

APC Newsletter

Christmas Edition Term 4, 2022



Ambury Park Centre
Riding therapy with a difference



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Gaynor Brown

Tena Koutou Katoa, Greetings to All



The Ambury Park Centre environment is amazing and even after many years I never cease to feel entranced on driving through the gate. As we begin summer with spring tones still vibrant, Ambury is at its most alluring.

Although it has been wonderful to live through the year without lockdowns and a slowed spread of Covid 19 there have been considerable instances of winter and spring illnesses, including Covid, which has meant at times extra workloads for the staff. The board acknowledges and is grateful for the efforts of the staff to keep all programmes operating. We also acknowledge the excellent leadership of Patricia Simeon, the new Director/Principal who is now well settled into Ambury Park Centre life.

The numbers attending the Centre are pleasing with the school reaching its maximum of 30 students and the vocational programme steady on its maximum of 27. In Term 3 we were delighted to welcome our physiotherapist Marjolein Harting back to working with our therapy riders and now in Term 4 Marjolein has been operating her usual days. The numbers in riding therapy have gradually risen to 58 in remedial riding therapy and 24 in intensive riding therapy. It is with sadness that the Centre is fare welling Elizabeth Warden, Head of School. Elizabeth has brought many talents one of which is her understanding of our rangatahi and how to effectively meet their learning and pastoral needs. Elizabeth has personal commitments to attend to, but we hope she will return to relieve. The NCEA achievements for our students are heartening for 2022.

In Term 3 our Vocational clients attended a transition expo held at the Auckland Netball Centre and run by Disability Connect, an interesting event with many options exhibited.

Disappointingly, once again Ambury Farm were not able to hold its annual farm day after it was cancelled due to wet weather. So much preparation had gone into the day. Ambury Park Centre was to participate with some of its horses to be used for the enjoyment of children.

I thank all at Ambury staff, volunteers, therapy riders and adult clients for their contributions to a good year for the Centre. The board and staff are forever grateful to our volunteers who support in riding therapy and make everything possible as leaders and side walkers. They are vital participants of day-to-day happenings at Ambury.

A huge thank you to the many corporate groups that have so often transformed the Ambury Park Centre environment. In 2022 groups who volunteered a day to Ambury include James Dunlop Textiles, Petspiration, AIA NZ Ltd, Fisher and Paykel Appliances, Salesforce, Duke of Edinburgh, Proximity NZ, Sharp Corporation NZ, Marsh, and Morphum Environmental.

Ambury Park Centre is deeply grateful to all the trusts and donors who have supported us in 2022.



All have significantly contributed to our success. Several trusts have been our mainstays for a number of years. The donors are listed at the conclusion of the Newsletter.

I wish all associated with Ambury Park Centre a very Merry Christmas and the best for the New Year.

**Ngā mihi na,
Gaynor**

FROM THE PRINCIPAL / DIRECTOR

Patricia Simeon



I've been at Ambury for 6 months now and I'm absolutely blown away by how fast this year has flown by. It seems like only yesterday when Vicky took me for my first trek across Ambury Farm and allowed me to ride her favourite steed – Tommy. In that moment I knew that I was making the right move from my small town of Kawakawa to the big smoke of Auckland. However, this could not have happened without the Board taking a leap of faith and appointing a First Time Principal – that's me and with each day that passes by I am still humbled and honoured to have been given this amazing opportunity.

As the new kid on the block I made it my number one mission to 1. Remember all the names of our students and clients 2. Get to know the staff 3. Understand how Ambury Park Centre operates. As I started working on these 'missions' I forgot two of the most important aspects of Ambury – the volunteers and our horses. However, trying to learn the names of our horses

proved to be much harder than learning the names of our students and clients, but I got there...eventually. The first few days I fumbled through the overwhelming sense of the position, but for Ambury Park it was business as usual. The Blues and Vocs went about their daily chores and lessons, the therapy rides ran without a hitch, and our horses relished their well earned daily feeds and hay.

As we come to the close of 2022 I thought it would be helpful to share a reel of highlights from my first 6 months as the Principal/Director:

- My first Ambury horse ride was on Tommy, followed by rides on Manuka, Sarah, Highlander and Dusty.
- Watching Fergus perform the haka (solo) for me at my mihi whakatau (welcoming). Everytime I visit my dad he still to this day asks about the young man who did the haka at my powhiri.
- Participating with the Blues in a horse riding lesson and feeling more nervous than I did at my interview.
- Attending volunteer training and being able to utilise those skills in a couple of RDA sessions and again...feeling more nervous than I did at my interview.
- Acknowledging the kind donation made by the Māngere Rotary Club at one of their meetings and having the opportunity to share the story of Ambury in my first public speech as the Principal/Director.
- Attending the 60th Anniversary for the Riding for Disabled at Government House and meeting the Governor-General Rt. Hon. Dame Cindy Kiro and her husband Dr Richard Davies and finding out that Dame Cindy Kiro and I have more in common than I thought.
- Participating with the Vocs in a couple of their weekly singing lessons with Mapura Studios in Otahuhu. Since that day, I've been looking for any excuse to 'hang out' with them.
- Celebrating our RDA Volunteers and their continual support because without them we know our therapy sessions couldn't operate. Also our volunteers, if you didn't know this already, are all amazing bakers and cooks.
- Building relationships with our students and clients who are being supported by a team of dedicated and passionate people.



