



*'The Family that changes'*

*Newsletter*

**Issue No. 17**

**June 2018**

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [www.stmarks.co.nz](http://www.stmarks.co.nz)

**COMPILER'S COMMENTS:**

The concept of Continuous Improvement at St Marks is alive and well. This edition celebrates the fulfilment of the dream of having a modern and attractive Multi-function Room due to be officially opened on 4<sup>th</sup> August. However, for me, a highlight has been seeing so many residents and staff voluntarily deciding to take part in the St Clair ½ marathon. Seeing them lined up at the beginning of the 21 km walking event with cheerful faces and an optimistic attitude is a memory that will remain with me for a long time. It was great to see other residents, staff and Board members taking the time to congregate at the viewing points to cheer the team on.

Ian Cameron- Compiler

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Some of the St Marks entrants ready for the St Clair ½ Marathon

**MESSAGE FROM CHAIR:**

**JIM HASSELDINE**



The past few months have been very busy with builders on site and the staff, residents and Peter Rijnhen (the Manager) have been busy moving things around as well as tidying up after the work has been completed.

The Multi-Function Room has been completed and is in use with a "Formal Opening" being planned currently. The Container Office is gone and the former "Hobbies Room" redeveloped into an "Open Plan" Office for the staff to work from. This is looking really good and should be very useful and more efficient in the future. At the same time computer systems have been upgraded as well.

We are now in the process of Landscaping around the Multi-Function room with the hope that with new shrubs planted for the spring things will be looking good!

This work has required a lot of extra effort by Peter and the staff and I would like to say "Thank You" to all of them. Also to say that all the Builders and Contractors have been great. At the "Formal Opening" I look forward to seeing you there and will let you know the date when it is finalised.

Best Wishes

Jim Hasseldine

**PETER RIJHNEN'S UPDATE**



- St Marks is grateful for the donations it has recently received, not only for the generous cheque presented by Blenheim South Rotary Club from proceeds raised at last year's Charity dinner, but from Rata Foundation, The Blue Door, Vavasour Trust, Wairau Community Clinic, and a 25k donation from a Trust which wishes to remain anonymous.

- Peter and Sarah Thompson, the Sector Relationships and Contract Manager of Nelson Marlborough Health are working on a Memorandum of Understanding between the two organisations.
- Brief drink driving intervention courses continue with the last course being held in Westport on 25<sup>th</sup> May and a further one planned for July in Nelson.
- All three of the Resident Nelson/Blenheim Judges- Judges Zohrab, Russell and Ruth have met with Manager, Residents and Staff over lunch recently. St Marks is grateful that they have taken time out of their busy schedules and their visits were appreciated by Staff and Residents alike.
- Peter attended the meeting of Government inquiry into Mental Health and Addictions panel in Nelson, giving him the opportunity to give NGO input.

### **THIS EDITION'S QUOTE:**

By centring our lives on timeless, unchanging principles, we create a fundamental paradigm of effective living. It is the centre that puts all other centres in perspective.

*Stephen Covey.*

### **5<sup>TH</sup> JUNE**

The 5<sup>th</sup> June was an important date for St Marks. Not only was it the quarterly volunteer's lunch date but is the date when the three-yearly certification visit by Health and Disability Auditing (HDANZ) took place.

### **REDEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATIONS:**

One of the important consequences of the Multi-Function room has been the opportunity to rationalise the available space at St Marks, creating more bed spaces for an increase in clients.

Jim Hasseldine referred to another consequence-the creation of an Open Plan office to accommodate the Team Leader, Counsellors, Registered Nurse and Student Placements/Volunteers. There was even room for a small kitchenette!



### **INTRODUCING STAFF MEMBER PAUL HATHAWAY:**

My name is Paul Hathaway, I have now been working at St Marks for 8 years. I first started in a voluntary role as live-in supervisor in the support house in 2010. This was a role I fully enjoyed as it enabled me to give back to St Marks and share my recovery journey with others.

