

**Update No. 8 May-June 2009**

**Haere mai: Welcome to the *Inspiring Communities* newsletter**

*“It’s easy to over estimate what you can do in two-three years, but underestimate what can happen in 10”,* says John Cooney, former CEO of Otago District Council talking about ‘community-up’ development.

In this newsletter, we report on nine years work for the aptly named Victory School in Nelson as they celebrate having no children stood down or suspended. They’ve done this by connecting with children, parents and service providers in their community. At the same time, a school in Dunedin is travelling along a similar path without knowing about Victory School’s experience. *Inspiring Communities* was able to make the link.

There are a growing number of **“DIY+ communities - *doing it ourselves but not on our own*”**. A common feature is reaching out across boundaries and bringing together the perspectives and resources of people who live in the community, business, local and central government, and funders to develop a vision or solve a long standing problem.

We are seeing fantastic ingenuity in communities from Rakiura/Stewart Island through to Parnell, Auckland. Creativity is even more important in the current recession; farmers markets feature as social enterprises – building connections in the community and contributing to the local economy at the same time.

The stories we have highlighted in this newsletter illustrate how leadership for these place-based developments can come from any sector – local government, schools, churches, community organisations or individuals. Thinking of the ‘whole community’ and beyond the walls of their own organisation or circle is something they each have in common.

*Mary-Jane Rivers*



**Highlights in this issue include:**

- ✘ *Destination Management and Community Planning: Central Otago*
- ✘ *Victory Primary School: Leadership for meaningful change in the Nelson Community*
- ✘ *North East Valley Normal School Dunedin - Of the community not just in the Community*
- ✘ *Parnell Community Trust: From renting community rooms to Social Enterprise*
- ✘ *Project Lyttelton: Sustainability in Action*
- ✘ *“Two Hours on our Street”: Support grows when you get to know your neighbours*
- ✘ *Creative ideas for funding from Rakiura/Stewart Island – Generosity and Sustainability in Practice*

**Inspiring Communities** is a nationwide initiative committed to a new way of doing things. We support local communities to achieve their vision and goals by:

- ✘ Promoting the power of working together
- ✘ Supporting leadership and learning for community-led development
- ✘ Linking people, projects and places
- ✘ Developing and sharing resources, tools and new knowledge
- ✘ Being a catalyst for change in communities of place

We operate an *Exchange* that links communities with others who are involved in community-led initiatives. This includes a core learning cluster of eight initiatives in communities of place across Aotearoa. Regional networks are also beginning to emerge. The newsletter features examples of place-based development throughout the country. For more information, visit [www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz](http://www.inspiringcommunities.org.nz)

**We welcome contributions.**

## Destination Management and Community Planning Making a World of Difference in Central Otago



**Bannockburn Vineyard**

In the far south a local authority is taking a leading edge approach to how it manages its affairs. In 2004 the Central Otago District Council officially endorsed a Destination Management philosophy with a view to exchanging its top-down management structure for a grassroots, bottom-up approach. This set it on a very determined tack of integrating services, and establishing the common values of its communities to serve as a guiding vision for the region's future.

Destination Management is community driven. It's about how communities see the place now and in the future; what's special to them, and what they want to maintain and accentuate.

The concept of Destination Management was initially broached in tourism at a national level with a view to educating regions on how to cater to visitors. The Central Otago District Council is concerned with delivering what local communities want. *'It's about managing the destination for the people who live there, first; and then those that visit'*, says John Cooney, former CEO of the Council



### **A Vision**

Anne Pullar, District Development Manager, and John Cooney have led the Council's conversion to Destination Management. John says he always knew they needed a vision that would encapsulate what was important to the region. Getting that vision articulated took a mammoth process of community engagement to get a clear direction. But the rapid growth of nearby resort towns was a motivating factor in facilitating discussion.

## Consultation in progress

Being on the doorstep of Queenstown and Wanaka made us articulate what we want as a community. We didn't want to lose sight of values that are important to us on a daily basis. We like what we've got here and don't want it ruined.

Those daily values form the basis of the regional vision or identity, which has become the region's brand: *Central Otago – A World of Difference*. Getting the vision right is very important. *'You have to be thinking: What's authentic here? Developing a byline is not the same as developing a regional identity with values'*, says John

## Applying the vision

Establishing a regional vision is the first step, applying it is the next. An integrated approach is the only way to make the vision work in practice. *"It's about our collaboration with communities, agencies and departments,"* says John. *"One group can't do Destination Management alone. Council is one cog in the machine and helps provide the infrastructure"*.

