



## GM's CORNER



Kia ora,

Since our last edition Autumn 2017, it has been a busy and steep learning curve understanding and appreciating the changes within the Ministry of

Social Development's move to a new funding model.

This model concentrates on finding employment for and placing people into work with less focus on continued support in-work, and more focus around building natural supports in the workplace.

Despite these changes, this newsletter features only a few of the successes that your on-going support has helped us achieve. Together, we have so much to be proud of.

**DRC living life connected** is committed to working through these changes and intends to continue true to its core values of assisting people to overcome barriers they face promoting independence to live a good life, contributing and living inclusively in their communities.

Ngā mihi

Sue Robson

General Manager



Kristina started working for Paramount cleaners on 3rd August 2016.



**Owners of Paramount Services Ltd, Hawkes Bay Franchise, Bruce and Sara say:** "Over the time that Kristina has been with our company we have seen her grow from strength to strength. Kristina's work skills have grown and her confidence has blossomed. She has formed some new relationships with our clients and has even been asked to support students with their art in the school she cleans. Kristina is very flexible and supportive as an employee and we are proud to be able to provide her these opportunities as an inclusive employer here at Paramount Hawkes Bay.

NP was able to apply for funding for Kristina to have art lessons. Hastings Masonic granted funds. The pictures featured on this

page were done by Kristina with 'Talking Cats Studio'.

### Art Teacher Anne Michelle Johal

**tells us:** "We are very excited to see her latest artwork has been accepted into the Hastings Artists Group (HAG) exhibition."





**Amanda Jane Fuller—Staff Assistant**

Amanda Jane Fuller, also known as AJ, has been with the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) since 2016. AJ has an intellectual disability and is partially blind and partially deaf. AJ joined DRC through the Turning Point

Service. Community Coordinators assist their clients to in achieve measurable goals that range from confidence to leadership skills and ultimately independence. AJ's personal goal plan included singing lessons, joining the swim gym, and doing voluntary work.

AJ, commenced part-time voluntary work at the Funky Farm in Mangateretere. While there she developed her skills in caring and feeding the animals, cleaning the animals and cleaning/looking after their environment. Other additional skill learned progressed to cashier work, retail sales and customer services.

Through her successful voluntary experience, a potential opportunity to employ AJ became available. Network Person-

nel Employment Services facilitated financial assistance by means of Mainstream funding from Ministry of Social Development which allowed the employer to viably employ AJ in paid employment on a part-time basis.

AJ has now been employed for 6 months and enjoys engaging with people and being independent. On her days off, AJ sometimes visits DRC to see her friends and the staff members here.

AJ is a great advocate for her employer and she quickly acknowledges Funky Farm as a great place for kids to enjoy themselves. If you want more information on where AJ works, you can visit the Funky Farm's website or their Facebook page at these links.



<https://www.facebook.com/KidzplayToyLibrary/>

<http://www.funkyfarm.co.nz/>

## ABOUT THE MAINSTREAM EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMME

The Mainstream Employment Programme provides a package of subsidies, training, and support to help people with significant disabilities to gain sustainable employment. The programme provides:

- A 100% salary subsidy for the first half of an agreed term of up to 2 years, and an 80% salary subsidy for the second half
- Funding for agreed external training, specialised equipment or other assistance for the participant
- Ongoing support for participants and their supervisors

Specially created or adapted positions are tailored to the skills and aptitude of the participant, and the needs of the employer. Participants are not expected to be 'job-ready' when they start. They train on the job

and have access to funding for extra training from Mainstream. Ideally the participant gets the opportunity of ongoing employment at the end of the placement, unless they find a suitable permanent position during the placement.

Because Mainstream follows the principles of supported employment, pay is comparable to the pay of others performing similar duties.

Applications are prioritised and placements are subject to the availability of funding. The amount of funding is agreed with the employer before the placement begins.

For more information visit MSD's website link <http://www.msd.govt.nz/what-we-can-do/disability-services/mainstream/index.html>



**Interview conducted by Mark Palmer, Employment Consultant, Network Personnel, with John who is celebrating his first 12 months continuous work in his job.**

First of all, congratulations on completing 12 months employment.

