



Disability Connect Newsletter

22 April 2025



Perler bead art - Kayden



Amazing work by Melissa

Art can come in many shapes and forms. This week, we have some colourful crafts made from perler beads and a very special piece of artwork by Melissa. Smiley faces! When my son drew his first smiley face all by himself, it was one of my proudest Mummy moments ever.

If you would like to see your child's artwork in our newsletter or on our website, please email us at: admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz



Join our Team! Are You Our Next Community Disability Information Advisor?

Work alongside Denise, 15-20 hours per week in this exciting role. Applications close end of April. Click [here](#) for more information and to apply.

What Have We Been Up To?



Denise - Out and About

Denise has been busy in the Community, attending the Waitakere College Parent Evening, Community Health Services Day at Waitakere Hospital and Papatoetoe Community Network Meeting.

Make sure you keep an eye out for events we will be attending - Denise has a wealth of knowledge and loves connecting with families.



April Support Groups

This month, Zsuzsa organised a "Finding Meaningful Activities with your Funding" session with Ainsley Darvell, founder of Flying Kites. The event was a huge success and it was great to see families connect and have long and meaningful

conversations with each other and Ainsley.

Jingjing facilitated the Chinese Support Group session "From Hobby to Youtuber: Empowering Young Adults with Autism" with guest speakers Indika & Asoka, Yedelin & Julie. These remarkable families shared their journeys of how to identify a child's passion and nurture it into a musical career, the challenges of finding a job after graduation, and the reason for becoming a YouTuber. The session was filled with laughter, singing, and a showcase of original YouTube songs. We're so happy to receive feedback that the event was uplifting, engaging and insightful. It also gave families a new perspective and hope for the future.

The topics of our monthly support groups change each month and can provide a night of fun or invaluable information. Make sure you have a look at what's coming up so you don't miss out! We look forward to seeing you at our Support Group events!



TE HUNGA HAUĀ MAURI MŌ NGĀ TĀNGATA KATOA

Connecting with Krissy Wright: Librarian at CCS Disability Action Library and Information Service

We had the pleasure of connecting with Krissy Wright - the librarian at CCS Disability Action Library and Information Service. Krissy introduced us to their national public free library service and the wide range of resources they have available to everyone in New Zealand.

Their Beyond Barriers Bulletin - the monthly newsletter for the CCS Disability Action Library and Information Service gives information about the latest resources to the library, summary of the Books Beyond Barriers radio show and

podcast, news about community connections and information about relevant disability related issues.

Click [here](#) for a copy of their library brochure or [here](#) for their Easy Read document.

You can also visit their [website](#) for more information or email info@ccsdisabilityaction.org.nz



Activities in South Auckland: Cherie and Mitchell

A member of our team, Cherie, has been trialling some [activities in South Auckland](#) with her son, Mitchell, who has recently finished school. One of those activities was to attend a [Rhythm for the Soul](#) session with Chewy on Tuesday in Manukau.

Mitchell has been enjoying learning to alternate his hands on the drum, feeling the vibes of the didgeridoo, and turn taking with the other young people. If you are interested in finding a new activity in the Manukau area, this might be worth a try. Other things Mitchell has been trying out are Bloom (in Pukekohe), Swimming with Special Olympics and the Papakura and Papatoetoe Phab clubs. Don't forget to check out our great list of [activities across Auckland](#) on our website.



Hot wheels and school holiday fun - hanging out with the CEO at Disability Connect: A glimpse into our life at Disability Connect by Asoka

I walked into our office last Monday and picked up the paper plane that landed at my feet. There were a couple more already on the floor. I looked up to find four grinning faces, 3 young and one young-at-heart (on his own set of wheels) looking sheepish but clearly having the time of their life. On to one side was a makeshift cardboard racetrack and lots of hot wheels.

"Ready, steady, go" said Ginny's 6-year-old son. Julia's two sons had their paper plane poised to launch. "Wait wait wait!" Mike cried out, "*Interns!!* Don't forget the cow face, put your tongue out to the side!" and all 4 promptly did so before throwing their paper planes in unison. They were rumbunctious. I thought Mike was the loudest, and clearly having the most fun.

When Mike came on board as CEO, he insisted that our Disability Connect ethos follow the 3F's-Family, Fun and Fabulous work. It has been over 5 years since we adopted this thinking. As I share my thoughts with you today, I am reminded that what you experience is what you are most likely to remember, and that this learning will drive your values and beliefs. Engaging with our kids this way, Mike is encouraging and helping to build a bridge between the

neurodiverse and neurotypical worlds. If we all engage with our disability community with a bit more awareness and create opportunities for people with disabilities to find friendships and feel accepted, we will soon be creating a genuinely inclusive community. I am hopeful for that day!