## Communicating the vision



Destination Management as a grassroots approach couldn't fail to get the attention of elected officials. John says some councillors are really behind it. *"They say, 'This is why I'm on this council, because of this vision.'" But with any change there continues to be tensions about who is responsible for what. Over time roles will continue to be clarified, but what's most important is respect for each person's role; then a strong partnership results.*

Council now encourages communities to manage their own affairs and to resolve problems with the expertise of local people. *"In that structure you get traction really, really quickly; far more quickly than through a council system,"* says John.

By way of support the Council is initiating community plans. These plans are drawn up in consultation with individual communities. They take into account a community's history, economy, environment, lifestyle and social structure and discuss specific features and points of interest. They state recommendations, which communities have agreed upon and are achieving.

Both John and Anne agree that the key to destination management and community planning is to get the integration and communication happening. *"It's easy to overestimate what you can do in two-three years, but underestimate what can happen in 10,"* says John.

*Developing the plans builds local knowledge and the capacity for communities to work on their own projects*

*The council now gets requests for a copy of community plans from people coming into the region to start businesses. They are looking for the most compatible place to build their businesses and communities here are quite different to one another.*

*"What you are doing is building momentum. And that happens without Council."*

*Anne Pullar*

## Victory School: Providing Leadership in the Community

Victory Primary School in Nelson has not had to stand down or suspend any children for the past nine years. This is largely due to the community leadership role taken by the school and its active integration of education, health and social wellbeing in a community centre based at the school.

**“The more our school becomes a community centre, the more it becomes the centre of community and family life, the better our children can do.”**

**Mark Brown, Principal  
Victory School**

Now a diverse range of practical activities and services attract local residents to the Victory Village community centre. Using a ‘partnering way of working’ with parents and across multiple groups, organisations, and sectors was key. There are

- Quality childcare services
- Clubs
- Parenting support
- Adult and intergenerational learning
- Health promoting services, legal advice and homework centres

This interactive school community approach has brought about impressive outcomes for both students and their families. Parental involvement has increased and:

- The children now achieve above national average academic results
- The children have improved self image, self confidence, attitudes and behaviour
- There is very little aggression in the playground
- Families are less transient and those that participate in the community centre are healthier.

This is an astounding achievement for a community with high rates of childhood illness, mental illness and families living in deprivation.

For further information about the leadership role taken by Victory Primary School, their approach and their impressive successes, a DVD is available from the Families Commission please email: [enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@nzfamilies.org.nz)

## North East Valley - Of the Community not just in the Community

*“A lot of school principals and teachers will tell you that it is not their job to deal with society’s ills; their job is to teach. We completely reject this. We will do whatever it takes to engage our children in learning at school and this often means working closely with the community at all its levels. What it takes is what it will take.”*

*John McKenzie, Principal, North East Valley Normal School*

*North East Valley in Dunedin is famous as the home of the steepest street in the world. The “Baldwin Street Gut-buster” takes place annually and involves athletes running from the base of the street to the top and back down again. The event attracts up to 1000 competitors. However, there’s much more to North East Valley than Baldwin Street.*

The Valley is a community clearly defined by its physical geography and lies to the north of the university campus. It is a narrow steep-sided valley with an obvious entrance point and a central roadway that provides a connecting point for those living in the Valley.

Over recent months, an exciting community development project has been taking shape in the Valley community. John McKenzie, Principal at North East Valley Normal School sought to understand why so many children were coming to school tired, sick and cold.

He involved many others, including support from the Ministry of Social Development and created a project that at its heart has the question “***what would improve the life of children and their families in the Valley?***” From this, the Project has been working to create a community vision for children and families in the Valley.

#### Five key themes emerged:

- ✂ **Education:** Enhancing the community of learning; finding ways for the education providers in the valley to work together to improve things such as transitions, resource sharing, professional development, collegiality and education outcomes for our children.
- ✂ **Housing:** The Project quickly came to appreciate how the relatively poor housing in parts of the Valley was having a negative effect on schooling, health and well-being. There is considerable funding required for solutions to be found for these problems. The Project is keen to work with local and central government to find solutions.
- ✂ **Environment:** A number of issues were identified around the theme of the physical appearance of the Valley and the desire to make it cleaner and more attractive. Initiatives around graffiti removal, broken glass, dog poo, and beautiful streets completion were discussed.
- ✂ **Social Inclusion:** Many people expressed a desire to see more community activities that allowed for social inclusion, with opportunities for families to have fun together at a low or no cost. Improved communication of what is already happening would help.
- ✂ **Community Initiatives:** Use existing resources and initiatives to benefit the local Valley community



Some of the project team behind this inspiring initiative

With these priorities identified, a Project Team made up of representatives of the schools, community groups, churches, local businesses and other agencies came together in November 2008 to continue the work. The Project Team is developing a philosophy / kaupapa, based on creating a community of care that works together to enhance the life and prospects of all its members.