I began by asking John what the best thing is about working at HB Caravan Sales. He told me:

"I enjoy the variety of work. I've learned some new skills, like how to decorate the inside of a camper van, sanding and painting. Before this, I'd only done house painting, but now I can strip down the interiors of the caravans as required, and do the painting and cleaning and getting caravans ready for sale.

"I also have enjoyed learning how to drive some of the big campervans and get them into position on the yard for display and that sort of thing.

"I've learned how to do some simple maintenance, like replacing vents and sealing them, replacing doors and making everything watertight. I would never have learned this anywhere else - because that's what we do here. Learning these things is important because then I can do more things around the yard.

"Sometimes I'm working with the help of the boss, and other times I work on my own, and then he checks and makes sure I've done it right.

"I do washing of the vehicles, and I've learned the best way to do it, which is better and faster than the way I washed things before."

I asked him what his work mates are like.

"There's one work mate and the boss. They're great to work with, when I need help. And I help them, so we work as a team. The boss keeps me on my feet - there's never a dull moment and he gives me lots of things to do.

When asked what working has done for him personally and how it

has changed his life, John was pleased to tell me that "Working has given me a bit more money to pay bills, which is great, but more than the money side of things, it's given me something to focus on and keep me occupied. What matters most is having a job to support a family and have something to do with my time. It keeps me out of trouble!

"And also it's helpful to my overall health to keep me more active and to get out more. I'm not sitting around - I'm out walking around and doing stuff and being active. Going up and down ladders helps my fitness too - that's another blessing from this job."

I inquired if working had helped John's mental health.

"Yes my mental health has improved since I've been here - because I'm focusing on things I enjoy here, like giving caravans makeovers. I'm proud to tell people I'm working and enjoying it, and it helps my self esteem."

I asked how John had contributed to making improvements since he started here. He was proud to tell me "Over the last 12 months, I believe I've helped improve the quality of cleanliness, appearance and presentation of the yard - doing the lawns and the weeding with the weed eater, clearing up all the rubbish when I see it and putting it in the bins.

"Picking up cardboard boxes and putting them in the recycling, moving stuff that's in the way of customer's viewpoint to make things look more clean. Make it look presentable for the customers so they want to get a caravan."

I ended the interview by asking John if his life is better now than before, when he wasn't working.

"Yes! My life is much better than before because I can wake up in the morning and have something to look forward to - going to work and doing something that I enjoy. I've improved my speed, my self esteem, and I like to go the extra mile to try and find things that need to be done."

Well done John on your first 12 months as a valued employee - may there be many more!





Robert, who had worked at Flaxmere New World for 13 years, started volunteering at the Knowledge Bank 3 mornings a week.

He is regarded as an integral part of the team and through his love of Golf and special Olympic medal winning is able to converse with some of the other male volunteers.

Robert went to Special Olympics where he won Bronze medal for his Golfing skills.

Robert has now gained a paid position as Outdoor maintenance Assistance at Clubs Hastings where

he has many responsibilities.

As he was a patron of the Club, he was already known so making the transition from customer to employee was seamless. With the support

of the staff and management Robert is once again proving his worth.



## MEET THE TEAM...

### SHARON ROSS

Hi, my name is Sharon and I am an Employment Consultant for Network Personnel.

My family and I have lived in the Hawkes Bay for the last 27 years but originally come from Fielding in the Manawatu.

I have worked with, fundraised, volunteered, and sat on advocacy & parents support boards, supporting children, teenagers and adults with barriers –I've done this for the last 20 years.

I am personally connected to this type of work as amongst my three children, my youngest son has life long challenges.

I come from very diverse employment roles —

everything from cleaning the boys bathroom at High School (GROSS) to running my own business.

I enjoy being with people as we all are just waiting to be seen. So if in any way I can support a person with barriers as an Employment Consultant then I know it will be paid forward.



### What we do:

*Network Personnel provide a **personalised Employment Service**, facilitating placement of people with health conditions (that last 6 months or longer) or disabilities into paid work. We also support the person in work (and the employer) for up to 12 months if required, and in special circumstances may be able to provide support beyond this."*