



**CCS
disability action**
Including all people

TE HUNGA HAUA MAURI MO NGA TANGATA KATOA

Widening Horizons

Upper South Region Magazine

December 2009 issue



“Good News”

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Tena koutou katoa
Greetings to you all

Welcome to our second edition of Widening Horizons for 2009 – a year that has been full of change, increased demands and challenges. In recent times we have seen the impact of the financial crisis on families and employment levels and this impact has hit many of those families and individuals that we support. There has never been a greater need for our work in the community and there has never been a greater challenge to find the funds to support this work. I can assure you that we are trying every avenue for funding, looking very hard at our own costs and working very hard to deliver the maximum amount of support during these very difficult times.

As a region we have entered our new financial year with a combined operational deficit of over \$370,000. This reflects the significant drop in money made available by community trusts as well as the lower returns on investment income. It also reflects the on-going issue of a lack of Government support for our basic core services over the past ten years. Hopefully one day, there will be an acceptance of the wisdom of providing more comprehensive financial support for our supported lifestyles service for children, youth and families across all CCS Branches and regions.



However despite the challenges and despair, great work is taking place within our organisation on a daily basis. This edition of Widening Horizons will focus on some of these success stories from around the region. I hope like me, you will be impressed as you read them and recognise the difference that CCS Disability Action is making to the lives of disabled people and their families.

And there is more good news. The South island Independence Games will take place in April 2010 and hopefully by then a Trust will have been established to ensure the continuity of this great event for disabled athletes. We have opened our new accessible holiday home on the West Coast and already a significant number of people and families have enjoyed the wonderful West Coast environment from a great facility at Paroa. This has truly been a great community project.

It is a little early I know, but I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all well for the coming festive and holiday season. May you find a positive opportunity to unwind, find some time for family and friends and have an enjoyable and safe break from the churn of life. Be assured that my staff and I are also looking forward to a break so that we can return refreshed for the challenges of 2010 and the work we play in helping to create a more inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand.

Ka kite ano

Regards

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Matthews". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David Matthews
Regional Manager

PS

In the last edition there was an article on Rachel Mullins who told her story of coping with reduced hours of work. She said in her article that her goal was to find full employment. You will be pleased to know that Rachel has now been appointed to a full time position as Inclusive Communities Coordinator with the Christchurch City Council – we are all delighted for her.

Keeping Up With Technology

My name is Brad Morgan, in most respects I am your standard young adult. However I also have cerebral palsy, which aside from getting me excellent parking, causes me to have difficulty in organising my life due to my brain's refusal to co-operate in the areas of planning and coordination.

As much as I love my room, the prospect of an entire life spent within its confines is rather unappealing to me. However the effort required to successfully plan a typical excursion is quite significant, particularly when I need to coordinate with the schedules of other people or services like wheelchair taxis, which are often entirely unavailable unless booked in advance.

Rather than accept this frustration, I have indulged my passion for technology to help me keep track of my life using my laptop, mobile phone, the internet, a Navman GPS to keep me from getting lost, and a lot of persistence. My phone is my primary organisational tool. I use its calendar to schedule my meetings and appointments and keep track of my daily life. I refer to it frequently throughout the day. Knowing the details of my next appointment means I can do all the little things I need to do to get ready with sufficient time to spare.

Even the most basic of modern phones feature a calendar application that will let you schedule appointments and set up reminders about them. If your phone lacks this feature, I highly recommend an upgrade; the time and productivity savings are vastly greater than the cost of a new phone. The second most powerful tool in my organisational arsenal is my laptop. On my laptop I have Microsoft Outlook which, amongst many other things, provides a calendar that is often easier to use when entering a large number of appointments, or setting up a more complex schedule with lots of repeating events. Provided your phone supports it, Outlook can also synchronise the calendar on your phone with the one in Outlook, so you don't have to update both calendars separately.

If you use a Mac, don't panic as Apple's iCal product which comes with Mac OS X (v10.3 or later) has very similar capabilities.

If you prefer a web-based solution then Google Calendar is a good option. It allows you to plan events in much the same way as Outlook or iCal does, but because it's web-based and free, you don't need to download or buy any extra software to use it.

Google Calendar also supports calendar sharing so you can allow other people to see and (optionally) edit your calendar, which is of great advantage when you need to plan meetings with groups of people.

Calendar synchronisation is also supported, if you have an iPhone then it can synchronise with the Calendar application using the mobile network, other phones require the use of the Google Sync application in conjunction with Outlook or iCal.

Using these tools I have eliminated a lot of stress associated with planning my often hectic life and now that you know my secrets, you can too.

Links:

Microsoft Outlook: www.microsoft.com/outlook/

Apple iCal:

www.apple.com/macosx/what-is.../mail-ical-address-book.html

Google Calendar: <http://calendar.google.com/>



The Hon. Tariana Turia

My personal connection with disability has been through my brother who was tetraplegic. I remember the experience and wished that he could enjoy the pleasures of life, to be able to participate in the way he determined, and to feel that nothing was beyond him.

I was pleased to be asked to be the Minister for Disability Issues in June 2009 and I am also pleased to work alongside Pansy Wong as the Associate Minister for Disability Issues.

