



A note from the National Chairperson



Kia ora everyone,

I hope you enjoy this newsletter. It is full of stories about great work being done by People First members at all levels.

Congratulations to People First Life Member Robert Martin MNZM, who has been elected as the first person with a learning disability to be on a United Nations Committee. It is a world first and we are very proud of him.

Congratulations also to all the other members who are in this newsletter too, doing great work in their regions. It is so good to see.

Hamish Taverner

Outgoing message from Hamish

As many of you know, I am standing down from my role as the National Chairperson and Central Region President. I have been in these roles for 2 terms, so now it is time for someone else to have a go.

There have been 3 Regional AGMs in the regions recently. Congratulations to the 3 members who have just been elected as Presidents for their regions:

- **James Carr – Central**
- **Penelope Banfield – Top of the South**
- **David King – Southern**

Thank you to Don Neal (outgoing Top of the South Regional President) for his hard work on the Committee for the last 2 years. You did a great job Don.

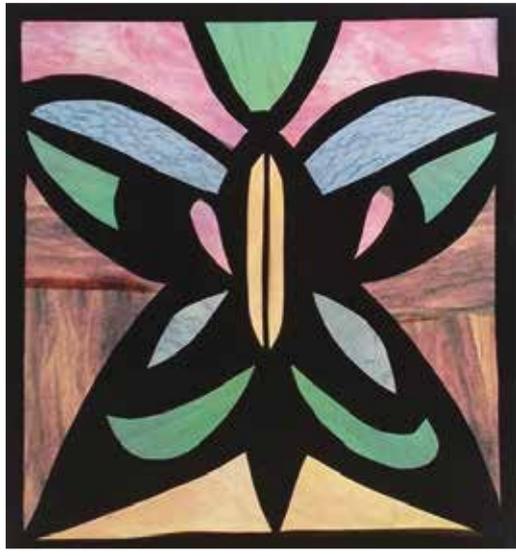
It has been a good 4 years. I have learned a lot in my roles. Thank you to the other members of the National Committee, the Advisors to the Committee and to Cindy and all the staff for supporting me over my time as National Chairperson.





The winners are in!

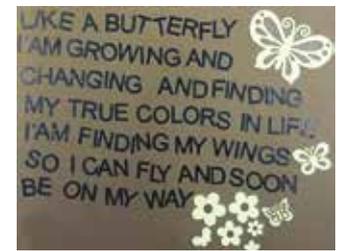
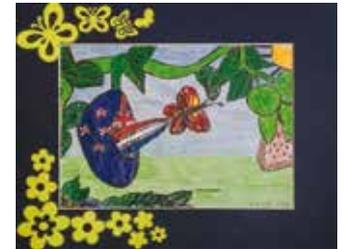
Congratulations to the following artists who took out 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in the 2016 People First New Zealand Card of the Year competition:



1st: 'Butterfly Art' by Frances Paul



2nd: 'See it my way' by Adam Rudings



3rd: 'Finding our true colours' by Elana Brok



The winning artwork has been made into the 2016 Card of the Year and all of the entries are on display in the ground floor foyer at People First NZ national office.

Thank you to everyone who entered, and to Zeus Te Ahuru from Tahi Design for the support given to the People First National Committee in choosing the winners.

Stepping up at the local level...

Shane McInroe has a bright future ahead of him, if what he's up to at the moment is anything to go by! The young Vice-President of People First Christchurch has this year stepped up to an elected role on the Disability Advisory Group of the Christchurch City Council. He is taking this role over from long-time People First member Simon Atkinson, who served on the group for 8 years. Simon's message to Shane: "I think he'll do very well in the meetings indeed. I wish him very well for the sessions in the future."



Shane is clear that he is "representing people with a learning disability and those who need documents in Easy Read". When asked what he wants to achieve during his time on the group, Shane says "There's still that sort of stigma in Canterbury about disability." He had an experience recently, where someone at his local library noticed the papers he was photocopying – papers for the Disability Advisory Group. They asked him "Do we really need this group in Christchurch?" Shane's answer? "Yes we do, to make Christchurch an accessible city through the rebuild. There's always going to be things pop up. It's always good to have that sort of group involved with the Council – we're actually talking to Councillors!"

