

newsletter

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- Hauora and the Arts
- West Coast Hui
- Workforce Development
- Update on the Forum
- Resources and Coming Events



Outside the Ngaruawahia Arts Centre: (from left to right) Lindy Wilson; Jane Kerr-Bell (Committee member); Faith Deacon-Wilson; Lianne Vandenbemd (Co-ordinator)

The Arts and Health Promotion

Twin Rivers Arts Ngaruawahia Centre and Art Gallery is a dynamic Community Arts Centre that began six years ago when a small group of local people with a passion for the arts got together to see what could be done in Ngaruawahia. As interest grew the group went from strength to strength with the ongoing help and support of the local Community Board and Waikato District Council. In July 2002 Twin Rivers Arts became an Incorporated Society and is about to officially open their newly upgraded premises on state Highway One, which include a shop and exhibition space.

The current Chair of Twin Rivers Arts is Teeny Tukere (Waikato), who was born and bred in Ngaruawahia and her Marae is Turangawaewae. Teeny says "We are proud of our Arts Centre and its benefits to the people of the town and the surrounding area."

Continued overleaf

TWIN RIVERS ARTS *continued*

“So many people want to come to classes we can hardly keep up with the numbers – there is such a great interest,” says Teeny. “People surprise themselves – they have so much enjoyment in doing arts and they discover that they have so much talent.” Classes include painting, mosaics, jewellery making, sculpture, clay modelling as well as traditional Maori arts and crafts such as whariki and kite making.

Besides classes there are family oriented days when children come with their whanau, and club nights when people work together on art and craft projects. The Centre also publishes a newsletter, advertises in the local newspaper, holds raffles and has a presence at festivals and events in Ngaruawahia town and at Turangawaewae Marae. The exhibition space and the shop showcase and sell the work of local artists.

Teeny feels that the Arts Centre’s work is all oriented towards community wellbeing, “People meet each other, they have something to look forward to, they get out of the house and they have a creative outlet. This helps them deal with the normal stresses and problems of their lives. It is so good to be creative and to do something else besides your job and your work at home – it is beneficial mentally.”

Moera Solomon, the longest serving Committee member of Twin River Arts is passionate about the link between the arts and hauora. “The Arts Centre is totally there for our cultural well-being. People look at jobs, houses, education, money and so on – but creativity and the arts are also essential. If that segment is missing from someone’s life then you don’t have a balanced person. And doing it together is important – and this is especially so for Maori – we are a communal people and when we share our creative ideas and efforts everyone blossoms.”

The Arts Centre co-ordinator and tutor Lianne Vandembem agrees with Teeny and Moera in her dedication and enthusiasm for community arts. She says that many people who come to activities at Twin Rivers would probably never have ventured into an arts class in a big city. “But they feel OK about coming to a centre in their own community, in familiar surroundings. Many isolated rural people car pool to get to the Centre and many of the people in the town come in first with a family member, but then they extend their contacts to a wider number of people throughout the community.”

“The classes are therapeutic with lots of laughter, sharing, meeting new people, expanding our horizons – as well as the joy and pleasure of creative activity. I would like to see many more community arts centres – particularly in our smaller communities.”

“Twin Rivers is owned by the community – all that happens here belongs to the community. All of the Committee and me, we have a life-long commitment to it - we’re here for the long haul and we reach out to the community to encourage people to get involved.”

Faith Deacon-Wilson, who attends classes and the club nights, says that community arts are fun and fabulous! “ You don’t know what you’re capable of until you try it – and then it’s really amazing.”

“At the Arts Centre we have a very supportive environment – really open to everyone. It spreads outside the classes, too, we get to say hello to a lot more people on the street – community arts opens up a whole new world!”

“I’m actually shy and reserved, but my confidence has now increased. The atmosphere is not competitive, there’s no pressure, it’s not political – it’s like a sanctuary where you can be inspired or inspire.”

Arts are good for us –
it’s official!