In 2011, whilst continuing with my role in the support house, I began studying towards a degree specialising in addiction. This involved travelling to Christchurch to attend classes, sometimes twice a week. I would often leave at 3am and leaving again at 4pm to return to Blenheim. I know this added up to many kms over these years.

I was offered a work placement at St Marks in 2012. This was through Te Ra Matatini as a Trainee Counsellor and was a perfect opportunity to put knowledge and experience into practice.

A full-time position as a Counsellor at St Marks was offered to me in 2013. This was a proud moment as this was my goal and what I had been working so hard towards, giving purpose to my past experiences. From 2013 I continued with my studies and working full time all the time giving

110% to the clients which took its toll and I learnt good lessons on practicing self-care.



*Paul Hathaway*

I am proud to say I completed my Degree in Addiction Studies at the end of 2017. I continue to work as a Counsellor at St Marks and I am in the process of working towards registration for A&OD Practitioner.

### **DONATION OF QUILTS**

The team at St Marks continue to be humbled and gratified at the good-will and support from the community.

Recently, the Picton Quilters have donated six beautiful quilts to St Marks. Yvonne Roberts from the Picton quilters group says: 'When Barbara Rocco (one of the Board members) came and talked to us about the wonderful work of St Marks we felt we wanted to do something practical to help.'



## **NEW BOARD MEMBER**



Bridget Orman joined the St Marks Board at the last AGM. She became aware of the work that St Marks does during her activities with Zonta Club of Marlborough. At that time Zonta was looking for local projects in Blenheim which promoted the cause of women and the vision of the then manager of St Marks, Lois Millar, to create a Woman's Room engaged their interest.

Zonta also worked with Blenheim South Rotary Club to support the annual Charity Dinner around the time it was held at Omaka Marae and then at the Convention Centre. Bridget began to learn more about St Marks and to gain further understanding of the challenges it faced. She has personal knowledge of what St Marks can achieve.

Bridget has lived in Blenheim for 26 years and loves the area. Her long and successful business experience will be a great benefit to St Marks.

## **LANDSCAPING AROUND ACTIVITIES ROOM**

Crafer Crouch Construction Ltd are doing an excellent job around the Multi-Function Room and the team thank them for the generosity they are displaying to the grounds.



From this....



Through this....



To this.

## **THIS MONTH'S RECIPE:**

### **SLICED AND DICED GERMAN VEGETABLE SOUP:**

- 40g butter
- 1 small onion chopped
- 4 large carrots thinly sliced
- ½ turnip or swede peeled and diced
- 2-3 stalks celery sliced
- 2 potatoes peeled and diced
- 1 medium leek sliced
- 1 ltr beef stock
- Salt and pepper
- 6 dsps fresh or frozen peas
- ½ small cabbage shredded
- 6 dsps fresh or frozen corn kernels
- 175g diced cooked beetroot
- 125g sliced frankfurters or browned and sliced bratwurst.
- **How to make:**
- To the melted butter add the onions, carrots, turnip, celery, potatoes and leeks and toss until the butter is absorbed. Add the stock and seasoning and simmer for 20 minutes, Add the stock and seasoning and simmer for 20 minutes. Add the peas, corn and cabbage and simmer another 15 minutes. Add the beetroot and sausages and heat a further 5 minutes only and then serve.

## DALE'S STORY:

*The following letter [edited] was recently received from an ex-resident:*

Kia Ora Te Whanau.

My name is Dale & I'm an alcoholic.

I'm also a survivor, not just of St. Marks, but life in general, although there was a time in the past I wasn't so sure.

I believe I was born with a predisposition to alcohol however had no idea of the impact it would have on my life until much later. My upbringing was well, pretty good I guess, but tarnished with events beyond my control.

I have 1 brother, 5 years my junior & we grew up in a heavy construction outfit. Money was no problem, we had what we wanted but the missing link was the bond with our parents. Working & sleeping at their desks I ended up helping raise my brother alongside our housekeeper. Schooling sucked, I was always bullied & disassociated myself from most things, eventually returning to NZ for escape. Story of my life, always running. I was living with my biological father and all was good for a while, then the unthinkable happened and I was sexually abused by him whilst he was drunk one night.

