

“It’s like a death in the family...you grieve the loss of the person you were, the person you thought you would be.”



ARTHRITIS
NEW ZEALAND
ENABLING A BETTER QUALITY OF LIFE
KAIPONAPONA AOTEAROA
Te whakapiki i te hounga ora

How many times have you told yourself to just harden up and get on with it? And how many times does it seem that nobody notices that you are ill? Or that nobody sees how you try your best to cope with your pain and fatigue?

Sometimes, you can feel like **nobody sees your pain**; and nobody sees **you**.

“Arthritis can make you feel invisible. It can take you away from everything you love.” says mother-of-two, Lee, “Sometimes people will tell you that it’s all in your head, especially if you don’t have a firm diagnosis.”

For Lee, it took over four years to arrive at a firm diagnosis: a type of arthritis called fibromyalgia. **“Having fibromyalgia means spending years in pain, feeling raw, dizzy and nauseous.”** Lee says, “Ponytails give you headaches that last for weeks. You’re bone tired but the pain keeps you awake all night so you start each morning feeling irritable and foggy.”

With fibromyalgia, the pain can be stinging, burning, aching, radiating... the pain moves all over your body and from moment to moment you can never be sure how much you will hurt. As Lee puts it, **“Sometimes your skin feels like it’s crawling with bugs and you just can’t stand to be touched. But when the people you love want a hug, how do you tell them not to touch you?”**

“There were many times when it was too painful to cuddle my children. We have two kids and we always wanted more but arthritis ruined that dream.” Lee continues, **“I feel sad and guilty because my kids missed out on so much due to my illness.** I couldn’t reliably take them to activities like Scouts and music lessons, and they had to

Over please...

Yes, I want to support New Zealanders affected by arthritis!

Enclosed is my donation of:

I am paying by: Visa Mastercard Amex Diners
 Cheque enclosed (*please make out to Arthritis New Zealand*)

Card No.

Expiry date / / / Card holder

Signature

Please amend my address details as shown overleaf.

*Please fill out this donation slip and send it back to us in the freepost envelope enclosed. **Thank you!** Your donation makes a difference – and if it’s over \$5, it’s tax deductible.*

Did you know that you can also donate online? www.arthritis.org.nz



help out a lot around the house.”

“You try to fight back up from the misery,” says Lee, “You try to be a useful family member but everything is so exhausting – a quick trip to get petrol takes every ounce of you. Eventually, I had to give up my job, my triathlons, my gardening, my jazz band...you can’t be relied on to be at school trips or go to that BBQ, so people stop inviting you. You become isolated from everyone; you have no social life anymore. **The community dream was over.**”

Just by looking at Lee, you would never know that she has already spent a decade coping with the pain of arthritis

“Even though there is no cure,” says Lee, “I am always looking for ways to improve my situation. My darling husband saw a wee advert in the local newspaper for an Arthritis New Zealand clinic – little did I know they would become firm friends. **It’s great to have an organisation like Arthritis New Zealand that is so friendly and willing to help you.** Arthritis New Zealand’s services, combined with regular gentle exercise, acupuncture and healthy meals, means that now I have much longer periods of time when I feel well. In fact, I am well enough now to be the Coordinator for the Fibromyalgia support group in Whangarei!”

“In addition to giving you great practical advice and emotional support,” says Lee, “the people at Arthritis New Zealand will help you focus on what you can do to improve your quality of life, and they can help make you feel like you are not alone.”

Today, I am asking you to help people like Lee. Your choice to donate today shows that you understand how important it is for people with arthritis to have their pain acknowledged, to feel like they are not invisible, to know that they do not have to suffer alone.

To the 1 in 6 New Zealanders who are living with arthritis, your gift says, **“Today I choose to see you. I see your pain. Please let me offer you some relief.”**

Warmest regards,



Sandra Kirby, Chief Executive, Arthritis New Zealand

PS. Today, you can choose to offer hope to over 530,000 New Zealanders living with arthritis...please don’t put this letter down until you’ve made your decision.

PPS. Fibromyalgia is one of the more than 140 different types of arthritis

The services we provide are directly funded by donors like you.

Your decision to donate will support the positive changes in Lee’s life and help us represent the interests of over 530,000 New Zealanders living with arthritis.



For more about Arthritis New Zealand, please visit our web site: www.arthritis.org.nz
Arthritis New Zealand, 166 Featherston Street, PO Box 10020, Wellington 6143, phone 04 472 1427

Address Correction

| | |
|---------|----------------------|
| Name | <input type="text"/> |
| Address | <input type="text"/> |
| Phone | <input type="text"/> |
| Email | <input type="text"/> |
| Mobile | <input type="text"/> |

Please send me information on:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Arthritis Educator Services | <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering | <input type="checkbox"/> Leaving a bequest |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Making automatic donations | |