

Community

A PUBLICATION OF YMCA AUCKLAND

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Time out at holiday camp

- ▶ Creating healthy habits in early learners
- ▶ YMCA Auckland swim teacher receives national award





**YMCA is here
for your community!**

In this issue

Feature

- 3 Time out at holiday camp

Funder Profile

- 5 Aktive – Auckland Sport & Recreation gets behind targeted health programme

YMCA People

- 6 A new start with Jumpstart

Community News

- 7 Creating healthy habits in early learners
- 8 YMCA Auckland swim teacher receives national award
- 8 Walk the Line: teens hit world stage at NZ Fashion Weekend

Community

Community is the official publication of YMCA Auckland.

Community provides YMCA a way to recognise the achievements of our members, individuals, teams and organisations that we work with and support.

We are pleased to be able to keep our wider community up to date with news of the work YMCA is engaged in and to share our successes with you. We hope you enjoy reading this issue of *Community*.

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Wellbeing. It's a term plastered on everything these days from cereal boxes to scented candles. But scratch beneath the advertising slogans, and wellbeing in the truest sense of the word permeates so much of our lives.

Wellbeing: the state of being happy, healthy or prosperous.

It's a hard state to pin down because your sense of happiness and prosperity might be entirely different from mine. There's no denying the commonalities, though: our emotional state, how engaged

we are with our community, our relationships and sense of purpose all combine to make us feel positive about the lives we lead.

Wellbeing can't be manufactured - it has to be nurtured, and finding and fostering the right mix to generate a sense of wellbeing cannot be done in isolation. It takes a village.

That ethos shines through in this edition of *Community*. Take for instance the Zalkalnins family from west Auckland. For four years mum Angela has faced numerous health challenges that have had a great impact on her family. Her son Jake has been by her side throughout and has had to experience far more than the average 10 year old.

No family should face hardships alone. Angela and Jake's story moved many of our staff, and it was an honour to offer Jake a place on our Spring school holiday programme at Camp Adair. The ability to send Jake to camp was thanks to the many contributions of our fundraisers and donors, and I cannot overstate the impact their contributions have made for the wellbeing of this family and many others like them. It takes a village.

In this edition we also look at the impact of taking targeted health programmes into the community. Once again several individuals and organisations banded together to help improve the wellbeing of people across Auckland - this time through a pilot Jumpstart diabetes programme for the South Asian community. A special thanks to Aktive - Auckland Sport & Recreation for supporting the programme.

Finally, we cover a new food programme at YMCA's Papakura and Manurewa Early Learning Centres that's creating healthy habits from an early age. What strikes me most about the story, though, is the contribution of staff member Erana Tawhai. Erana's children attended Papakura Early Learning Centre and now she's working there to give back to the community as a wellbeing educator.

Wellbeing. It's not an easy word to define, but peer into a YMCA centre on any given day and there it is being nurtured by a community of people working towards a common good.

Peter Fergusson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
YMCA Auckland



TIME OUT AT HOLIDAY CAMP



For Jake Zalkalnins, a 10 year old from west Auckland, six days at YMCA's Camp Adair this past school holidays was an unforgettable experience that involved nothing more than the simple joy of being a kid.

For four years Jake has been firmly by his mother Angela's side as she faced numerous health challenges. In 2015 Angela was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia. The diagnosis was yet another blow for the mother of two boys who in 2013 underwent a spinal fusion to cure a bad back.

The surgery failed and in August 2015 Angela was rescheduled for a second back operation, but things didn't quite go to plan: "During the preoperative bloodwork

had a smile and a huge hug for me, and he tells me many times a day how much he loves me."

Angela's leukaemia is now in remission, and in September she is scheduled for a second spinal fusion surgery to correct the first. Foremost on her mind, though, has been giving back to Jake.

In June she entered a Facebook competition that asked entrants to nominate a child they think deserved six days at a YMCA school holiday camp. Angela jumped at the opportunity to nominate Jake: "I wanted a way to say thanks to Jake for being there, and I wanted him to be a kid," Angela says.

Being a kid was exactly what Jake got to experience at Camp Adair: a

Being a kid was exactly what Jake got to experience at Camp Adair: a high ropes course, mud slide, and archery activities made certain it was a week of fun in the outdoors.

the doctors detected some abnormalities and I was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukaemia."

For the first month after the diagnosis, Angela's susceptibility to infection meant Jake and his 14 year old brother Zach were unable to see much of their mother. What followed was six months in and out of hospital and very little time together as a family. Christmas day was reduced to a visit to the hospital for family breakfast.

The entire experience, says Angela, has been particularly hard on Jake who has been by her side throughout.

"Jake has been through so many ups and downs over the last four years," says Angela.

"All throughout he has always

high ropes course, mud slide, and archery activities made certain it was a week of fun in the outdoors.

Attending the camp was also a full-circle experience for the Zalkalnins family - Jake's father Aron and two of his uncles stayed at Camp Adair as children. Angela says Aron is very fond of the camp and was excited to hear Jake would have the same experience he had as a kid.

