

BEYOND THE HORIZON

Welcome to the second and final edition of **Beyond the Horizon** for 2014. I hope your plans to finish the year on a high are in 'full swing' and that you have scheduled some time to reflect, relax and hopefully enjoy some sunshine over the holiday season.

2014 has been a year of change for the disability sector in New Zealand; changes that affect both those who receive support and the people who support them.

As an organisation, Community Living is no different. We headed into our 25th year of supporting people to achieve personal outcomes and we are continuing to work on ensuring we provide high quality individualised services, build stronger relationships with family/whanau, and develop more robust connections with local communities. Needless to say, it has been an extremely busy year filled with changes on a number of levels which is the theme of this newsletter.

One of the most significant changes was the loss of our behaviour support contract.

In August 2013, the Ministry of Health (MOH) called for proposals for a single national provider or consortium of providers to offer Behavioural Support services for people with disabilities. Community Living in conjunction with Spectrum Care Trust Board (Auckland), Tautoko Trust (Wellington) and Southern Behaviour Support (Christchurch), formed a company and submitted a tender. Unfortunately we were not successful and missing out on the contract was a huge disappointment. I would like to acknowledge the fantastic work provided by the Behaviour Assessment Team (BAT) over the past 25 years. This team enjoyed a very strong and well-deserved reputation nationally and has over the past 25 years, assisted many people with disabilities and their families/whanau to achieve their goals. The Behaviour Assessment Team completed their time with Community Living (in October 2014) and behaviour support services are now provided by EXPLORE. The referral process for this service is unchanged and should you require support for your family/whanau member, please contact your local NASC agency.

We would like to extend our best wishes to the EXPLORE team as they begin their journey of developing a new model of behaviour support and the provision of this new service nationally.

Choice in Community Living (CiCL)

The MOH's Choice in Community Living project, whereby people can choose where they live, with whom they live and how they wish to be supported, started in July 2013. Community Living now has 13 people who have opted to be part of the project, with seven more working through the process. Those who are now choosing the living arrangements that best suit them are positive about the outcomes, as are 70 or so more people involved across the country. Special thanks to David Slone, a father of one of the people supported in the project who has shared their story in this newsletter, about what CiCL means for them.





Each year we are audited in accordance with the contracts we have with the Ministry of Health, Disability Support Services, and the Ministry of Social Development. This year our Vocational service (Employment Options), Out of Home Respite Service (Leong Ave) and Family Living Options were audited. In all instances the Auditors were very positive about these services and the staff who work hard to deliver a quality service. More recently a number of our residential services were also audited and many of these homes received very positive feedback too. We take every opportunity to engage in discussion with the audit teams, as well as with the people we support and their families/whanau, seeking to continually improve what we do - ensuring high quality support is at the forefront of all our work.

Changes within Community Living

PlatformPlus Limited

PlatformPlus is a registered charitable organisation which started by trading as a division of Community Living Trust in 2012. Two and half years later, in July 2014, the organisation became a separate 100%-owned subsidiary. PlatformPlus provides a bureau-type service covering aspects of business support services and organisational capability.



Last year, to better align ourselves to Community Living's strategic direction we made changes to our senior management structure. As a result, two new people were recruited to the management team; Fran Tilley and Claire van der Most. You will find their introductions later in this newsletter.

We have also commenced, with the involvement of staff, people supported and family/whanau, a wider organisational redesign. This redesign will enable us to be in a strong position to adapt and, indeed, innovate in response to the sector-wide changes. Please be assured that this will be done with as little disruption to day-to-day service delivery as possible.

