

APC Newsletter

Mid-Year Edition Term 2, 2024



Ambury Park Centre
Riding therapy with a difference



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gaynor Brown

With recent seasonal changes our spontaneous ponds have re-emerged in the paddocks around the Centre, which wondrously attract the oyster catchers, pukeko, ducks, grey and white herons, and white and black swans. No doubt Barry, our semi-resident peacock has been around as well. I am so proud of the Centre, as it has again embarked on an active and mostly strong first half of the year. It has not been possible to date to have the Intensive riding therapy programme in full swing. For a number of reasons the Centre is yet to fill the full time physiotherapy hours. I wish to congratulate Claire Hall on her promotion to the Head of School where she

has already proven proactive managing an upgrade of the Centre's IT systems and actively engaging student whānau in the school and its environment. The head of Equine, Katja Spooner, can finally focus on her role with the employment of two coaches for the Remedial riding, Elise Power and former staff member Beret Atkinson. We welcomed part-time physio Esther Coenradi to the team also, with our previous physio Marjolein stepping in to help when she was able. Katya has responsibility for the riding therapy, student and adult riders, and does so much along with our Equine team towards maintaining a healthy, working herd of beautiful horses. Julie Wharton maintains responsibility for our adult clients who continue to happily engage in their varied activities in the Vocational programme. Patricia Simeon, our Director/Principal, continues to lead the successful teams and actively support them. On the ground it is the staff who ensure the smooth synchronisation and running of programmes. It is a while since my newsletter piece has focused on a description of each programme. It seems timely to briefly do so now and in the process honour those who make it all possible.

RDA Programme: As mentioned the intensive riding therapy is minimal currently but normally operates for many clients, mainly children, with significant disabilities. Ambury's intensive therapy combines Riding therapy, Hippotherapy and Physiotherapy. The gait of the horse works on the muscles of human uprightness and along with hippotherapy is able to target specific parts of the body. The magic of this work and the relationship with the horse enable significant improvements in mobility, speech and other cognitive developments. In the remedial programme, the riders may graduate from Intensive or join the programme with less severe disabilities. They also present with issues such as neuro- divergence, depression, social anxiety and other mental health challenges. Again the riding therapy and the relationship with the horse work magic physically, socially, cognitively and psychologically. Improvements are noted by whanau, agencies and schools. Most importantly the sessions are fun!



RDA Ride in action

Secondary School (Blues): Our alternative education programme caters for a diverse group comprising students with learning delays, neuro-divergent conditions, behavioural and mental health challenges, among others. Riding and horse care are a vital part of the curriculum. English, Mathematics and Science teachers work alongside teacher aides, some MOE funded and others employed by the Centre. The therapeutic impact of the horse and Individual lesson plans are a winning combination. The students are also involved in other activities like garden to table and in community activities for educational purposes or giving back. The students can take time to settle but the change that takes effect is amazing in progress, motivation, wellbeing and socialising.

Vocational Programme (Vocs): The adult vocational/life skills programme also enables therapy riding and caring for the horses. Much of the programme's life skills activities involve work around the horses as well as cooking, domestic duties and gardening. They have cultivated an impressive garden and tend to our chicken flock. Community participation is a key part of their week that involves swimming, art at Māpura Studios, Library visits, using public transport, fun outings such as going to local plays, and exploring our surrounding whenua. They also give back to the community by setting up and taking down arena equipment for the Clevedon Pony Club's weekend eventing. Several key support workers assist with the Vocational programme. It is a wonderfully busy Centre where our dedicated staff ensure much positive work happens.



Blues and Vocs with Animal Safety Team



Vocs planting at Te Ara Rata Stream

On behalf of the board, I express deep gratitude to our community trusts, charitable trusts and the many donors for operations, horses and all sorts. We are also grateful to the whānau and agencies like Oranga Tamariki, Te Hikoi and ACES (AE) and Ministries for support. There is no doubt that Ambury Park Centre is unique both in what it offers and how skillfully it serves its therapy riders, secondary students and adult clients. I am extremely proud of Ambury Park Centre and having the pleasure of working with and being alongside its people - staff, board, whānau, supporting agencies and donating trusts, donors, and ministries that make Ambury an institution that helps improve lives. A very special thanks to all the staff who put in so much practical work to make this a reality.

