

# JOINT SUPPORT

DONORS NEWSLETTER  
ISSUE 34 | APRIL 2011

## APRIL FOCUS: HELPING THOSE WITH ARTHRITIS

### *We need the kiwi spirit to keep on giving...*

*The Christchurch earthquakes have touched every New Zealander's life. Sadly, these have had a massive impact on the day to day lives of people in Christchurch. Amongst those affected, are people living with arthritis.*

The words 'return to normal' don't seem to be within reach for those affected by Christchurch's 6.3 magnitude earthquake. With bone-rattling aftershocks occurring regularly and major infrastructure damage, the ripple affect on people's lives is enormous.

For some of those with arthritis, this means pain. One arthritis client can no longer access her local pool for hydrotherapy classes, resulting in joint pain and stiffness.

Another Christchurch arthritis client has relocated to Wellington after the earthquake, and has found that where she has moved into has lots of steps making it impossible for her to go out.

With so much uncertainty, stress levels in Christchurch are at extremely high levels. Major stress has been shown to trigger inflammation response and can trigger 'flare ups' in arthritis.

Our Arthritis Educators are operating in Christchurch and are there for anyone who is struggling to cope with their arthritis in these hard times.

People are also able to get in touch with their local Arthritis Educator free of charge through by calling 0800 663 463.

Arthritis Educators are predominantly registered nurses or other allied health professionals who provide 45-minute individual consultations (clinics). The clinics are held in both urban and rural areas at venues that are easily reached e.g. health centres, pharmacies, marae, and community centres.

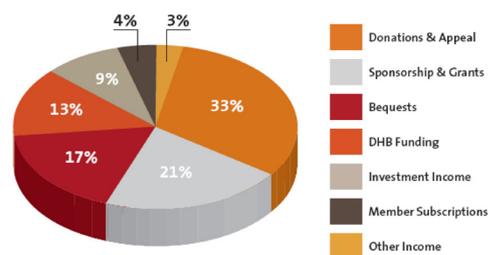
The benefits to service users are increased knowledge, understanding and self-management of their condition and how to work better with their health care providers.

We understand that the famous kiwi generosity is stretched to it's limits at the moment with helping Christchurch get back on it's feet and now Japan's devastating disaster.

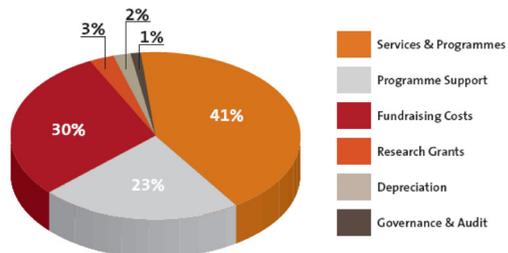
But we still need donations so we can continue to offer our services to people like those that are suffering from arthritis in Christchurch.

We strive to ensure that we maximise the use of every dollar donated. Below is a clear picture of our commitment to and spending on services that matter most to those with arthritis.

**Income Sources**  
Total – \$5,205,000



**Operating Expenditure**  
Total – \$6,305,000



**Please dig deep and donate. We cannot continue providing our services without your generous support. Thank you.**



Sandra Kirby,  
Arthritis New Zealand Chief Executive

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Editor: Megan Hubbard  
Phone: 04 472 5640  
Email: [megan.hubbard@arthritis.org.nz](mailto:megan.hubbard@arthritis.org.nz)

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## FROM THE

# Chief Executive's Desk

*Kia ora tatou*

*Change – sometimes it comes incrementally and sometimes it just hits us all at once.*

February 22nd rocked our world. As Christchurch appeared to crumble we were glued to radio, television and internet to follow the immediate impact of the earthquake. E2, as the February earthquake has become known (E1 was the September quake), was the disaster we thought we had avoided in September. Most New Zealanders appeared dazed and disbelieving. This soon passed as we watched and marvelled at how quickly and resourcefully our families, colleagues, friends and fellow citizens started to put their lives back into shape.

Our people were safe; some of our staff lost houses; one family member escaped miraculously from the CTV building; our building suffered only minor damage. Two days after the earthquake one of our Arthritis Educators was running a clinic in an unaffected part of North Canterbury. People with arthritis were still looking for help and support for their condition – her clinic was full. Arthritis doesn't disappear in a disaster – unfortunately.

Christchurch followed hard on the heels it seemed of the Queensland and Victoria floods. Almost immediately afterwards the Japanese earthquake, tsunami and nuclear accident occurred. The size and scale of the Japanese disaster is mind boggling. We sit in the relative comfort and safety of our lives and want desperately to do something to help.

New Zealanders have been incredibly generous for the emergency appeals – last year for Canterbury and Pike River; already this year for flood, quake and tsunami victims. Not all of us can go and be there – we aren't needed and the infrastructure can't cope. We can give money – it is needed.

We, at Arthritis New Zealand, know how generous New Zealanders are. Our services rely on the generosity of the community –

as they have since the early Telethon that helped set up the services as we know them. We thank you for your generosity and commitment to helping where help is needed.