There is considerable community interest, curiosity, energy and involvement. A community Christmas party brought many strands of the community together and featured in the December Otago Daily Times.

The six education centres (schools and kindergartens) in the Valley have formed a more vital network and are meeting together finding practical ways to co-operate. A Project report was completed in March and provides a solid base for moving forward.

The Project also interweaves with a longstanding NEV Community Programme, which runs community-based education programmes and produces a 'Valley News' newsletter, and a Transition Valley initiative. The Valley team says that all of these groups have a key role to play in the Valley along with the other networks, groups and businesses. *"Collectively, working together through a coordinated process it will be a community force to be reckoned with."*



For further information contact: the [nevproject@gmail.com](mailto:nevproject@gmail.com)

*Written by Alison Broad with thanks to Jan Hudson, project worker, for her contributions to this article (and for the great work she and the rest of the NEV project team have been doing).*

## Sustainability in action:

### Margaret Jefferies and Anneleise Hall talk about Project Lyttelton:



**Margaret and Anneleise**

Lyttelton is attracting people from all corners of the globe. This is not just because every new resident is welcomed with a cloth shopping bag full of home baking and helpful information. Rather it is due to the way Project Lyttelton has built on local strengths and skills to help make this small community of 3000 people a desirable and dynamic place to live.

People really care about each other in Lyttelton. Everyone has the opportunity to be heard and this has led to a focus on possibilities and creative thinking. Since it was established over six years ago, Project Lyttelton has encouraged community connections and drawn on the many and varied skills and resources that already exist within the community to get things done.

The belief that everyone has something to contribute of equal value is reflected in the "time banking system" which is one of the highlights of Project Lyttelton. The time bank encourages people to share their skills in the community, and the time donated, rather than the specific skill, is valued as a 'time credit'. So someone who walks a dog for an hour may be paid by getting an hour's worth of legal advice, for example.

Margaret, the Project Lyttelton Chair, and Anneleise, a board member, are proud of the holistic approach of Project Lyttelton. There is an emphasis on sustainability, energy efficiency, waste minimisation, and growing food. As Anneleise says, the community is ecology, where everything

is interrelated and complementary. An example of this is the extremely popular Farmers Market which draws crowds from far and wide every Saturday. This not only supports the local economy in a variety of ways, but it provides a source of fresh food, while generating an income for innovative projects that might otherwise not be funded.

Margaret and Anneleise refuse to allow a lack of money be a barrier to creativity. They prefer to ask themselves, 'How can we make this happen and what resources do we have available in the community?' As Margaret says, "it is amazing what can be done on a shoestring." As proof of this, Project Lyttelton won a Bronze Award at the 2009 Ellerslie Flower Show in conjunction with Canterbury Soil and Health, with little money but large community effort.

Project Lyttelton offers some of the most diverse activities under one organisation. This proud achievement has at times drawn international interest. However, in spite of this success, there is still an emphasis on learning and growing as an important part of the project's philosophy. To find out more about this project and the people of Lyttelton who give their time and energy, paid and unpaid, to the diverse range of activities that it inspires, visit [www.lyttelton.net.nz](http://www.lyttelton.net.nz)

*Helen Wilson*



### The Parnell Community Trust

Who would have thought that an Auckland church renting out rooms in the 1970s would lead to a thriving community Trust that supports the community through social enterprise?

The Parnell Community Trust began in the 1970's when Bruce Patterson of Knox Church rented church property out to community groups. After its incorporation as the Knox Community Trust in September 1982, holiday programmes, child care, classes and activities were introduced. The founding activities still form the basis of its work but the Trust has always sought and responded to feed-back, specific requests, surveys and focus group ideas.

The Trust has also frequently taken the initiative and introduced new activities. Recent examples of this openness and adaptability are travel talks, the Heritage Walks and Farmers' Market all of which strengthen community connections.

