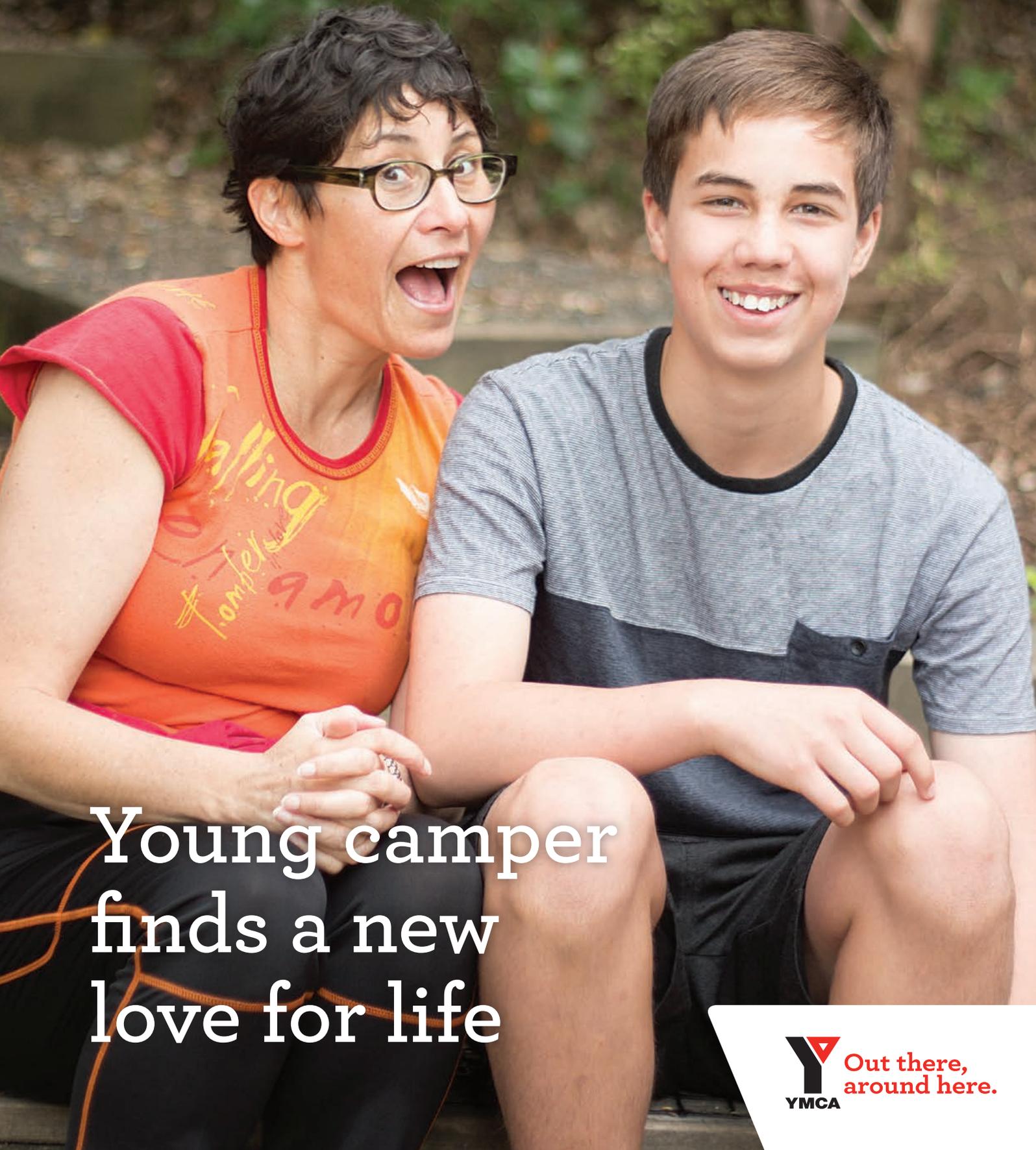


Community

A PUBLICATION OF YMCA AUCKLAND

SUMMER | 2015



Young camper
finds a new
love for life



Out there,
around here.



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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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Editorial



It is an exciting time of the year as we approach the festive holiday season. Although treated by most of us as a time for celebration, my challenge every year is to also be aware of who and what is happening around me. We can easily jump into the chaotic season the Christmas period brings but can I bring a small encouragement to us all... that we might consider others this Christmas.

