

# SHARE AND CONNECT!



SEPTEMBER 2008

## HELLO FROM JOHN

Hello again.

This is my second opportunity to write something for this newsletter so thank you for offering me the chance to say what I hope is the direction for Community Connections.

Community Connections, which grew out of DEALS, is now just over a year old – and it has been a very exciting year. We have been lucky throughout that year to have had so many people involved in making the organisation work. We have a very capable Board of Trustees which over-see our work, there are skilled staff who provide the support we offer and, most importantly, there are the people who we support, who have remained loyal and patient throughout this transition.

In Community Connections

we are hoping that we will create an organisation where everyone has a voice and where each person can grow and learn from one another. At an organisational level we are beginning this process by, among other things, planning each person's support individually and then checking that we are getting the outcomes people want; putting in place systems so that we can be sure that we are doing a good job supporting people; moving away from a model of caregiving into one of supporting people to be autonomous and connected with their community.

In Community Connections we want to support people to live their own life by walking alongside them. The staff are there to support and offer some expertise. What we don't want is to tell people what to do.

I hope this is your experience of Community Connections and I welcome any feedback and suggestions from anyone on how to do things better or differently. We are always trying to adapt our practice to better reflect our learning as we grow in our ability to support. In the end though, it is worth remembering that Community Connections is only an organisation. As such it is only the vehicle by which people connect with each other and it is the people who remain important. So our focus will always need to be one person at a time and we all have a part to play to make those relationships work.

John Taylor

## SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- *Looking for Employment?*
- *Meet some of our talented artists*
- *Feedback on the Client Forum*

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## CLIENT FORUM

I think the forum was overdue but it was really good that we had it “ says client Tim Morgan talking about the client-run forum held at the Community Connections Head Office on Friday August 8<sup>th</sup>.

A whole lot of issues were aired, Tim explains, including the use of taxi chits, transportation issues, contributions to the newsletter, communica-

tion and feed-back difficulties and the possibility of a social get together on a regular basis.

Clients from Wellington, Porirua Kapiti and the Hutt attended and while Tim would have liked to see more people attending he is pleased that a number came.

A highlight of the forum for Tim was talking about the

journey he has been undertaking over the previous few years in researching the Morgan family tree. “I really wanted to encourage others to look up their family tree too” says Tim who adds it took 15 years to get as far as he has today.

“It's often a struggle finding out about your family but it's really worth it!

## COLIN KOROVIN



ABOVE: ONE OF COLIN'S CREATIONS!

Community Connections can boast quite a few artists among its clients. One such is Colin Korovin, who was featured in the 'Indulgence' pages of the Saturday, July 5, Dominion Post.

'Indulgence' describes Colin's pictures as dense, busy and packed with the 'save the planet' messages that Colin says are really important to his art.

Four days a week, leaning over an A4 pad, pen in his hand and a box of coloured markers nearby, Colin works on his pictures at Vincent's Art Workshop where he's been a regular since the late 1980's. But although he goes home exhausted from pouring so much into his art, he's never

"off duty".

If Colin hears an item on the radio or reads something that worries or excites him he has his pen at the ready. "My mind's like an encyclopaedia and I have to put it down (on paper)," he says.

World peace, the environment, save the animals – these are the messages that Colin's art contains.

But more than that, they contain his fears. "When you have fears about the world about disasters – flooding, about people calling you 'spastic', 'idiot', you can put all your fears on paper.

"So he decided to pursue the art that had been his hobby since he was 15.

Take out your fears" says Colin who, many years ago spent time in Porirua Hospital where he was given electro-convulsive therapy after a nervous breakdown.

Colin used to work outdoors as a painter for the Council, doing a variety of outdoor jobs that made him long to work in the warm.

Sometimes people make fun of my artwork, sometimes people in society ask me why I do this thing and I say, for the "world."



## NICK MITCHELL—ARTIST!

Hi, my name is Nick and I've been with DEALS/Community Connections for about four years now.

I am an artist, a painter to be more specific and I have my own studio at the Art Centre in Abel Smith Street.

I have Asperger's Syndrome and although it's fairly mild, it does bring its ups and downs in everyday life. Overall I have a lot to be grateful for because if you have some quality of life (as I feel I do) then that counts for a lot.

This is where my life is so important. It gives me a kind of anchor and purpose, I've been an artist for 10 years now and although I always showed ability in drawing growing up I never had the belief or confidence to pursue it.