During the year, we held a Community Connections Day that included the people we support, their families/whanau and staff. The purpose was to hear from all groups, in particular what we are doing well, how we could improve our services, and what they want for the future. The day was very successful and helpful for us when thinking about new structures to take us into the future. The most important feedback we received from this day was our need to clearly communicate with our stakeholders - you. We welcome your feedback about how you prefer us to do this. Please email Colleen Kiely with your thoughts and ideas. colleen.kiely@communityliving.org.nz



Please also let us know your email address so we can send the newsletters and other future communication via email where possible – this will help us to minimise the costs of 'slow mail'. We are looking forward to 2015 as we bed-in our changes in service delivery. We are excited about developing stronger community connections for the people we support and working with each of you and your family/whanau member - supporting them to live their dreams.

I wish you and your family/whanau a safe and enjoyable holiday season.

**Naaku noa
Na Marese**



Choice In Community Living - A Parent's Perspective

By David Slone

Matthew moved out of home in July 2014, one month before his 21st birthday, to go flatting with two friends in Hamilton. His flat mates were already flatting together and there was an empty room in their flat. They are supported by Community Living under the Choices in Community Living funding.

We spend so much time fighting for our children, overcoming challenges and just doing whatever it takes to give them opportunities that the thought that they will leave home one day and enjoy their independence doesn't always come automatically. It's more a long term goal – what we strive for but never knowing for sure that it will be achieved. Scary and exciting, it's something that needs to be done – something that will leave an empty feeling in your stomach but also immense pride.

After Matthew left school we wanted him to start thinking about the day he will go flatting. This was so that he was prepared mentally and also took more interest in learning the necessary skills (cooking, cleaning, public transport etc.)

Matthew initially wasn't keen at all but we kept at it. Over time he started to think more about it, planning firstly to do it in a fairly long timeframe ("I'll move out when I'm 33") and then suddenly one day he decided it was time. He then went a step further and put paid to all of our thinking. We were thinking a managed transition period of a year or two and then him moving into a flat in Cambridge. Matthew however decided that he not only wanted to move out straight away, he also wanted to live in Hamilton.

We knew that moving to Hamilton would present challenges – for him and us. All of his activities and interests were in Cambridge, he didn't know Hamilton at all and had never used the bus system over there. Truth be told, we had never even considered him not living in Cambridge.

Like most parents I guess, we wanted to be there if necessary and if he could just pop around for a visit, it enable us still to have lots of contact with our boy. Having said all that – it also made sense to us that any young man would want to move to "a big smoke". In fact, that is what we both did when we left home. His friends from Special Olympics live in Hamilton and there would be more opportunities for work etc. in a city than a small town like Cambridge.

So Hamilton it would be.

Going into the process, we knew that Residential Services were simply not an option and asking around, we were warned about this new funding model being trialled that Disability Support Links (DSL) was pushing. Like many parents, we didn't have a lot of faith in the system so it was in a cynical mood that we approached DSL.

Following the needs assessment, we were visited by DSL to discuss Choices in Community Living. This is where we came across two remarkable opportunities. The story of two young men was part of the information provided – and we knew one set of parents through Special Olympics. The first opportunity was to talk to another parent about how the system really worked in practice. All of the various organisations may have their hearts in the right place but at the end of the day, parents of children with a disability tend to look after each other and we really value each other's opinions and experiences. Funding model sorted.



While we did the formal approaches to organisations, and had their 'sales pitches', the second remarkable opportunity is what drove us forward. The two young men mentioned above had a vacancy in their flat. Matthew knew both of them and they got on really well together at a sports programme and through Special Olympics. We didn't want to press things too hard in case they weren't keen but Matthew was positive that he wanted to go flatting with these guys. A few meetings, some discussions, visits to the flat and all parties were keen to go ahead with Matthew moving in with Glen and Alex. Flat found.

We met with two different service providers and both met our requirements while past experience/knowledge meant that several others were ruled out immediately. Knowing the flatmates and their parents, having met the staff, learning first-hand about how the flat operated and was supported were the key things for us. Who the organisation behind it all was almost secondary (as long as it was one of the two we decided were appropriate). One area that pleased us with Community Living was the fact that the house was managed by someone who knew the flatmates really well, not by someone who just happened to be in charge of that area but didn't know the guys. That sort of flexibility gave us a lot of confidence. Service provider agreed.

