

# APC Newsletter

## Mid-year Edition, 2023



### FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gaynor Brown



*Tena koutou, Greetings to all*

The year that was expected to have a smooth start was suddenly and tragically from Auckland and beyond subjected to unprecedented weather events of an atmospheric river followed a severe cyclone. While the Centre was affected by paddock flooding and MoE required closures, the board and staff are deeply sorry for all who bore the brunt of the storms and still do. It has never been as green at Ambury during this period nor as wet, as the water table has had no chance to fall. The Centre's three programmes started positively from the beginning of 2023 building up to good numbers of about 80 therapy riders, between 26 and 30 students and for most of the time the usual 27 in the adult Vocational Programme.

In February a new Head of School, Nicola Seager, who also has experience in PE, Literacy and Health, was appointed. She has settled well into the Ambury Park Centre team, introducing new sports options and education outside the classroom opportunities. Last year the Centre employed a then first year Science teacher which has been very successful. She has entered several students in NCEA standards, as have the Mathematics and English teachers in their subjects. The adult programme continues to engage the clients in various work and life skills activities and community participation opportunities that included going to a local production. The intensive and remedial riding participants are flourishing to the delight of the riders and their whānau. It is a tribute to all Ambury programmes and staff that there is much positive feedback from whānau, caregivers and agencies about the Centre's positive impact physically, socially, educationally, behaviourally and psychologically for its clients and students.

I wish to acknowledge the wonderful work of the Centre's volunteers in regularly supporting our therapy riders and holiday programmes. The Centre would not be able to offer its riding therapy or holiday programmes without their input. I also acknowledge the good work of Patricia and all staff over the past two terms, which have been particularly challenging in the second term with two key staff resignations. Ambury Park Centre farewelled two senior staff members: Andrea Menzies, Head of Equine, and Debra Moore, Office Manager, in Term two. Andrea led the Equine team with her expertise in coaching and knowledge of horses generally and specifically for Ambury's needs. Debra looked after so many aspects of the Centre including managing the office, recruiting volunteers and looking out for them, managing corporate volunteer groups and promoting the Centre to organisations such as Oranga Tamariki and at community events. The board and the staff thank them for their major, expert contributions to the Centre and its people. Saskia from the Vocational team also left earlier in Term 2 and is much missed by all for her creative and imaginative talents and special care for our adult clients. Toni, an experienced therapist with our Intensive Therapy riders for the past 18 months has also moved on from Ambury. She was most valued in this area as a riding therapist and trained Physiotherapist with an interest in Hippotherapy. We were very sorry to see all four leave Ambury. We are pleased to welcome Stacie as Ambury Park Centre Office Manager and welcome back Katja as Remedial riding therapy coach.



# FROM THE PRINCIPAL/DIRECTOR

## Patricia Simeon

In amongst all the crazy summer weather Auckland has thrown at us, I have so much respect for our resilient staff who shoulder whatever comes our way with grace and humour, and who always go above and beyond making sure our horses are safe, happy and well. Also, huge aroha to our Ambury community and wider whānau who were affected by flooding, hoping that any stress and disruption has been alleviated by now.

It's been my privilege to help out with the Blues and the Vocs on trips to the community, including setting up for events at Clevedon arena. They really are such a great group of people and I feel lucky to have



the opportunity to roll up my sleeves and get stuck in with them. It's said that at Ambury our biggest asset is our horses – they are definitely what makes our school and vocational programme unique, but beyond that, our biggest asset by far is our people. Although we've been incredibly sad to have lost some valued staff members we are lucky also to have gained some friendly and talented new faces – our new office manager Stacie in particular has had giant shoes to fill but has taken to the job with enthusiasm and passion. We look forward to introducing some of our new staff members over the following weeks – keep an eye on our social media pages!