Understanding its purpose and objectives has been a pillar of the Trust's success. Changes in purpose can be subtle as communities evolve. Regularly reviewing its purpose and objectives has helped the Trust's development. It is easy to underestimate the extent the Trust's community has evolved.

In the 1970's academics and activists moved into Parnell as part of the gentrification and rejuvenation process. In the late 1980's many of those buying in Parnell were more conventional and wealthy. It is being transformed again. With the Trust's catchment being the wider Hobson Ward the community includes increasing numbers of immigrants, students and people living in high rise buildings.



In 2007, after serving its community for 25 years the Trust prepared a history, written by a volunteer. Without the history we would not have had the opportunity to reflect on the Trust's achievements and the reasons why it has survived. To our surprise the four principal lessons gleaned from it which ensured the Trust's success are equally relevant today. These are to:

- *have a clear understanding of your purpose and objectives*
- *know and listen to your community*
- *assure good governance and financial discipline and*
- *attract and recruit the best people you can.*

Good governance and sound financial management are sometimes seen as the antithesis of a social organisation. The economic restructuring of the late 1980s – early 1990s forced the Trust, along with many other organisations, to address governance and sound financial management. This has served the Trust and the community well.

The Trust has always had the attributes of a social enterprise. Bruce Patterson, probably unwittingly, introduced the concept by letting out the Knox Church buildings and promoting the establishment of an Op-Shop to garner revenue. Trustees have since formalised and increased these commercial aspects of the Trust through Venue Solutions, early child care, certain school holiday programmes and the Farmers' Market.

A professional, well run, respected organisation always has a better chance of attracting high calibre people. Professional staff are attracted by the clear purpose of the Trust. The flat management structure appeals to young people, providing management experience early in their careers. Volunteers contribute skills the Trust cannot afford. The volunteer student intern programme has been very successful. Students contribute advanced technical skills. They like the association with a professional social organisation on their CVs.

### Creative Funding Ideas

Stewart Island/Rakiura have a fantastic community centre built by locals. To pay for the running costs local people have been very innovative. They

- ✂ Collect water from the Community Centre roof, bottle and sell it as Stewart Island Rain Water at local outlets, in Invercargill, and other parts of Southland. This has twice won the national bottled water contest in Putaruru!
- ✂ Have put in community mussel ropes at the local salmon farm. The profits go to the Community Centre and other community projects.
- ✂ Have converted the community hall heating system to use waste oil from the local power station and are ducting heat to the connected library. The Southland District Council was previously paying to have used oil removed from the Island. This is a real example of a win-win solution.

When the Trust formally celebrated its 25 Years with a function on 22 November 2007, guests wandered through an exhibition representing the Trust's activities over that time. Almost no one, including Bruce Patterson, would have predicted the early initiative of letting out Knox Church property would have metamorphosed into the Parnell Community Trust. As Bruce commented; *"there are many people who are willing to get involved and serve the community."* The Trust and the community have been beneficiaries of that commitment.

*Phillippa Pitcher (abridged by Helen Wilson)*

### "Two Hours on our Street": Support grows when you get to know your Neighbours

Lyttelton welcomes new neighbours with home baking. In the North Shore of Auckland the LIFEWISE & Takapuna Methodist Church are also supporting neighbours to get know each, and are helping build community from the street up. This is an excerpt from the latest **Know Your Neighbours Project** newsletter: Please contact Rebecca Harrington for a copy of the newsletter/more info: (09) 489-4584 or email [RebeccaH@lifewise.org.nz](mailto:RebeccaH@lifewise.org.nz)

It was Sunday at four and time for afternoon tea with one of our neighbours. On the way, our next-door neighbour asked us to **mind her house** while she was away. Our other neighbours (a family of seven) drove by and updated us on how their new baby was doing and we offered our **babysitting** services.

We arrived to fresh, homemade lemonade. Our host took us around her garden and gave us tips on how to **grow our own vegetables**. As walking her dog was no longer easy for our host, we took the dog around the block. Knowing animals lifted the spirits of another neighbour on our street; we made a quick stop and discussed the idea of forming a **'dog-walking team'**.

As we returned, our host's next-door neighbour was **mowing her lawn**. "He often pops over like this". She took us into her **craft** room, where she demonstrated her ability for working with wool. After a **cuppa and chat**, we left with an armful of **home-grown peaches**. On our way home, another neighbour greeted us over his white-picket fence and told us he had just been made **redundant**. We asked if there was anything we could do and he suggested we could help him look out for a new job.

