

Stepping Stones to Success...



Disability Resource Centre (HB) Trust (DRC) is a Charitable Trust, which helps people overcome the barriers they face so that they can lead happy and rewarding lives. Our work includes supporting people to find and stay in work, as well as helping them to explore opportunities for social inclusion and to develop the skills that will enable them to fulfil their personal goals and aspirations.

The Turning Point division and the Network Personnel division provide two distinct services, however, depending on the individual needs of the person, at times work hand in hand to assist the people we support.

Turning Point's objective is to help grow confidence and independence; set goals and walk along-side people to achieve these goals. Involvement in the community with everyday people in everyday places in an integrated fashion is encouraged and facilitated. There are many success stories from Turning Point's involvement.

The Network Personnel division serves as a Supported Employment function. Staff work with people to achieve sustainable employment in mainstream open employment, and support them in their jobs for as long as they need to.

The following stories will assist to illustrate how Disability Resource Centre has impacted on changing the lives of our clients – one step at a time. Our person-centred, individual approach has seen many successes and we are proud to tell our stories which by no means are the end of the journeys of the people we support for them to fulfil what is individually to them, a good life...

Potiki

Potiki came to Disability Resource Centre initially as a referral to our Network Personnel Supported Employment division. Employment Consultants worked with him to establish a career path and through their interactions with Potiki, they identified a high level of anxiety and severe lack of confidence.

These traits can be quite common for someone with an intellectual disability and with learning difficulties. Network Personnel staff also found that Potiki's inability to converse with other people was a barrier to employment so in March 2014, they referred Potiki to the Turning Point service to work in tandem with them to raise his confidence and lessen his anxiety levels.

Potiki joined the "cooking for blokes" classes to learn to work alongside other people. This class evolved over time and now the group works together to



plan their meals, budget, shop for bargains, purchase ingredients through the supermarket self-serve kiosks and follow the recipe to complete the meal which they then eat together. This cooking group is facilitated by the coordinator – ie, they do

everything and she prompts them – "What do you think you need to do next?"

Potiki has also been able to build up his confidence which has seen him attend a Halloween Disco with a LOT of people present – something he again had never thought he would do. He also graced the cat-walk at a fundraising fashion show (beside his coordinator) in front of a very large crowd. After it all Potiki said *"Well, that wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be!!"*



At Disability Resource Centre we do goal setting sessions with our clients. Potiki set some goals:

1. Get a paid job
2. Get licence
3. Go flatting
4. Buy a car

We helped Potiki identify his strengths, support networks, and steps he needed to take to reach the goals he had set for himself.



We then supported Potiki, helping him to study for his learner's licence which he got on 16th December 2014. Potiki states *"I studied really hard for my learners licence, so was confident I would get it"*.

Network Personnel secured a position for Potiki to work at the DHB in the Equipment Stores as an Equipment Assistant. He started this job on 29th December 2014. This is funded through the Mainstream Programme which is a two-year placement with the hopes that he can up-skill himself to make his role permanent. Potiki currently works 24 hours per week in this job and likes it. Potiki says: *"I work with nice people and feel well supported"*.

Potiki is also training on Unit Standards under NZQA for qualifications in relation to his work. Employment Consultants and his supportive boss Candace help him to understand the more complicated areas of study and ensure he stays on track.

Potiki has now purchased a car (a massive, gas-eating Honda Odyssey) and as he had no one who could take him for test drives, his coordinator takes him out for driving lessons to enable him to get his restricted licence. There is a colleague at his work who drives a van and does deliveries of hospital equipment. He is motivated even more to get his licence so he can be a back-up when the usual delivery man is away on leave.

Potiki has applied to the Barry Whelan Scholarship (a fund that is available from the Disability Resource Centre) for 5 driving lessons with a driving instructor. This was approved and Potiki is keen to get started.

In July 2015, an opportunity came about for Disability Resource Centre clients and staff to go in a bus from HB to Wellington by means of a day-trip to TePapa. Initially Potiki was hesitant to go but decided it would be good to do



so 48 people went to TePapa on 15th August. Potiki was very pleased he had decided to go and be a part of the group – another milestone for his confidence.

Following the trip to TePapa, Potiki told us *"I'm*

really glad I went, it was much better than I thought".

