

The Chief Electoral Office, The Electoral Enrolment Centre and the Electoral Commission has been working with the People First Disability Information and Advisory Service/ DIAS.



People First is working with the electoral agencies to develop information to make it easier for people with learning disability to know how to vote.

Get Ready To Vote at This Year's Election

This year we get to have our say about who runs the country, this is called a General Election. The Election will be between now and mid November.

A DVD film showing how to enrol and vote at this year's election is being made. We will let you know when the DVD has been completed. You will be able to get a copy of the DVD through the People First DIAS. Phone: **0800 20 60 70** for a copy.

To enrol you need to fill in an enrolment form and send it to the Electoral Enrolment Centre.

To be able to vote the first thing to do is to get enrolled.

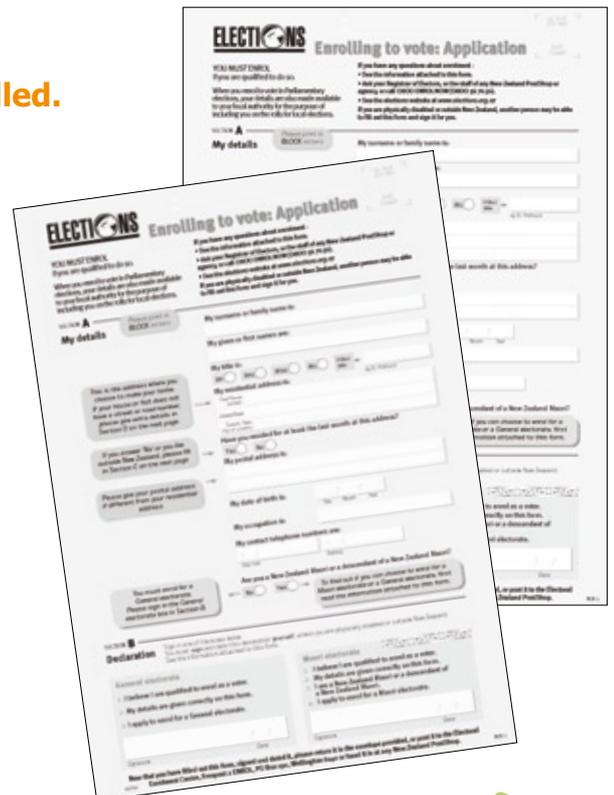
You can get an enrolment form by:

- Going to your nearest PostShop, Citizens Advice Bureau or Library
- Freetexting your name and address to 3676
- Going online to **www.elections.org.nz**
- Calling Freephone **0800 36 76 56**

You need to fill in the form and sign it and then send the form back or drop it into any PostShop.

Help is available if you are unable to fill in the form. Another person can fill the form in and sign it for you.

Contact People First for your copy of the DVD, available soon.



National News



Susan McDonald, People First National Chairperson was the opening Key Note speaker for the 2008 NRID Conference. (NRID is the National Residential Intellectual Disability provider group)

Here is a small section of Susan's speech...

"Altogether there are 15 objectives, with actions set out in the New Zealand Disability Strategy. There is a lot of work for us all to do to educate and inform our communities. You as providers can help spread the word about our services at People First."

"Objective 4 from the New Zealand Disability Strategy says "provide opportunities in employment and make sure disabled people have an adequate income".

"I have been supported to achieve this myself but some of my friends aren't getting supported to have the same opportunities. I feel upset and hurt that this is happening to them because we are ordinary people, want ordinary jobs and incomes so that we can have ordinary lives just like other New Zealanders."

"This doesn't happen while we are being paid differently to others as we don't have enough money to do the things like go out for a meal, go to the pub or go shopping, ordinary things".

"Sometimes we struggle to do the ordinary day to day stuff".

Well done Susan for a great speech

The Leona Gitman Trust Te Aranga Award



Leona Gitman (pictured) was a young woman who was passionate about self advocacy for people with a learning (intellectual) disability.

Sadly in 2004 Leona passed away and her family asked that her friends and family give donations to People First instead of flowers at her funeral.

With this money People First established the "Leona Gitman Te Aranga Trust". Te Aranga means the rising of the Phoenix.

This Trust will be to award a person with a learning disability who has been a strong self advocate for people with learning disability in New Zealand.

The award will be given every 1-2 years and this year will be presented at the Standards Plus Trusting Partnerships Conference in October in Rotorua for the first time.

Many thanks to Leona's family for supporting People First through a very tough time. We will work hard to honour Leona's name through the Trust.

Thanks to Access Ability who have contributed towards the Trust.

If you want to make a contribution please contact the National Office of People First New Zealand.

Work and Your Rights Roadshow

"People First members have been doing a roadshow around New Zealand talking about 'Work and Your Rights' and giving workers a copy of the book.

Graeme Parish completed the South Island presentations in March and Simon Coe, Jenny Brame, Morgan Smith and Josie Khoury are finishing the North Island visits.