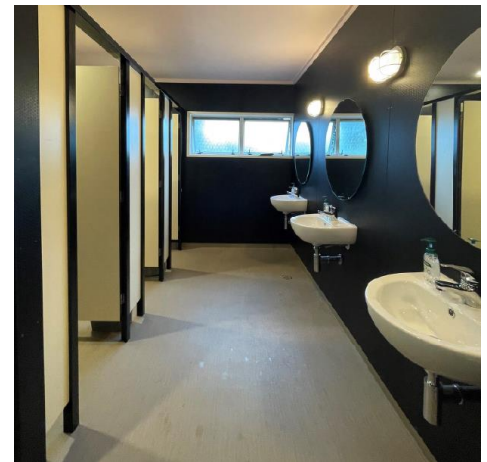


Ngā mihi nui to all our supporters, volunteers and families for all that you do to help make Ambury the special place it is. I'm excited for all the growth, learning and new beginnings the rest of this year will bring and to continue celebrating the success of our students, clients and riders with you.

## Ambury Projects 2023

### *Bathroom Renaissance*

A highlight for Ambury Park Centre in 2023 is the much-needed upgrade, including some reconfiguration, of its indoor arena female, male and accessible bathrooms. These service the students, adult clients, therapy riders and visitors. The Board is extremely grateful to the **Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust** for hugely funding this project. The Centre is fortunate to have such



support, as it was from several companies who donated much of the materials and bathroom fittings or offered them substantially reduced in cost. Jeremy Purcell, a board member and architect, gave of his time to design the refurbishment, negotiate the material donations and project manage the operation. The outcome is an extremely attractive re-design to current compliances that will be fit for purpose for many years to come - a state of the art oasis in the arena space! The students and clients are very impressed! The wonderful companies that very generously donated to the project are **Plytech** (Plywood wall linings), **Inzide** (Floor and shower vinyl), **Resco** (Toilet partitions), **Warren & Caroline Grove** (Plywood flooring and fixings), **Mico** (Sanitary fixtures), **Allproof** (Floor drains), **Insulation** (Roof logic).



## Shade Relief for Horses

Another very important project in 2023 is the planting of shade trees for the horses in paddocks needing them. Through Paul Wilson, Auckland Council Regional Parks provided the trees, a wonderful and generous bonus for Ambury Park Centre. The surrounding fence protections to be built have been funded by the Lindsay Foundation along with funds to purchase a large shade structure for one paddock. The board and the equine staff are most grateful to the **Lindsay Foundation** for this generosity. Adequate shade is an increasing need for our horses.



*Ngā mihi nui*  
*Gaynor*

## Equine

**Shelley Trueman**

We are well into winter now, with our horses clipped for work and wearing filled waterproof covers. Covers makes identifying them while catching a bit tricky, especially as we suddenly have quite the painted pony collection!



**Dakota**

Going to catch a particular paint when an impatient herd surrounds you in low light on a foggy or rainy morning requires careful scrutiny of face markings and socks, (assuming they are not wearing thick mud socks!). Our horses happily take any halter if they can come in earlier for a warm feed. Our list of skewbald and piebalds now includes: Magpie, Patch, Romeo, Smudge, Teka, Gin and Angel. You will notice a couple of new names - more on comings and goings, below.

This year's incessant rain meant some paddocks resembled lakes, as water tables remain high. This led to rich long grass, making swapping herds to fallow paddocks tricky. Thankfully our kind friends at Mangere Pony Club cut our lush paddocks so we could tape off regrowth sections and give wet feet a break. Those big storms resulted

in a couple of emergency rescues of stranded horses when water levels rose very quickly. Thank you to staff who lived close enough to wade in, open gates to relocate, and feed out hay.

Despite the challenge of warm and wet conditions our horses did not suffer too badly on the hoof health front. Rigorous regular hoof picking and application of all manner of concoctions averted most fungal and bacterial skin conditions on the legs, seedy toe, abscesses and thrush. We did take a precautionary approach and clipped all feathers on our Clydies and Cobbs.

We have lost and gained equines. Old Casper departed earth over the summer, with dignity and without pain. Arlie now trots the Waitakere hills. Stately Ernie returned to his breeder. Veteran Frosty returned to his human family in Taupo where he herds rams. Newbies include young bush pony Gin, elegant English riding pony Angel (Galaxy Angel Jane), robust Kaimanawa pony Dakota, and spirited lease ponies, Lorry and Harvey. We also lost and gained human herd members. Former RDA coach Grace is skiing and sailing and ranch riding her way around the world; equine teaching assistant Bonnie started her teaching career (taking Arlie as companion to her elderly horse); long time equine manager Andrea took her wealth of equine experience and expertise to be a St John's Ambulance first aid trainer; and physiotherapist Toni moved to new fields of therapy endeavour. We welcomed Katja back as RDA coach and are grateful to have Lili, Tracey and Olivia in the stables helping the students. With winter solstice hitting, the horses and humans will shed their winter coats and be enjoying spring before we know it, fluffy legs and all.



