

## **Muscular Dystrophy Northern Chairperson's report**

### **Introduction**

Once again it's been another really busy year for Muscular Dystrophy Northern – one which we have added more member services and seem to have gone from event to event.

### **Fieldworker service**

Now in its third year, our fieldworker service grew considerably in the past year, with the addition of Loretta Dixon to the team as our Waikato based fieldworker. Loretta was greatly assisted by Joanna Baylis, our Auckland based fieldworker as well as Denise Ganley, our Office Manager. Through their guidance and knowledge, we were able to get Loretta up to speed relatively quickly and we able to ensure that more members were being seen more regularly right throughout our region. In the past year, our fieldworkers visited more than 290 members – as well as attended clinics with them, attended meetings at schools and also assisted them to get more assistance and services from numerous other organisations.

The benefits that this fieldworker service brings are huge and almost too many to list, but the ongoing positive feedback we receive from members indicates very strongly the necessity for this service.

Unfortunately due to personal circumstances, Loretta resigned in April and we are now re-advertising the Waikato position and are working hard to get this filled as quickly as possible. In the meantime Joanna has stepped into the breach and is spending time in the Waikato and Bay of Plenty region to ensure members are receiving the service they require.

### **Member gatherings**

Thanks to the support of Takapuna North Rotary, we were able to hold a Family Camp in Rotorua in October that more than 40 members attended. Another 20 were able to come over for the day from Waikato for a visit to the Agrodome.

As usual the MDN Christmas Party was a well attended event, with more than 70 members travelling to Horse Magic in Cambridge last November. Thanks to the Harley Owners Group, of which 40 of their members also travelled to Cambridge to ensure that Santa got there safely!

Another highlight was the recent “Partners of Members dinner”. This event was the brainchild of one of our members, Claire Siddens, who felt there was a need for an event where partners of members could get together with other partners and share experiences. The first event was a very successful dinner held in Auckland in April, that 28 members and partners attended and all agreed that this needed to be a regular event!

### **Communication with members**

A major part of our Office Manager, Denise Ganley's role, is to ensure that members are kept in the loop with what is going on within the organisation and the disability community as a whole.

As well as the writing and distribution of four newsletters, Denise also has regularly sent emails to our members on numerous issues to ensure that they are kept in the loop.

### **Sponsorships**

All of the services that we have offered in the past year are thanks so much to our wonderful sponsors, who include the following organisations:

ASB Trust

COGS

First Sovereign Trust

Harley Owners Group

Lions District Pukete Club

NZ Community Trust

NZ Lottery Grants Board

Pub Charity

Orange Hall Society

Southern Trust

Takapuna North Rotary

Trust Waikato

Wellenergy Trust

### **Future Activities**

Given the current global financial situation we know that funding is going to be more difficult to get in this coming year, but we are working hard on several ideas to ensure that we maintain the services that we have introduced and also are still able to look at new initiatives too.

On such event to help with the fundraising is a Hypnotist and Karaoke Evening that Joy Jenkins has organised for Saturday 4 July.

Other member's events planned for this year include another family camp as well as additional Partners of Members events to be held in both Auckland and Waikato.

Finally I feel it appropriate to thank the people who made this all happen thanks to their commitment to Muscular Dystrophy Northern and all our members. Firstly thanks must go to our fantastic employees Denise Ganley (Office Manager), Joanna Baylis (Fieldworker) and Loretta Dixon (Fieldworker). These ladies do so many things that are outside their job descriptions – and it never ever seems to be any trouble.

Secondly I'd like to thank our dedicated committee consisting of Jan Fels (Secretary), Raema Spence (Treasurer), Bart Taylor, Tim Dempsey, Monica Booker, Lewis Pulman, Sarah Katz and Joy Huston.

We have five committee members standing down this year who I would especially like to acknowledge. Tim and Monica have both been very long standing committee members and

have made a huge contribution to the branch in so many ways. Sarah Katz was our previous Chairperson and has really assisted us from a legal point of view – especially with documents such as employment contracts. Joy has been a breath of fresh air on our committee and introduced the craft sessions for our members over the past year which she has indicated she is happy to continue doing. And finally I'd like to thank Raema – she has done the most amazing job in looking after our accounts – the level and accuracy of these is at a level that I am sure many corporate would be jealous of!

And thank you to all our members – we appreciate your ideas and feedback and look forward to working with you all in the year ahead.

**Katie Noble**

*Chairperson*

Muscular Dystrophy Northern

May 2009