In terms of leadership, I chair the Ministerial Committee on Disability Issues which I am charged with the responsibility of implementing the United Nations Convention; the Disability Strategy and the recommendations of the select committee inquiry on the quality of care and service provision for people with disabilities.

When we refer to leadership, it is just as essential that we look to disabled persons and their families for their advice as to the proper priorities for action. I have been meeting with a range of groups, families and individuals to understand the opportunities and challenges that are present.

The most important thing is that people with disabilities talk for themselves.

Working together; placing value on relationships and adopting a focus on sustainable, positive outcomes is the only way to go and it is about looking and seeing the possibilities that are already there for a society which values all people, and which encourages and enhances full participation in the richness of life.

I am passionate about the right of families to care for family members in their own homes, with flexible support that allows them to have greater choice and control of their lives. This is an area that I will be focusing on.

Tariana Turia

Minister for Disability Issues



December 3rd: International Day for People With Disabilities

This was the day elected by the United Nations to celebrate people with disabilities all over the world. It is a day to bring to the World's attention not only the achievements of people with disability but also to acknowledge their struggle for equal human rights in the societies they live in. This year, the theme of the day was "empowerment of persons with disabilities and their communities around the World".

At CCS Disability Action, every day is a day for people with disabilities to be celebrated. Every day we are working to empower people with disabilities and the communities they live in. The Disability Awareness and Education Team based in the Christchurch office works to educate all kinds of audiences in our community about how individual attitudes make a difference to the lives of people with disabilities. The team believes that able-bodied people who empower people with disabilities open doors for them to have a regular life and be part of society. If you want to find out more about the Disability Awareness and Education Team, or if you want to have a presentation or organise a presentation in your community, please contact Team Coordinator Neelu Memon on 03 365 5661 extn 847 or email neelu.memon@ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz

Positive Parental Attitudes Make A Difference

Many adults with disabilities have told us that it was the attitudes and expectations their parents held towards them and their disability during childhood that made all the difference to how they succeed as adults. Parental attitudes and expectations can make all the difference between a disabled person having a “good” life or just accepting whatever comes his or her way.

I interviewed two striving young adults, Kerri Bonner and Josh Smith from CCS Disability Action’s Mentoring Programme for Widening Horizons, to give parents of young disabled people some ideas about what Kerri and Josh think made the difference for them.

Leigh: “What did your parents do that was helpful when you were a youth and as an adult now?”

Kerri: “Well I guess when I was in my teens, my parents pushed me to be independent. I hated it at times; but I would ask them to do something and they would say ‘no, you can do that!’ I hated it then because I didn’t want to do it myself but they pushed me to do all that I could for myself. Now I thank them because it’s been so beneficial to me in terms of getting out and doing things. Being independent now, I wouldn’t have it any other way.”

“I see people whose parents have done everything for them and notice the difference. I am pleased that my parents didn’t go down that line of ‘let’s wrap Kerri in cotton wool,’ and do everything for me. Also, they never saw my disability as a hindrance. They expected me to do everything I could. They had the same expectations of me as they did of my siblings. My parents pushed me to do well at school, and to get involved in things and I think that was really helpful. They didn’t let me off and say, ‘Oh, you don’t have to do that; you don’t have to do very well because you have Cerebral Palsy (CP)’. They expected me to do everything I could.”

Leigh: “What did your parents do that was a hindrance?”

Kerri: “Good question. I’ll get back to you.”

Leigh: “How about I talk to Josh and leave you to think about that question?”

Josh: “About my parents – My parents are very forward thinking people. Even when I was little they never treated me as different. In my case it is a bit different because I was quite mobile. So, I was out there doing a lot of things as a kid like running around and playing sport.”

“I remember one of the things my parents wrote on my wall was ‘I can’; it was a little motto that inspired me. For most part my life, probably about the first 12 years, I really didn’t associate with Cerebral Palsy so much. I think my parents just let me go and do normal things, go to normal schools and everything helped me build up normal expectations of what real life is like. My parents have done so many great things for me. It’s a bit like Kerri’s parents, mine expected me to do as well as I could. They didn’t over pressure me into doing stuff, but they believed that I was intelligent and could do anything. They have done a great job of encouraging that, and as far as the hindrance goes I don’t think they have been a hindrance. I think if anyone is to blame for being a hindrance in my life, it has been me with my pessimistic view of my own talent. My parents have been so supportive; it has usually been me that has been the problem I would have to say!”

Leigh: “So was that because of the lack of confidence?”

Josh: “Yes, pretty much. In my case, I put heaps of expectations on myself to be really good at whatever I tried. I am one of those people who likes to do something as well as they can, and if you can’t do it well, there’s no point in doing it. That’s been really quite strange and I think in my case because I am almost able bodied in some ways, that was really hard growing up. I would be close to being able to do a lot of those things like run around, but couldn’t quite do it and would get left behind.”

