



A note from our National Chairperson

Kia ora everybody

Welcome to the newsletter for People First New Zealand. Sorry this newsletter is out later than usual. The reason is because we ended up having to go into lockdown over COVID-19. There were a few people around the country living by themselves – so the lockdown would've made it hard for them. That was my experience too and I found it quite hard going from normal life straight into Level 4.

All People First members have done really well by keeping in contact with other members and checking on them to see how they are coping with the lockdown.

Thank you everyone for understanding that we had to shut down all local and regional meetings, events and courses. We are in the middle of finding a way to slowly start the meetings back up again – with small meetings at first. I would like to remind everyone to make sure they don't forget the rights of people in this crisis.

I hope everyone enjoys our first newsletter of the year.

Thank you and stay well and healthy,

Penelope Banfield





Congratulations to Sir Robert Martin KNZM



In the 2020 New Year's Honours, People First NZ Life member Sir Robert Martin became the first person with learning disability in the world to be knighted! Sir Robert spent the day giving interviews to the media and celebrated with his friends in Whanganui.

The Knighthood is a wonderful way to say thank you to Sir Robert for his lifetime of advocacy for the rights of people with learning disability. We are all so very proud of him.

Congratulations Sir Robert and thank you for everything that you do.

Sir Robert's achievement has just been on Attitude TV. You can see the episode here: <https://attitudelive.com/player-page/sir-robert-martin-a-human-rights-conversation/>

Coping during COVID-19

Here are some of the ways People First members around the country kept busy during isolation.



Jeff Moyles went out for fresh air on his brand new mobility scooter.



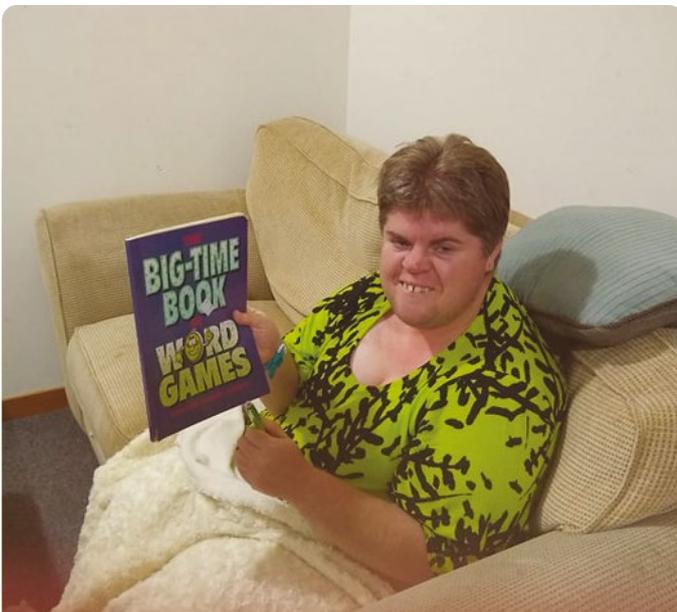
Julia Young worked on her painting during lockdown.



Cathy Boyle kept busy writing poetry and doing puzzles.



Peter Knighton did some baking.



Jenna Maguren kept busy doing word-games and cooking healthy meals.



Anatasha Valentine ran her Zumba classes from her mum's house.



Messages of support from our leaders to help us all get through these tough times



For this tough time, just remember we will get through this as a group. - **Jason Donovan**



I say to People First members stay safe and make sure that you follow the information of COVID-19. Make sure that you all wash your hands every time you have finished doing something so we can hopefully stop the virus.
- **Penelope Banfield**



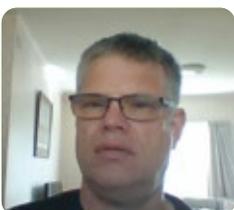
Try not to spend too much time listening/ reading the news at this time, as it might get you upset. - **Shane McInroe**



Keep being independent, keep going out for walks and always act in a respectful way to others. - **Ronnie Sione**



Stay safe and keep in touch with friends and know that there are people looking out for you as we go through this lock down together. - **Cheryl Wallace**



Look after yourself and keep safe and don't be afraid to talk to other people and give your friends a ring as they are probably feeling as isolated as you. Together we can all get over this corona virus situation and we will learn from it and be more united as a country - **David Corner**

My experience with COVID-19 testing

By Simon Atkinson

Where did you get tested?

On Friday 17th of April 2020 I got up early and did my shopping at Pak'nSave in Christchurch.

As soon as I was leaving Pak'nSave I saw they were setting up something - I was told it was random testing for Covid-19.