But, you could say, I've kind of

come back full circle, as if it was what I was meant to be doing all the time. My main medium is oils, but I also do a lot of other kinds of work such as watercolours, prints, collages etc.

The themes or subjects that I work from are varied but they are mainly about things that mean something on a personal level. Themes also are things of everyday beauty.

At the moment I'm working on a series of works depicting issues and problems in the legal system. I am working on a series of paintings that challenge the way we might see the system; that justice and the law don't always operate in the way we might think it does.

My work will be shown in an exhibit in February '09'.

Some of my other interests

include reading, an interest in old heritage buildings and architecture and history itself. I also like listening to different types of music and am interested in learning to play a musical instrument

I have an interest in cultures and language and am interested in learning to speak French.

As I mentioned earlier, having a disability is difficult but in many respects I also consider myself fortunate as well - it depends on your perspective.

In my time at Community Connections I've met other clients who have disabilities and different problems, I've been amazed and humbled at how well some of them use the skills and abilities they have to positively get on with their lives.

I feel strongly that someone's quality of life should not come

down to just dollars and cents and funding availability and that's what I most appreciate about Community Connections – the support is given in a caring and down to earth way. I really appreciate the way the staff put their hearts into all they do.

Certainly I've made a lot of progress in a single, self-focused way but it would have been a much tougher road without the support I've had in these last four years or so.

Now, I've told you about myself, I just want to round this off by saying overall I lead an uncomplicated sort of life, just getting up and living for the present and as for regrets, well I'm also lucky that I've not had too many of those either. So for me, that's about it.

## LOOKING FOR EMPLOYMENT?

If you would like some paid work why not try approaching some of the Employment Agencies set up to support people with a range of disabilities to find work?

In this issue of your newsletter we look at two such organisations:

Workbridge in Wellington, and Worksmart in Upper Hutt.

There are other organisations too such as Emerge Workmates and Mainstream.

Their services can be covered in future issues.

Workbridge probably familiar to quite a few of you says it is a "Professional Employment Agency".

"We are", Workbridge ex-

plains, "a non-profit organisation for people with disabilities and injuries, contracted by the Government to help them find work".

A national organisation with 20 centres throughout the Country, Workbridge is proud of the good services it offers clients and employers;

: For employers, skilled and able clients who want a job.

This is a free service.

Support is on-going if needed for clients. Workbridge can also get support funds to cover various disability costs.

You can find Workbridge office phone numbers in the white pages.

Worksmart is a supporter em-

ployment agency and through its work, its an important part of Earthlink, a disability support agency in Upper Hutt.

Worksmart offers a wide range of services to people with psychiatric illnesses who are either ready to come back to work or who want to work for the first time.

Says John Harward, Worksmart Manager, "We provide career counselling and development, job coaching, and support for employers".

The list of supports offered includes on-going help with reading, writing and mathematical difficulties, client advocacy, personal mentoring support with further education and benefit advocacy.

John says, "we see our role as putting people into jobs. This means supporting clients to find jobs and then providing on-going support if it is needed, once the job begins."

And John says, "Worksmart doesn't believe in putting square pegs in round holes. Worksmart puts a lot of effort into helping clients find out where they fit in to the world of work".

Interested? You can contact Worksmart on 527-9900.



## WORKING AND LOVING IT!

Community Connections has two Wellington-based clients with long employment histories who are happy to talk about their jobs.

Newtown-based Tim Morgan works as a Kitchen hand at Eva Dixon's Café in Miramar.

Assisted by Workbridge to find a job in the food industry, an area he has always liked, Tim works on Mondays and Saturdays from 9am to 5pm helping to keep the kitchen immaculately clean. "I have always liked food and kitchens", Tim says. "And I'm lucky I have really pleasant and supportive employers".

Tim used to work with Eva Dixon's café at the Wellington Zoo but when operations were shifted to Miramar he went with them.

"I've always liked working" Tim

says. "When I first started I tried cleaning, but it wasn't my thing. I went to Workbridge for help and I found them friendly and supportive."

Over the years Tim worked for several cafes and restaurants, including Brier Fox, Grain of Salt and Logan Brown. Today he is very happy with his job at Eva Dixons – and his friendly employers.

Tim has some advice for would-be jobseekers.

"I think attitude and presentation are two very important factors in getting a job," Tim says.

"You need to dress well, look good and always want to work," he says.