“One of the things that my parents did well was they sent me to the normal local schools and high schools - I think that really helped me. My parents didn’t put me in cotton wool; I put myself in cotton wool to be honest. I didn’t really like trying things. The concept of having a go is something that I really find quite difficult because in my

Positive Parental Attitudes (Cont)

psyche I don't want to have a go at anything; I want to win at it. I never played any disabled sports because I wanted to play against able bodied people and I wanted to win. My father is very competitive and I have got a lot of that in me as well."

Leigh: "So you wouldn't necessarily join in because you had to win and because you had doubts that you couldn't win?"

Josh: "No, I wouldn't do it because I only do things that I believe I can do well, or that I believe I have a chance of winning. There are flaws in that ideology – I think that the people who do have a go are very good – I'm impressed with the people that just go out there and have a go. I think it is my background; my father's got an extensive sporting background, and he's a former All Black and coach so when I was growing up I learnt how to play rugby. I wanted to be so good at it and I felt well, I can't be good at it! I just don't want to be one of the boys; but I have improved over the years."

"I think when I was growing up my parents helped me to understand my disability. Now I actually feel that in parts of my childhood maybe I should have paid more attention to my disability, because until I was about 20 I didn't really care about it. I used to go around thinking I didn't have a disability, and in reality that was something that wasn't really good. I should have had a better balance between the two."

"Perhaps I should have done more with CCS Disability Action when I was growing up and done more of the able bodied activities, but I was quite closed minded. My parents have been fantastic; that was fate I think, I don't think that there are better people that could have handled me in better ways."

"It makes me sad to think that some kids don't get the moral and emotional support that they need. It has certainly made it a lot easier for me to handle Cerebral Palsy by having good, supportive parents. I hate to think what it would have been like if I didn't have that base."

"It's important to talk about your feelings, because I think

everyone with Cerebral Palsy has feelings and gets upset about something. There is always something that annoys you – it doesn't matter if you are in a wheelchair – anyone with Cerebral Palsy will have some sort of frustration going on because it is a very frustrating disability. I think my parents are fantastic."

Leigh: "Thank you for that. Kerri, can we come back to you – have you thought of anything?"

Kerri: "I really can't think of anything major but I guess there wasn't so much focus on my disability, which might appear to be good. But it also meant that I wasn't really facing the other thing if you know what I mean. I guess it would have been helpful to talk about my disability and things like that. I didn't go into segregated schools – I didn't have too much contact with people with disabilities. So, I don't know - maybe it could have been good to just talk about stuff like my CP and what effect that can have."

Leigh: "That's great Kerri, thank you."

Kerri and Josh are passing their messages on to the young teenagers they are mentoring in the hope others too have a successful adult life. If you would like to find out more about our Mentoring Programme please contact Jonathan Mackie or your key worker.

Jonathan Mackie

Practice Coordinator – Adult Services CCS Disability Action
Postal Address: PO Box 8066, Riccarton, Christchurch
8440, NZ

Phone: 03 3655 661 ext 870

Email: jonathan.mackie@ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz

Leigh Montford

Bluff Oyster Festival 2009: Raw Is The Way To Go!

A report by Chris Bartlett

Ghost Writer: Leigh Montford

My name is Chris Bartlett. Jack, is my guide dog, he is a white standard poodle.

I was able to attend the Bluff Oyster & Food Festival in 2009, through the generosity of CCS Disability Action in Christchurch. Stephen McLennan, Adult Practitioner, applied to the Ferry Trust through CCS Disability Actions' Head Office in Wellington for funding. They were kind enough to provide me with funding.

It's the first time I've been away without taking an assistant. Christchurch Airport was under construction, I found it extremely difficult to navigate my way to the terminal because of the need to take various detours. If I had not have had Jack, who followed other passengers, I would not have made it to the terminal.



Chris with Mayor Tim and Jack

I met with Mayor Tim Shadbolt in his Mayoral chambers the day before the Festival, which he also attended. When we met I discussed with His Worship my reasons for attending the Oyster Festival. During the course of our conversation I asked him what I should look out for in Invercargill in the future. His Worship responded that I should watch to see if they strike oil – if they do, Invercargill will boom. The Mayor also suggested that I should follow the diabetes developments – we are looking for a possible cure for diabetes. Then our brief meeting was over.

Kerry Gray assisted me on the day of the Festival and the following day. I found Kerry through a friend. Christchurch CCS Disability Action kindly provided one-off funding to pay Kerry.

Things Kerry assisted me with were: chauffeuring, walking me around the Festival, introducing me to people, and he invited me to his home for some meals with his family. I am very grateful for his support.

The challenges I faced during my trip were easily overcome by asking passers-by for directions. All the taxi companies, shop keepers and the public were extremely helpful – from the Mayor Tim Shadbolt, to the average person on the street.

The Festival began with the poem, "Ode to the Bluff oyster," read by Spencer Morrison whom was dressed in Scottish regalia. Then they had a Kapa Haka group from the Bluff Community School. They were dressed in traditional Maori costume and performed a variety of songs in Te Reo and included a haka. A boy stepped forward to give the traditional welcome in Te Reo to everybody, and at the end of his speech he paused, turned to an adult standing behind the Kapa Haka party and said, "Oh bother, I've forgotten the word!" The crowd roared with laughter and applauded. Then the Festival began.