In our organisation change too is happening. Last year we reviewed our services to see how we could increase our capacity to help people with arthritis within our available resources. This year at the Board's request we will be implementing changes. We must ensure we can continue to be a sustainable service that meets the current needs of people with arthritis. How people access our services have changed – the need for the services have not.

Last month's camp for families with children who have recently been diagnosed with arthritis is a good example of a different way of meeting a need. These children, many of whom are pre-schoolers, benefit from the new Paediatric Rheumatology services that are available. They are great but the parents as well as the children need time to meet others like them – and share experiences and advice. That is where we fit in.

We remain reliant on the community for our services – for us the community is you and people like you. We know that you will be drawn to help in the disasters. We will be continuing our work – in Christchurch and around New Zealand because arthritis remains the leading cause of disability in New Zealand. Our work relies on you also.

Thanks.

Nga mihi

**Sandra Kirby**  
Chief Executive

## Our services from a client's perspective

*Following is an email we received from an arthritis patient Lorraine Knight. Lorraine found our services to be invaluable.*

Thank you for all you have done for me regarding the consultation and the valuable 'Hand Clinic'.

Although I have had osteoarthritis in my fingers since 2004, no health professional had explained to me anything about it.

It was during the consultation with the Arthritis Educator, that I finally understood that the repetitive movement and stretching of my fingers in an unnatural direction had destroyed the function of the joints.

For the first time I was shown pictures of the working of the joints and what caused the strange red bumps on the side of my knuckles and why they hurt so much. I was also treated with compassion for the first time.

It helped a lot to understand what I eat, my emotions and other factors that could help improve the management of my condition. I felt a huge relief that someone cared and

it brought me to tears. Prior to this I had only had doctors give me a prescription for pain killers and anti-inflammatory drugs. I also experienced ridicule from doctors when I explained how scared I was of kidney damage from long term use of these drugs.

From the consultation I found out I had a right to be referred to an occupational therapist through the health system. All these years I have not known about the aids I could get to help me manage my life better.

The 'Hand Clinic' was amazingly helpful too. I learnt that I could get splints to help prevent further damage to my fragile joints, equipment that is available to help with carrying out daily tasks and heaps of other valuable information. I learnt how my treatment by doctors is not unique as we all had similar stories about an indifference to our struggle and frustration at the length of time it takes in doing basic everyday things which most people take for granted that

they can do in a few seconds.

Although existing with constant pain is a struggle, I learnt that the pain has a role in telling me to ease off what I am doing and take my time. That pushing through the pain is just causing more damage. Also the importance of exercising my fingers helps to maintain what mobility I have in them. We shared the experience of how other people see us doing something one day but don't understand that we may not be able to do that same thing the next.

I really do appreciate so much the help of the Arthritis New Zealand. I only wish I had come to you sooner.

**Regards Lorraine Knight**



## 'Let's Keep Moving' Children's Camp

*What do we know about children and arthritis? That's silly, children don't get arthritis!*



That's the thinking that we need to change to support the 1000 children and young adults living with arthritis in New Zealand.

Youngsters and their families like young

Dominique (above) were counting down the days until the 25th March when along with

Arthritis New Zealand staff and members of the National Paediatric Rheumatology team, they gathered at the Totara Christian Camp in Matamata for two days of fun, information and networking.

Ages range from 2 years to 13, and many of the children have been diagnosed in the past year with arthritis.

The camp was made possible with grants from both AXA Hearts in Action and the

Newman's Own Foundation.

It has been a number of years since Arthritis New Zealand hosted a camp and it is a tangible way we can support families.

Children got the chance to relax and mingle with other children with arthritis, while their parents had the opportunity to have all of their questions answered by both the specialists and the Arthritis New Zealand team.

## It's surprising who has arthritis

The review of our services showed that there's a need for more national-level awareness of arthritis in New Zealand.

We are pleased (and rather excited) to announce that in partnership with Abbot, we are in the midst of developing an awareness campaign with the theme **"It's surprising who has arthritis"** with a focus on the form of arthritis ankylosing spondylitis.

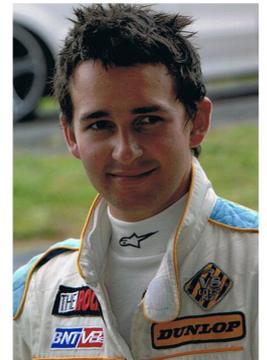
This theme will hopefully help change people's common misconception that arthritis is an 'old person's' disease.

One person who would disagree with that statement, is Matt Lockwood.

Matt Lockwood, at only 23 years of age and with only five years of motorsport racing experience under his belt, has already taken home three national championship titles and is competing in three rounds of the New Zealand V8s. Matt hopes this will get him noticed as his ultimate goal is to get to the Australian Super Cars.

These are amazing achievements for someone so young. What is more amazing is that he achieved these without disclosing until recently, that he has ankylosing spondylitis (AS).

We hope with Matt's story and the new campaign it will show people just how surprising it is that arthritis can strike anybody at any age.



### March Lottery #3

In acknowledgment of the Christchurch earthquake and the appeals being undertaken to support residents and businesses, we will be postponing our March Lottery #3.

Please keep an eye on [arthritis.org.nz](http://arthritis.org.nz) as the new launch date will be announced shortly.

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