

Your community CONNECTOR

VOLUNTEER WELLINGTON | TE PUNA TAUTOKO



→ VISIT US AT www.volunteerwellington.nz → EMAIL info@volunteerwellington.nz

Volunteer Wellington – your community connector in the time of Covid-19

The world has been thrown into disarray by the Covid-19 crisis but we are continuing our services, working remotely from home offices across the region.

As the situation unfolds we are reaching out to our community member organisations to assess your needs for volunteers. We are here to support you at this time. Staying connected becomes more important than ever. For those of you we haven't been able to connect with or your needs have changed we'd love you to complete [this survey](#) which gives you an easy and quick way to tell us what your current needs are. It will help us to help you.

Alongside these measures we are liaising with peak bodies (*Volunteering New Zealand, Volunteer Centres Network Aotearoa, WREMO, National Crisis Management Centre*) throughout the country to clarify the role of volunteers

at this time and how best to deploy them safely.

We have been compiling resources pertaining to the Covid-19 response on our website.

They include: COVID-19: Volunteering in a new "normal"; COVID-19 planning: Tips for Non Profits and Volunteer Engagement Leaders; Covid-19 Volunteer Guidelines. Visit www.volunteerwellington.nz to access.

As we go to print we have streamlined the process for volunteers to sign up to help wherever they are required in this time of emergency. This will allow us to deploy them to our community members who have expressed a particular need.

Vulnerable people

We are working locally with other organisations including the Student Volunteer Army, community networks, and Wellington Timebank and the

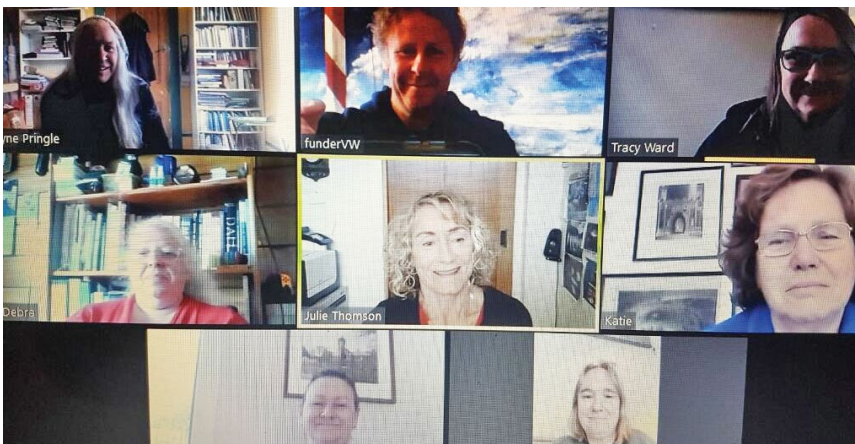


Wellington City Council. The focus is on social isolation as the lock down period progresses and the needs start to emerge, of vulnerable people on their own.

In the pre-internet times of the 1918 flu pandemic ([link for booklet on our website](#)) it is interesting to note that localized community action was called to fight the health crisis and was crucial for people's wellbeing both physically and mentally. Wellington was broken up into precincts with community hubs in local halls, similar to the way Newtown School hall is being used as a testing station in the current pandemic.

Kind conversations

In time of crisis people come together by having kind conversations on the street, helping out neighbors and putting teddies in windows. **Volunteer Wellington** continues to help with this community connection in these disrupted times.



The Volunteer Wellington team staying connected.

Inspiring comments from our member's survey with more detail on page 3

'A one-stop place to go for anyone looking to volunteer, to a potential volunteer – this would be the 'go to' area in my opinion.'

To an organisation – absolutely find it the most helpful and practical place when working with and managing volunteers.'

'They organise a much needed professional development programme which always has something to offer everyone in the sector.'

CHAIR'S COLUMN



In this unprecedented time where New Zealand is in lockdown along with many parts of the world against COVID-19, **Volunteer Wellington** is receiving many

calls from people who want to help others in the community. Instead of celebrating Student Volunteering Week in this edition, we find ourselves working with other agencies to ensure there is a co-ordinated and safe way for volunteering to happen.