The Festival was extremely accessible, well run, and very well set-up. They had tables and chairs under-cover in a separate area. The food, oysters and other offerings, was superb, with a choice of alcohol and non-alcohol beverages.

Bluff Oyster Festival (Cont)

The organisers provided accessible portaloos for disabled people.

I used taxis while at the Festival – the taxi drivers were very helpful. As a blind person, Blue Star Taxis had Braille on the passenger door saying what company they were and what the car number was – I found this very handy. I also had Kerry who drove me around in his private car.

The attitudes towards me were fantastic. Everybody was very helpful. I stayed at Southern Comfort Backpackers – it was nice, warm, though not accessible for disabled people who use wheelchairs.

The first highlight of the trip was having enough money to go. My next highlight was going to Barnes Oysters Limited and arranging for oysters to be purchased in the future for CCS Disability Action and friends. And, of course, going to the Oyster Festival itself - pouring several dozen of Barnes' best down my throat! I also indulged in a very beautiful oyster pie!

A highlight for Jack was when someone gave him half a dozen oysters in a small pottle, while we were at the Festival – which he bolted down with great gusto! I don't know how oysters impact on the digestive system of a standard poodle, but let me tell you, every time he passed wind it smelt like the seawater under a wharf!

If I attend another Bluff Oyster Festival in the future, I'd like to have an assistant to go with me.



Where's my oysters!"

ODE TO BLUFF'S OYSTER

*We put you on a pedestal
Oh oyster from the sea
You're such a delicious delicacy
That's where you deserve to be*

*We carry you from Foveaux Strait
To the safety of the shore
And free you from your protective shell
So the public can adore*

*A gem, a pearl set in Bluff's crown
So proudly we display
Our oyster in all its glory
To all who are here today*

*Oh oyster, bounty of the sea
It gives us so much pleasure
To proudly set before the world
Such a truly, delectable treasure*

"Maureen"

Making a Complaint: “Face The Fear and Do It Anyway!”

In this article, Widening Horizons investigates a complaint by a service user that had very positive outcomes for him after years of being treated disrespectfully and not listened to (as he should have been). In working to resolve the nature of the complaint positive outcomes arose for the service provider as well. While names and identities have been changed for confidentiality reasons, the words of those involved illustrate that making a complaint can end well.

Hands up if you are afraid to complain? Hands up if you think complaining won't get you anywhere? And, hands up if you think by complaining you'll lose what you have got? Well you are not alone, many of us will not complain for fear of repercussions. We put up with a poor service or inappropriate treatment that leaves us feeling unhappy or afraid to 'rock the boat'; often to the detriment of our health or personal well being. It doesn't have to be this way, speaking up can be an empowering process for you and the people in your life. Having the courage to say "I don't like being treated this way," can be positive, not only for you, but for other people who use the service you are complaining about.

Background

Arthur is an intelligent man who lives a full life; his speech is affected by his disability at times, which means careful listening effort is required to understand his message. Arthur has been using Progressive Services for the last ten years. Arthur phones or visits Progressive about twice a month for assistance, and although this may not seem a lot, this assistance is critical to Arthur participating fully in the community. Over time, Arthur noticed that while requesting or getting assistance, the staff at Progressive Services began to treat him differently from the way he had been treated by the previous service provider. "They began treating me like a child, as if I don't have a brain. If I was with a companion, they would speak to her even if I asked them to speak to me. My companions would say, "Tell this to Arthur, but the staff just ignored them and continued talking to them." In one incident a new member of staff talked so loudly to Arthur he was nearly yelling, as if Arthur were deaf. "I asked him to stop but he just kept on doing it."

Arthur complained to the local manager, Gary, twice over the years hoping Gary would speak to the staff and do something to ensure that Arthur received the respectful treatment he is entitled to. The manager listened, but according to Arthur, nothing changed. "I began to avoid calling or going to Progressive unless I absolutely had to because I felt so bad, even my companions didn't want to make the call or go there with me."

Then on a recent visit Arthur just exploded, "Basically I had had a gutful! The staff member was not speaking with me, he was speaking to Sarah, my companion, and I basically yelled at him, "I am not an idiot! Talk to me!" I blew up and then went to see Gary. While talking to him, I thought to myself that even though he was listening to me Gary wasn't going to do anything about my complaint."

Who Do You Complain To?

The first place to complain is directly to the service provider, ideally to the person you are unhappy with. Give them the opportunity to do something about their actions or to explain why they are doing things the way they are. If you are afraid to do this, get no result or an unsatisfactory explanation, go to their manager. Putting your concerns in writing (or on a voice recorder – whatever is appropriate for you) is a useful tactic because you create a "paper trail" - establishing dates, times and providing a record of the incident, including your feelings and concerns. Support or advocacy is also very helpful in getting the outcome you want.

Arthur realised he was not getting anywhere with internal complaints to Progressive Services. He would have to get outside help to get the outcome he wanted. "A couple of days later I talked with my CCS Disability Action key worker about what the options were, I knew there was a Health and Disability Commission complaint similar to mine being made; we also talked about the Human Rights Commission and because I thought I was being discriminated against I thought it was appropriate to take it there."