Visiting disabled workers throughout New Zealand has been a great chance to talk about People First. People First can be proud of the presenters and how they have undertaken this important work.

Many of the workers were very aware of their rights at work and how they can access advice and support. Hearing their stories made the visits very interesting and worthwhile.

A big thank you to Jenny, Simon, Morgan, Josie, Graeme and Kaeti for working hard doing the presentations."

Joanne Doherty



Robert Martin is awarded a New Years New Zealand Honour



Robert has been recognised as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for services to people with disabilities.

Robert is a very familiar face around the New Zealand disability community and is one of the founding members of People First New Zealand.

Robert is a strong supporter of People First and is a Self Advocacy Advisor for Ihc.

This is just a small list of Robert's achievements:

- Involved in the drafting of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disability
- Led the development of the self advocacy movement within Ihc
- Was invited to be part of Inclusion International and is now the Chair of the Task Force on Self Advocacy within Inclusion International
- Was involved in writing The Beliefs, Values and Principles of Self Advocacy
- Keynote speaker at international conferences
- Has been the Captain of the New Zealand Special Olympic Team
- Has been an office holder and valued members of many clubs and organisations.

On congratulating Robert he is very humble and says "I don't see this as a personal award, I see this as an award for all people with intellectual disability in New Zealand!"

People First would like to say "Congratulations Robert, you are a champion to us and you really deserve this award! We want to say thanks for all the work you have done in New Zealand and around the world speaking up for our rights".

International News



In November 2007 members from the People First Christchurch group went to the ASSID (Australasian Society for the Study of Intellectual Disability) Conference in Perth.

Graeme Parish, Simon Atkinson, Robyn Rainey and Steve

Bull attended with Pam Shanks and Marg Matheson supporting the team. They presented a workshop called "Loneliness and Friendships".

The team said after the workshop.

"We had a good turn out at our workshop and there was a lot of discussion about what it is like for people with a learning disability who live out in the community".

"Everyone agreed that people's lives are much better than in the days when thousands lived in large institutions. But now we need to listen to people's stories and try to help them to make friends and have a social life in the community."

"Other people at our workshop said that having good staff support is difficult – management and staff in Residential Services do not seem to understand that everyone has the right to choose their own friends and interests. A lot of staff think we should be happy with the people around us but they do not help us meet new people. Some families think that too."

The Team are off again this year to the conference in Melbourne and are busy preparing their presentations to submit- good luck and we look forward to again hearing how you get on in 2008.

People First in your area...

Since 2003 many of the local People First groups have stopped running. This is because we found it hard to find enough support to keep them all going.

In 2008 and 2009 we want to see many of these groups up and running again!

In 2008 we nearly have a full regional coordinator team in place and this team is working hard to strengthen People First in your local areas again.

In the North Island we have:

- A vacancy in the Northern Region but Kaeti is working with Simon Coe and the team,
- Kirsty Linnell is in the Midland Region working with Susan McDonald and the team and
- Kaeti Rigarsford is in the Central Region working with Morgan Smith and the team.

In the South Island we have:

- Rosemarie Cavaney in the Top of the South Region working with Dale Richards and the team,
- Mid South Region is Pam Shanks working with Simon Atkinson and the team, and
- In the Southern Region we have Gerry O'Farrell working with Rosemarie Scully and the team.

All the contact details are at the back of the newsletter so if you are either interested in becoming a member or think you could offer a couple of hours here and there to help out please get in touch!

Regional Roundup

Nelson People First Group

The Nelson People First group has a large membership of around 44 people. We enjoy our meetings on the last Wednesday of every month where we meet at the Maitai School hall. Anyone with a learning disability is welcome. Please contact Rosemarie on **021 132 2483** if you want more information.

In November 2007 there were 10 of us in two vans who went to Blenheim to the National People First Annual General Meeting. This was held at the Omaka Marae and we enjoyed hearing about the stories behind the pictures and carvings around the walls of the Marae.

We had a great lunch and at the meeting asked questions about:

- Top of the South leadership,
- Getting members from the National Committee to come and talk to us at our meetings and

- What should happen when we hear journalists reports on the radio or television that we don't like.

We were told that if we do hear words and statements that we don't like, we should write to the newspaper or television and let them know that we didn't like the way they said things. This was good advice.

We are looking forward to a great 2008.



Victor Frew
President
Nelson People First Group

People First Northern Region



The Northern Regional team is looking for a Regional Coordinator. The position is for 15 hours a week (worked flexibly) to rebuild and develop new local People First groups through the region.

The kind of person we are looking for is someone who has disability sector experience, has good networking skills and is someone who is motivated to promote People First across the area.

We need a mover and shaker!!!

If you want to know more about the role or are interested in applying please contact:

Kaeti at kaeti@peoplefirst.org.nz or call her on either **04 381 4588** or **0274 575 4000**.

Regional Roundup

The Nelson District Health Board supports People First

Rosemarie Cavaney works for the Nelson District Health Board under the umbrella of Intellectual Disability Support Services (IDSS) as the Service User Facilitator.