Stage one complete – we hired a trailer and packed up our son to begin his new life in Hamilton. Some of the key things we learnt from those process were:

1. Things don't always go the way we think they will – and that's completely OK
2. Things often happen when they're meant to happen
3. The opinions and experiences of fellow parents are gold

When your first child leaves home it's usually a big thing, but when it's also a child with a disability it's a huge thing. Yes it was hard, yes tears were shed but the staff and the other parents understood this. The empathy definitely made things easier. The biggest thing though was seeing how happy Matthew was, and seeing the genuine friendship all three flatmates had for each other.

Our flatting experience has been relatively easy up to this point but we know there will be hiccups ahead – there always is. We also understand that no two journeys are the same and some people will encounter many more issues than we have. Choices in Community Living may also not be the best option for you at this point in time. All we can say is that it's working for us, we're so happy that Matthew is enjoying flatting and if you're in the flatting process or ready to start – we wish you all the very best.



Community Connections - Planning for the future

What happens when you bring together 80 people from different perspectives to talk about the future?

An opportunity for people to share ideas, listen to each other and have meaningful conversations about what is important to them.

At the end of July we held our first Community Connections - Planning for the Future day. No one was quite sure how the day would unfold, but everyone was deeply committed to creating a society where Community Living's inspirational dream **People with intellectual disabilities living their dreams through community connections** can come true.

The purpose of the day was to include people and take our time and get it right. Our focus is always on the following:

- Providing support that enables choice, flexibility and an ordinary life for the people we support
- The quality of our support is central to supporting people to achieve their outcomes
- Working in partnership with families/whanau, leading to great results for the people we support
- Enabling staff to have positive outcomes for themselves

We talked about:

- What an individualised service looks like
- How we work in partnership with the people we support and their families/whanau, to achieve this
- The next steps

The day was structured to provide an opportunity for people to use a variety of ways to express what was important to them. Groups worked together to create paintings that showed what community connections meant for them. People discussed and shared their fears and dreams, and what some of the opportunities may be with the many changes in the disability sector.

Individuals talked about their lives and what they want for themselves, their family or whanau. We discussed possibilities and barriers, and what some of the practical steps Community Living could take in partnership with people we support, family /whanau and staff. The group made decisions together and prioritised the most important steps for them.

The feedback from the day has been overwhelmingly positive with parents describing it as fun, constructive, challenging and a great opportunity to share experiences and learnings from different perspectives. We've even had families who heard through the grapevine what a great day it was, contacting us to be included in the next one!

All of the day's conversations were captured and brought together in a report by Felicity Beadle from Bullseye, the day's facilitator. The report was shared with the day's participants and all staff.

We are all looking forward to our ongoing journey together as we live the dream and tell the story. Please watch this space for our next Community Connections day in 2015!



New Managers



Fran Tilley - General Manager, Community Options

Joining the senior leadership team at Community Living in February this year, Fran brings a wealth of experience in the community services field. After completing a Bachelor of Applied Science in Melbourne, Fran started her career as a speech pathologist in Tasmania during the de-institutionalisation period. Later, she worked as a team leader and service coordinator for Disability Services.

A career highlight for Fran was helping to set up the first Community Resource team. The team's role was to provide community-based support services, including services to support people with disabilities and with challenging behaviour, as they set up new lives for themselves in the community.

Most recently, Fran was Regional Director of UnitingCare Community in Queensland, tasked with creating an integrated service to bring together disability, child and family, and crisis support services across the state.

Fran is a member of the Australian Institute of Management, the Australian Institute of Company Directors, and is an alumnus of Leadership WA. She previously held a Board position with CLAN, a small and innovative NGO supporting families and children through connections with community volunteers in Western Australia.