Finally. Yay! Half the poo pile has gone and the rest is to go!

Ngā mihi nui,
Gaynor



Our old friend Barry the Peacock

NOTES FROM THE INCOMING PRESIDENT

Neil Rusden

Allow me to introduce myself: I am Neil Rusden, and I'm honoured to be your incoming President at Ambury Park Centre. Most recently I was the Vice-President on our retiring Board. I'm really looking forward to meeting you and working alongside a great team to provide the services our people need.



I never expected to be writing this article. Firstly, I would like to acknowledge Mary Brook, our Patron who has represented Ambury Park Centre with dignity and grace for many years. Mary has decided it is time to hand over the reins to a new Patron. Thank you Mary for your dedication and continued championing of APC. It is only fitting that we welcome Gaynor Brown, a person we all know, love and respect as Patron. Gaynor has provided tireless, dedicated service to our Centre for longer than many of us can remember and we welcome Gaynor into this esteemed honorary role.

Sadly, at our recent Annual General Meeting our Board took the decision to retire. Many of our Board members have served APC for decades. The service that they have provided in this time and the decisions they have made have resulted in the Centre you see today. Thank you Gaynor, Caroline, Deanne, Claire, Anna, Donnelle, Jeremy and Linda. We will be celebrating you all on an appropriate day for an in-person celebration of your service. Alongside this celebration we are hoping to bring you all social media posts celebrating each Board member's time with us in these roles. A big thank you also to our members who came in numbers to our Annual General Meeting, it was great to see this renewed level of engagement in our Society.

The members have decided to lean into this retirement and take a moment to reflect. It is no secret that times are tough for many of us, and that Ambury Park Centre is not immune to these times. Being mindful of this reality, Members have voted to enter a time of transition and to take on the generous offer of a full time Executive Chair for the next year to guide us through this time of change. The Executive Chair will walk alongside me and our Director / Principal Patricia Simeon to set us up for a new future. Rules changes are needed to meet new laws. Once ratified, we will need to advertise for new Board members. Importantly, we can take this opportunity to set us up for the next 30 years of being of service through the power of the horse. We welcome Darrin Brinsden into this Executive Chair position and will introduce him to you in the near future.

A note to our staff, thank you! Your commitment is the reason that we exist. It is the reason that the people we serve trust us and engage fully in the services that we provide. Thank you also to all of our volunteers for offering your time and expertise, we value you all.



Ambury Park Centre AGM, June 2024

And to our riders, students, vocational adults and the families who support you. Thank you for challenging yourselves to learn something new. You are the reason that we exist. You make APC the vibrant centre we all know and love.

Our funders, thank you for your continued support. We are very grateful that you see the value that we see in the provision of our services. We acknowledge our long term and short term charitable funders, government funders, council funders, and individual funders. Thank you for investing in APC. Our horses, paddocks, built environment, and people really benefit from the funds and fees that you contribute.

My day job is focused on change, so experience tells me that change can be hard. It is less hard if we all stay engaged. The three of us want you to know that our doors are open and that we are keen to have a chat.

I feel a weight of responsibility in this role to champion this period of transition though I am also looking forward to working with Patricia and the Executive Chair to land APC in a different place by this time next year.

An inter-generational future that we create together. Strong, aligned and engaging.

Neil

FROM THE PRINCIPAL / DIRECTOR

Patricia Simeon

Kia ora one and all, and many thanks for a wonderful first half of the year. Our Head of Academic, Claire Hall, has settled into the new role amazingly with everyone's support. She is a problem-solver extraordinaire, our resident IT guru and recently won our staff "Zen Award" for remaining calm under pressure! It was so good to celebrate all our incredibly hard-working team, both long-serving and newer team members at our End of Term Awards night. I am so proud of the passionate team I work with and the mahi everyone collectively puts in to make Ambury the place that it is. Office manager Stacie won the "Sunshine Award" and if you have had the pleasure of being in contact with the office you will see why! Stacie and our admin support/volunteer coordinator Barbara attended the recent Volunteering Auckland forum and are looking forward to more opportunities to spread the good word in the community about what we do. As always, if I am not in my office you will find me with my sleeves rolled up getting involved in the various programmes around the centre, ensuring all run as smoothly as possible and working on the ground alongside our students, clients and riders. I look forward to making many more positive memories at Ambury over the second half of the year.



