



MERRY CHRISTMAS!

It is hard to believe that we are nearly at the end of 2008 and 2009 is just around the corner



2008 has been a good year for People First. We have seen an increase in membership with groups coming out of recession which has been great.

The members have continued to put many volunteer hours into People First- thank you to you all, you have represented the organisation well and have helped speak up about what is important to you in your communities.

We have a great team of staff who have been committed to supporting the members speak up and take part in their communities.

And to all our volunteers- we couldn't run People First without you. You support the grassroots of People First to stay strong- this is so important because it is here where we can make the difference in people's lives.

Thanks to all of you who have supported People First throughout 2008. We wish you all a merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Drive safely, don't eat and drink too much (ok ok, Christmas is one time of the year when eating and drinking can't be avoided!), remember to slap on that sun screen and we look forward to working with you all in 2009.

**Merry Christmas from the
People First team xxx**



Some of the highlights for People First in 2008 have been

- The first Leona Gitman Te Aranga Trust awarded to Graeme Parish at the Trusting partnerships Conference
- The opening of the Southern People First office in Christchurch
- Seeing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Person's with Disability being ratified by the New Zealand government.
- Working with the Chief Electoral office to make accessible information for people with learning disability about the General Election in New Zealand
- Getting the Employment Advocacy Service contract from the Ministry of Social Development
- Simon Atkinson being selected to travel to Japan in February 2009 for the 'Young Core Leaders of Civil Society Groups Development Programme'
- Many more People First members growing in confidence and representing the organisation in speaking up for the rights of people with learning disability in New Zealand
- Robert Martin being the first New Zealander who has an intellectual disability being recognized as a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit (MNZM) for service to people with disabilities.
- Working on projects with DPA and CCS Disability Action



Disability Information and Advisory Service/ DIAS

It has been good to see an increase in people contacting the DIAS in 2008 and in particular more people with learning disability are getting in touch.

We have good networks and resources so remember if you are wanting to get information about learning disability, give us a call 0800 20 60 70.

Employment Advocacy Service for people with learning disability

The name of the new service will be

Works 4 Us, Advocacy @ work.

This service will be up and running in 2008 so watch this space.

For more information call the DIAS on 0800 20 60 70.



Leadership Hui

CCS Disability Action received some funding from the Ministry of Health Leadership fund.

CCS Disability have asked People First and DPA to join them to hold these Hui.

They will be run by Disabled Maori for Disabled Maori.

The Hui will be about "How to manage your current and future supports". We will be asking "When your supports are working well, what do they look like"?

We may be coming to a town near you so watch this space.

Contact People First DIAS for more information:

0800 20 60 70.



Southern People First Office: **Christchurch**

4 People First members in Christchurch are well and truly into the swing of learning what it takes to run the office. They are Stewart Haig, Robyn Rainy, Graeme Parish and Hayden Stephen. Alexandra Gilbert has been doing a fantastic job of supporting the team and has said they have been learning so quickly that she has had to work hard at keeping up with them!

This truly is a fine example of "Nothing about us without us".

Hayden says "It's fantastic to do real work in a real office."

Robyn says "I feel much more independent and am looking forward to helping people more and more"

And Stewart says "People say I have come out of my shell. I want to do more, get known and help people with all disabilities more."

Keep up the great work and we look forward to seeing you carry on through 2009.



Hayden Stephen and Robyn Rainey working away at the Christchurch Office

Big thanks to the Christchurch City Council for funding the office rent.

To contact the Christchurch office call 03 366 4210 or email south@peoplefirst.org.nz or call in at 41 Essex St, Christchurch.

Stewart, Robyn, Hayden, Graeme and Alexandra are in working in the office at the following times: Wednesday's from 9.15- 12pm and Thursday's from 9am-1pm.

People First Annual General Meeting



Here is Alex giving his presentation

This was held at the Auckland Disability Resource centre on Friday 28th of December.

Alex Sneddon was our guest speaker and gave a great presentation- thanks Alex!

Thanks to all of you who came along and supported the People First National Committee by being there.

If you want a copy of our Annual report please contact the National Office on 0800 20 60 70 and we will post one out to you.



ASSID Conference In Melbourne 24-26 November 2008

By Robyn Rainey



**From left to right:
Graeme Parish, Simon
Atkinson, Steve Bull,
Robyn Rainey, Lynette
Priddy and Pam Shanks**

On Saturday morning we arrived in Melbourne at 9am.

We stayed six nights in Melbourne.

On Monday, the six in the group went in Melbourne University to set up the People First NZ display. We also did our presentation about our 'Speaking Up Course' that day. It went well.

On Tuesday it was my birthday.

We did another presentation on 'Your Rights at Work'. Graeme, Simon and Pam did that well.

We did a Code of Rights workshop as well on Wednesday.

Our experience there was to meet people with different disability and to meet other kinds of people like us. We got to hear about the difficulties people with learning disability have. We went to several different workshops. They were very interesting. I learnt a lot.

It was fantastic to go to Melbourne. Pam helped a lot to get us there and with our presentations. We thank her for that.



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Telecom

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Ministry of Social Development

J.R.McKenzie Trust

ASB Communtiy Trust