An advocate of values-based services delivered in partnership with families and which focus on the needs of the people supported by organisations like Community Living, Fran believes that robust, ethical and financially viable services can be provided through working together.

Outside of work Fran enjoys singing in community choirs, yoga, reading, travel and bushwalking.

Claire van der Most - Group Manager, Organisational Capability and Development

In March this year, Claire made her first foray into the not-for-profit sector when she joined the senior leadership team at Community Living. Claire is enjoying working in an organisation where she can "give something back".

Having gained registration as an organisational psychologist from the University of Waikato in the 1990s, Claire spent some time in Auckland before heading off on her 'OE', spending nearly a decade working in the United Kingdom and exploring Europe.



She has held a variety of management roles in the public and private sectors – her first of which was with a private sector start-up company in London, where she was responsible for human resources and leading a team who achieved ISO9001 accreditation. Claire enjoys thinking about things from a variety of perspectives and is particularly proud of a project she led within the public sector where she designed and implemented flexible benefits and new ways of working - a fresh approach within the sector and for the organisation at the time.

Prior to joining Community Living, Claire spent four and a half years in the corporate world at RD1 (recently rebranded to FarmSource), the 100%-owned rural retail arm of Fonterra, where she was responsible for Human Resources, Organisational Development and Health and Safety.



A strong advocate for fairness, Claire enjoys being part of collaborative organisations and teams that focus on making a difference in people's lives. In her spare time Claire enjoys travelling, challenging herself physically (having recently completed the Hamilton Half Marathon and earlier this year the Five Bridges Swim also in Hamilton), spending time (preferably at the beach) with family and friends.

Partnering with Family / Whanau

As part of our continued focus on partnering with family/whanau, we have recently extended staff training opportunities to family/whanau members.

Below is some feedback from two family/whanau members who attended our recent 4-day Personal Outcomes training.



Marie Manning:

"I absolutely loved the course and definitely felt included. Initially, I was hesitant about returning to the 'classroom' but I really wanted to find out and understand in more detail, how the 21 Personal Outcome Measures work and how they are defined by an individual.

I appreciated hearing the different points of view from the other participants and I realised too that I had often been doing POMs automatically during Jessica's upbringing (now 27), without knowing it.

I wish to thank Community Living for giving me the opportunity to attend the 4 day Personal Outcome Measures."

Lorraine Garrett:

"I was fortunate to be able to attend a 4-day POMs training along with one other parent and staff members from various parts of CLT.

It was a very stimulating time as it gave me an insight into the problems that have to be overcome with personal outcomes.

As a parent I did not always agree that the answers we came up with were always the correct ones, but I found the training put a totally different light on some areas for me - giving me room to rethink my thoughts. The staff did embrace us and our ideas were listened to, which gave me the feeling I am as important as the clients.

Given the chance I would do more of these training days as I feel we all benefited from the experience."

If you're interested in participating in training opportunities, please let Colleen Kiely know (colleen.kiely@communityliving.org.nz or (07) 834 3700); that way we can share upcoming opportunities with you!



Gifts for Staff

Community Living strives to provide excellent support to those people and their families/whanau referred to us. During the year some families/whanau have chosen to express their gratitude to individual staff providing the service to them or their family/whanau member in the form of gifts. On occasions these gifts have been extremely generous and have included large amounts of cash or vouchers. Whilst staff are very appreciative of these gestures, because of the ethics that guide their practice, some feel compromised by accepting gifts for carrying out tasks they are employed and paid to do.

We acknowledge that on occasions it is important for the person and/or their family/whanau to show their appreciation of the work done by a particular staff member, and to assist with this Community Living have developed the following guidelines:

- Individual staff members may accept gifts to the value of \$25.00. We suggest that any gift be in the form of gift vouchers, or an actual small gift.
- Gifts are facilitated through the line manager of the service to ensure the safety of the people we support and the support staff.

Please note that staff cannot accept cash from either the person they are supporting or family/whanau members.

We thank you for your support in this matter.