The Government has asked all people to stay at home to help stop the spread of COVID-19 and follow guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health. Even if you feel completely well, you should stay home unless you are working with the small handful of volunteering organisations supporting essential services equipped with protective gear. While you may mean well by trying to be helpful, you might inadvertently spread illness and end up doing much more harm than good.

In the coming days, weeks and months, help will be needed in a variety of ways. To help in the interim, you can make a list of everyone in your life who is on their own, and call them regularly to make sure they are feeling physically and mentally healthy and checking in on whether they need anything.

With **Volunteer Wellington** staff working remotely, we will be publishing our member survey results, and planning for deferred delivery of training and workshops later this year. We are pleased to welcome Claire Teal as our new Manager Member Services. Claire has been consistently involved in volunteering throughout her career both nationally and internationally.

I would also like to acknowledge and farewell our Lower Hutt Manager, Katie Terris. Katie has been with us since 2006 and has provided valuable leadership at our Lower Hutt office. We thank Katie for her long service with the organisation and wish her well with her retirement plans.

As we unite against COVID-19, please remember to follow regular advice around physical distancing, washing your hands, and wearing protective gear. Be safe and be kind – particularly to those working in essential services where there is no respite.

Kia Kaha
Ming-chun Wu

World Micro-volunteering Day 15 April

As we adjust to a new way of working this could be a perfect time to find suitable roles for volunteers. Micro-volunteering is bite-sized, on-demand, no commitment actions that benefit a worthy cause. Micro-volunteering Day is also a unique opportunity for micro-volunteering platforms, volunteer involved organisations and individuals to join together in a synchronised effort to demonstrate the empowering potential of the micro-volunteering concept.



Training ... to come

We have a great line-up of training topics planned for 2020 based on much of your feedback from last year. Postponed for now ... we are looking forward very much to seeing you in person when we have lived through this crisis. Meanwhile be aware of our many – but differently-shaped – opportunities. And may you all and your families, both local and faraway, stay well.

Small group planting and online possibilities for Employee Volunteering

Many Employee Volunteering projects are on hold at present but employee volunteers may be still able to volunteer for our community member organisations (see the micro-volunteering article above).

With many people working from home offices, there are opportunities for online skilled volunteering roles. Some examples are: help with accounting systems; new board members with particular skills; a qualified auditor for annual accounts; developing an APP; auditing workloads.

Planting season is coming up May–Sept and our community groups will have thousands of trees to put in the ground. We are working on finding a way, (Alert Level permitting) to get small teams involved in planting that takes into account health and safety issues, so please get in touch with us about this.

We have put this question forward to our Employee Volunteering Partners to see what solutions they may come up with. **With the focus on the health and safety of employee volunteers, how do we continue to engage with our communities and contribute to this meaningful and often critical work?**

The communities that we collectively serve still need support and depend on volunteers for that support. We look forward to creatively shaping participation.

Introducing Claire Teal



In March we welcomed Claire Teal to our team as the **Volunteer Wellington** Manager Member Services.

From Claire:

'I started volunteering when I was 11, and I basically haven't stopped since then! After completing my Master of Social Work degree, I worked in a community development role. From there I moved to manage the Central City Branch of the Wellington CAB. While I was there I joined the **Volunteer Wellington** board which was a great experience. Working at the CAB fired my passion for the importance of the manager of volunteers' role and that led to a move to Volunteering NZ, where I spent three years working nationwide on raising the profile of the manager role and on the development of Best Practice Guidelines for Volunteer-Involving Organisations and Competencies for Managers of Volunteers.

In 2013 I bowed out of the paid workforce to have my two sons, Oscar now six and Arlo nearly four. Last year I took the leap back into paid work doing community engagement at Community Networks Wellington (CNW). It is so exciting to be back involved with **Volunteer Wellington**, working amongst volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations and doing what I love.

More of everything say our members

Our annual members' survey gave us reassurance, ideas and thoughts for the future.

An overall sense, is that the community sector works extremely hard... will always need volunteer teams and that ongoing training for managers of volunteers – and governance boards/committees – is important and necessary.