For Jake, walking the same grounds his father and uncles had nearly 35 years ago, Camp Adair seems to have been just as memorable, and he has plenty to say about the experience: "The people were so kind and caring, and the activities were exciting. My favourite activity was the high swing. Camp Adair was amazing!"

Aktive – Auckland Sport & Recreation gets behind targeted health programme

A new initiative is helping the

South Asian community get active and lower their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, and it's all thanks to funding provided by Aktive – Auckland Sport & Recreation for YMCA's Jumpstart programme.

“The sport and recreation system has to think of other ways of doing things to engage with different populations.” That's the message from Veronica Thompson of Aktive – Auckland Sport & Recreation.

With research indicating New Zealand's Indian population has some of the highest rates of diabetes in the country, the need for targeted health programmes has never been more urgent.

Earlier this year YMCA's Jumpstart diabetes education and lifestyle programme received funding from Aktive for a pilot programme at the Mahatma Gandhi Centre in Auckland. The 10 week programme sought to engage Auckland's Indian population in exercise, nutrition seminars and health education – all with the aim of helping diabetics and pre-diabetics lead healthier lives.

Veronica, the Māori engagement and priority populations manager at Aktive, says a participant focussed approach was key to Aktive's decision to fund the pilot programme.

“Typically people who are involved in the sport and recreation sector will create an initiative or programme and expect people to come to them.”

Veronica says one of the drawcards of the South Asian targeted Jumpstart programme, and a large reason why Aktive decided to support the pilot, is that it sought to go where the population is, as opposed to inviting



the population into somewhere they may not be as culturally comfortable.

“The programme engaged the Indian population in their own community context – it was a good example of an outreach approach not often seen in the sport and recreation sector.”

The ultimate vision for Aktive, says Veronica, is to make Auckland the world's most active city. A key part of achieving that vision is ensuring sports and recreation activities are accessible to everyone and are extended into multiple communities.

Jumpstart has been operating at 16 YMCAs across New Zealand for two years, starting in Auckland and Hamilton, and launching in Wellington and Invercargill at the beginning of 2017. Common results for programme participants include weight loss, lowered blood pressure,

improved mental health and confidence about a healthy future. So far the programme has helped over 600 people.

The proven success of the Jumpstart programme, coupled with the backing of reputable organisations such as YMCA Auckland and programme co-founders Pharmaco (NZ) Ltd, meant Aktive had the confidence to support a roll-out of the pilot programme in a more targeted setting.

Aktive provided funding for the programme through the Targeted Populations and Development Fund and administers the fund in Auckland on behalf of Sport New Zealand.

60 people participated in the first South Asian Jumpstart diabetes health programme. Subject to further funding, YMCA Auckland hopes to roll-out the targeted health programme to other community centres in the near future.



A new start with **Jumpstart**

Since joining the Jumpstart

diabetes education and lifestyle programme at her local YMCA, 77 year-old Tiritia Coombe has found a new lease on life.

In March 2017 Tiritia received the news she had always dreaded. Her GP had just informed her she had prediabetes and, without action, she was likely to develop type 2 diabetes – a disease that plagues her family.

“My immediate reaction was ‘I’m not going there,’” says Tiritia of the diagnosis.

Despite leading an active life, Tiritia had already suffered a number of blows, including two operations for a hip replacement, a minor stroke and the loss of her husband. The end result was bouts of depression, isolation

and difficulties staying mobile.

Her doctor’s diagnosis was the last straw. Tiritia explains most of her family are diabetic, including a sister on insulin and two now deceased brothers who had amputations as a result of their diabetes. She was determined not to suffer the same fate.

Seeking support, she signed up to the Jumpstart diabetes education and lifestyle programme at her local YMCA. Just four weeks into the 10 week programme and she had already lost three kilograms and six inches around her waist. She continues to regularly exercise and her GP is pleased by the results.

“I went to the doctor and he just looked at me and asked ‘What have you been doing? You look so well!’”

Tiritia says the programme has given her more energy and the motivation to stay active, as well as providing other health benefits: “My asthma has improved, particularly at night time, and I sleep better.”

After seeing so many family members struggle with diabetes, Tiritia is thrilled to have found support in Jumpstart. The programme’s nutrition seminars are empowering her with the knowledge to make healthy choices, and the supportive community at her local YMCA has motivated her to keep going.

“I feel so energised and so good. I really feel as if I have a second chance at life.”

Find out more about Jumpstart at jumpstartprogramme.co.nz



Creating healthy habits in early learners

Every parent knows well the

daily struggle to get kids to eat their fruit and veggies. Coupled with perceptions regarding cost, preparation time and taste, consuming the recommended three servings of vegetable and two pieces of fruit per day can seem like an insurmountable hurdle for families.

A new initiative at YMCA's Papakura and Manurewa Early Learning Centres is aiming to overcome those barriers by creating healthy food habits from a young age.

