



## President's Annual Report 2014

Dear Members,

The Board of Ambury Park Centre extends a welcome to you for attending our Annual General Meeting, Monday 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2014.

The year 2013 was successful for the Centre, which again would not have been possible, without the generous assistance that is bestowed on the Centre from several charitable and community trusts and individual donors. That the Centre continues to attract such funding is a tribute to the programmes, the staff that ensure these maintain an innovative edge and current relevance, the whanau who seek our services and the volunteers who dedicate their time. The three programmes - Intensive and Remedial Riding Therapy for children, adolescents and adults, Secondary Schooling for students unable to progress in mainstream education for a variety of reasons and Vocational Training for adults with disabilities – continued to offer opportunities for many across Auckland.

The Riding Therapy has a holistic approach using the rhythm of the horse to develop the muscles used in human uprightness along with other physical and cognitive challenges to promote physical, emotional, intellectual and psychological development. It may be that a child sits upright or says its first word on the horse.

We believe we have a complementary combination with an Occupational Therapist and a Conductive Therapist working in this programme, in a holistic way.

In the secondary school and vocational programmes the approach is the same with an emphasis on individual programmes to suit the varying needs of the students and clients. These can be educational, emotional, behavioural, psychological and psychiatric. In these areas riding as a therapy and a skill is a magical influence in the progress of the students and clients.

The numbers were steady in the programmes in 2013, with a considerable increase in the school students and the remedial riders during the year.

The school students worked towards NCEA standards and to improving their horse riding skills. The Vocational programme offered opportunities for its clients to improve life skills, maintain Literacy and Numeracy skills, to be involved in community activities and pursue personal aspirations. Many were involved in riding and all in horse care.

The end of year Prizegiving celebrated the achievements of the students and clients for their academic, riding and horse care achievements. It was again a fine day to celebrate outdoors after a skilful and entertaining riding display that included the team game “Hoof Ball”! This is rather like soccer on horseback, played with a very large ball. Some students transitioned to further education or work: MIT Hospitality, Youth Guarantee Tourism (Cabin Crew Training) and an assistant position in Early Childhood.

In the 2012 Annual Report details were reported about our fundraising dinner in our indoor arena on March 23, 2013 but it should be reiterated that it was a stellar event in every way. The Board was overwhelmed by the generosity of those present and others that contributed to raising funds for “Horsepower”. As mentioned in the 2012 report an unexpected bonus was that the global design company Gibson Rusden, now called Creative Refinery, who supported us to brilliantly stage the event, later adopted Ambury Park Centre as its charity, taking the role of helping promote the Centre through redesigning our logo and promotional materials, including the website. The new name and logo feature on this document, the letterheads and the business cards are designed and the website is well on the way. The relationship with Vanessa Preece and Neil Rusden from Creative Refinery is inspiring and motivating. We are most fortunate to have their talented input.

We are planning that the “Horsepower” arena fund raising dinner will become at least a biennial event, and hope that its initial stellar success is repeated.

The Board and staff were very pleased to receive a grant in 2013 from the ASB Community Trust to fund the purchase of a new server for the Centre and new computers for our management and administrative staff, and some other staff members. The upgrade was very much needed. In 2014 the challenge in this area is to upgrade the computers for our students and clients, as the existing ones are no longer supported.

In 2013 there was a plan to raise the funds to address a winter and spring drainage issue in the area between the facilities building and the barns at the back of the property and look to create a second outdoor sensory area or trail for our riders. This remains on the agenda but to date more pressing needs have taken priority, such as the IT upgrade and assistance with our operational costs.

That the Centre continues to operate not just effectively but with verve and satisfying outcomes is largely due to the continuing contributions we receive from many quarters. A visit to the Centre demonstrates the complexity of how the various programmes operate in a smooth precision to facilitate Intensive and Remedial riding for a wide age range, second chance secondary education for vulnerable and often troubled adolescence and vocational skills training and opportunities for adults with disabilities. The average numbers catered for in 2013 were 80-90 in Riding Therapy, up to 29 in the school and 29 in the vocational area. The outcomes for all of the programmes were pleasing through utilising individualised programmes and the powerful influence of the horse as therapeutic not just in riding therapy but in the school and the vocational course to provide riding opportunities, horse care duties and a relationship with a horse.

As mentioned number of our students achieved NCEA standards and in 2014 the senior students are poised to achieve more. Further NZQA Equine standards are being introduced for senior students. The NZQA Equine Standards begin at Level 2 and require a level of maturity.

The Equine Assisted Learning continues to be part of the school programme and as yet the Centre has not ventured much further with the idea of offering this therapy beyond the Centre's students and clients. Although a form of this has been an element in the initiation and transition process with Intensive Wraparound students, to help ascertain whether Ambury Park Centre could be suitable for their continuing education. EAL is an area in which one should proceed with caution ensuring that a professional mental health person is involved. As mentioned in last year's report we do have three staff qualified to support EAL.

The half salary contribution related to EAL type ground work in the students' riding programme was again funded by The Four Winds Foundation.