'As a Manager, I am always on the look out for courses and workshops and the chance to upskill our volunteers, so the training workshops you provide are very valuable. I would love to be able to have more time in my role to attend more workshops.'

There was overall consensus that many questions to issues, were answered for participants. Confusions

around Health and Safety and legal requirements became clearer. Also aspects of how to understand '... the needs of volunteers and how to retain them better.'

'New information has ensured I'm more up to date.'

The perennial issues stayed in the mix – funding, time and governance training.

The value of training for governance members being repeated regularly, was emphasised; but it was suggested, for those who worked during the day there needed to be more evening sessions.

The Managers of Volunteers peer support groups held regularly in Wellington, Hutt and Porirua plus **Volunteer Wellington's** member services programme, were valuable answers to ensuring volunteer teams

'They provide a fantastic free service – easy to access, helpful, and great advocacy for volunteerism.'

created effective organisational capacity. *'Have found it very reassuring to know that issues are shared and find that sharing helps to put things in perspective ... and to share ways that others have used to manage issues'*. Peer support group participant.

Impact from the training workshops focussed on the value of networking opportunities and understanding the 'bigger picture' of the community sector. *'I don't go to all (the workshops) but each year I find something we need to improve on and attend. You guys are doing such a good job.'*

Those communities who had used **Volunteer Wellington's** Employee Volunteering programme praised the service and were very or completely satisfied with the current service. One suggestion was, *'Ensure your business partners understand that sometimes a significant amount of lead in time is required before they can volunteer in order to give the employee teams a good experience'*.

Volunteer Wellington's most visible and highly used service is the recruitment and referral of volunteers. In the **Volunteer Hutt** and **Volunteer Porirua** area most contacts concerning role description and placement were face-to-face. In Wellington use of the website was higher. Ninety percent of respondents said they found the volunteers referred to them to be a good fit for the role.

Overall, the demand for our services was for more – more training, more support with role and project design was noted; and, from across the survey, most said they would use all of our services more over the next 12 months. *'Love it! The quality of volunteers, the prompt follow up support is brilliant. Our Trust got so much accomplished working with volunteers from Volunteer Wellington.'*

Thank you for your feedback. It is great data for us to use as we review our services to ensure we are meeting our community members needs now and into the future.

Farewelling Katie Terris



After 14 years in her role as the manager of **Volunteer Hutt**, Katie Terris is retiring.

Katie has done a sterling job leading, managing and delivering our services to the Hutt Valley communities. Through Katie's leadership **Volunteer Hutt** has had a significant impact on building strong and healthy communities in the Hutt Valley; she has touched thousands of people's lives over that time.

Our team and the Hutt Valley communities

will miss Katie in so many ways. She has a wonderful ability to develop warm relationships, connect and work with diverse communities, as well as support people from a wide range of backgrounds to develop and achieve their goals through volunteering.

There will be more detail of Katie's 14 years of service and her farewell celebration in our next issue of *Your community connector*.

→ THANK YOU FOR FUNDING AND SUPPORT

Betty Campbell Trust, Christine Taylor Foundation, COGS, Department of Internal Affairs Support for Volunteering Fund, Roy Ferguson, Four Winds Foundation, Hutt City Council, Hutt Mana Charitable Trust, Infinity Foundation, John Ilott Charitable Trust, Lion Foundation, Lottery Community, Ministry of Social Development – Work and Income, One Foundation, Pelorus Trust, Pub Charity, Sargood Bequest, Tai Shan Foundation, T G McCarthy Trust, Trust House Porirua, Victoria University Wellington, Wellington City Council, Wellington Community Trust **IN-KIND SUPPORTERS:** CSG Technology, *Kapi-Mana News*, minimum graphics, New World Metro, St John's in the City Presbyterian Church, Southern Cross Garden Bar, Sushi B, Vertia

Donate: your support will enable us to continue to support the Wellington, Hutt Valley and Porirua diverse communities [donate here](#). As always thank you to our existing financial supporters for your support.