**Lorry**

# Academic – “Keeping Up With the Blues”

## Lucy Rickit

The Blues have had an action-packed year so far. In term one we went to the lava caves at Ambury Farm, won certificates, went up Māngere Mountain and then for our end of term trip we got to go to MOTAT. As well as the Blues trips, the Blues still did their daily pooper scooping, job group and of course riding. After a much-needed break Term Two began. In Term Two we went to the gym and played lots of fun games, as well as the Cloud in the city which held a new medical science and tech expo. We also went to Auckland Museum to look at the volcano room. Most of us went into the Rangitoto eruption simulation but Nicola was too scared. The Blues did a beach clean-up on a particularly dirty beach called Te Matauranga in Clendon with the Sustainable Coastlines group. Some Blues went up Māngere mountain for tree planting. We of course did schoolwork and even cooking.

Thanks for reading! Lucy



# The Vocational Programme

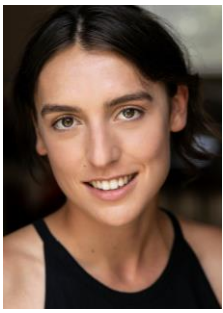
## Julie Wharton

This term we have once again enjoyed getting out and about in the community. The Vocational team have been engaged in community tree planting and stream clean up this term. They also enjoyed Pink Shirt Day and of course being with our Ambury horses. Once a week the Vocs have the responsibility of doing hayout. This term we have also celebrated Samoan Language Week and Anti bullying week. The vocational team also set up and packed down the Clevedon arena.



Follow Ambury Park Centre Inc. on Facebook and Instagram to be kept up to date with future events and lots of photos and interesting articles.





## Art/Mahi Toi – Welcome to Emily!

### Emily Hurley

This term in art some of the students have been introduced to still life painting as it is part of their NCEA or foundation course curriculum. Studying Vanitas still life paintings has been a great way to introduce the students to the use of symbolism in art. For instance, Vanitas painters of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century would include objects in their paintings that represented their commissioners' life and surroundings. Often, they would also include symbols to inspire the viewer to consider their own mortality and appreciate the

transience of life. This idea of remembering death or *Memento Mori* was re-popularised during the Renaissance, but the philosophy can be traced to the Stoic's of Ancient Greece. It was then adopted by the Romans in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and early 1<sup>st</sup> Century BCE. Vanitas paintings in contrast were in their time symbols of status; Vanitas painters would include objects that represented wealth in the commissioner's life. therefore inspiring a contemplation of the futility of the acquisition of wealth and success in the face of death. In this way, Vanitas paintings warned against the trappings of the material world (*Vanitas* is the Latin word for Vanity.)



*Vanitas Still Life with Flowers and Skull, Adriaen van Utrecht, 1642*

The influence of Vanitas paintings can be seen in the work of modern Damien Hirst and Kathleen Ryan – both of whom are known for their bejewelled sculptures referencing symbols of *Memento Mori* from Vanitas paintings.



Made using a real 18<sup>th</sup> century human skull encrusted with 8,601 diamonds and sold for a record breaking 100 million dollars, ***For the Love of God*** (Damien Hirst, 2007) is widely known as one of the most expensive modern artworks ever made.

Made using glass beads and precious stones Ryan's ***Bad lemon (tart)*** 2020 features sculptures of rotting fruit highlighting the strange beauty of decay.



This term I tasked the students to set up their own Vanitas painting and encouraged them to bring in objects from home – or to choose objects from their surroundings to include in their compositions which would serve to represent their life and interests. I also brought in a couple of classic Vanitas objects for the students to choose from when creating their still life. It was awesome to see the students bringing a personal touch to their work.

### ***Chris, Ambury Park Centre 2023***

Chris included his bow in his composition to represent his love of archery.

### ***Brooke, Ambury Park Centre 2023.***

Brooke and I discussed the idea of featuring objects in groups of three to represent her relationship to her sisters as she is one of 3 triplets.