As we wrap up for the year, I'm really proud of every volunteer, staff member and ambassador of YMCA for their dedication and commitment to our mission. We've not only set out to be the most respected provider of services for people to reach their full potential but we also hope that our mission leads us to build greater and stronger relationships with people in the community.

The evidence of the impact YMCA is having on people is phenomenal. They come from all ethnic and social backgrounds, the young are mixing with the old and where it can be 'uncool' to be seen with your folks, there's an increasing number of families participating in our services, programmes and activities together.

It is especially humbling to be sharing stories in this edition of people like Jacob Gardiner, a young man who asked for donations to be made to YMCA instead of getting gifts for his birthday. When a shy boy living with autism becomes a confident, outspoken and team leader at one of our camp sites, it tells me that each person driving this organisation is absolutely committed not only to the cause but to the individual - helping them become the best they can be, on their way to reaching their full potential.

I know that in every edition of *Community* we're not even scratching the surface and I truly believe there are many untold stories out there where YMCA has been able to help in some way or another. In light of this, I am certain that the New Year will bring us a wealth of these stories, whether they're unsung heroes from their local community, people making a difference in the lives of others or celebrating successes across the organisation. We look forward to bringing you those and many more stories in 2016, so on behalf of YMCA, I wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

Peter Fergusson
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
YMCA Auckland

YOUNG CAMPER FINDS A NEW LOVE FOR LIFE

At the age of seven, Daniel Chant was diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. Daniel's Mum Lisa, who currently works as a senior lecturer in interprofessional health at AUT and has prior experience in the health industry, followed up on a few leads to try and help her son get more involved in the community and with other children. Finding herself in luck, she was granted funding by the Taikura Trust to help Daniel head along to a YMCA programme held at Camp Shakespear, in Whangaparaoa.

Daniel remembers his first week at camp like it was yesterday. "I was scared and afraid that I wouldn't be good at anything. I remember picking up the bow and arrow and it was so much bigger than me." With a smile on his face, Daniel said he realised how silly he'd been. "As I pulled and released each arrow, over and over again, it felt really good.... I was actually pretty good at this!"

The bow and arrow experience was the first of many challenges for Daniel as he quickly learned that camp would require meeting new people, listening to and following camp leader instructions and giving every activity a go. On one occasion,

the rest of the camp kids were challenged to a wall climb which Daniel recalls as one of his hardest days at camp. "I was climbing the wall and as I reached the overhang I wanted to give up," he says. With a glum look in his eyes followed by a victorious tone he continues, "I was really tired but I kept going and when I made it to the top I was so happy."

Daniel knows it certainly takes more than one experience to make something permanent, so every holiday since 2008, Daniel attended all of the camp programmes held over the school holidays, missing only one when he and his mum visited the South Island.

The team at YMCA say that Daniel and his mum have become a part of the furniture. Lisa cannot express enough gratitude to the team for what they've been able to achieve with her son. "In all my years of practice, I've never been able to do what they've been able to with Daniel - with any of my patients."

"We are now able to do some very basic things that had either been too difficult or frustrating for Daniel, such as brushing his own teeth, wiping his face with a wet cloth or wearing a hat."

"The unconditional love, safe environment and the genuine way in which they valued my son, is the reason why Daniel has learned how to do these simple things and now also understands why they're useful," says Lisa with a deep and sincere tone.

As a solo mother, Lisa knew that having positive male role models in Daniel's life was important. Daniel would arrive home after spending a week at camp, having learned something new and sharing about the new friends he'd made. She quickly grew to love the leaders at Shakespear and Daniel, had swiftly become a camp favourite amongst his peers and leaders, picking up the award for 'Most Valued Camper' in 2012.

Lisa recalls one holiday where Camp Shakespear had closed temporarily. When Daniel and his friends found out they were to spend their holidays at another site, they were reluctant to go. Lisa puts this down to the leadership from Centre Manager, Mike Cash. "Although he leads a team of young camp instructors, there is a maturity in them that comes from his dedication and values based driven leadership," says Lisa.

During the interview for Community,

"As I pulled and released each arrow, over and over again, it felt really good.... I was actually pretty good at this!"



Lisa and Mike were seated on one of the camps outdoor tables – a mug in one hand, large smiles on their faces and conversations flowing to and fro. This picture highlights the relationship that has flourished between Lisa and the camp leaders. Daniel looks on as most teenage boys his age do, in slight embarrassment but is quick to remember the work of his mum when asked “What are you thankful to your mum for?”, jokingly he says “You know I never want to do anything she puts me in... I still don’t... but I see that it works and that is why I am thankful for mum.” He laughs and looks back at his mum who continues to laugh and banter with Mike.