Promoting access to
and participation in
the arts are great ways
to support the mental
health and wellbeing
of communities and
i n d i v i d u a l s ,
according to the
research cited in
VicHealth Letter, 2004.
(see the *Resources page*
of this newsletter for
details)

The arts can celebrate
diversity and promote
a more tolerant and
supportive society. For
example, large cities
promote the wellbeing
of their citizens with
festivals and other
community events.
Well-known examples
from Auckland are the
Lantern Festival at
Chinese New Year and
Pasifika – wonderful
events that attract
thousands of people.

ARTS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

“ A Community Arts project – for example, a cultural festival, setting up of a community arts centre, or creating a community mural - is incredibly powerful in promoting community wellbeing and social cohesion. Many people live quite isolated lives, particularly people on limited incomes, and community arts offers everyone an opportunity to gather around something that is really positive in their own neighbourhood. It is an accessible choice to become involved with others in an enjoyable way.

Often at the beginning of an arts project the skills and options of many may seem limited. But they quickly gain skills and capacity in the community increases rapidly. As people and groups learn more skills their horizons expand – and so do their options.

People and projects get stronger; they reach out to other organizations and build networks – this all has huge flow-on effects. People become more active politically with their Community Boards and TLAs – they have higher expectations and are more able to successfully advocate for what they want.

I have seen wonderful growth and empowerment in both individuals and communities through arts projects.”

Saskia Schuitemaker, Advisor, Arts Waikato
Regional Community Arts Advocacy and Support Trust



Community Psychologist
Saskia Schuitemaker

The arts can be used as potent anti-discrimination tools. One example was the production of the play *A Delicate Quest* for public performance. Mental Health Service consumers wrote the play, the music, the lyrics, designed and made the costumes, acted and sang and worked as a team to perform a moving and potent piece of theatre. Debbie Hagar, health promoter says, “The research suggests that a way you change your attitudes to mental illness is to get to know a person who has an illness and then to recognise the humanity of the person. A play seemed a really good way of introducing people to each other.”

The arts can enrich the lives of people who are marginalised or struggling in some way – such as new migrants, refugees, homeless youth, people living in prisons. An exciting pilot project - *Singing With Conviction* begins in April 2005 with the establishment of singing groups in New Zealand prisons. The partners in this project are Arts Access, the New Zealand Choral Federation, New Zealand Prisoners Aid and Rehabilitation (NZPARS), New Zealand Prison Fellowship and Department of Corrections.

PASIFIKA TRADITIONAL CRAFTS AND WOMEN’S HEALTH

At Pasifika Healthcare in West Auckland Lingi Pulesea, cervical screening co-ordinator and Pauline Osbourne work with small groups of women doing craftwork as a way to offer a safe women-only environment. Lingi encourages women to have smears and to pass on information about the screening programme to their families. Other members of the Pasifika Healthcare team are available in a nearby room to take a cervical smear if a woman decides that is what she wants.

In traditional Pacific cultures women have always done art and craft together in women-only groups. Now as then, they teach each other, pass on knowledge and skills - using tapa, using flax, and making flowers. They talk and laugh together while they create beautiful things. Lingi and Pauline say it may be hard for Pacific women to come forward about personal healthcare, but they are happy to come to craft groups where they have the opportunity to meet each other and speak their own languages.



Women at Pasifika Healthcare with their artwork

WORKING BETTER WITH MAORI

“Haka & Hangi – Haggis & Hogmanay – insight into a tribal psyche”

This was the provocative name of a one-day workshop in Greymouth in February.

At the Hui



From left; Richard Wallace - Rata Te Awhina; Adrian Te Patu Presenter – Community & Public Health, Canterbury DHB; Rosie McGrath - Community & Public Health, Canterbury DHB; Melanie Penny - West Coast DHB; Danielle Smith - West Coast Cancer Society

The aim of the workshop was to assist individuals and organisations working in the health arena with Maori to do it even better. Te Waipounamu Health Promotion Coalition (TWHPC) organised the day in response to a perceived need to enhance cultural knowledge and relationships on the Tai Poutini - West Coast, to help strengthen health promotion. (TWHPC acknowledges and thanks Community & Public Health, the West Coast DHB, Rata Te Awhina Trust, and the Cancer Society for their support.)