Not knowing what was right nor wrong, I was only nine years old. I suppressed everything & eventually returned to Australia. Years later with schooling finished, working full time & being raised by hard drinking and smoking people, that was the norm for me. Then one fateful day in 99 I woke feeling uneasy. Went into work and returned a couple hours later, I just had to be home with my stepfather for some reason. Later that evening I realized why, as he had a massive heart attack and passed away in my arms. I certainly don't wish that upon anybody and to this day, I'm still dealing with it. That event, a failed relationship & serious motor vehicle accident in the space of 3 weeks is enough to tip anyone over the edge so to numb it all out, alcohol was my best friend.

Fast forward to late 2007, I was at my wits end, woke one morning, handed in my notice at work, cashed in my leave & bought a 1-way ticket to Auckland. Two weeks later I was on a 747 back home, thinking if I left all that stuff behind I would be OK. It's only now I realize that alcohol doesn't forget.

Eventually I ended up here on the West Coast, two days before the Christchurch quake. Suffering a major breakdown, I was hospitalized and after a review of life, found solace in the AA groups. This did help. Worked hard, got life back on track and have a beautiful daughter, but that demon alcohol never left. My sponsor and his partner were carbon copies of my parents so we got really close but his health deteriorated rapidly & it was a case of history repeating itself. Another tangi, another void, I'd lost a 2nd father. Nothing mattered anymore but the booze.

Fast forward a bit more, things got real ugly. I found myself homeless, broke, no possessions, squatting in a house with no power or water, then the Kaikoura quake happened. That was the final straw for me and I decided to do something about my life once & for all so I walked out to the highway & waited for a truck. I'm sure you can work the rest out. I certainly call it an act of God or a higher power, but that morning at 3am, I was spared. 6 hours

later I checked into Mental Health, utterly broken & began my journey to St. Marks.

Rehab? Nah stuff that, only junkies & weirdos go there. I fought hard not to, but inside I knew it was my only option. I've never regretted it.

Pity party? I would have thrown the end all. Drink, smoke, you name it. Have to be broken to be put back together.

I was like you.

Entering the lounge, didn't know what was going on or who was who, resistant to change, it was a humbling experience. Two months with people dealing with addiction quick snapped me out of my thinking.

Structure, lessons, routine, effort, tears, anger, hugs, sneaky smokes, internal stuff, it's how we build up or break down. My kudos go far. Paul, Hatarei, Bulldog and Becky big-bird, Gina, Ali, Nisargo, I know I've missed many so I'm sorry but you all know who you are!

My time in Blenheim, albeit two months not just gave me a new lease on life, but a decades old reconnection with my Aunty & Uncle. Daughter- wise, she's a brat but one I now have a better relationship with than ever before.

Along with my passions... aviation and railways. And annoying people. Like you!

Bless you St. Marks & all you do.

My days are not all shits and giggles, sometimes I want to choke people and things, but I just remember a day at a time, an hour at a time if need be... and all the fond memories & friends made.

Parting words to all reading. I went from a broke-ass to driving one of the top 5 rail journeys on the planet. Never give up. I fought a long time to get this far, you can too.



*Dale*

☞☞If you would like to become a friend or volunteer at St Marks and would like more information please email:  
newsletter@stmarks.co.nz

☞☞If you would like to make a donation to St Marks either post your cheque with your contact details to the:

ADMINISTRATOR

ST MARKS SOCIETY

61 MAIN STREET

BLENHEIM

☞☞Or if you would prefer to pay by Automatic Payment or Internet Banking our bank details are: St Marks Society 03 0599 0292678 00. Please insert your name as the reference.

A receipt will be issued for all donations and will be emailed to you

NB. DONATIONS of \$5 and OVER are TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

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newsletter@stmarks.co.nz