The success of the Centre's programmes is of course related to the planning and practical skills of the staff and the energy they expend to be innovative and ensure the students and clients experience success. We acknowledge both the work and the skills of the staff.

The board very much appreciates the good work of our Heads of School (Elizabeth Warden), Equine (Debbie Freeman) Vocational (Keating Oakley-Browne) for their skilled leadership and management. Also on behalf of the Board, I acknowledge the leadership of the Director/Principal (Noel Morrison) generally and in particular his skills in promoting the Centre, attracting students and clients and his dedicated work in seeking the best outcomes for them.

Recently Pip Hackett, a Centre Remedial coach of long standing was awarded the honour of the RDA coach of the year for 2013. We congratulate Pip. Debbie Freeman is also to be congratulated for being bestowed with a Life Membership of RDA.

The goal in in the adult Vocational programme has been to further implement 'pathways to inclusion', whereby the clients are supported to access activities or areas of training that they personally aspire to, as required by the Ministry of Social Development. It is reported from The Vocational group that the programme has been developed to enable the clients to access activities applicable to their personal aspirations and take part in small group community outings focusing on shared preferences that foster independence and personal networks. A Vocational Prospectus, which includes whanau views, was completed to be trialed in 2014. Otherwise the programme continues to offer a variety of foci in life skills, such as cooking, horse care, managing public transport and shopping, personal skills for Numeracy and Literacy, swimming and generally managing being out in the community.

Volunteer's day was celebrated in June and the Centre ran volunteer programmes in holiday periods providing opportunities for learning further horse skills and taking part in riding activities. It is much appreciated that the Equine staff do this for such a dedicated service to Ambury Park Centre. Quite simply our riding therapy programmes could not function without our many volunteers. There is considerable effort made by the Equine staff to canvas interest and to then train volunteers. It is very good that Carole Wiltshire

has taken the responsibility to be the Centre's Volunteer Coordinator. This is a great help to us all.

It is important that the staff are offered Professional Development opportunities as a whole staff and as specific to their particular roles. In 2013 there was a continued focus on Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder and its implications for development and learning, all important internal planning and sharing of PD experiences and First Aid. The school teaching staff attended Cluster Group PD meetings and other subject specific PD in English and Mathematics. The Vocational Skills staff took part in the Ministry of Social Development course in Facilitation and Planning. Other groups were involved in Abuse and Family Violence run by the Ministry of Education, Equine Assisted Learning, Jen Hamilton Show Jumping Course, Registered In-service for Priority Learners and Volunteering Auckland information sharing. As in other years a number of Equine staff attended the RDA Conference/Training, this year held in Silverstream in May 2013.

2013 was no exception in the staff organising a car boot sale in March to raise funds for the students and clients to experience community based educational and aspirational trips. There were many car boot vendors and a staff variety stall. The horse rides and the sausage sizzle were again popular.

Later in November selected members of our herd were used for horse rides at the annual Ambury Farm day. On both these occasions several volunteers assisted. This is appreciated by the Board.

The continuation of the holiday riding programme is also very most welcome and is valuable for raising further funds, and for the Centre providing for a wider community need that simultaneously raises the Centre's profile.

In 2013 volunteer groups Chorus, a group from Manukau Electoral Office and volunteers from the farm and staff helped out at the Centre with mainly outdoor work.

The agencies with which the Centre works for the support of our clients and students in 2013 were Child Youth and Family Services, Group Special Education, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (Whirinaki, Kari Centre, Marinoto West), the Child and

Family Unit, Youth Transition Programme, Alternative Education, several schools, special schools, other youth and adult providers and transition coordinators.

An annual early evening meet and greet with the students, clients and parents/caregivers in March helped to facilitate understanding of the Centre's practices with our whanau. At other points in the year, meetings for Independent Learning Programmes (IPLs) are held to reinforce and explain the individual goals for the students, clients, parents and caregivers. Feedback from the parents and caregivers generally and specifically for their children is important for the staff, and no less specifically for the Board to know.

2013 was the last year in the three year cycle for the Centre's Strategic plan for the school as required by the Ministry of Education. So in July the next one is to be formulated. There is a considerable Equine element in this document at Ambury since riding and horse care are vital parts of the curriculum and qualifications. The Board reviews and discusses an annual income though a review and projected budget planning.

Sadly we lost Fred and Tyson from our herd this year. They were retired to Debbie's Freeman's farm and had become increasingly frail. However two new horses, Cobber and Rain, joined our herd in 2013. Rain settled into the Therapy programme and Cobber with the student riding.

The overriding challenge for Ambury Park Centre is to achieve the level of funding each year that ensures our three areas of operation continue to offer high quality equine therapy, secondary education and vocational training. The Centre is the recipient of a proportion of its funding from the Ministries of Health, Education and Social Development and from fees. Beyond that the Centre is reliant on donations and grants from charitable and community trusts which so generously contributed to the Centre's success in 2013. The Centre was blessed with extraordinary assistance from these sources that enabled it to cover salary, horse care, staff professional development and other operational costs. Horse sponsors are a valued source of income, the number of whom increased as an outcome of the Arena dinner in 2013. Individual donations were also very generous. The Board is indeed grateful for all of these sources of income.