In April 2017 the two centres signed up to the Know Me Eat Me programme. The 12 month programme provides resources for early childhood educators to help children learn about healthy foods, the origins of fruit and vegetables and, best of all, explore taste.

Four months in and the programme is already having an impact for

children and their families.

"The kids have changed their lunchboxes quite a lot," Erana Tawhai, a wellbeing educator at YMCA Papakura Early Learning Centre, said.

"They used to come in with a whole lot of junk food high in sugar, but now we're seeing a lot more fruit and vegetables."

Erana and the Papakura early childhood teachers are working with the children to explore a different food each month. June was all about milk and included an excursion to a local farm. In August the kids explored cauliflower through a range of activities including science experiments, interactive stories and healthy recipes.

The onsite kitchen, centre-prepared lunches four days per week and daily morning and afternoon teas ensures the children have plenty of

opportunity for hands-on learning.

"If we're doing a recipe the kids will be involved in the preparation, cooking and tasting. They love it!" Erana says.

The initiative is also having an effect on families connected to the centre. Erana notes the children are talking about the healthy food activities at home, sparking conversations amongst families and prompting some parents to ask for recipes. As a result, Erana is planning to start monthly cooking lessons to enable parents to see what their kids are cooking through the day. Cheap, easy and healthy recipes on display in the centre are also busting myths about the costs of healthy eating.

"We're all learning together," Erana says. "The kids are learning healthy from unhealthy and it's great to see their knowledge is slowly changing habits at home."

YMCA Auckland swim teacher receives national award

For the third year running, a YMCA Auckland swim teacher has taken out a national award for outstanding work in the area of infant and preschool aquatic education.

Swim teacher Liam Blain-Caunce, a teacher at Onehunga War Memorial Pools and Cameron Pools in Mt Roskill, received national recognition for his contributions to aquatic education and water safety by taking out the 2017 AUSTSWIM Aotearoa Teacher of Infant and Preschool Aquatics Award on 15 July.

YMCA Auckland Swim School Quality Services Manager Karla McCaughan says the recognition is testament to Liam and YMCA Auckland's commitment to providing a fun and safe learn to swim

environment for early learners.

“Drowning is the fourth highest cause of accidental death in New Zealand. Last year three children aged under 5 drowned – three too many.

“It’s a particularly tragic statistic given basic water safety and swimming skills can dramatically reduce a child’s risk of drowning.”

Liam’s swimming and water safety lessons have had a huge impact on a number of lives, says Karla, and over his three years at YMCA Auckland Liam has empowered hundreds of Kiwi kids with vital water safety skills.

Find out more about YMCA Auckland’s learn to swim programmes at ymcaauckland.org.nz/programmes/swimming



Raise Up youth hit world stage at NZ Fashion Week

The Walk the Line fashion show

run by YMCA’s North Shore Raise Up youth crew is back for another year, and this time it’s bigger and bolder than ever with over 50 young designers from around the country showcasing their talent on the runway.

Take a peek behind the scenes, though, and all the glamour and glitz rests on the shoulders of 20 teenagers from YMCA’s Raise Up youth development programme. The teens, aged 14 to 17, are solely responsible for organising and running the show.

YMCA Community Development

Manager Kev Carter says each year he is impressed by what the young event crew manage to organise on their own.

“Walk the Line is testament to the commitment and skills developed by young people in YMCA’s Raise Up youth programme. Most people in the audience would be unaware that the world-class show at NZ Fashion Weekend is all organised and run by a group of teenagers.”

Find out more about YMCA’s Raise Up youth development programme at raiseup.co.nz



YMCA Auckland sincerely thanks the below funders for the following donations over the last quarter. Their generosity provides vital contributions to YMCA's community-based work across Auckland and Hamilton.

FUNDER	VALUE	CAUSE
Foundation North	\$300,000	Auckland City stadium roof project
Lottery Community Facilities Fund	\$100,000	Auckland City stadium roof project
Four Winds Foundation	\$30,000	Auckland City stadium roof project
Albert-Eden Local Board	\$20,000	Mt Albert Schools Cultural Festival
Albert-Eden Quick Response	\$1,000	Mt Albert Family Day
Ministry of Education	\$5,000	Mt Albert playgroup
Trust Waikato	\$4,600	Raise Up Hamilton
Maungakiekie-Tamaki Local Grants	\$5,000	Lagoon Pool disabilities programme
Maungakiekie-Tamaki Local Board	\$5,000	Raise Up Youth Engagement
Maungakiekie-Tamaki Local Board	\$800	Raise Up youth week
Papakura Local Grants	\$3,000	Camp Adair Main Dining Hall architectural work
Puketapapa Local Board Strategic Relationships Grant	\$5,000	Raise Up Lynfield and Youth Voice
Auckland Council Sport and Recreation	\$17,000	Year three of #AKLPLAY Social Sports Programme
Sport Waitakere	\$3,540	Massey Boccia
Henderson-Massey Local Board	\$12,000	Massey youth hub



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