Daniel, now 15, is thriving at Westlake Boys but is soon to move south with his mum on a new adventure. This year he

joined the school’s hockey team and also went along to the last camp programme, this time as a camp leader. Lisa says he’s been enjoying the perks of being a camp leader. “When he returned home he boasted about the endless supply of milo and how the toilets for camp leaders were so much nicer.” Lisa laughs as she re-tells his experience because, she says, “He doesn’t even drink milo, let alone enjoy it when we have it at home, but the fact that he was a camp leader changed all of that for him.”

Daniel has learned to be comfortable in his own skin, developed a new confidence that the team at Shakespear have been instrumental in supporting. Mike and the rest of the team are sad to say goodbye to this family as they start a new

chapter in their lives together, but feel incredibly privileged to have been allowed to impart strong values, leadership and communication skills into Daniel’s young life.

Daniel has gone from the shy kid with low confidence and limited communication skills, to a fun, outgoing and give-it-a-go teenage boy. Lisa is more than proud and in his own words, Daniel encourages others who have shared a similar journey to “just try it out, whatever it is your afraid to do, give it a go, the more you do it, the more enjoyable it will become.” ▼



Swim School for everyone!

YMCA Auckland is dedicated

to enriching the lives of everyone that comes into contact with the organisation, no matter who they are. It is this philosophy of acceptance that is behind the Swim School's Access and Inclusion Programme, which aims to provide an equal opportunity for a diverse range of people to participate in aquatic activities, regardless of their ability, age, culture or background.

Not wanting to exclude any members of the community from learning and enjoying swimming, through being involved in a Swim School, YMCA Auckland have developed the programme with the goal of removing barriers to participation that could keep these Aucklanders out of the water.

often, individuals were excluded from swimming lessons due to behavioural or physical issues, or sometimes just a lack of awareness, or programme inflexibility.”

There are currently 57 students enrolled in Access and Inclusion specific programmes, which are now offered at all of YMCA Auckland's aquatic sites. While some programmes are one-on-one, and others group lessons, each is flexible and adaptable, providing support as required.

“If at first you don't succeed, adjust what you are doing and find another way,” Helen says, explaining their approach.

Each of the programmes cater to people on a case-by-case basis. Water safety is a key element across the board and there is a focus on

engaging, adaptable to their needs, and accommodating to everyone with a disability. No matter what the participants require, the staff at YMCA will find a programme to suit them and help them achieve their goals in the water.

“Parents regularly give positive feedback on the programme and the benefits it has to their children, not only in the pool, but also out of it,” Helen says. “Children learn skills in the pool and transfer them to land; a number of children have taken their first steps in the pool.”

Along with learning valuable swimming and water safety skills, the programme is also about developing skills like hand-eye coordination, balance and movement. Many participants have

“There was a definite gap in what Swim School's were providing to people who had a disability”

Instead, they want to enable all people, including those with a disability, to access a swimming programme that gives them the opportunity to be in an inclusive environment that recognises and celebrates their individual abilities. They even have funding available for those that would like to take part, but otherwise could not afford to participate.

The programme began at Lagoon Pool and Leisure Centre managed by YMCA, and was implemented by the centre's Swim School Manager Helen Vann, who had developed an awareness of the range of disability issues around learning to swim and water safety while studying towards a Bachelor of Human Services in 2005.

“There was a definite gap in what Swim School's were providing to people who had a disability,” Helen says. “All too

helping people learn to swim when possible. The programmes also work to improve muscular and strength endurance; develop motor skills and balance; improve self-confidence; and increase fitness, health and wellbeing.

It's also a lot of fun! “The swimmers enjoy participating in lessons and learning new skills,” Helen says. “They always look forward to attending and it offers a nice break for family members too.”

Feedback about the programmes has been extremely positive. Participants love the helpful staff, who go out of their way to recognise the needs of those involved and understand the best ways to encourage them so that they reach their full potential. The swimmers also have great things to say about the programmes, which are described as

also gone from supported classes and private lessons to regular Swim School sessions with peers in their age group.

Looking to the future of the programme, YMCA Auckland is currently working with Halberg Disability Sport Foundation to deliver NETs (No Exceptions Training) to all their staff. This reflects their goals of increasing knowledge on inclusion and universal design, to help drive industry awareness and make YMCA Auckland facilities and staff even better than they already are, and, in the process, help and include more members of the community.

