

IC Auckland Newsletter February 2015

Kia ora ano, and welcome to our first newsletter for 2015!



How quickly summer goes! I hope you all had some time to relax and refresh and have adventures that have left you curious and inspired for what 2015 may bring. The people who have generously contributed articles to this newsletter certainly feel that way! See what they have to say about community fruit harvesting for food banks, hosting a Grey Lynn Sustainable Business Walk to a community garden, Neighbours Day Aotearoa and an Ethnic food festival in Puketapapa. All the stories we feature are written by those involved and there are links included for you to find out more directly from them. There are upcoming events and opportunities after the articles - scroll down to find out more!

This month we also have a short film on community-led development to share: *Journeys into neighbourhood-led development* is the title of a video produced by Auckland Council and Rooftops Media. It was recently presented at the UNITEC Community Development conference and highlights the work of residents in Waitakere. Community gardens, stream restoration, and play days for pre-schoolers in parks are some of the initiatives that are portrayed through interviews with the coordinators of these resident-led projects. Some of the things Inspiring Communities has learned about neighbourhood-led development are captured throughout the video. Watch it here: <https://vimeo.com/120441274>.

If you would like to share what locally-led change you and your community are up to, please let me know by email and we'll happily run an article or advertise your event:

Denise.Bijoux@inspiringcommunities.org.nz.

Denise.



Fruit picking for food banks

Di Celliers talks about how Community Fruit Harvesting has grown, what it does and how you can get involved!

Community Fruit Harvesting charity was started in June 2011, on the North Shore to harvest fruit that would otherwise go to waste and supply it to community organisations.

Inspired by fruit harvesting groups overseas, Diane Celliers began asking around her neighbourhood to see whether she could pick fruit from the trees of elderly, disabled residents or anyone who did not want to use the fruit from their backyard trees and share it with the Auckland City Mission. She found that many of those unable to harvest their own fruit did not want to see it rot, and were only too pleased to share it with people in need.

“The response was very positive,” Diane says. “The first week I collected 10 bags, the next week double that and the following week 50-60 bags.”

How much fruit is picked, and when it’s picked is organised in advance with the owner of the trees, which have included homeowners as well as Pony Clubs and other organisations that have fruit trees on their land and quickly spread to orchards that produce excess fruit to their needs.

The number of fruit pickers is also growing, with volunteers attracted by the combination of outdoor work and chance to help the community. Diane now coordinates over 250 volunteers around Auckland who are picking fruit from backyards and orchards. More than 50 volunteer preserve makers are also using the fruit to make marmalade, jam and other products for distribution via food banks, schools, refuge centres; women’s refuge centres, schools and charities. Over 4000 jars of preserves were distributed last year and many thousands of kilograms of fruit. The Auckland group even managed to pick and distribute hundreds of kilograms of citrus fruit to Christchurch last year.

Most of the fruit goes to the various distribution centres, but pickers can take a small amount for their personal use or to share with friends and family. Some of the preserves are sold at stalls occasionally during the year and the money raised, is used to purchase sugar, ingredients for preserves or fruit picking tools. The group actively promotes and teaches preserve making too.

Interest in the Community Fruit Harvesting Group has already spread throughout New Zealand, with a number of other affiliated groups starting up in other cities.

There is always a need for more volunteers to collect jam jars; coordinate picking in their suburb; pick fruit; make preserves or simply promote us to homeowners or orchard owners that have fruit to spare.

To find out more email Diane at pickfruit@xtra.co.nz or visit www.facebook.com/pickfruit or www.pickfruit.co.nz. Or phone 021 228 9020.



Profit for passionate people producing peas in a petite picnic patch: Wilton Street Garden

Fionna Hill shares her adventure of hosting a Grey Lynn Sustainable Business Walk to a community garden. Photo by Josh Griggs.

Wilton Picnic Patch is a community garden which was invited to host (amongst other destinations) the Grey Lynn Sustainable Business Walk organised by the Grey Lynn Business Association in February 2015.

What is the definition of 'sustainable business' I wondered? We are a garden, not a business. WIKI defined 'A sustainable business is any organisation that participates in environmentally friendly or green activities to ensure that all processes, products, and manufacturing activities adequately address current environmental concerns while maintaining a profit.' That's us!

