

Across the Spectrum

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From our CE

We all have a role to play in beating COVID-19

Once again, we've moved rapidly and with little warning out of and back into heightened COVID-19 alert levels. I'm not sure now if this requires special mention or if it's just now part of our new reality. Either way, we've all been doing our utmost to ensure continuity of service, support and kindness is delivered with wholehearted optimism every day, as we go about our work.

While I'm sure no one was looking forward to another escalation of the alert levels, it was pleasing to see how quickly we were able to activate our planning to change the way we delivered our services and deployed staff to meet the needs of the people we support and their whānau. Well done to everyone in making this happen, and thank you to all the people we support and whānau for your ongoing support as we navigate this 'dynamic' time.

Our focus now is not so much about the current alert level, but how quickly we can transition from one alert level to the next and back again. Our Crisis Management Team has detailed transition plans in place, which include critical tasks, roles and communications to help minimise the impact on the people we support and their whānau.

It's certainly encouraging to know COVID-19 vaccinations got underway last week – it's an important part of our national strategy to knock this virus on the head. The importance of following the rules and the vaccination programme will be critical going forward.

Getting a vaccination is a personal decision for people and what's important is that we all have access to balanced information on the topic as the vaccination programme ramps up. Getting vaccinated protects you and the people around you, which is particularly important for those people we support (and their staff) who may be at increased risk of severe illness.

In support of the vaccination programme, our Chief Operating Officer, Ray Finch, was recently seconded to the Ministry of Health for a two-month period to lead the development of a vaccination plan for the disability sector. I'm sure Ray will do a great job and we're very glad to be playing our part in bringing the pandemic to an end in Aotearoa.

He waka eke noa [We're in it together]
Sean Stowers – Chief Executive



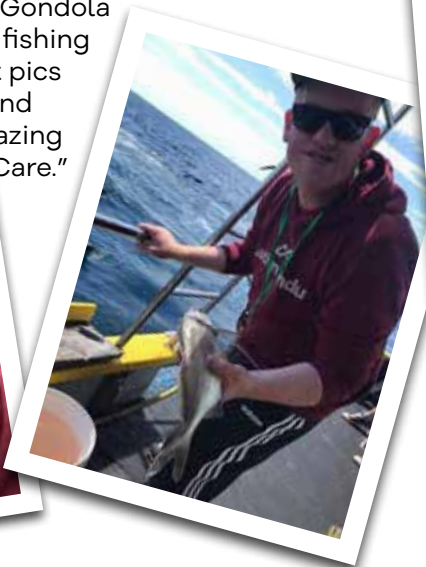
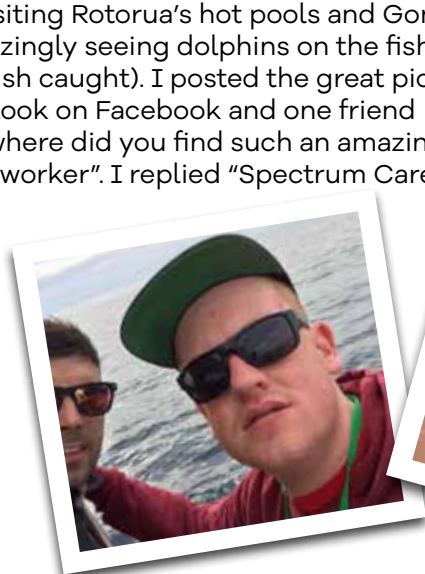


Whānau feedback

Part of what we do at Spectrum Care is providing ordinary life outcomes for the people we work alongside. We work to provide everyday life in everyday places to ensure the people in our service are regarded as citizens with everyday access to all the opportunities they wish... and one of those is helping them save up to be able to take a special trip! We received feedback from the whānau of two people we work alongside regarding a trip they took last year.

"I just wanted to thank you all for the support of Ben and James Hollis over a specially challenging year. One of the highlights was James' epic holiday adventure that Dafydd organised. They packed in a huge number of adventures, all of the things James loves, visiting Rotorua's hot pools and Gondola and amazingly seeing dolphins on the fishing trip (14 fish caught). I posted the great pics Dafydd took on Facebook and one friend asked "where did you find such an amazing support worker". I replied "Spectrum Care."

"Thanks to you all. I know that it is not just exceptional staff but the policies and values that provide James equal opportunity to achieve his goals and aspirations"



Onwards and upwards for Stacey!

At Spectrum Care we provide support guidance and wholehearted optimism with every step... on the ground and in the air too!