Tim says that having a disability should not stop people working.

"You can get a job that suits you," he says.

He believes that working with a wide range of people and different cultures is very good for everyone – and the money is great too, because "it gives you things like holidays either here or overseas."

Tim says that when accepting a job, you also need to accept that you'll have to do what your employer asks you to do; to be flexible and be prepared to work hard.

Camelia Lilly, who found her job with the help of Ace Employment (through Ace House) has worked at Commonsense Organics in Courtenay Place for five years.

Camelia ('Cam' to her friends) works in the packing room where she is responsible for the hygienic – and fast – packing of

flour, dates, dried fruit, cinnamon sticks and curry powder in small bags to sell to the public.

Cam offers her tips for getting – and keeping – a job.

"Look for jobs in the newspapers and websites. Be clean and wear clean clothes and have a positive outlook. You can't apply for a job thinking I won't get it. If you don't get a job the first time just try again".

Cam believes that if you go to a job first impressions count. "Show someone you can do the job and do it well. Find a job that suits you and suits the hours you want to work."

Doug from Ace Employment first helped me find the job", Cam says. "Now Ewen supports me if there are any difficulties". Cam enjoys the job because she works with people from a lot of different cultures.



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*Thank you to everyone who contributed an article to this issue. We received so many articles that we have had to hold some aside for our next issue so keep watching!*

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**WE'RE ON THE WEB!**

**WWW.CCSLT.ORG.NZ**

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## FAREWELL JANE MATA

Jane Mary Mata died on Wednesday, July 23<sup>rd</sup> at Mary Potter Hospice, Newtown, surrounded by her loving family.

Jane had been a popular client of DEALS/Community Connections for just over four years.

Jane's large bubbly personality and enjoyment of life more than made up for her short stature. With partner-in-crime Kathryn Pratley, Jane loved a good practical joke and the two were always thinking up tricks to play on staff and friends, who took the mischief in good part.

A keen food and music lover, Jane thoroughly enjoyed attending Ace House and was a keen participant in all its activities. Jane flatted with good friend Kathryn Pratley in Palm Grove, Berhampore and both were well-known and liked in the Community, where Jane also enjoyed a drink and a dance.

Jane was also a great 'Home and Away' fan. Community Connections will miss her



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## RELAXING WITH ART

On Tuesday afternoons Oasis Network offers an opportunity to learn some new skills and have a fun social time, writes Hanne Van Beek in the April 2008 issue of the "The Parchment", the newsletter of the Oasis Network, based in Lower Hutt.

From 12.30pm until 2pm there are art classes that have been running since October 2007 under the guidance of Lynda Barrow.

Some of the outcomes of the art classes, as well as Lynda's own work, can be seen adorning the walls at Oasis Network at 14 Laings Road.

Lynda is an artist in her own right and has regular exhibitions at the Roar Gallery in Wellington and a solo show is

coming up later in the year.

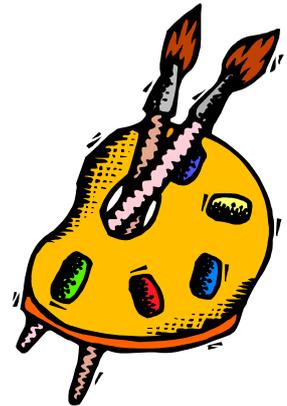
Lynda can take 30 to 40 hours to finish a piece of work. They are mainly very fine ink drawings on paper that are then scanned and put together on the computer. It is a labour intensive process and the final result is very intricate.

Lynda works in an intuitive way, but the art classes are planned. Each week covers a different topic, ranging from learning sketching skills through to making Christmas cards and working on a range of media. Although there are occasional exercises, the focus is on having fun. Participants are at different levels of ability, with up to eight people taking part. Lynda is one of those quietly giving people donating in her own materials at times.

Lynda provides a free and encouraging environment so anyone can come along and try it. She warmly invites anyone to join the fun.

Hutt clients want to know more? Why not give Oasis Network a ring on 566 – 1601.

Wellington clients wanting to become involved in art projects – don't forget Vincent's Art space in downtown Wellington.



### COMPETITION!!

We need help to come up with a good name for your newsletter. Please send all suggestions to Tanya at the Porirua Office. PO Box 50048 Porirua 5240, 2375576, or [tanya.mac@cslt.org.nz](mailto:tanya.mac@cslt.org.nz)