Office personnel Stacie and Barbara representing Ambury Park Centre at the Volunteering Auckland forum



Principal/Director Patricia making fried bread with the Vocs for Matariki

Equine

Shelley Trueman

The current Ambury herd stands at eighteen horses. Although we have fewer than usual, all our current horses are fit and in active work, and generally younger than in the past. This has allowed changes to fitness programmes, training and work load. Diversity of work and play helps keep our horses happy and healthy in mind and body. We suddenly have several paints and chestnuts, making identification in low light, at a distance or with covers on a fun experience!



New boy Tama

Veterans Amara and Sarah left together in April to enjoy retirement rides in Woodhill forest.

Lease horses Lily, Bella, Harvey and Sammy returned to their families. Staff and Blues students continue to keep close tabs on Arlie, Patch, Frosty, as well as Sarah and Amara.

Redhead Rupert and tall Tama joined the herd a few months back, proving popular with riders, including staff. Versatile Gypsy Cobb Charlie arrived in January. She rides with our Blues riders as well as RDA and supplies endless cuddles to all. She is also a firm grooming favourite for the

Vocational Clients, who also help out our stable team by grooming Lorry, Magpie and Lollipop in the mornings.

The weather has been tricky for paddock maintenance, but our smaller and younger herd have allowed some flexibility and experiments, such as strip grazing long pasture, and asking our lawn maintenance man to mow paddock weeds. Thank you for your patience and humour, Shannon, as we dispatch you to navigate gates and horses! (No horses or mower men were harmed in the mowing of paddocks.)

The new shade shed donated and erected by the Lindsay Trust is a horse hit to avoid not only summer heat, but also winter wind and rain. We are also grateful for the generous grant by the Mangere-Ōtahuhu local board (Auckland Council) towards our horse hay. Kind donations from several organisations and individuals keep our horses rugged, fed and tacked. Our volunteers are crucial for running RDA and therapy rides, and we welcome our new trainees. All help is much appreciated.

Outside normal working hours we ran a few events. The Ambury Park Centre Horse Show in March hosted a dozen entrants competing in Working Equitation and Dressage Tests, who received valuable feedback as well as ribbons. In May we held the Ambury Special Olympics, allowing riders to compete in equestrian events and receive valuable coach feedback and accolades. Thanks to volunteer effort from judges, staff and our Ambury volunteers, horses were groomed, stalls were mucked, rider assistance was given and courses were created for these events. In early July the Ambury Red Nose Day Cure Kids pony rides fundraiser shared our horses with our community. School holiday programmes continue to attract horsey kids who learn how to ride and care for horses along with pony pats and tractor rides.



Riding with Teka



Mesh masks help protect our horses faces from UV light and infection



Follow Ambury Park Centre Inc. on Facebook, Instagram and Tiktok to be kept up to date with future events and lots of photos and interesting articles. Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/AmburyPark/>
Tiktok: @amburypark
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/amburyparkcentre/>

Academic

Secondary Students Term 4 - "Keeping Up with the Blues!"



Students explore creativity and character-building with puppetry

The Blues had a fabulous start to 2024, enjoying the sunny weather. Families and students came in for working bees at the start of the term and worked incredibly hard to clean, tidy, and fix the classrooms, stables and grounds. We all really appreciated the refreshed Ambury spaces. Term 1 started off with student-Whānau planning meetings; it was great to catch up with everyone and the students settled into their academic learning with refreshed goals for the new year.

The Blues made the most of the gorgeous weather, getting out across the farm with the horses and completing paddock maintenance jobs - the horses appreciated their sparkling water troughs! We resumed our Friday EOTC activities and trips out. Summer was a perfect time for several swimming sessions and our students perfected their dives; Jizaiah showed everyone how to do an amazing "manu", a skill that got him to the Auckland manu championships.

We were very lucky to have visits from our local Police; they talked about their role in the community and showed us how to handcuff, radio and carry out the entrance fitness test!