The Access and Inclusion programme has made a real difference to the lives of those involved, and shows YMCA Auckland's dedication to building stronger kids, families and communities, no matter what. ▼

Eight-year-old Jacob chooses charity donations over birthday presents

Jacob Gardiner was more

than happy to give up his birthday presents this year, in the hope that other, less fortunate children might get the chance to play and enjoy sports like him.

In lieu of presents from his friends, the eight-year-old from Pt Chevalier, who celebrated his eighth birthday in July, asked them to donate whatever money they wished to go to YMCA Auckland and its special programmes for families and children.

“Jacob understands that some kids don’t have the same opportunities to play sports as he does and we talked about how nice it might be for his friends to donate money towards an organisation that provides opportunities for kids that aren’t always as lucky as him, instead of bringing presents this year. He liked the idea that those kids might get to play sports and games more often if we helped them,” says Jacob’s mum, Louise Gardiner.

Louise and Jacob set up a FundraiseOnline fundraising page, with a photo and a blurb they wrote together, and included the link on the birthday party invitations, encouraging friends to donate towards a good cause for Jacob’s birthday.

The duo raised \$130 and Jacob and his friends had a fun-filled day celebrating his birthday at Mt Albert Community and Leisure Centre managed by YMCA, where they’d booked out an indoor soccer court for a couple of hours. A YMCA co-ordinator organised the games with the children while the parents were able to use the kitchen to make lunch for the group and relax.

“The boys had a fantastic day and I’m so proud of Jacob and his wanting to give back to other children this birthday,” says Louise.

Niamh Wingate, YMCA Auckland Fundraiser, says, “We are very lucky to



have someone as young as Jacob thinking about others on his own birthday, raising money so that other children can get involved in sports and activities. He really does represent the values of YMCA. The money Jacob raised will help fund participation in activities for children at Mt Albert through our fee assistance scheme.”

Jacob is an avid sports fan, currently in Year 3 at Pt Chevalier School. In the winter Jacob played winter soccer and he’s now about to kick off a season of summer soccer with Western Springs Football Club. Jacob also plays touch rugby in the Sandringham Juniors tournament and

cricket with the Cornwall Cricket Club.

Jill Gibson, Centre Manager for Mt Albert says, “To say a special thank you to Jacob and his kind gesture, we offered him a free day trip with our school holiday programme and we look forward to seeing him soon!” ▼

If you would like to fundraise for YMCA Auckland feel free to set up a donations page via our givealittle page at <https://givealittle.co.nz/org/ymcaak> or contact our Fundraiser, Niamh Wingate, to find out about how you can get involved.



Encouraging Kiwis to move their bodies for diabetes action month

According to Diabetes New Zealand, 1 in 4 New Zealanders are expected to have pre-diabetes, and currently more than 250,000 Kiwis are living with diabetes. Diabetes is the fastest growing long-term illness and it has been increasing 7% every year for the past eight years – something YMCA Auckland feels strongly about helping to change.

So on Saturday, 28th November, YMCA Auckland, in association with YMCA's strategic partner, Diabetes NZ and their 'diabetes action month', hosted special public events across 11 centres for Fitbit MoveMeant Day.

Welcoming Kiwis near and far, YMCA Auckland centres offered

free access to their gym classes, including Cardio Kick at YMCA North Shore, Power Play at YMCA Hamilton Recreation Centre and Yoga, Mums and Bubs, and Step and Move at YMCA Auckland City Fitness, in a bid to promote the first diabetes prevention method of physical exercise. The second method of preventing diabetes is a good diet.

Other activities over the day included the public being able to practice their boxing and sports skills, with access to boxing equipment, use of squash and basketball courts, as well as free reign on the centres' full gym facilities and studio spaces.

Massey Leisure Centre managed by

YMCA offered a family-fun afternoon, with a bouncy castle, water slide, face-painting, a sausage sizzle and taster sessions of all its group fitness classes. They set up plenty of sporting activities, such as beach cricket and soccer too! They offered diabetes education with staff and its local Raise Up crew talked to young people about what they do in the community.

"Diabetes is a big problem in our country and we do a lot of work within our communities to encourage awareness and prevention for those living with it. Being a part of the Fitbit MoveMeant Day was another fantastic way to make some noise about the seriousness of the issue, but in an encouraging way,

and it was a great turnout,” says Grant Helleur, YMCA Business Manager for Fitness and Recreation.