Helen Rance, coordinator for the TWHPC Think Tank, says “This workshop was designed on the premise that people are already giving good service to Maori, but are not as well equipped as they would like to be.”

Adrian Te Patu was the presenter and there was an opportunity for participants to ask the questions about working with Maori that they’ve always wanted to ask. The workshop included conversations about recent history as well as a lot of contemporary issues such as the diversity and many faces of Maori. It offered the opportunity to discuss issues with Maori and included some insights that are not often shared.

The role and expectations of people in designated Maori roles was one important topic for the day. Adrian looked at changes in the socio-cultural-political landscape nationally and on the West Coast within the last decade, and topped it off with a bit of good old-fashioned common sense practical advice.

To prepare for the hui participants were asked to bring three things:

- All they already knew about Maori
- Open minds
- A highly tuned sense of humour

..... And if they couldn’t bring those then they needed to bring a pound of whitebait for the presenter!

When the hui was advertised the response was overwhelming, the venue needed to be changed three times to accommodate all the people who wanted to be there. The hui essentially provided free training and therefore many NGOs and small rural providers came. Some West Coast organizations cover a huge area – from Haast in South Westland to Karamea and the Buller District - and significant numbers of participants were the actual workers who cover the whole Coast. The chance for people to network and discuss their questions and concerns together was another bonus.

Adrian explains that the day was meant to be an opportunity for mainstream providers and local community groups to be able to develop better relationships with Maori providers and individuals.

“When we advertised the day we said this was not going to be the definitive Maori experience – it was more of a beginner’s guide. We said - you won’t become an expert, but you’ll sleep better”.

Continued bottom next page

The Public Health Workforce Development Plan (PH WDP) – Discussion Document soon to be released - Latest News from the Ministry of Health

Public Health Workforce Development

“Public health workforce development needs critical attention. If we are to have a robust, capable and competent workforce to sustain the delivery of public health services in New Zealand, the public health sector must work together and take strategic action to address the issues the public health workforce are facing.

The Public Health Directorate of the Ministry of Health is therefore developing the Public Health Workforce Development Plan (PH WDP); a strategic framework to guide the development of the public health workforce over the next 10 years. The PH WDP will have specific actions for the next 3 – 5 years.

A discussion document with a draft framework and proposed actions for the PH WDP will be released shortly for consultation.

What is known about the Public Health workforce?

At the start of the PH WDP project, there was very little information available on the NZ public health workforce. The first step therefore involved a range of research projects, including a survey through Phoenix Research of 188 public health organisations that contract with the Public Health Directorate of the Ministry of Health.

Although the workforce engaged in public health action extends more widely than these organisations, this survey does provide a starting point and some understanding of who does what, and where.

Other research projects include a review of leadership programmes, options to develop a centralised training infrastructure, Maori public health needs assessment, a tertiary training stocktake, a core competencies research report, etc.

Continued from page 4

“This was a very special workshop because it was held on the West Coast where people are very direct, where you can be frank, where they pride themselves on being outspoken. West Coasters are good at getting to the point and tend not to dilly-dally around, which enhanced the day.”

“One of the things we had conversations about was how the things that have happened in Maoridom in the last 20 years quite clearly followed in the wake of the women’s movement – both internationally and locally, such as the work done by

All the research reports will be available on the PH WDP website. Please email PHWDP@xtra.co.nz for access to the site.

Evolving themes

Some clear themes/approaches have evolved in the research work to date. In some cases the feedback has been so strong that we have already started work on specific projects. Here are some examples of the proposed work:

- Developing a kaupapa Maori approach to Maori public health workforce development.
- Encouraging the development of a coherent stair-cased training and qualifications framework.
- Developing generic public health competencies, cultural competencies and supporting workforce groups to develop their professional competencies.
- Developing a public health leadership programme (or stream within the existing LAMPs project)”.