Disability Connect Services



Housing Navigation Service

We are offering a new Disability Housing Navigation Service, first of its kind, here in Auckland. Led and staffed by disabled people and their parents, our free service provides an advisor to support disabled people and their families to research, broker and find a suitable place to live.

Do start early. If you need help finding a home, email us at: admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz with the word "housing" in the subject line or call [09 636 0351](tel:096360351).



Next Steps To A Flat Workshop

Colleen Brown KSO

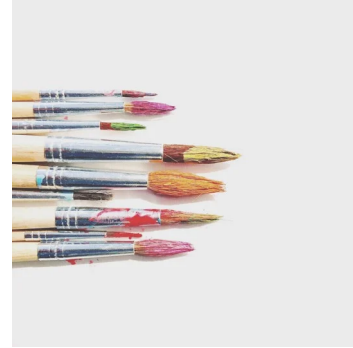
Are you looking for a flat? Have you read [Four Go Flatting](#)? Seen [Managing Support Staff](#)? Are you ready for the next step?

Come along to our Next Steps to A Flat Workshop on Wednesday, 23 April at 7pm - 9pm. In person and via Zoom.

Click [here](#) for a copy of the workshop flyer.

To register, email us at: admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz

Disability Connect Support Groups



Chinese Support Group

Zoom Parents Support Group

[Zoom Parents Support Group](#) - Every Monday 7-8pm

Open to anyone seeking advice or support for parenting, upcoming Needs Assessments or anything in-between the Zoom Support Group is for you! Robyn would love to meet and chat about anything that is important to you.

Parent Support Group

[Parent Support Group](#) - Wednesday 7 May, 6-8pm

Topic: Mother's Day Celebration: Make your own lip balm

Facilitator: Zsuzsa Szabadi

Location: Mt Richmond Specialist School, 30 Albion Road, Ōtāhuhu
Click for a copy of the [flyer](#)

To register, email us at: admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz

[Chinese Support Group](#)

Topic: Mother's Day Special Event - Create your artwork with Jingjing

Facilitator: Jingjing Xue

Location: Logan Campbell Building, Auckland Botanic Gardens

Further information and details of this event TBC. More details will be posted on our website shortly.

Disability Connect Seminars and Workshops

- [Planning for Adulthood](#) - **Tuesday 6 May - 11am-2pm via Zoom.** Learn about Welfare Guardianship, Power of Attorney, Property Management, Estate Planning, Wills and how a Trust may be useful.
To register, email admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz
- [Education Legal Issues](#) - **Monday 9 June, 11:30am-2pm via Zoom.** Learn about enrolment rights, decision processes around special education, processes around an ORS funding decline, requests to parents for teacher aide funding contributions, requests to parents for funding for student support at extra-curricular camps and activities, stand-downs, use of restraint, and much more.
To register, email: admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz

to being able to attend.

Community Courses, Seminars and Workshops



The Disability Journey into Adulthood

Real World Living have scheduled 6 more sessions of their informative conversation about leaving school, what you need to know and how to make it happen.

Topics include: Transitioning out of school, ORS vs Non ORS students, Transport Options, Work and Income Supports, Community Engagement / Options / Support, Disability Support Services (previously Whaikaha - Ministry of Disabled People and Ministry of Health), Living Options, Legal Options, Transition Coordinators.

Click [here](#) for more details and to register. A [Facebook](#) page has also been created for these sessions.

Upcoming Courses

Click [here](#) for detailed information about some upcoming courses and how to register (these were included in our previous newsletters).

- My Business Starter Course
- Introducing Individualised Funding
- Money Smarts Made Easy

Community Events & Notices



Music & Fun: Support Group for Under 5's and their Carers

Music & Fun is on fortnightly during term time and is designed for children with additional needs. The session is 90 minutes long.

Time: 9:45am - 11:15am

Dates: see [flyer](#) for more details

Location: 130 Remuera Road, Community of St Luke, Courtyard Room.

For more information, please contact Margaret Davidson:

nzmargaret@gmail.com or phone [021 293 3009](tel:0212933009).



Rippa Rugby

Disability Sport Auckland and Marist Eastern Rugby Club

Rippa Rugby is a new programme available in Term 2 and is hosted by Marist Eastern Rugby Club.

Day/Time: Saturday 10:30am - 11:15am

Dates: 10 May - 28 June

Location: Marist Eastern Rugby Club

Click [here](#) for more details.



Continence NZ - New Website

Continence NZ provides education, information, advocacy and support for people living with incontinence, caregivers, health professionals and the general public.

They offer a range of resources, guides, product information, online courses and webinars.

Visit their new website [here](#).



Child to Parent Violence and Abuse

Child to Parent Violence and Abuse ("CPVA") encompasses a broad range of behaviours that children under the age of 18 display towards their parents/caregivers. The violence can continue into adulthood. CPVA can occur in any family and there are many reasons why it may happen.