See the text boxes which explain your rights as a disabled person when receiving a service; CCS Disability Action's

Making A Complaint (cont.)

complaints procedure; and the Human Rights Commission's tips for making complaints.

The Health & Disability Commissioner's Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights

The ten rights of consumers and the duties of providers are:

- Right 1:** the right to be treated with respect.
- Right 2:** the right to freedom from discrimination, coercion, harassment, and exploitation.
- Right 3:** the right to dignity and independence.
- Right 4:** the right to services of an appropriate standard.
- Right 5:** the right to effective communication.
- Right 6:** the right to be fully informed.
- Right 7:** the right to make an informed choice and give informed consent.
- Right 8:** the right to support.
- Right 9:** rights in respect of teaching or research.
- Right 10:** the right to complain

For more details telephone the Health and Disability Commissioner's Office on 0800 11 22 33, email: hdc@hdc.org.nz, or visit: <http://www.hdc.org.nz/theact/theact-thecodedetail>

What Next?

The Human Rights Commission provides a mediation service to resolve complaints. In Arthur's case they negotiated a time and venue for him to meet with Beth, the General Manager of Progressive Services, and Gary.

Arthur spoke first about the way staff had treated him over the years and how it made him feel. He prepared a Power Point presentation on his laptop that listed the difficulties he had endured and the times he complained. Arthur said he didn't think it was a personal matter between the staff and him, but that Progressive Services had a culture that treats people with disabilities differently.

Beth then spoke. She accepted Arthur's complaint and

explained that the internal complaints procedure had not been followed correctly. This meant that Progressive Services could not monitor its quality of service and make the changes or provide the training to staff to improve things. She later explained: "I got the letter and my initial reaction was shock and anger that we had somewhere in our organisation brought this complaint about. So, having worked through that I then wanted to find out exactly what had happened, and that's when I discovered that there had been a series of issues that had not been reported up, and actually we have a robust complaints process, but (Arthur) wouldn't have known that because the process had not been followed by Progressive Service's staff. It will be in future."

The next stage of the Human Rights Commission mediation was to resolve the complaint through a binding agreement between the parties on what to do next. Arthur went prepared with a list of ideas that he believed would help Progressive Services treat disabled people more appropriately. Beth accepted these, "working through the complaint and some of the recommendations or requirements that the complainant put in place, was really good for us; we were effectively being given support at the place of assuming we have got it right, to being told that we haven't and what to do to get it right. Actually, that has been a really good process, having Disability Awareness training and the involvement of disabled people with interviews and we will have a group of disabled people in the focus group in a little while from now. All good stuff that we are rolling out across the whole organisation."

Has It Made A Difference?

Ryan an employee at the coalface for Progressive Services thinks it has. He says "well, I guess the lessons I have taken are a recognition of my role here at Progressive Services is specifically to support you, a person with a disability. There does tend to be a little bit of "not seeing the forest for the trees" mentality when you are in a day to day working environment. It is always good to be able to have someone say, 'come back up here and have a look at the big picture' and the big picture is that I have a job because you have a disability, simple as that. If everybody with a disability was able to be cured (if that's the right word) tomorrow, then I would be out of a job. I'm not

saying that I don't want people with disabilities, I would rather see people become as physically able and causative and capable as they possibly can, but by the same token, I think that there is a role to play in supporting people with disabilities and I just need to be mindful of the fact that you are my customer. You are actually the most important person in this business and so if you come up to me and say look, I am not happy with the service, that means we have got to do what we do better for you."

Graham another Progressive Services employee believes this complaint has made a difference as well. "I guess if we have taken anything out of all of this, we can make sure that we do keep a clear line of communication going. You listen to what people have to say. People don't complain for no reason at all, there has got to be something that upsets them." Graham goes on to say, "By all means complain. The more people that actually do complain might mean we get a few extra resources here. I don't have a problem with complaints. They are good. How do you learn if someone doesn't say hey look you are doing something wrong?"