Animal control came and talked with us all about safety around animals and what to do if you encounter a stray dog. Trips out included a sculpture exhibition at the Botanic Gardens, sculpture trail at the airport, learning about the Manukau Harbour and its inhabitants at Auckland museum, ice skating, Careers Expos - and more!



Puppeteer Jon Coddington with his vulture puppet

The Blues have been brushing up their cooking skills, with regular sessions making cookies for the volunteers and hearty food for lunch. We have all been very impressed with the nachos, creamy chicken, homemade pizza and more! Maha Tomo and the team at Aotearoa Bone and Stone Carving have run workshops for some of our students who are learning carving skills and creating amazing pieces. Expressing their creative sides, many students took part in the puppetry workshops run by art facilitator Emily, learning how to manipulate and animate puppets, bringing them to life. This was topped off by a fabulous workshop with puppeteer John, displaying his amazing bird puppets and marionettes.



Finn models Police hats

Getting out in the community, our students learned about weeds and pest control, taking part in the moth plant competition, to help get rid of this invasive weed. Well done to our star "pod hunter" Finn, who collected a huge number of pods! Dylan supported with counting, and the team won \$500 for the school!

Earlier in the term, Frances and the students organized a fundraising sausage sizzle at New World Eastridge, baking sweet treats to sell and using their marketing skills to raise over \$1,200!

It really has been a jam-packed start to the school year. Last week, for Matariki, we took time to celebrate our achievements, reflect on the past year and look ahead; sharing some amazing kai, with singing and games! We look forward to the rest of 2024!

Claire Hall



Successful sausage sizzle fundraiser

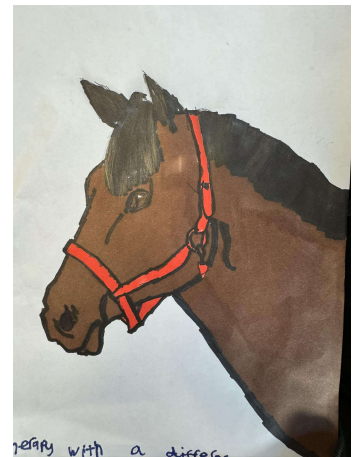
The Vocational Programme

Julie Wharton

For Matariki, we learned how to make fried bread and enjoyed the company of Rosehill school. Earlier in June Auckland Animal Management came to Ambury to give us a talk on dog safety. We also visited the museum, did some planting at the Te Ara Rata stream, and visited Eldon Community hub.

We farewelled Tina at the end of Term 1, but wish her all the best with her family back in the US, although she will be missed. We have welcomed some friendly new faces to the Vocs team - Amy Hall, Jax Wahanui, Savannah Campbell and reliever Aimee Martin.

"We caught the bus to the library in Onehunga. We caught the 309. We read some books in the library and then got back on the bus back to Ambury. By Hannah Smith."



Horse art by Gena



Vocs trip to the museum



Bus trip to the library

How can you help?

The Centre being a 'not for profit' relies heavily on its supporters to ensure it can continue to provide the level of service requested by the community. If you or somebody you know could help in the following areas please don't hesitate to get in touch with Stacie or Barbara in the office. Any help is greatly appreciated - Thank you! office@amburyparkcentre.org.nz

- Volunteer with our therapy riding programme
- Donate products or services – contact us to see what we might need!
- Become an Annual General Meeting voting member of the Centre for \$25.
- Make a cash or bank donation: Donations can be deposited into our Ambury Park Centre Inc. account 06-01930-154558-26 (please let us know if you require a receipt!)
- Collect Horse manure from us for a koha (great for the garden!)
- Sponsor one of our wonderful horses! Each sponsor receives a certificate and bio plus an invitation to visit their chosen horse.

Physiotherapy Program

Shelley Trueman



***Volunteer Kris with
doppelgangers Spy and
Lollipop***

RDA rides are well subscribed following the appointment of new coach Elise Power and the welcome return of previous staffer Beret Atkinson, both sharing the RDA coach role. Elise maintains her own horse training and tack specialist work when not at Ambury. We are fortunate to have physiotherapist Esther Coenradi join our team, taking on Marjolein's therapy clients as well as newcomers. Esther is a horse lover from way back, so is enjoying horse love in her part time role when not at her Physio clinic role. Marjolein is supporting Esther to settle in, as well as helping us assess new riders for our programmes.