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BUSINESS FRIENDS: Symonite Wellington Ltd, Mosquito Consulting Services Ltd, House of Sabra

INDIVIDUAL FRIENDS: Sue Hine, Sue Hobbs, Ann Hodson, Colin Hyde, Pat Lakeman, Helen Middleton, Raewyn Sinclair, Chris Streatfield, Olwen Taylor, Celia Wade-Brown

'Collecting' mission follows security work career

Graham Nelson has been involved with security and bodyguard work for more than 40 years. He has worked with big bands, embassies and entertainment venues in New Zealand and several countries around the world.

With martial arts as his base and an ability to smile and communicate with anyone, when unemployment hit, Graham was determined to remain cheerful and engaged with people. 'After all life is a journey – not a destination,' he grins. Even if he didn't have paid work he wanted to keep meeting people and being useful.

So he headed for **Volunteer Hutt** and was impressed with the friendly welcome he received from manager Katie and interviewer Anita. Through their Work and Income programme they talk in depth with clients to find the most appropriate and meaningful roles. **Foodbank** was Graham's volunteering starting point. 'The food people brought in would put a supermarket to

shame,' he said. And the team spirit among the volunteers, was strong. He loved that. 'We were all getting to help others and enjoying doing it together.'

Then his 'collecting' mission began with, at the time of this interview, every weekend booked for the entire month.

Child Cancer Foundation was last weekend, next week it's the **SPCA**, then **Blind Low Vision NZ** and finally **NZ Red Cross**. He will be on a course for dealing with emergencies with **NZ Red Cross** as an extra. What could be better than having a former security guard around in an emergency, the organisation had said. Heading for 60, age has been a barrier in the paid work field; whereas voluntary organisations understand the value of experience and knowledge gained



during a dedicated working life. And as Graham reiterated it's the meeting of new people that he likes. 'Keeps the mind sharp. Keeps the communication skills alive.'

As he does his standing-with-his-collection-box stints among the varied roving crowds there could be a

politician, a sporting elite, an entertainer who will recognise Graham with a smile of recognition recalling that this was the friendly man whose job was to keep them safe.

Or it could be a patched gang member who will also recognise that here is a 'strong man' – and that he is standing where he is to collect funds for the community. 'Yes they gave a donation for **Child Cancer Foundation** and we exchanged greetings and hongi,' said Graham. His cheerfulness has a far reach ...

Having spent so much of his life in so many parts of the world often exposed to huge crowds and vastly diverse populations, Graham knows it's important now 'to get out of the house'. He needs to be part of life and the community. That's what's keeping up his spirits and giving him the motivation and confidence to stay in the paid job seeking circuit.

Hutt Valley High School students connect with the elderly

During the past few years **Volunteer Hutt** has worked with staff and students from Hutt Valley High School to create a pathway through which students could learn about the many aspects of volunteering.

About 50 students responded in 2019, many of them involved in activities with elderly people in a rest home. Their responses to the activities they

undertook were very heartening – they saw that they were able to bring joy to a sector of the population that was often lonely – and in need of seeing younger faces.

Hutt Valley High School felt that the programme had been so successful that in 2020 they built volunteering into their timetable. As manager of **Volunteer Hutt**, in mid-February Katie Terris talked to the 340 Year 12 students about the benefits of volunteering both in the community, and for them.

Seventy came forward to offer their services, many of them opting for roles with the elderly; but others seeing that there were options across the board to experience what volunteering could offer.

Activities have now come to a halt with the Covid-19 situation. When the time is right we will reconnect with the students and take up their offers of energy and enthusiasm; and the wonderful connection that happens between youth and the elderly will happen again.



Volunteer Wellington
Level 7, 186 Willis Street, Wellington.
PO Box 24130, Wellington 6142
Tel 499 4570.
Email info@volunteerwellington.nz

Porirua Office
Level 3, Pember House, 16 Hagley Street,
Porirua 5022. Tel 237 5355
Email managerporirua@volunteerwellington.nz

Hutt Office
Level 4, 21–23 Andrews Avenue,
Lower Hutt 5010. Tel 566 6786.
Email managerhutt@volunteerwellington.nz

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