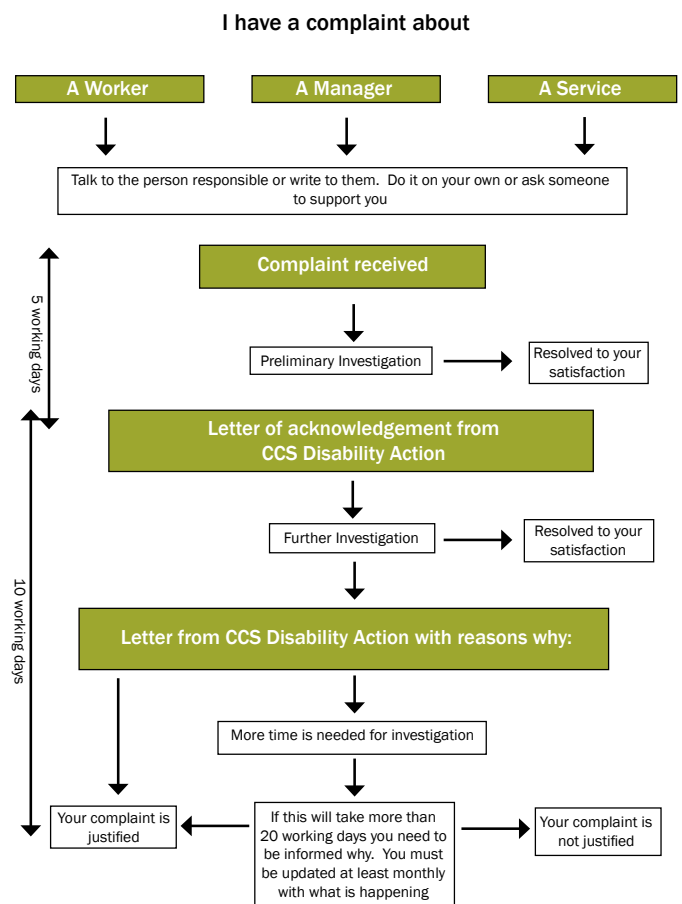
Ryan believes people should speak up if they are not getting the service they are entitled to. "Don't be afraid to say anything. I think there has been a little bit of concern that as a person with a disability if I say something, then I will be treated poorly or I will be persecuted to some degree whether that be very minor, which is totally wrong. I actually don't like the word complaint, I would rather have something like a service improvement request where people are saying look your service is just not up to par, can you please improve your service in such-and-such an area."

Having been unhappy with the treatment he has been receiving for the last ten years, Arthur says that complaining through the Human Rights Commission, "restored my faith in people. We work with organisations that have all sorts of processes in place, but if someone takes a very adverse approach with a complaint it wouldn't happen like this. It would be a lot harder, in this case we had it sorted in less than four hours. Yes, it's scary; but the thing is you need to have support in place to complain. Making a complaint changes things for the better. The

proof of the resolution of the complaint is not how nice I will now be treated (by Progressive Service), it's more about how nice other people get treated. That is the real test for me."

Despite being from different sides of the service user/provider fence, Arthur, Beth, Ryan, and Graham all have the same message for you; it doesn't matter how small the issue is, if you want to improve services don't be afraid to complain. As Beth says: "People should never be frightened of raising an issue or making a complaint, because something has led them to feel unhappy. It can only escalate, so if something makes you feel unhappy, the next time you go back to the service, you go with this overlay of unhappiness, of an incomplete something, and then it can only escalate. My advice would be to face the fear and do it anyway."

Leigh Montford



See Right 10 of the Code of Health and Disability Services Consumers' Rights for more information.

Contact your CCS Disability Action Key Worker, or local office. Details can be found on the back cover of Widening Horizons.

Tips for Complaints To The Human Rights Commission

1. **Contact** our Infoline by phone 0800 496 877, e-mail infoline@hrc.co.nz, or fax 09 377 3593 (Attention: Infoline) as the first step. Website www.hrc.co.nz
2. **Provide** your information clearly. You do not need to use our complaint form (available on-line, or hard-copy on request). However, it shows you the information we need and can help us understand your complaint.
3. **Talk** with us: we can help you focus your complaint – what it is about, and how you think it might be resolved.
4. **Our turn:** We will assess your complaint to see what we can do to assist you. The Human Rights Act informs our assessment. A mediator will contact you when that has been considered.
5. **Be aware** that the Human Rights Commission processes are mediation and dispute resolution, not investigation. We make no judgment about whether or not unlawful discrimination (which includes racial or sexual harassment) has occurred.
6. **Give** clear information to our staff about what your needs are with respect to communication – best methods and times for contacting you. Keep us updated if anything changes.
7. **Tell** your mediator if you have particular needs with respect to interviews or mediation meetings.
8. **Contact** us if you have any queries, if you would like an update, or if you have an update to give us.
9. **Don't worry:** We will not make initial contact with the other person/s without discussing that with you first.
10. **Remember:** Much of what happens with a complaint depends on the other person/s involved: how easy they are to contact, how quickly they respond to us, and whether or not they are willing to take part in dispute resolution, which is a voluntary process.
11. **Be assured** that you don't have to attend a face-to-face meeting if you don't wish to, although that may make for a better outcome.
12. **Think about** who would make good support people to come to a mediation meeting with you, if one is planned. Discuss this with your mediator.
13. **Be prepared** to listen to the other side of the dispute – you don't have to agree with it - and it helps other people to listen to your perspective.
14. **By the way,** if you feel you are being treated badly because you have made a complaint, the Human Rights Act covers victimisation. Discuss this with your mediator.

A “Win Win” Situation

Max lives with his big sister and single parent Mother and they find the holidays are very long away from his usual school routine. Max has been going to a school holiday programme for special needs children, but they wanted his Mum to pay 2 days Carer Support to attend each day.