RDA and therapy rides keep the indoor arena busy. Meanwhile, mostly outdoors our Blues coach Awhina Rask and her team run a diverse programme combining grooming, lessons, hack outs, in-hand horsemanship and games, tailored to each student's abilities, and including non-riders. A lot of horse love is had in these sessions.

Now we have a full complement of equine staff, our energetic equine manager Katja roams at large, helping coach riders, train our humans and horses, while corralling the equine team with infectious enthusiasm. She encourages all staff, volunteers and riders to embrace the horses in whatever way they can.

Vollie Voice

Sheryl Christian



***Longstanding volunteer Sheryl
is honoured at the recent AGM***

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Board for the Award made to me at the last AGM as an Honorary Member of Ambury Park Centre.

This Award came as a complete surprise and speaking "off the cuff" I omitted to say what Ambury really means to me.

It is a very special place. Over the years there have been many, many moments when I thought my heart would burst with the excitement of witnessing what the wonderful OT's and Coaches have achieved with the Riders. I even remember times when our team has shed tears at what seemed were miracles happening before us.

The bonds made with each other too are special, and how fabulous that in this workplace, hugs abound amongst us. Interaction with our Vocational and School Students is also a very special part of Volunteering at Ambury.

As I build on my memories I remember the wonderful horses who have moved on or crossed the Rainbow Bridge. Claude because he was the first I was introduced to by Cate, Manly because I went home with a full bite of his mouth etched on my backside for days, after he let me know that a buckle on his coat had hit him, Honey puff for her wonderful nature and love which she gave to the little Therapy Riders and all the dressing up she endured. The list could go on and on.....

My sole purpose in coming to Ambury was to give back and I have always reflected on my day's highlight as I drive out.

Never hard when you are amongst great Staff and Volunteers, a herd of horses, and Clients coming to the Centre who appreciate the help we give.

May we all continue to enjoy contributing and building on the progress of the dream created back in 1983 known as Ambury Park Centre.

Sheryl Christian



Sheryl in action with Kerry, RDA rider & ride favourite Lollipop.

The board is most grateful for grants both substantial and generous.

A sincere thank you to all our donors.

Such generosity enables the Centre to continue to provide for and strive to raise performance for its riding therapy, second or third chance secondary schooling and a vocational course for adults.

Thank you to our donors in 2024:

Throughout the year many trusts, organisations and individual donors have supported Ambury Park Centre programmes. The board and staff are deeply grateful to:

The Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust, Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust, J M Thompson Charitable Trust, Woolf Fisher Charitable Trust, Peter and David Picot Charitable Trust, Chenery Memorial Trust, Kelliher Charitable Trust, Lindsay Foundation, Nell Erne Adams Charitable Trust Foundation, Foundation North, NZ Lottery Grants Board, NZ Community Trust, ARA Lodge No.348 IC Charitable Trust Board, Samar Kand, Four Winds Foundation, Trillian Trust, Auckland Manukau Dressage Group, Baron Investments, Rano Trust, Michael Otto, Sam Hugli, D and A Alderslade, Longmuir Trust, Ron Paterson, Māngere Market Trust, The Trusts Community Foundation, Milestone Foundation, Tim and Suzanne Merriott, Grove Hardware Ltd, Pub Charity Ltd, COGS, T.W. Thomas-Stone, Auckland Council Mangere-Otahuhu Local Board, Auckland Council, Mary Brook, Warren and Caroline Grove, Sheryl Christian, Gaynor Brown, Vincent Maire, Christine O'Brien, Tu Manawa Active Aotearoa, and our other donors who contributed towards expenses such as a new horse for the Centre and saddles, including those who wish to remain anonymous.

Important dates for Terms 3 & 4 2024:

- **Ribbon Day - Thursday 19th September**
- **Term 3 Ends Friday 27th September & Term 4 Begins Monday 14th October**
- **Labour Day - Monday 28th October**