Through this work they have given Rosemarie the direction to work with the local People First group in Nelson as a local group Assistant.

Rosemarie is also the Regional Coordinator for the Top of the South Region for People First and can be contacted on rosemarie@peoplefirst.org.nz or on 021 1322 483.

Rosemarie supports the People First group to

- Speak up for themselves
- Tell services what people with learning disability want and need
- Supports the group to organise social events
- Keep people informed with what is happening around town that might be of interest

A big thanks goes out to the Nelson District Health board for providing this support to People First. It is a really good way to be supporting people with leaning disability in your community.

Antenatal Screening

In 2007 the Government said that they thought it would be a good idea to offer all New Zealand pregnant women antenatal testing to see if their baby has Down Syndrome.

They set up an advisory group but didn't ask anyone with a learning(intellectual) disability to be on this group. Thanks goodness members of DPA were on the Advisory group speaking up for the rights of disabled people.

This is a big risk for people who have Down Syndrome. When they introduced this screening in England 80-

90% of women decided to not to continue with their pregnancy. This means that less and less people with Down Syndrome are being born- we don't think this is ok!



People First members were asked what they think. "Alison (who has Down Syndrome) said "It was difficult for my parents when I was born with a disability but, when I grew older I went a special school and learned to read and write and my family helped me too. I made lots of friends"

"Now I am a woman, I feel happy with myself and love life. I have a boyfriend and my work with People First is very interesting. I have 2 goals – to get married and to get a paid job."

The Christchurch People First members said "The public need to have much more education about disabilities – from people with a disability themselves – since we know what life is like with a disability."

"We feel if they did ask us and heard what we have to say, they would not even be thinking about the question if some babies should live or die. Every baby has the right to be born"

People First resources available

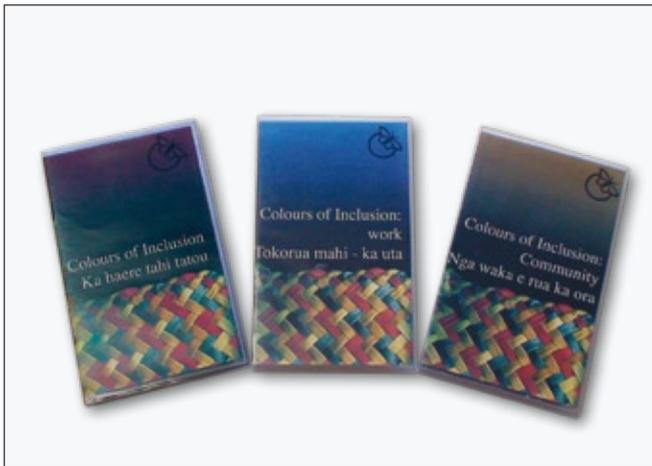
"NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US!"



DIAS Service pamphlet



Seeking Community book & DVD



A set of Colours of Inclusion video: Work, Community, Ka haere tahi tatou



Work & Your Rights in New Zealand booklet



Problem with a disability Service poster



Inclusive Communities

Contacts

National Office:

Address: Level 4,
173-175 Victoria Street,
Wellington

Mail Address:

PO Box 9199,
Marion Square,
Wellington
Phone: 0800 20 60 70, (04) 381
3242
Fax: (04) 381 3242
mail@peoplefirst.org.nz
www.peoplefirst.org.nz

National Committee Manager

:
Janet Doughty (04) 381 3242
(027) 684 1061
janetdoughty@peoplefirst.org.nz

National Finance & Office Manager:

Crystal Fang
(04) 381 3242
(027) 688 8048

crystalfang@peoplefirst.org.nz

Northern Region

Simon Coe (Chair)
(09) 265 0505
(021) 102 2801

Midland Region

Susan McDonald (Chair)
(021) 2595644
susan@peoplefirst.org.nz

Kirsty Linnell (Co-ordinator)
(06) 759 0946
027 697 2663
kirsty@peoplefirst.org.nz

Central Region

Morgan Smith (Chair)
(021) 0489670

Kaeti Rigalrsford
(North Island Team Leader,
Co-ordinator)
(04) 381 4588
(027) 5754000
kaeti@peoplefirst.org.nz

Top of South Region

Dale Richards (Chair)
(03) 545 9315

Rosemarie Cavaney (Co-ordinator)
(027) 246 1073
rosemarie@peoplefirst.org.nz

Mid South Region

Simon Atkinson (Chair)
(03) 366 4210
Simonatkinson2003@yahoo.com.au

Pam Shanks
(South Island Team Leader, Co-ordinator)
(03) 981 6067
(027) 4400279
pam@peoplefirst.org.nz

Southern Region

Rosemary Scully (Chair)
(03) 4551323

Gerry O'Farrell (Co-ordinator)
(03) 456 1345
(027) 242 4916
gerry@peoplefirst.org.nz

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Telecom



Office for Disability Issues ASB



Community Trust



Community Organisation Grant Scheme