Our Service Coordinator talked with Mum about Max attending the Christchurch City Council Holiday Programme. We registered him for a programme near his home, and then talked to them about what his special needs were. The week before the holiday programme started a Supervisor from the programme visited Max and his family at home. She was able to get to know Max and find out what special care he needed. The visit was also good for Mum, as she was a bit nervous about how Max would be, and who the people were who would be looking after him - everyone felt a bit easier after meeting the Supervisor. Max went to the school holiday programme 3 days on the first week and 4 days the second. He loved it, and was well cared for and supervised. Yes - there was a hiccup, but with good communication between Mum and the Supervisor, the City Council staff involved soon sorted the problem and Max enjoyed the holidays so much that he went back the following school holidays. Mum says to give a huge bouquet to the CCC staff for their professional approach and doing everything they could to include Max in an ordinary school holiday programme. Mum has a break during the daytime from his care, and she can do special things with his older sister during the holidays. And Max is having a great time at his school holiday programme.

Donna's On The Case

I am a very recent addition as a Service Coordinator, Supported Employment in the Nelson Branch of CCS Disability Action.

I have been a wheelchair user for seventeen years as the result of a tumour located in my spinal cord at T12-L1. After a few years of poking and prodding, the tumour was successfully removed.

I was left a partial paraplegic and relied on the wheelchair everyday to get about.



I was on an Invalids Benefit for many years whilst raising my young daughter however, when she turned five and went to school I was advised that the Government was making noises about people on the Invalids Benefit being made to find work. I decided that I didn't want to do just any job and that I needed the pieces of paper that would get me a higher level position.

I went back to the polytechnic to increase my skill base and graduated two years later with the NZ Diploma in Business through NMIT and the Diploma in Management through NZ Institute of Management.

Then came the hard part of finding a suitable job.

I attended many interviews and was forever hopeful that I would find the employer who could see past the disability and realise the asset they were about to employ. After eight months, I managed to get a position with NMIT as a Customer Service Officer. Then I was on my way. When I decided to leave NMIT I had advanced to Team Leader of Customer Relations. I had held the position for eight years over which time it had evolved to include not only the Domestic administration but also the International administration and the Enquiries department as well.

I thought that I would easily find something that would challenge me again. I had forgotten what the employment market was like. Not only had the recession hit and I was but one of many people looking for work but I had the added pressure of having a disability. To be honest I didn't think that it would be a problem as I had held down a high pressure job for eight years. However my first interview brought back the stark reality that there is still some work to be done with employers about employing people with disabilities.

I was quite shocked at the barrier that I witnessed go up as soon as the interviewer saw me but I carried on as if I hadn't noticed. Fortunately for me I have a 'can do' attitude and proceeded to sell my abilities to the employer even though his body language told me that he was trying to end the interview as quickly as possible. I didn't get that job obviously.

A lot of applications are now done on-line and they ask if you have an injury or illness that could affect your ability to carry out the role you are applying for. I always found this one hard to answer as in my mind I would never apply for jobs that I wouldn't be able to do but had to be honest about being in a wheelchair. I applied for a number of positions, probably about twenty before seeing the CCS Disability Action Service Coordinator position advertised in the Nelson Mail. I decided that even though my wedding was but a month away I would apply for it. I knew I could do this job really well and I had an understanding of what it was like to be on the other side of an interview table. I would be able to relate to the Service Users' nervousness about trying to secure employment and I was also an ex-employer myself so I have that advantage too.

I have been with CCS Disability Action Nelson for four weeks and already I am enjoying the environment I am working in and have had some very positive meetings with Service Users and potential employers.

Donna Case
Service Coordinator
Supported Employment

Barbara Elston - Following Her Dreams



I am a West Coast Girl who moved over to Timaru on 11th November 1999. I have never looked back since and have been able to follow my dreams like working on a train as Assistant Guard at Pleasant Point Railway. I have been a serving member of Order of St John for 22 years with countless hours of duty and will serve the Order until the end of my days. I am also involved with the Scottish Society enjoying monthly concerts. I attend Red Cross meetings, am a volunteer for Presbyterian Support, a Hospice, also IHC. I go on monthly coach trips with MCL Bus Club. CCS Disability Action has been good to me over the years. Julie Fosbender has helped me a lot through good and bad times for which I am also very grateful for.

Christine found me a job early this year with OCS cleaning a kindy. This is the first permanent job I have ever had in my life and has made a big difference as I'm able to get about more after an accident on the West Coast.

The kindy is a lovely place to work. I have helped with one of their fundraising schemes. Now that I am working I am able to travel on my much loved train

the Tranz Alpine on one of my regular trips to the West Coast, and also to catch up with my railway friends. I am also able to attend a concert in Christchurch to see Cliff Richard and the Shadows. None of these things would have happened without the help of Julie, Christine and Tony to whom I am very grateful - They have been wonderful to me.

Never let anyone stand in the way of whatever you want to do because you can go out there and do it. Follow your dreams.

Barbara Elston

Life's Looking Up

Jane lives with her sister, father, and mother, Sally. Due to the nature of Jane's disabilities, Sally was accessing support in the community, regarding a number of disability - related areas. Many parents find themselves in a similar position, and many may have a positive outcome which is beneficial for the family, however Sally did not have this experience.

Over a period of time, Sally started doubting her abilities as a parent, her self esteem decreased, she felt her opinions and experiences as a parent did not count, she felt depressed, stressed and overwhelmed, and she began to lose all hope that her family situation could change.