Stacey has often talked about wanting to go for a ride in a helicopter (as she reads about them in many of her books) so her team surprised her with a trip. She listened to the pilot's instructions then eagerly climbed aboard and was grinning from ear to ear as she took off from Mechanics Bay in Auckland and flew over the boats to the Harbour Bridge.

Throughout the whole trip, Stacey saw many of Auckland's landmarks and enjoyed pointing out the yachts and the Sky Tower. She loved seeing all the tiny cars and houses below as she flew over the city and out across Rangitoto Island.

When she landed, Stacey said that she would like to have another flight on another day, but take her Mum and sister next time. This self-determination is great to see and no doubt Stacey will get another opportunity in the future if that is what she wishes.

A big thank you to her team at Hepburn for providing her with the skills and means to be able to do something as exciting as this – but also helping her to achieve an ordinary life outcome. Great work team!



The Fabulous Baker Bunch

It's the strength of our commitment to the people we support that we're most proud of. Part of that commitment is working alongside people to discover their talents. It is very clear that when you give extra time to people you will see that human potential is in everyone, some people just need more support to realise it.

When it comes to support, teamwork and creating a trust filled environment, the team at Baker House in South Auckland are true champions. This positivity has enabled two of their residents to fulfill their dreams to also be champions themselves by being part of the Special Olympics. The Baker House team have been able to tailor the individual needs of the people they work alongside to allow them a choice in what they do each day.

The Special Olympics is a special activity that Baker House residents, Steven and Lavinia, are always looking forward to, not just to see their friends, but they also feel that they are using their talents too. Steven joined the Special Olympics in 2018 when he moved to Baker house. Lavinia joined the Special Olympics while she was living at home with her family and continued when she moved to Baker house.

Steven is a budding track star. He loves the 100m and hopes to be part of the relay team too. He is also learning how to throw the javelin. Steven is one of the most enthusiastic members of the Special Olympics team and gets very excited at each training and event. He uses his excitement to help cheer on his fellow team members. Each training session is person-centred, so each athlete decides on what event they want to participate in.

Like Dame Valerie Adams, Lavinia has her eye on a shot put gold medal. Lavinia's coach, Maria Lee, can see a lot of potential in Lavinia and says that the Special Olympics have been a great way for Lavinia to gain success and feel good about her efforts too.

Sia, the Team Leader at Baker House says, "The Special Olympics are useful in helping people realise what their interests are and what they can gain by continuing to follow their heart. Everyone is gifted with something special within them that makes them different from others. It does take time to nurture that hidden potential, but once it is unleashed, it is bound to shine to its brightest. There is no one stopping them from chasing what they want."



Every person with a disability deserves a life of choice, freedom and independence.

Vaccines and informed consent

COVID-19 is a virus that spreads easily and can make people very sick. However, there are now vaccines available that enable our bodies to recognise and fight the virus. This reduces the severity of the infection and reduces our 'viral load', which is a key factor in transmissibility.

To help us decide to vaccinate, we'll all need to consider the information available in order to give informed consent.

Spectrum Care has an 'Informed Consent for Healthcare' policy to help the people we support access healthcare. According to our policy, a vaccine requires informed consent.

We all have the right to make informed choices and, generally, must give permission to proceed with treatment. In order to do so, we must be able to retain information long enough to make the decision; be

able to weigh up the pros and cons; and be able to (or be supported to) communicate our decision. A support worker cannot give consent on behalf of a person we support.

Spectrum Care's responsibility is to advocate for the people we support by ensuring that health professionals follow informed consent processes, based on the person's level of understanding.

For more information about COVID-19 vaccines, please talk to your medical professional and search 'covid-19-vaccines' on www.health.govt.nz.

A life of one's own – it's a simple human need

For many of us, it's a given. But for thousands of people living with disability, it's something that can only be achieved with support.

Our work is to help identify the unique potential in every one of the people we support, then lend a hand to help them realise it.

Often, we're in partnership with people and their whānau for their lifetimes – offering support, guidance and wholehearted optimism with every step.

Through each stage of someone's life, we face the challenges together and empower their capabilities.

To help people and whānau better understand what we do, we created four sub-brands for the different ages and stages of support we provide.

Spectrum care whānau

Many families we work with have been tested before we even meet them. Our whānau-focused services have been designed to give every whānau member time out to recharge, along with providing valuable educational, interactive and fun experiences for children of all ages.



Spectrum care youth

Our youth programmes recognise that the transition to adulthood can be challenging but also full of promise. We aim to help our young people successfully navigate these years so they can fully realise their potential.