Shane brings many skills and a unique perspective to the Disability Advisory Group. His ability to think ahead to the future, while not forgetting those who have less of a voice comes through clearly when you talk to him. "My main thing is trying to make it easier to make a complaint to the Council. The Council have a fantastic new App which I have been using all over Christchurch! They are going to be busy! But it still needs to be easier for people who don't have a smartphone".

We are excited to see what great changes you are going to make in the world Shane.

Keep up the wonderful work.

Stepping up at the regional level...

In May, People First Whakatāne members Rainus Baker QSM and Michael Pulis were called upon to present to the Whakatane District Council Community Board. And they did very, very well!

The local People First group had asked the Board for funding support to go towards costs and getting their members to regional meetings. The local Council, who run the Board, had never heard of or funded People First before, so they asked them to come in and do a presentation about why they needed the money.

Rainus admits he was a bit nervous before the presentation, knowing that the people they would be presenting to knew nothing about People First. This was their chance to make a good first impression!

For a few seconds after the presentation, says Midland Regional Coordinator Yi Small, the Board was silent. Then smiles broke out all around and the Board members passed around Rainus' Queen's Service Medal that he had brought to show them. Michael and Rainus waited for some questions, but the Board members said they didn't have any – that the presentation had told them all they needed to know! They then funded the group for the full amount they had asked for! A truly wonderful achievement!

Great work Rainus and Michael - kia mau te wehi!

Huge thanks to the Whakatāne District Council Community Board for seeing the value of the work that People First members do!



People First Whakatāne Local Assistant Silvana Piaggi, Regional Coordinator Yi Small and Whakatāne members Michael Pulis and Rainus Baker QSM.



Stepping up at the national level...

It was big news last year when it was announced that a young woman from Wellington would be Green Party MP Mojo Mathers' representative in the 2016 Youth Parliament.

Why?

Because People First Wellington member Katrina Sneath is the first young person with a learning disability in New Zealand to get such an opportunity.

This is a great step forward for both Katrina and all young people with learning disability. Mojo, who is New Zealand's first Deaf Member of Parliament, understands just how important a step it is, saying "I already felt there was 1 group of people that hadn't been represented in Parliament before and that there was an absolute need for that representation. But then Katrina made her application and it was really outstanding, she very much got the role on her own merits. Katrina has already opened people's eyes and challenged their preconceptions about people with learning disability."

Katrina too, is passionate about breaking down barriers for people "You can't always change things straight away but I want to encourage people with learning disability to have the jobs they want to have. Other people need to understand that we should be able to do what we want with our lives."

Youth Parliament happens every 3 years, and is a chance for young people to see how Parliament works, with each MP choosing a young person to sit in their seats. They get to do this for 2 days and a made-up law is given to the young people to talk about, argue over and take through the process that real laws go through.

People First New Zealand was pleased to be able to assist Katrina to take part in 2016 Youth Parliament, providing her with a trained Meeting Assistant over the course of the 2 days.



Article 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities says that disabled people have the right to take part in politics, vote and be elected.



Green Party MP Mojo Mathers and People First Wellington member Katrina Sneath.

Stepping up at the international level...

Robert Martin MNZM, Life member and founding member of People First New Zealand, made history in June, when he was voted onto the United Nations Committee that monitors if countries are making the rights in the Disability Convention real. Robert is the very first person with a learning disability in history to have a seat on a UN Committee. He was voted onto the Committee by 101 countries out of 160 and he will hold that role from 2017-2020.



People First New Zealand National Manager Cindy Johns and UN Committee member Robert Martin at the United Nations, a New York, June 2016

Robert has worked very hard throughout his life to challenge what others have said is possible for him and his friends. “I am very proud to have been elected to the Committee for the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Thanks to everyone who has supported me in my campaign, Minister Wagner, former Minister Dame Tariana Turia (DNZM), the team from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Office for Disability Issues, the NZ Disabled Persons Organisations Coalition, David Rutherford and Paul Gibson from the NZ Human Rights Commission, Down Syndrome International, Peter Powell, Cindy Johns, and my friends at People First New Zealand. It is a great day for people with learning disability around the world. I hope my participation on the Committee will set the pathway for others to follow in the future.”