Why did you get tested?

I thought to myself "I will get it done anyway for peace of mind."

What did you have to do?

First of all, I had to wait in a queue. My wait was NOT too long.

They asked a few questions about my:

- name
- date of birth
- address
- contact details
- GP (Doctor)

They asked me if I was an essential worker or not. I said "Non-essential".

With luck they let me in and did my test with a stick up the nose after I blew my nose.





What did the test feel like?

It felt very strange indeed. It caused a funny sensation and I got a little bit of a headache later but it is REALLY worthwhile to do.

What do you want to say to other people getting tested?

It's alright.



You may feel nervous doing it but having it done is for the safety of us all, so we can stamp this virus out.

I'm pleased I did it. I do hope everyone in New Zealand will get it done. The more the merrier.

AGM 2019

We had our national Annual General Meeting in Christchurch in November. Many people came to the meeting, including local Council members and representatives from other organisations, like Disabled Persons Assembly. It was a great celebration of our hard work from the last year and the National Committee did a great job of hosting it.

Here are some of the certificates and awards we gave out:

Congratulations to former National Chairperson Hamish Taverner for getting the 2019 Leona Gitmans Te Aranga award for self-advocacy.





Congratulations to Napier City Council for winning the 2019 Make It Easy Award for their commitment to making their Disability Strategy in Easy Read. The first Council in New Zealand to do so!



Congratulations to National Manager Cindy Johns and National Advisor Brigit Mirfin-Veitch for their long-service to People First New Zealand!



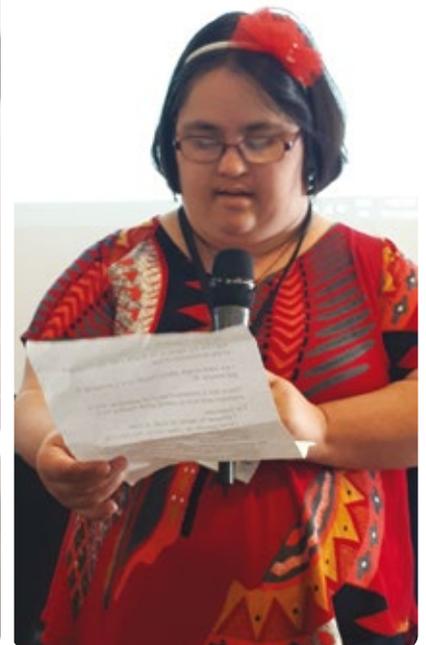
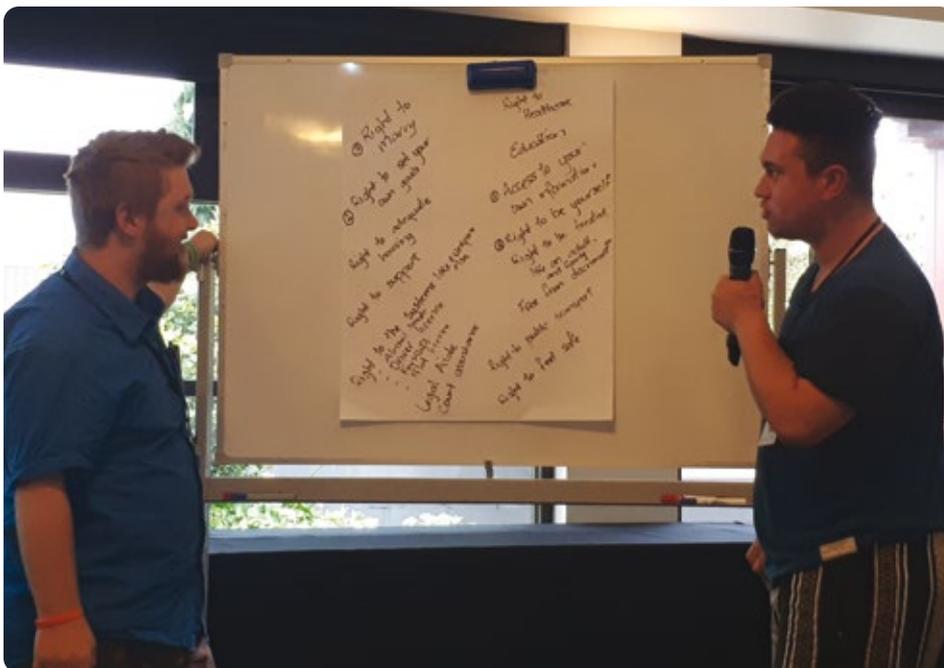
Teaching people about the United Nations Disability Convention