The Service Coordinator supported Sally to rebuild respect for herself as a parent, and to value herself, and her own ideas, opinions, feelings and experiences. Support was given for Sally to identify her most important goals and aspirations for her family. As Sally regained her inner strength and energy, she found courage to explore other avenues of support, and continued exploring until she found in the community people who offered support that she felt comfortable with. From this they were able to work together to meet Jane's needs.

With positive support she was able to gain new strategies and workable ideas, that have resulted in significant progress and greater harmony in their home life, and in accessing the wider community. Sally is able to identify her strengths as a parent, and has a restored sense of pride and confidence in herself as a mother, which has had a positive impact on the family. Sally feels that the family have now moved out of being in a state of 'survival mode'. They feel strengthened and supported by a positive and constructive group of understanding people in the community. Sally's inner strength and courage enabled her to make changes and as a result her family have been able to shift their focus to a different level of living and enjoying life on a daily basis.

Notices



Christmas Closure

CCS Disability Action Upper South Region offices will be closed from 23 December, (**Christchurch Office closes 4.30 p.m. 21 December**) reopening on Tuesday 5 January 2010.

We would like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

Xmas Tree Festivals:



Greymouth:
Regent Theatre
Saturday 5 December to
Thursday 10 December

Festival is open to the public from 10.30 am through to 6.00 pm and from 7.00 pm to 8.30 pm each day

Hokitika:
Carnegie Building, Hamilton Street, Hokitika
Friday 11 December to Monday 14 December
Times as follows:
11 and 12 December - 10.00 am to 5.00 pm
13 and 14 December - 10.00 am to 4.00 pm

Garden Club

Hi, my name is Chris Bartlett and I would like to start up a garden club for disabled people in Canterbury who want to garden in their own home.

I am looking for people who are interested in becoming members and forming a committee.

AIMS:

It is our initial aim to secure funding to provide each member with a garden box 1m x 3m x 65cm deep (or smaller). This will have a seat on all four sides (able to take 125kg in weight). The box, dirt and plants will be fully funded to all members.

This gives the disabled a sense of worth and enjoyment of their self-grown vegetables or flowers. It will also provide a great talking point with family and friends. Membership is free, and meetings will be held quarterly.

FUNDING:

This will be sought in the usual ways.

CONTACT:

Please contact Chris on (03) 960 4652

South Island Independence Games

QEII Stadium April 10-11 2010.

Contact your local office for more information



Australasian Academy of Cerebral Palsy & Developmental Medicine
5th Biennial Conference
“Getting a Good Start” 3 - 6 March 2010, Christchurch, New Zealand
www.dconferences.com.au/ausacpdm2010

PLUS “Family Day for Cerebral Palsy 2010”.

DATE: 7th March 2010 TIME: 9.30 a.m. - 2.00 p.m. VENUE: QEII (Mezzanine floor/sports hall)

This day is for all families/whanau that live with cerebral palsy. It will be a great opportunity to meet and network. Seminars are planned with guest speakers who will talk with families about a variety of issues. Service providers will also be there with information about what they can offer. There will be opportunities for children and families to join in some fun sport and leisure activities.

If either the conference and/or the Family Day sounds interesting to you contact the organisers directly. Gaela.Kilgour@cdhb.govt.nz or talk to your CCS Disability Action Service Coordinator.



NZ Registered Magazine

If undelivered, please return to CCS Disability Action
PO Box 8066, Riccarton, CHRISTCHURCH 8440

Permit Post 
New Zealand
Permit No. 158474

Contributions:

We welcome contributions, comments and letters.

Please email to:

wideninghorizons.canterbury@ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz
or ring David Matthews (03) 365 5661 ext 843.

Editing Team:

David Matthews, June Mercer

Printer:

Kalamazoo Wyatt & Wilson (NZ) Ltd

The opinions expressed in Widening Horizons are not necessarily those of CCS Disability Action Upper South Region.

If you would prefer an electronic version of this magazine please go to our website

<http://cwc.ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz> or email us at:
wideninghorizons.canterbury@ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz

Your Local CCS Disability Action Offices:

Ashburton

Mackenzie Centre
Mona Square
Ashburton 7700
Ph. (03) 308 4456

Kaikoura

114 Beach Road
PO Box 75
Kaikoura 7300
Ph. (03) 319 3263

Blenheim

9 Sinclair Street
PO Box 533
Blenheim 7240
Ph. (03) 578 1170

Nelson

65 Trafalgar Street
PO Box 586
Nelson 7040
Ph. (03) 548 4479

Christchurch

224 Lichfield Street
PO Box 8066
Christchurch 8440
Ph. (03) 365 5661

Rangiora

2 Durham Street
PO Box 594
Rangiora 7440
Ph. (03) 313 8312

Greymouth

Disability Information Service
25 Albert Street
Greymouth 7805
Ph. (03) 768 4600

Timaru

2-4 Victoria Street
PO Box 585
Timaru 7940
Ph. (03) 684 7151

Hokitika

Como House
Tancred Street
PO Box 3
Hokitika 7842
Ph. (03) 755 5329

Westport

Clocktower Building
Palmerston Street
PO Box 112
Westport 7866
Ph. (03) 789 6833

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