### ***Genevieve, Ambury Park Centre 2023***

Genevieve, a student of many passions, decided to include her teddy bear, knitting needles and painter's palette.

# Riding Therapy & Physiotherapy Sessions

Marjolein Harting & Katja Spooner

The first half of the year has been very exciting at our RDA. Most of our group sessions had new riders joining in. Some of them were simply switching dates to join another group that was working towards similar goals. Some others transitioned from our physiotherapy sessions to RDA or had the chance to take part in our rides for the first time.

On top of that, we have also had a new coach that joined our team: Katja who has previously been coaching at Ambury Park Centre came back to join the team after Grace left for her overseas adventures. With Katja's experience from working at a riding school, she is bringing along new ideas and challenges for our riders.

Not disturbed by all these changes going on in the background, our riders have been working very hard on their position during their sessions. A great riding position does not only make themselves more comfortable on the horse, but also helps our horses to keep doing the excellent work they are doing with us. Furthermore, we were having our first practice at a few obstacles that will be included in the ribbon day which will be held for our vocational clients in term 3.

Toni and Marjolein have also been busy with our physiotherapy sessions. It has been so nice to see all of the progress happening with some of our little ones getting more confident and stronger in their core muscles which is then helping with sitting, transferring and walking during other times at home and for some at school. It is great to see progress for some of our clients who have gone from the individual sessions to the group sessions in RDA which is such a big step especially for their social and concentration skills.

With all this exciting news, comes also sad news: Toni left our team close to the end of term 2. Toni had been successfully teaching our Friday groups and with her positive and supportive approach had been relating well to our riders during their sessions. We will all miss her patience and knowledge, but even more her jokes and personality that made the time with her so special! We wish Toni all the best for her future adventures!

Stay warm everybody and before you know we will have lambs and new leaves on the trees!

Marjolein and Katja

## Important Dates:

- 14<sup>th</sup> July - Matariki
- 17<sup>th</sup> July – Term 3 starts
- 17<sup>th</sup> July – Ambury Park Centre AGM
- 14<sup>th</sup> September – Ribbon Day
- 14<sup>th</sup> October – Car Boot Day



## Community

We welcomed Resilient Horse & Rider on June 24th to hold a clinic in our indoor arena. We are next hosting Hauraki Horsemanship on August 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup>. Our arena and other facilities are available for hire at weekends and evenings during term time and holidays (other than holiday programme dates) Please enquire with our office for details!



*Joanne from Resilient Horse and Rider*

## How can you help?

The Centre being '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 assistance is greatly appreciated - Thank you! Email us at [office@amburyparkcentre.org.nz](mailto: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
- 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.

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

The Centre is fortunate to have the support of many charitable and community trusts, whanau and other donors. The board is most grateful to all donors for the support that enables its programmes to operate. These include in 2022 and 2023 to date the Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust, Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust, J M Thompson Charitable Trust, Woolf Fisher Trust, Peter and David Picot Charitable Trust, Chenery Memorial Trust, Kelliher Charitable Trust, Nell Erne Adams Charitable Trust Foundation, Foundation North, NZ Lottery Grants Board, NZ Community Trust, Lindsay Foundation. ARA Lodge No.348 IC Charitable Trust Board, Samar Kand, Four Winds Foundation, Trillian Trust, Rotary Club of Māngere, Auckland Manukau Dressage Group, Baron Investments, Rano Trust, Goodman Contracting, Michael Otto, Ruth Daniels, Amir Halabi, A K Potts, Janet Hepi, Sam Hugli, D and A Alderslade, Changii Xuan, Shams Alchalabi, Longmuir Trust, James Dunlop Textile Group, Morphem Environmental Group, Ron Paterson, Māngere Market Trust, The Trusts Community Foundation, Milestone Foundation, Tim and Suzanne Merriott, Grove Hardware Ltd, Kings School, Pub Charity Ltd, COGS, T.W. Thomas-Stone, Linda Watts, Tim Chan, P.G. Watts, Jane Anderson. Mangere-Otahuhu Local Board, AT Realty, Grove Hardware, Caroline and Warren Grove and Sheryl Christian.

Thank You  
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