A report from Shane McInroe

In November 2019 People First had a 2-day South Island training forum in Christchurch. 4 members from the 3 Regions in the South Island - came to the forum with their Regional President and Coordinator. It was a great success! There was plenty of time for questions and it was a good chance for new members to gain skills like:

- Understanding the UNCRPD (United Nations Convention on the Rights for People with Disabilities)
- Using the microphone
- Sharing issues that they had never had the opportunity to talk about before
- Working in groups and reporting back

There was also plenty of opportunity for members to talk to our guests Sir Robert Martin and David Corner (IHC Advocate) about their experience as leaders.



Regional updates

Northern

By Ronnie and Leia

In February the Northern Regional President, Ronnie and Auckland Central Local Group Assistant, Leia went to the Access Alliance Business Awards at the Sudima Hotel. It was an evening of mingling, making friends, and celebrating accessibility in Aotearoa.



People First is part of the Access Alliance who were acknowledging businesses that had gone the extra mile to accommodate people with additional needs. The event was the first of its kind and was a big success! It was awesome for everyone to see the hard work that many people are doing to make Aotearoa more accessible and accepting.

Midland

By Kris

The Midland Region delivered a Money Smarts Made Easy course in Rotorua in February. I was the Course Leader and I helped to run the course with Yi, our Coordinator. It was my first time in this role.



Before each session, Yi assisted me to understand what I would be doing to support the people doing the course. During the course, I shared my thoughts and helped with group discussions, encouraging people to speak up about their own ideas about money and money goals.

Doing the Money Smarts Made Easy Course has really helped me to grow in confidence as a leader.

12 people attended this course. They found the course really helpful and useful and they have learnt some real ideas about what to do with their money now.



Top of the South

In September the Top of the South Region had its regional Hui at Whakatū Marae in Nelson



ASID Conference, November 2019

Cheryl Wallace's report

I went to the ASID conference in Adelaide, it was a big trip with 4 flights to get there and back.

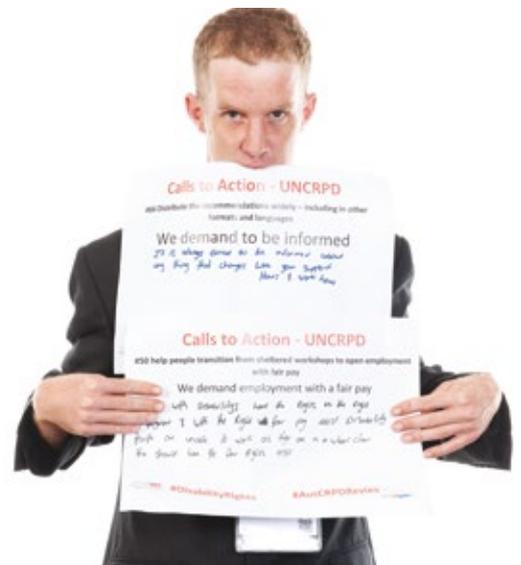
At the conference we had 4 or 5 different workshops each day and we chose which ones we wanted to go to. When I was at the workshops I listened and then later we got a chance to talk in small groups.

The best part of the conference for me was being able to talk to other people and share our different points of view. It was really interesting hearing different people's stories, it gives you an idea of what life is like for others. I would recommend the ASID conference to anyone in the future who may be interested in going.



Kris Roguski's report

I found the ASID conference really useful and it was my first time going to a conference overseas. I really enjoyed it and I would like to go to another one if I can. I got heaps of information from this conference and it was a life changing experience for me.



New staff



Kia ora - I'm Kath Parrish.

I am the Make It Easy Coordinator at People First.

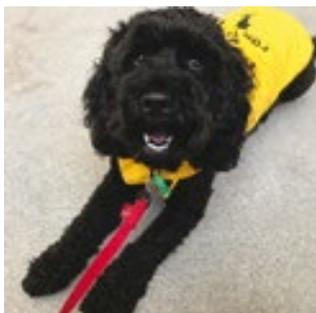
Make It Easy is the name of People First's easy read translation service.



Make It Easy works with businesses and government to translate information into accessible formats like easy read.



I support a fantastic small team of translators who do the translation work.



I live on the beautiful Kapiti Coast with my family and my gorgeous Hearing Dog for the Deaf.

I have worked in lots of different disability services for many years both here in New Zealand and also in Australia.



I am looking forward to a busy year ahead with the Make It Easy Service.



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