

Muscular Dystrophy Northern Inc

Annual General Meeting May 22, 2011

Chairperson report

We have had an exciting year with many changes and a few challenges.

As this was my first year as Chairperson I can tell you that it was a pleasure stepping in behind Katie Noble, our association is richer for her direction and her willingness to continue support us as we transition.

Some things don't change and finances always seem to be an on-going concern. With our current economic climate and our recent natural disasters, it seems the charity dollar is even more stretched and having to go further.

We are forever thankful to of our support organisations and local agencies who provide us with grants to pay for our Fieldworker Service and some of our member events.

However we are very thankful of our member support, we are here to listen to you and to create opportunities where members can meet, socialise and have fun. We have 58 new members join our Branch in the last year.

Fieldworker Service

It seems that demand for our Fieldworker Service increases – a continued financial balancing act however we rise to the challenge and continue to find ways of operating efficiently and smoothly.

Over the last twelve months we've had 3 Fieldworkers operating out of our office working a total of 75 hours per week. This resource has enabled us to work through our member database and catch up with everyone who's contacted us over the past few years. Our Fieldworkers managed to do 558 face to face contacts with our members, send out thousands of emails and goodness knows how many telephone conversations.

So when Jenny decided to move on to other work we knew we were in good shape, with a bit of a review and an offer from Darian to work more hours we decided not to replace Jenny. Supporting Joanna and Darian is a joy and together they give great care and attention to our members.

They travel and visit our members from one corner of our Branch territory to the other means that our members have the opportunity to have more contact with our Fieldworkers and Branch should they need it.

I couldn't possibly put into words the work our Fieldworkers do so here I will read out in their words, two experiences they have reported on.

Recently I talk to staff at a school where one of our younger members attends. I had expected to be talking to one or two staff members but instead walked into a room of

around 20 people! I spoke to them about the condition and about the role of MDN in supporting the member and family. Then I spent some time answering questions. It was wonderful to see so many people taking the time and effort to learn about how to best provide for this member and that they are obviously well cared for in this community. The staff had a huge amount of willingness and good will and our fieldworker service gave them what they were needing in terms of information and support in how they can best support someone in their school with a neuromuscular condition.

Last month I worked with a family and one of our members. The family manage well and usually do not have time nor require a F/W visit. I made a follow up phone call during the school holidays which worked out to be very well timed. Our member is unwell causing more emotional and physical stress on the family. After a long conversation with 'mother' we came up with a plan to utilise Hospice for respite care to give her a break. This family would not have phoned us and ask for help, they are proud and independent choosing to do things themselves. The family had not thought about Hospice care as an immediate short term option yet we were able to work together with the GP and Hospice to get an admission the following day.

What has enabled us to better serve our members has been our acquisition of a Branch Car – this has made traveling to our members far easier and more economical. So far our Branch car has travelled 17,816 kms doing 335 home visits.

Branch Agreement

After much discussion and alteration our Branch signed up along with Wellington, Canterbury and Southern Branch to the MDA and Branch agreement. This agreement outlines the relationship between the MDA, Branches and National Office.

Created to assist our Branch committee of volunteers to address and manage our legal obligations and responsibilities. The agreement outlines the roles of each party and covers items such as MDA Marketing, Employment and fundraising. Already our Branch has benefited from the MDA Agreement with a reduction in our insurance costs by being part of a national insurance policy covering MDA and all Branches.

Branch constitution

The other big backroom project was the integration of the MDA and Branches constitutions. This exercise supports the Branch Agreement work. It means that MDA and its family of Branches are now interconnected legally and it provides for a seamless relationship between all organisations. Our Branches retain their independence but now follow the same procedures around organisational rules.

MDA National Council

1. We'd like to thank Chris Higgins, Hilary Rayner, Miriam Rodrigues, Deb Baker, Raema Inglis and the other MDA staff members for their support to our Branch. Each has supported us in different ways but our mutual objective to improve our organisation and member services is one we all work together on.

We'd also like to thank the MDA for their financial support to the Branches over the last year. The additional funding has enabled us to maintain our level of service and enabled us to continue to meet our member's needs.

Branch events over the past 12 months have been:

- Partners Group – achieved two dinners, a lunch and a trip to Rotorua
- Ferrari Club – despite the atrocious weather Branch members and Ferrari owners turned up to have fun. The cars looked outstanding and with some help members were able to enjoy a great ride.
- Christmas Party – Hamilton Gardens – Lew Pulman's scavenger hunt was a hit, and we all enjoyed listening to the team from Rex Bionics and Dame Susan Devoy. The Harley Owners Group arrived bringing Santa with them. Somehow Santa couldn't get off the Harley and ended up riding into the restaurant to screams of delight from our younger members. Our Christmas Parties are well known for connecting members and this one was no exception. Everyone enjoyed the day and we all left in the afternoon knowing new friends.
- Without Limits – In January we took the plunge and signed up to be part of the Without Limits Charity night at Alexandra Park in Auckland. We also invited as our special guest the new Super City Mayor. Mayor Len Brown came along with his wife and had a great evening with the MDN crew. On the night we raised over \$4000 for our Branch. This was largely due to MDN's entry in the two Charity trotting races. Special thanks go to both Raena Inglis and Freda Evens who despite the horrendous weather and rain, donned racing silks and headed out strapped tightly into the sulkies to start racing. Both recorded a second place in their respective races scoring \$1500 each for MD Northern.
- Bow Tie 2011 – The timing wasn't good due to the Canterbury earthquake and much needed after care but with the best intentions we took to our annual Bow Tie appeal. We give thanks to those members who in their own way raised money for our Branch by selling our MDA bow ties and holding fundraising events. For the second year Waikeria Prison created handmade bow ties from old neck ties for us to give away. In light of the Canterbury earthquake we have donated 15 bow ties to the Canterbury Branch to give in appreciation those who have helped them recently.
- Harley Owners Group Auckland – I couldn't do a report without mentioning and thanking the HOGs, their support and undying financial donations to our Branch requires special thanks. Since 2007 HOGs Auckland Chapter has raised over \$11,000 for MD Northern Branch which is just outstanding.
- MD Northern Family Camp – the first camp in a while, your committee members took to the organisation with gusto. Camp Leader Lew Pulman did most of the organisation, when I say most it's because behind every great leader is a greater lady. In thanking Lew for his work organising and putting together the camp we extend a thank you to his wife Basil. Also to thank are Joy and Trevor Jenkins, Denise, Joanna and the others who all assisted in putting the camp together. And I hear there is some training being arranged in preparation for the next camp quiz night?

- I can't end the list of events without special mention of a wonderful lady who despite her nerves decided to skydive to raise money for MD Northern. Waimon left her wheelchair behind and jumped out of a moving plane in the name of doing something not expected. Waimon Thant-Cyn raised over \$2000 for her jump. She got a bit bruised and bumped along the way but the money raised will go towards providing scholarships for our young members to attend National Leaders Day. This month we awarded two scholarships, Bradley Jenkins and Lisa Kalberer will be attending the National Leaders Day being held in Auckland and Rotorua.

Thank you to:

Other thanks go to Tim Dempsey of Fundraising Solutions who has helps us with our grant applications and responsible for helping us to raise funds to cover our Fieldworker Service and Office costs. This year we've added Reena Mehta to our team. Reena comes on board to provide help to secure other funding such as sponsorship, project funding and to help us maximise other income generating opportunities along the way. One of the projects Reena is working on is the setting up of a MD Northern Trade Me shop where members can post their unwanted stuff to sell with the money being donated to MD Northern.

- ASB Community Trust
- Bay Trust
- COGS – there are 15 separate trusts that make up our Branch area
 - Far North
 - Whangarei/Kaipara
 - Rodney/North Shore
 - Waitakere
 - Auckland
 - Manukau
 - Papakura/Franklin
 - Waikato West
 - Kirikiriroa/Hamilton
 - South Waikato
 - Rotorua
 - Mataatua
- Harley Owners Group
- Lion Foundation
- Lotteries Grant Board – Auckland and Waikato
- LW Nelson Trust
- Manukau Citywide Social Investment Fund
- NZ Community Trust
- NZ Lottery Grants Board
- Pub Charity
- Southern Trust
- Trust Waikato

And the following organisation and individuals who have donated in excess of \$150 to our Branch

- Te Awamutu Saturday Charity Market

- Takapuna North Rotary
- Tony & Libby Svensen
- Crane Works Ltd – towards our Family camp
- Hobbs Transport – towards our Family camp
- Downers – towards our Family camp
- Inframax Construction – towards our Family camp
- Beth & Roger Miller
- Marion & John Loveridge
- Helen Hoggard
- Margaret & Peter Kelly

Office Manager – Like the HOGs I can't do a report without a note about Denise Ganley our Office Manager and Information Officer. Denise is the central core of our Branch operation, nothing happens without Denise's approval and she's the one who makes things work. She's a manager, writer, coordinator and boss. She keeps me in tow, herds the Fieldworkers and provides backup support to them; she is the fountain of all knowledge for our members and is a great friend and an all-round nice gal!

Lastly I'd like to thank our committee whom work hard, get a bit frustrated at things not happening fast enough, are energetic and supportive and without them we wouldn't be here.

Robin Chester - Tauranga

Joy Jenkins - Auckland

Lew Pulman – Te Kuiti

Freda Evans – Auckland

Katie Noble – Auckland

Dr Huhana Hickey - Auckland

Leigh Gleeson – Te Awamutu

a special thank you goes to them for their support and hard work.

So on behalf of those who were party to the 2010/2011 MD Northern Branch list of activities I thank you for your listening time.

Claire Siddens

Chairperson

Muscular Dystrophy Northern

May 2011