Spectrum care living

Human potential is in everyone. Some people just need more support to realise it. Our Living Services support families/individuals to find and create a place they can call home. As well, we provide services to support, motivate and connect our clients to things that will make their lives better every day.



Spectrum care mahi

No matter how complex someone's challenges may be, they are worthy and they are of immense value. We work with individuals to identify their strengths and how best to empower their capabilities so they can live independent and fulfilling lives.





Max's story

Max was keen to let everyone know a little bit more about himself and what he likes to get up to. He sent our Communications team a bunch of photos and wrote this short bio for Across the Spectrum. If you would like to send him a message back, or want to let us know about your world too, then please email feedback@spectrumcare.org.nz.

About me by Max

Hi guys! I am Max Fitzgibbon and I live in Avondale. I am glad to introduce myself and what I have been doing. I still go to school, called Arohanui, in Henderson doing many activities including my favourite stuff like art.

I am verbal and can understand simple instruction. I am really good at art and am happiest when I am left to my own devices with plain papers and colouring pencils and black pens.

For the past few months, I was encouraged to paint not only colouring paper but some shaped stuff like the letters which make my name on my door and some Russian doll sets that are all five different sizes. They are quite cute but it was a bit challenging for me to paint the smallest one as being so small. After finishing all of the people gave me a lot of praise regarding my painting skill and very similar colour match for all five.



Tino Pai Kyla!

Kyla is now a Arohanui Special school graduate, great work! Kyla attended the Henderson school for her high school years and she is now ready for the next challenge. The event was a memorial occasion with members from her team attending to enjoy the moment with her. Spectrum Care is in partnership with people at all ages and stages of their lives.

The graduation was a formal celebration for the students and started with a pōwhiri, then karakia and hīmene, followed by korero, and then concluded with a big meal for everyone attending.

Kyla was especially honoured at the event to be able to wear a korowai that belonged to one her team – ka pai Mattie for making a special moment even more special! Graduation ceremonies like this are a great way to recognise and respect the abilities and contributions people have and give – and also the effort that their whānau put in too!



Choice, freedom and independence

Everyone deserves the opportunity to live a full, fruitful life – whatever challenges they might face – and Spectrum Care can help.

One in five Kiwis has a disability and may need a little support to reach their full potential. This is where Spectrum Care comes in – partnering with disabled people and their whānau, and helping them realise their potential.

At Spectrum Care, we partner with people and whānau at all ages and stages of their lives, providing support, guidance and optimism at every step.

“We especially want to reach out to whānau with infants and young children, because they’re often unsupported and struggling,” says Spectrum Care’s Communications and Marketing Manager, Justin Walsh, whose teenage son is supported by the organisation. “Those early years can be especially challenging, as the realisation grows that life isn’t going to be quite how one might have imagined.”

It’s important that disabled people and their whānau know they’re not alone and help is available. Human potential is in everyone, so it’s about facing challenges together and empowering capabilities. It’s about daring to dream...”

Spectrum Care is all about “wholehearted optimism” as Walsh calls it. They also recognise that disabled people’s desire for choice, freedom and independence is the same as anyone else’s.

An example of this is 21-year-old (and very sociable!) Amy, who wanted to go flatting with three other young women – away from her family for the first time.

Spectrum Care helped make this happen, and also arranged for several preliminary sleepovers so everyone could get to know one another and see how they all got along. Flatting is preparing Amy for her future living a life of her choosing.

Spectrum Care has evolved over its 26 years from being a provider of support services to partnering with people and whānau throughout their lives, and providing flexible, person-directed support that empowers lives of choice, freedom and independence.



Spectrum does this through a wide array of support options focused in four key areas – Whānau, Youth, Mahi and Living – which include independent living and accommodation support, home support, day options and work skills support, planned breaks or ‘respite’ support, and specialist support such as speech-language therapy, behaviour and clinical support.

Spectrum’s approach is founded on ‘How can we help?’ and ‘What works for you?’.

“We then work together to get them there,” says Walsh. “It’s a different mindset, but it’s about supporting disabled people and whānau to expect more – and holding ourselves to a higher standard.”

Spectrum Care aims to be a trusted partner, walking alongside and supporting disabled people and whānau realise their unique potential.

Have you visited our new website yet? Visit www.spectrumcare.org.nz to see how flexible and easy it is to use our support options and how that can help.

Article first appeared in Stuff.co.nz

Across the Spectrum is available by email

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