“Exercise can be incredibly fun and rewarding, and whilst not all diabetes can be prevented, physical exercise and diet do play a key role in helping sever the disease. Diabetes is a killer and it’s something all Kiwis should be aware of and we plan to keep on pushing these kinds of messages at any opportunity we can,” says Grant.

Diabetes is the result of the body not creating enough insulin to keep blood glucose (sugar) levels in the normal range. Everyone needs some glucose in their blood, but if levels are too high they can damage the body over time wreaking havoc on the nerves and blood vessels and, in some cases resulting in limb and toe amputations. For many people, Type 2 diabetes can be prevented by making healthy food choices and staying active.

It’s important to note that there are two types of diabetes – Type 1 and Type 2. Type 1 cannot be prevented and is often diagnosed at a young age. Most people diagnosed have Type 2 diabetes, which is preventable with a good diet and exercise.

According to the New Zealand Artificial Limb Service, around 150 people in New Zealand will lose a limb due to diabetes each year.

Podiatry New Zealand has provided figures from a Waikato study, showing that 13% of diabetics are at risk of having their foot amputated – totaling more than 33,000 people across the country.

Year-round, YMCA Auckland offers a 10-week lifestyle programme, Jumpstart, across 11 of its centres for people living with diabetes or who are pre-diabetic. Jumpstart has been set up as a fun and dynamic programme, offering various levels of exercise and positive sessions around nutrition, goal-setting, behaviour change and keeping yourself healthy. Sessions are led by exercise professionals and nutritionists, and family members and peers are encouraged to join in. ▼

A helping hand from the Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust

The Joyce Fisher Charitable

Trust’s mission is to make New Zealand a better place by providing young New Zealanders with opportunities that enhance their leadership skills and values, while creating community, role models and future leaders.

Since its establishment in 1975, and Lady Fisher’s passing in 2009 (at the age of 96), the Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust has grown immensely. As a result, the Trust is now able to strategically support more charitable organisations.

Chris Paykel, one of the three Trustees and Lady Fisher’s great nephew, says the aim of the Trust is to “make New Zealand a better place. One of the ways we’re doing that is by focusing on leadership and giving youth opportunities that they might not otherwise have had. YMCA Auckland shares a similar vision to help youth to fulfil their potential.”

“The focus of the trustees is to ensure that the support we are able to give follows Lady Fisher’s vision and continues to support those charities that were dear to her heart,” says Chris. “The important thing is to always come back to Joyce’s original vision: education, community, leadership and supporting disadvantaged youth, especially Māori and Pasifika.” The Trustees annually review how each of the charities have progressed, look at what community projects are happening that fit with the trust’s overall strategy, and assess where support can make the greatest impact.

Chris often learns about organisations doing good work through other charities. “We often find the charities we support feed into each other. We can have a more positive effect by supporting like minded organisations and we see this as a win for all.”

Chris gets a great deal of satisfaction from his role as trustee, as he believes

that being in a position to support charitable organisations is “a great privilege. You learn so much about what’s going on in the community,” explains Chris. “I can get involved and have a far deeper understanding of the challenges and where support is needed. Well-run programmes not only have a positive influence on individuals, but they lead to better outcomes for communities too.”

YMCA Auckland are grateful for the support they receive from the Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust and will continue to put their generous donations to work in making New Zealand a better place, as Joyce would have wanted. ▼



YMCA Auckland want to sincerely thank all of the funders for approving the following donations over the last quarter, which contribute to the community-based work we do.

FUNDER	VALUE	CAUSE
Foundation North	\$60,000	YMCA youth development programme, Raise Up, across Auckland
LB Mangere - Crime Prevention Fund	\$3,000	YMCA youth development programme, Raise Up, in the Mangere/Otara area
Kaipatiki Local Board	\$2,798	YMCA North Shore Recreation Centre
Diabetes New Zealand	\$90,000	Jumpstart, 10-week lifestyle programme for people living with diabetes
Manurewa Local Board	\$1,598	Heat pumps for YMCA Manurewa Early Learning Centre
Trust Waikato	\$10,000	YMCA's youth development programme, Raise Up, in the Hamilton area
NZ Sport	\$44,862	Community Sports for 2015/2016 in the Hamilton area
Community Post	\$500	Family Camp
Waitemata Quick Response	\$850	OSCAR resources at YMCA Auckland City Stadium