Our profit is not in the traditional way - it is a social profit: good company, neighbourly events, learning new skills, knowledge, passion, inclusion and connections. We provide food and refuge for bugs, bees and butterflies and in our enriched soil grow organic vegetables and fruit for ourselves and to share.

Wilton Picnic Patch in Grey Lynn, Auckland began life as the Wilton Street Community Gardens over five years ago. Now reduced in size it is still an organic community garden focusing mostly on edibles and is a tiny space for the use of anyone who would like to garden, to call in for a visit, or bring a

picnic lunch and relax in the bountiful small garden. It has picnic tables and seats, it's child-safe with a fence, a secure gate, good vibes, prolific plants and a hard working small band of gardeners.

In September 2014 I grew pumpkin seeds and decided to guerrilla plant the space as no-one had expressed interest to help me take over this neglected garden. I was joined by four women and two pre-schoolers and we weeded together like gardeners possessed! They volunteered to come back the next week and, now called the 'A team', have stayed. Forgetting the pumpkin plan, we have gardened together when we were free almost every week since, joined by more people and their children, some regular and some occasional. Children have small buckets, a mini watering can, tools to share, a box of toys and books and regular duties such as beating donated coffee grounds into a powder to sprinkle around, breaking up bread to feed the birds or watering the garden and pots.

We planted climbing beans along the whole fence line and one of the A team created an 'illustrated' climbing structure in time to catch the bean tendrils. We transferred some established herbs from a garden that was about to be demolished and, from the same place, I moved my potted unusual edibles like pineapples, myoga ginger, horseradish, climbing spinach and blood veined sorrel. A friend came with a WWOOFER and together they pruned the existing fig tree and also reconstructed a compost bin which had been demolished. By working together with what we each could bring, summer crops brought 10 varieties of tomatoes, many many beans, cucumbers, salad greens, herbs, comfrey, carrots, radishes, Malabar spinach, rhubarb, stevia, parsley and zucchini.

The garden is open to everyone – feel free to stop by and have a picnic in the garden any time, as long as you shut the gate. And if you have some time, resources and energy to donate, help is always wanted. Find out more at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/wiltonpicnicpatch/>



Neighbours Day Aotearoa 2015

Written by Kimberley Cleland.

Neighbours Day Aotearoa, celebrated over the weekend of 28-29 March 2015, will see local neighbours turning your street into a neighbourhood. You can join in and connect with your neighbours by registering at www.neighboursday.org.nz/join-nda.

Henderson resident Bill Edmonds is valued by his neighbour Lorna for his kind, caring nature. "I'm 93, and my husband died over twenty years ago. At the time, Bill said 'Don't worry, I'll look after

you,” says Lorna. “He was a builder and he’d work a full day then come home and saw firewood for me. He’d always do repair jobs around my house, including my kitchen stove so I could stay warm over winter.”

Bill is now retired, but his good deeds for Lorna continue. “Now that he has time to garden, he brings me fresh vegetables, and he helps me by bringing my recycling bin in and leaving it at the gate,” she says. “His partner Raewyn is a marvellous cook, and brings me hot soup in winter, along with delicious fresh scones. Life would have been far more difficult were it not for my neighbours.”

Everyone lives next to someone else, and we all have the opportunity to connect with our neighbours. Whether it’s feeling safer, more connected or being able to share resources with those closest to you, being neighbourly has huge benefits.

“Neighbourliness isn’t just a once-a-year thing,” says Neighbours Day Project Manager Kimberley Cleland. “The more we practise it, the stronger our communities grow. Neighbours Day Aotearoa is an amazing opportunity to celebrate neighbourliness, to meet the people we live alongside, and create healthy, resilient communities.”

The recent Sovereign Wellbeing Survey found that only 30% of Kiwis connect socially with others more than once a week, and only a quarter of us feel connected to our local communities. This has major effects on the wellbeing of individuals. People who feel isolated are more likely to experience depression, have disrupted sleep, and feel more stressed. Conversely, neighbourhoods with residents who know their neighbours well, say that they feel safer, happier and enjoy their communities more than those who don’t.



Showcasing talents and bonding with community through an Ethnic Food Festival

Written by Fadumo Ahmad.