Further information

Watch out for the release of the discussion document or email PHWDP@xtra.co.nz to request a copy when it is available.

For enquiries or updates on the development of the PH WDP, or if you would like to run a consultation meeting in your area or for your organisation, please contact Viv Head, Project Manager, on 027 276 9215 or email: headstrategic@xtra.co.nz.

the Women’s Welfare League. If people understood the Bolshie Sheila transformation of the 60s 70s and 80s then they’ll easily understand the Uppity Maori transition as well.”

“It was a full-on day with buy-in from the coast for future dialogue opportunities further reinforced, especially by the presence of Richard Wallace, kaumatua of Te Rata Te Awhina and many Maori working in mainstream organizations also attending.”

Update On The Forum

FAREWELL ISABEL

After working here for nearly four years Isabel Bird is leaving Health Promotion Forum. She plans to develop her consultancy, project management and mentoring & coaching work. Isabel has made a wonderful contribution to the forum and is very highly regarded within the team and within health promotion. Readers of this newsletter and our website will be well aware of her many skills in communication. She will undoubtedly continue to contribute an enormous amount to public health in the future and we wish her all the very best.



Alison Blaklock
Executive Director

ADVANCE NOTICE

The Health Promotion Forum will be holding a one-day symposium on health promotion and human rights on 31 October:

“Hauora: Health and Wellbeing - Everyone’s Right”.

Symposium theme: The potential of a human rights approach to enhance health promotion, looking at Te Tiriti o Waitangi and indigenous rights; advocacy; inequalities; discrimination and marginalisation, community action for social justice and valuing of diversity.

The Symposium will be held at Waipapa Marae at Auckland University.

Watch this space and our website for further information.

Tena ra koutou katoa

nga kaimahi hauora

huri noa te motu.

Piki te ora, piki te kaha,

piki te maramatanga

ki a koutou,

ki a tatou katoa.

Looking towards a new horizon

Strategic Planning Process

The Council and the Secretariat recently spent the day together in March to discuss a new draft strategic plan for the Forum. Over the next couple of months or so the draft of our discussions will be distributed to our membership for comment. I encourage all members to have input by putting pen to paper and fingers to keypad and giving feedback about our intended direction as an organization.

Workforce Development

On 5 April Alison Blaklock and myself attended a Ministry of Health discussion about workforce development for public health. Most of the discussion revolved around the potential of developing a national framework for training, work standards and competencies for the public health sector. For more information please refer to the Ministry of Health article about public health workforce development in this newsletter (on page 5).

Farewell to Isabel Bird

It is very sad news to hear Isabel Bird will be leaving the Forum. Isabel has ensured health promoters are well informed about critical health promotion issues and events happening regionally, nationally and internationally. Her high standards of work and expectations have been pivotal to creating a bright future for the Health Promotion Forum.

Nga mihi me nga manaakitanga ki a koe Isabel.
Naaku, naa

Te Herekieke Herewini
Te Tiamana

STOP PRESS – Advocacy Issue – NGOs Voice Heeded

At the Health & Disability Sector NGO – Ministry of Health Forum, in Christchurch on April 7th, Don Matheson, Deputy-Director General of the Public Health Directorate updated the Sector on the Ministry’s draft instruction on public health contracts and NGOs. He said that the Ministry of Health received 51 submissions and he specifically acknowledged the Health Promotion Forum’s submission and Consensus Statement with its 270 signatories. The Ministry has acknowledged the concerns raised in the submissions and has decided not to proceed with the instructions – so well done all of you who participated and made your views known. Don also said that the Ministry value the work of NGOs very highly and he noted that effective public health work could not be achieved without them.

The Ministry meanwhile is developing a general clause for contracts that will cover its concerns about political neutrality. Watch this space – further discussion will be needed.

(For more details and ongoing updates please see the Forum’s website – www.hpforum.org.nz)