People First National Manager Cindy Johns, who has assisted Robert at the UN throughout the election process, commented “It’s been an amazing journey since Robert’s candidacy was announced 2 years ago. Robert is a great leader and role model, and will make sure the rights of people with learning disability will be brought to the Committee table. His presence will make the Committee more inclusive.”

People First New Zealand National Chairperson Hamish Taverner has been a close friend of Robert’s for over 30 years and summed it up best “He’s a great mate, I’m so happy for him and what he has achieved. This is for all our friends who have passed away. Time to show everyone in the world what people with learning disability can do”.

Huge congratulations Robert and to everyone who has been part of the process. There are no words to say just how proud we all are of you, and grateful that you will be a voice for the rest of us at the highest levels.



Wear your support for People First New Zealand on your sleeve with these cool new wristbands coming to a People First local group meeting or information stall near you!



Old Friends Are Good Friends

The Ihc Foundation has always been a great supporter of People First New Zealand and our projects.

In 2015 the Ihc Foundation funded People First to write the Money Smarts Made Easy course and in 2016 they have agreed to fund the training for all the Lead Facilitators of the course. The training was held at the Westpac Massey Fin-Ed Centre and was facilitated by Dr Pushpa Wood (ONZM) and was a great training opportunity for People First staff and contractors.

Janet Doughty, People First Funding Manager asked Sir Roderick Deane, Chair of the Ihc Foundation, "The Ihc Foundation is a long term funder of People First NZ's projects. What kind of results are you looking to see when you are choosing what projects to fund?"



Fiona Williams, Dr Pushpa Wood, Maxine Snowden, Duncan Armstrong, Janet Doughty, Maria Garland, Jason Donavon and Chelsey Pettigrew at the graduation ceremony for the Money Smarts Made Easy trial.

"The Ihc Foundation started in 2008. Our vision is to fund projects that help people with intellectual disability to be valued and active members of their communities. The Ihc Foundation chooses to fund organisations who are also working towards these goals. We also think it is important to fund leadership development for people with intellectual disability.

The Foundation is delighted to keep supporting People First and thinks that we are both working towards the same goals for people with intellectual disability in New Zealand. We are proud to support the partnership between the Westpac Massey Fin-Ed Centre and People First.

It sounds like the Money Smarts course is shaping up to be a great success and will likely make a real difference to people who take part."

If you want to know more about the Ihc Foundation please go to www.ihcfoundation.org.nz

Thank you Ihc Foundation.

Our heartfelt thanks to our supporters



Working together with NZ Police to prevent abuse

At the start of June People First NZ delivered the very first Keeping Safe Feeling Safe course in Christchurch, with funding from the Christchurch Enabling Good Lives Demonstration. Keeping Safe Feeling Safe is an abuse prevention course and was developed with funding from the Ministry of Social Development's Think Differently campaign. The course was held over 5 days, with 15 people aged between 16 and 32 taking part.

As with all of the courses offered by People First New Zealand's education arm Learn With Us, the Keeping Safe Feeling Safe course has been made with people with learning disability in mind. The course covers topics such as keeping yourself safe, having healthy relationships and learning how to spot when others are doing things that are not okay. The students all get Easy Read information and take part in role plays to practice their new skills. The idea is to empower people to keep safe and ask for help if it is ever needed.

The course went really well, with positive feedback from everyone who was involved. People First Christchurch volunteer Sharon Glavish-Keepa was blown away seeing the value of the course first-hand, saying "This week was so amazing, to see the participants become aware of their own mana and learn how to protect their mana was an experience I won't forget".

Inspector Glenn Nalder, Manager Family Violence, Youth and Victims Services, Canterbury District NZ Police said "We are pleased to be part of this exciting project. We recognise that people with learning disability are sometimes an invisible community. Keeping Safe Feeling Safe will support NZ Police to develop a framework to prevent the abuse and repeated victimisation of disabled adults and support police to work with services and agencies which perform a vital role in safeguarding adults at risk of abuse".



Students taking part in a role play at the Christchurch Keeping Safe Feeling Safe course



Keeping Safe Feeling Safe resources in Easy Read



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