NZ Ethnic Women’s Trust project aims to empower refugee and migrant women by giving them skills in both creating marketable products and creating small businesses to sell these products. Through this, these women are able to generate income for themselves, and thus become financially independent and no longer dependent on government welfare and charitable assistance. This is especially important as refugee and

migrant women are the primary drivers of their families' integration into New Zealand society despite being among the most vulnerable members of society.

However, many community refugee and migrant support organisations do not specifically address women's financial needs due to various cultural, religious and political reasons. By providing marketable and entrepreneurial skills to these women in a setting specifically designed for them, the Catering Project helps refugee and migrant women achieve their potentially, benefitting themselves, their families and the wider community.

We at NZ Ethnic Women's Trust held our first Ethnic Food Festival on the 19th of December 2014. The idea for the Ethnic Food festival began as a small way to showcase the talented ladies from the catering group at our organization but evolved into a large event that included performances from the local talent and volunteers from our community. Many groups that included Sky City, Roskill Together, New World and Inspiring Communities helped this event come to life by sponsoring it. Inspiring Communities, Auckland Council, Community Waitakere, Department of Internal Affairs and ANCAD also supported it to be workshopped and developed in a Masterclass run by Denise Bijoux and Jim Diers, which also provided kick start funding provided by ACDA .

On the day, we had local ladies from more than seven different countries put up a stall with their traditional foods as a way to introduce ourselves to Puketapapa community. The stalls from the weekly market allowed for more people to attend our event and try many different foods. We did this as a way to create bonds within our community as well as introduce our catering initiative to future customers. The event date that we picked coincided with the local market day so we already had a large group of people that were curious as to what was going on so we extended the market hours for more exposure.

Other organizations that provided services to the community or sold craft were also invited to set up a stall at our event, groups such as Roskill together took part. We also had face painting, African drums, fire dancing, Pasifika beats and Bollywood performances from our local community and schools.

The event was an overall success that would not be possible without our sponsors and local community volunteers who worked extremely hard to make this event a triumph for our community and ladies.

Find out more about the NZ Ethnic Women's network here: <http://www.nzsomaliwomen.org.nz/>

OPPORTUNITIES AND EVENTS COMING UP SOON!

Community Waitakere - Community Developer (12 months fixed-term): Are you a passionate community development practitioner seeking to use your excellent project delivery, leadership, facilitation and relationship building skills? Do you have a personal commitment to working alongside communities to achieve their goals and aspirations? Do you have experience in working with Maori in empowering and sustainable ways? If so, then you may wish to submit an application for this role- a copy of the job description can be obtained by sending an email to marie@communitywaitakere.org.nz. To apply for the role please send your cover letter and CV to Marie Jenkins at marie@communitywaitakere.org.nz Ph: 09 838 7904.

Leading in Communities – two courses starting March 10 (mornings) and April 16 (evenings).

FREE! If you are already involved in making positive change in your West Auckland community and want to grow as a leader, or are noticing different ways of leading in communities and are keen to try out different ways yourself, then this could be a course for you! There are limited spaces so for more information and to RSVP please contact Mandy at Community Waitakere: mandy@communitywaitakere.org.nz of phone 838 7903.

Paul Born: Deepening Community and Collective Impact, 12 March 2015: A full day workshop that includes a copy of Paul's newest book "Deepening Community – Finding Joy Together in Chaotic Times", practical exercises and a membership into Tamarack Institutes Learning as well as an opportunity to enjoy great food and fellowship with other amazing community and civic leaders. Registration is \$275pp and can be done at: <http://bankofideas.com.au/events/>. Have questions? Contact Peter Kenyon at pk@bankofideas.com.au.

Neighbours Day! 28-29 March 2015: Plenty of ideas online at <http://neighboursday.org.nz/>. Tell your story, download resources, connect with others, have some fun together ☺

JAPHA fund: Every month the JApHA Fund (*Just Another Philanthropic Aucklander*) will pay a monthly grant of up to \$1,000 to Aucklanders who have small and creative projects that will achieve social or environmental good. This fund also makes giving more accessible. You can find out more about both contributing to the fund and applying for a grant from it here: <http://www.aucklandcf.org.nz/95/for-community/grants-and-funds/the-japha-fund>