**House minding, babysitting, gardening lessons, dog walking, lawn mowing, craft, demos, sharing produce, and social support...** These two hours on our street illustrated the practical benefits of 'Know Your Neighbours' in action.

### Green Fingers at the Khandallah Post Office



Tita Taylor, Phil Sutton, Ben Denton & John Maynard from Khandallah Post Office admiring the results of their work

Two years ago when John Maynard was asked how to grow potatoes by a fellow postie, he decided to demonstrate how easily this could be done. Since then the pots behind the Khandallah Postal Delivery Branch have provided posties and their families with a wide range of organic food, from onions, climbing beans, sweet corn and tomatoes, to carrots, lettuces, strawberries and rhubarb.

All 14 posties from the branch are involved in one way or another, and each year when the first of the new season's crop is harvested there is a shared morning tea at work. Now, encouraged by their green fingers, some of the posties are taking home seedlings to plant. In an example of reciprocity, when the resulting bounty is too much for one family, the vegetables come back to the posties' office to be given to another postie's family. Post managers have been so impressed they have been spreading the news to other branches.

## Information, Events and News

### *Trading tools for tough times: An introduction to complementary currencies*

Wednesday June 17

St Mark's Hall, Richmond Road, Carterton

10am to 9pm - \$30 includes meals

Day only, 10am to 5pm \$20 includes lunch

While the world economy is crumbling, our communities are building innovative resource pools and trading systems to become more sustainable, empowered and resilient. This one-day workshop will introduce three complementary currency systems and look at how they work alongside the mainstream economy. Presented by *Living Economies Educational Trust* in association with Wairarapa Local Exchange & Trading System, Transition Towns Wairarapa and Sustainable Wairarapa Inc.

For more information please contact: Helen Dew, Phone (06) 379 8034, email [helend@contact.net.nz](mailto:helend@contact.net.nz) or Robyn Bracey, phone (06) 378 7420 email [bracey@orcon.net.nz](mailto:bracey@orcon.net.nz) or visit our website [www.le.org.nz](http://www.le.org.nz)

## News from Massey Matters

### **New Massey Matters DVD**

Over the last few months, Massey Matters has been reflecting on the journey of the last 3 years. Click on this link to see a five minute DVD of what Massey Matters is all about and people's thoughts on how MM Community Projects funding has helped them.

<http://www.waitakere.govt.nz/OurPar/masseycommunity.asp>



### **Staffing Changes at Massey Matters**

We've been going through some changes over the last few months and now have some exciting new staff appointments to announce:

**Linda Shaw** has joined Massey Matters this week as the new full time *Project Coordinator*. Linda can be contacted on 836 8000 ext 8839; mobile 021 0533460; or email [Linda.shaw@waitakere.govt.nz](mailto:Linda.shaw@waitakere.govt.nz). Sue Berman and Jenny Tanner will be joining forces to share the new *Massey Ranui Sustainable Neighbourhood Broker* role. This streets-based, action project will be kicking off shortly in both Massey and Ranui and build on some of the great work happening in both communities. For the next few weeks, Sue can be contacted on 832 6049 or 021 0414427 or [Sue.Berman@waitakere.govt.nz](mailto:Sue.Berman@waitakere.govt.nz). Jenny Tanner can be contacted on 839 0400 or 021-1846236.

*From the Massey Matters Team*

## Village Well Newsletter

The latest Village Well newsletter is hot off the press! This includes news of Village Well's recent Place Making work in the beautiful heart of New Zealand's North Island, Lake Taupo. To download a copy of the newsletter, click on the following link: [http://www.villagewell.org/drupal/index.php?q=news\\_newsletter](http://www.villagewell.org/drupal/index.php?q=news_newsletter).

There will be an article about Taupo's 'place making' in the next *Inspiring Communities* newsletter

This newsletter has been produced by Helen Wilson and Mary-Jane Rivers. Thanks to contributors Anne Pullar, John McKenzie, Alison Broad, Jan Hudson, Mark Brown, Phillippa Pitcher, Margaret Jefferies, Anneliese Hall, Rebecca Harrington, Megan Courtney and the Massey Matters Team, John Maynard and the Khandallah posties. Thanks also to those people who provided the wonderful photographs. The next newsletter will be June 2009.

**Website:** [www.InspiringCommunities.org.nz](http://www.InspiringCommunities.org.nz) **Email:** [exchange@InspiringCommunities.org.nz](mailto:exchange@InspiringCommunities.org.nz). *Inspiring Communities* is supported by The Tindall Foundation and The Todd Foundation