In 2013 a grant from The ASB Community Trust funded the purchase and installation of a new server and computers for the administration and management staff. This was an urgently needed upgrade. As mentioned earlier, we now have the challenge of seeking funding to upgrade the computer for the school students and adult clients

Further funding from Community Foundations and Trusts contributed to the Centre's expenses for Equine, schooling, professional development, maintenance and resources for all programmes. The Board works determinedly to ensure that our horses are well cared for, we are adequately resourced, and our staffing levels are maintained.

In 2013 the Centre received grants from numerous Community Foundations and Trusts namely Pub Charity, Four Winds Foundation, Southern Trust, Blue Waters Community Trust, Infinity Foundation, Lion Foundation, Pelorus Trust and COGS.

Family and other Charitable Trusts donations are the very backbone of the Centre in ensuring that its three operations continue - the riding therapy, second chance education and vocational training, that strive to improve the physical, educational, emotional, psychological and psychiatric wellbeing of our clients and students, and in so doing to impact positively on their whanau and their wider communities. The Board is enormously grateful to them, horse sponsors and individual donors who made all of this possible in 2013.

The Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust, Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust (2013-14) and J M Thompson Trust are long time extraordinary benefactors of the Centre, along with the Lou and Iris Fisher Trust, PH Picot Charitable Trust and the Sir John Logan Campbell Residuary Estate. Other generous grants and donations were received from the June Gray Charitable Trust, Chenery Memorial Trust, ARA Lodge no. 348 IC Charitable Trust, Geoffrey & Nell Erne Adams Charitable Trust, Mangere Community Trust, Lois Dalley Charitable Trust, Ziera Shoes NZ Ltd, Franklin Machinery Club, Mangere Markets, Totoraa Epsom Service Club, Epsom Girls Grammar School, Pukekohe RSA, Waiheke Over 40s, Budwalda and McDonnell, Whitford Women's Institute and NZRDA.

Horses were sponsored by Grove Hardware Ltd, the Kelliher Charitable Trust, REM Systems, Dr Malcolm and Chris Futter, Mike and Linda Gill , Jane Burmester and the

Ralph and Eve Seelye Charitable Trust (sponsored 2 horses), and Warren and Caroline Grove.

Several individuals contributed significantly. Among these were Mary Brook who ensured a very generous grant for the Centre, Michael Otto, Jane Thompson, Tim Chan, John Goulding, Sir Thomas Thorp, Carole Wiltshire, and many others. Too numerous to mention individually are the people who donated so much with horse care pledges, to auction items and with donations to the Arena fundraising dinner, "Horsepower", in March.

I repeat that the Centre is truly blessed with such a positive input towards its operational costs, enabling it to realise its goals in 2013

Tribute has been paid to the staff, who along with the Board members are fundamental to the Centre making a difference in the lives of many children, adolescents and adults in the Auckland area. I wish to acknowledge the good work and dedication of the Board and in particular I thank treasurer, Claire Lingman, and Secretary, Caroline Grove, for their very significant efforts. I also wish to acknowledge the particularly creative input of Vice President Ian John, and the work of other members Chris Futter, Deane Maule, Doug Alexander, Janet Hepi, Vicky Latta, Director/Principal Noel Morrison and staff representative Elizabeth Warden. Doug Alexander was welcomed as a member of the Board in August. Doug brings experience and talent in Accounting and property development and investment. We are most fortunate to have Doug as a member of the Board.

Sylvia Taylor was the Auckland Council Mangere and Otahuhu Local Board representative on our Board. Tim Lowe represented Parks and Janine Nillesen the Ambury Farm. Their contributions in keeping us abreast of Parks developments, their representations on our behalf and the work that is done in maintaining and improving our corner of Ambury Regional Park is amazing. Janine puts a huge effort into our surrounds. It is a pleasure working with them and we offer our sincere thanks to them.

For 22 years PKF Ross Melville (now BDO Auckland) have audited Ambury Park Centre's accounts. This is an extraordinary contribution for which we are deeply indebted. We again thank Graeme Lynch, Blair Stanley and Andrew MacDonald for their work for our 2013 audited accounts.

Mary Brook has been our Patron since 2003, for which we are most fortunate. I thank Mary for her advocacy of the Centre, her enormous generosity and her belief in what the Centre aims to achieve, I thank Mary for all of this and for her personal support.

Our community of our Patron, donors, staff, volunteers, board members, agencies, families, caregivers, students, clients and friends of the Centre all contribute to the continued success of Ambury Park Centre.

The Board is dedicated to working with this community to seek ways to improve and be innovative to ensure the best life-long outcomes for our therapy riders, our secondary students and our adult clients. Above all the goal is that Ambury Park Centre will be a strong therapeutic institution well into the future.

*Gaynor Brown*

Gaynor Brown

President of the Board

30 June, 2014