Potiki is still living at home with his parents. He is keen to attain his next goal of going flatting but would prefer to live by himself, maybe in a bed sit or room off a garage – but you never know, he just might take that next step and be a flat-mate with the friends he has made at Disability Resource Centre.

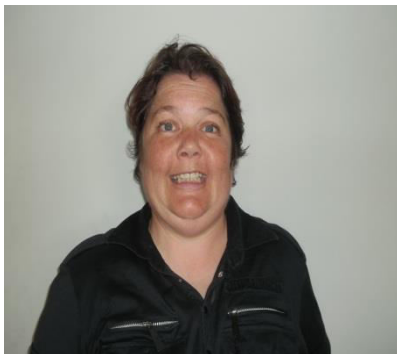
To be continued...

Trudy

Trudy is a person who has blossomed with the assistance of the Turning Point team. She's witty and smart (both with intellect and her cheeky comments!) Her humour is contagious.

Trudy doesn't let her disability affect her negatively any more. She has a diabetes-related disability and uses an automated insulin pump. Some time ago she was hospitalised and through a medical misadventure incident it resulted in a 3 year coma and Trudy awoke with left-side hemiplegia which restricts her ability to move around easily and is unable to walk for long distances and most days requires the need for a wheelchair. Her speech was also affected making it difficult for some people to understand her unless you know her and concentrate on what she is saying.

Before coming to the Disability Resource Centre, her confidence levels and self esteem were low. She found it difficult to remain positive.



Through staff within the Turning Point service working with her one-to-one we found she dabbled in a bit of poetry writing. When she brought some examples in for us to see the calibre of her literature, a seed was planted about the possibility of Trudy publishing her own poetry book.

We promised to walk alongside Trudy and although she was to do the work, we would guide and support her and get her in touch with the right people to make it happen. Trudy tells us: *"I so appreciate all the help and supportive positive pushing into this achievable dream"*.

Trudy was excited and it was then that we got to see all of the amazing poetry that she had written over 16 years. Her poetry was very emotive – at times dark in nature. Her writings varied from achievements such as a successful sky dive, then plummeting to depressive, anguished writings of being trapped in her body with no escape – with desires to jump in a car and drive away. *"This sums up my poetry book"* Trudy says.

Trudy longed to be able to drive also, but thought this was an impossibility given her physical limitations. Her eyes lit up when we showed her some examples on google images of cars that had been adapted for people with a variety of physical disabilities.

We methodically worked with Trudy for well over a year ticking off each step it took to get her book published. This included meeting with a published author, deciding if any further creative writing would be of benefit (which she decided against), meeting with a publisher, selecting poems for the target audience she wanted to speak to through her poetry, researching poetry books in the book shops, etc, etc, etc – it was not a process to gloss over and needed to be completely professional and representative of the true Trudy.

As time progressed it got to the inevitable stage of the prospect of going ahead and committing to paying for the illustrator, publisher and printers and all other associated costs.

Trudy had some money put away, but a sister of another Disability Resource Centre client offered to hold a fundraising event with Trudy as the special guest and beneficiary.



It was decided, a fashion parade (modelled by a mixture of people but including Disability Resource Centre clients) was held. The hall was packed with people and was completely sold out. Trudy tells us *"It was just amazing to see so many people there for me!"*

Models were being primped and preened in the dressing rooms and the clothes they were modelling were pre-loved clothing that had been hand-selected for the evening.

As a result of this fundraiser, \$3,200 was raised to enable Trudy to pay for her book to be published. *"It was an emotional experience" says Trudy, "It blew me away."*

It was then all go from there with looking over and approving illustrations, fonts, colours, covers, dedications, etc, etc.

The day finally came when everything was finalised



and Trudy was presented by the publisher with the final completed book ready for selling and poised for the go-ahead to print the first 100 books (35 of which Trudy had already pre-sold).

Trudy ripped the wrapping off and was delighted to find everything that had taken so long

to come to this – her book proudly entitled: **"Poetry from a Quiet Body and a Screaming Mind"**

"My heart stopped, it was like I was choking, but it was so exciting at the same time."

Trudy has been selling her book and it is looking like she will need to do another print-run.

She is thinking about what to write for her next compilation and she also has another goal in mind. She would like to learn to drive.



Knowing her determination, we wouldn't be surprised if she does!