VisAble recently created a survey to better understand CPVA in New Zealand and the results will be published in the coming months.

An information booklet for parents and caregivers can be found [here](#).

Altogether Autism

Parent2Parent, Altogether Autism and Your Way Kia Roha



Compiled with input from Autistic people, parents and professionals, this guidebook published by Parent2Parent is a must-read for anyone who wants to learn more about autism.

Click [here](#) for a copy of this amazing resource.



Cerebral Palsy - Hōkai Nukurangi: The Early Years Kete.

The team at the Cerebral Palsy Society is delighted to share with you a toolkit they created.

The Early Years Kete includes information about Cerebral Palsy - Hōkai Nukurangi, the services available in Aotearoa New Zealand, and examples of different organisations to connect with. It also

covers early interventions, education and looking after the wellbeing of parents and wider whānau.

Click [here](#) for the toolkit.

Job Vacancies

CCS Disability Action currently has vacancies for:

- Reception Administrator
- Community Support Workers

Click [here](#) for details and how to apply.



2025 Local Elections

Stand as a candidate, voting related updates / short video clips

Auckland Council will be holding [candidate information sessions](#), for anyone interested in standing for elections. The first event will be a **[FREE webinar: Become a candidate in Auckland's Local Elections 2025](#)**.

As part of the programme, Auckland Council have created eight short, animated videos, which are being translated into 7 languages including NZSL.

1. [Why be a candidate](#)

2. [How to be a candidate](#)
3. [What would I do if elected](#)
4. [Why do we have a council](#)
5. [What are the Auckland local elections](#)
6. [Why vote in Auckland elections](#)
7. [Enrolling to vote](#)
8. [How to vote](#)

For more information you can visit voteauckland.co.nz



Local elections enrolment support

Local elections are being held in 2025 to elect members of city, district and regional councils.

Each local council runs its own local elections.

Click [here](#) for some voter enrolment information with links to enrolment information in sign language, easy read documents, audio documents, braille format and more.



Discussion Document: Strengthening New Zealand's Emergency Management Legislation

The National Emergency Management Agency is seeking public feedback on options to strengthen New Zealand's overarching emergency management legislation.

It is important that disabled people and at-risk communities are included, considered, and informed of emergency management process that will directly affect how they prepare for, and respond to emergency events.

Click [here](#) to find the discussion document, a summary and information on how to make a submission.

Submissions close on 13 May 2025.



Johnson Reserve Upgrade

The Maungakiekie-Tāmaki Local Board have invited Disability Connect to feedback on the development of Johnson Reserve in Panmure. We think there should be consideration for a sensory component in the playground and security for our neurodiverse children around the waterways, paths and roads. Do email us with your thoughts to add to our submission especially if you live nearby.

For more information, visit their website: <https://akhaveyoursay.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz/johnson-reserve->



Beyond the National Curriculum: Whiria te taangata (Research Invitation)

Are you a parent or caregiver of an aakonga/student with an intellectual disability who received ORS funding and has left a Specialist Day School in Aotearoa New Zealand?

Ellie Mackwood is currently studying towards a Master's of Change and Organisational Resilience at academyEX, and as part of her research, she is exploring how we can create a more inclusive curriculum for aakonga with significant intellectual disabilities in Aotearoa. To do this, she is seeking the voices of those who know these learners best — their whānau and caregivers.

Ellie would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete an anonymous online survey [here](#).



Accessible Air Travel Survey

Air New Zealand

Air New Zealand want to make their services more inclusive and accessible for everyone in the long term.

If you have flown with Air New Zealand in the last year (12 months) and have access needs or support someone with access needs including disability, neurodivergent, mental health needs, long-term health condition please complete this survey which will take 15 to 30 mins: [Air New Zealand air travel survey](#)

Survey runs until 25th April 2025.

Survey participants can enter a draw for one of 20 prizes of \$100 in Air New Zealand Airpoints Dollars.

Your voice matters!

Make your voices heard by signing the petition below:

[Carers NZ Petition](#) - Recognise and protect New Zealand's family, whānau and āiga carers

To have your say, you can also write to your local MP or email us at admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz

Great information on our website!

- [Newsletters from other disability organisations](#)
- [Useful links page](#)
- [Disability Support Guides - English, Chinese, Korean and Arabic](#)
- [View all news and updates on our information pages on our website.](#)



Something we should know?

admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz





We are available Monday-Friday 9am-4.30pm

admin@disabilityconnect.org.nz

Phone [09 636 0351](tel:096360351)

We are here to help you with the best information, advice and support for living the best life possible.

Disability Connect can now receive online donations via credit card. We appreciate any donation from you!

Donate now



Disability Connect

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