With that I would like to thank all those who have supported us this year, whether physically or financially. Without your support we cannot do the wonderful work that we do. It certainly is a team effort! All the best for the holiday season and I look forward to an even more successful 2023!

Equine



Andrea Menzies

Milestones in the pathway of the Ambury student

On the day a student starts at Ambury, there begins an exciting initiation into a whole new world. It is sometimes an exclusive world with its own baffling language and rituals. For the layman struggling to differentiate between a fetlock and a forelock it can be quite daunting. Little wonder then, there is often a short period granted whilst the student learns to newly acquired horsey vocab, their

One of the early skills taught is to

horse is trying to communicate. There is a very noticeable friendly advances of a horse enjoying a nice groom and one out assault when sorely displeased. It is very much to the appreciate the difference between the two.

Before long, it is time to awaken the leg and bum muscles by is true that no amount of time spent in the gym can body for the coming onslaught. The student will soon never knew were part of the human anatomy, or even useful

The golden rule of learning to ride is first, try to stay on board. Parting company with your horse, often from a great height, is seldom a fun experience. The plus side is you may gain a tale to rival your annoying fishy mate's account of the one that got away. You now have the opportunity to equally embellish a good story. Poetic licence can be taken on the size of the horse, the daring exploits attempted and heroics which finally brought about your demise.

The adage frequently trotted out by those secretly intimidated by our equine friends, claim the difference



between one end of a horse and the other, is one bites and the other one kicks. While there may be an element of truth to this, horses quite naturally mirror the attitude of the human presenting to them. If the said human has no intension of kicking or biting the horse, the odds are the meeting of the two will go just fine Never let it be said that a horse lacks a sense of humour! It is often acknowledged they are great levellers. Should a rider ever become complacent or just a little too anxious to summon the attention of an audience, the horse will inevitably choose that same moment to bring any semblance of pride crashing down to earth. Some

even swear a horse can snicker as they feign total innocence.

An Ambury student can expect to learn all these lessons and more during their time here. Then again, if things were too easy, we would be a school teaching the fine art of tiddlywinks.

(Incidentally, if you are still pondering the difference between the fetlock and the forelock, you will find one on the lower leg where our ankle would be, and the other growing between the ears and down the face, resembling the human fringe.)



find their feet, or with hooves.

recognise signals the difference between the ready to launch an all-handler's advantage to

climbing into a saddle. It adequately prepare the discover muscles they in any other sport.



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



Academic

Fiona Donnell

Secondary Students Term 4

Term Four has been filled with learning, creativity and milestones.

This term the 'Blues' have reached our full capacity of thirty students. We now have a waiting list for ākonga (students) and their whanau wanting to attend the Secondary School. Ka rawe to the leadership and staff who are working hard to offer a caring and individualised learning programme for so many students! Also, a big thankyou to our students who have shown manaaki to those who have only just started this term, displaying empathy, kindness and friendliness - we all remember what it's like to be the "new" person! Ngā mihi nui!

One of our new students shares that his favourite feature of Ambury Park Centre is the horses! The horses remain an important and unique focus of our programme - often leading into academic areas. Some students have learnt about the components of a healthy diet for horses in Science. In English ākonga use horses as inspiration for both narrative writing and report writing.

This term in Science, students have had the opportunity to learn about DNA (see lolly DNA models below) and about pests threatening our endemic or native creatures here in New Zealand, and particularly here at Ambury. Through many hands-on activities and experiments, ākonga have explored insect identification and classification; habitats and life cycles; population explosions and pest management. As a result of this knowledge-rich topic, insects discovered by students (including spiders living in gumboots!) have been taken to the science room with curiosity; leading to magnifying glasses and classification charts being spontaneously and enthusiastically used. It is great to have the flexibility to provide space for this incidental learning!



In English each student is given tasks in which both the subject matter and the skills cultivated are specific to each ākonga. Some students enjoyed reading Joy Cowley texts such as 'Bow Down Shadrach' and 'The Silent One', while others have read short stories. They then formulate personal responses to the texts. Visual texts have given students the chance to explore how images can convey a message, and to create their own image including a quote from a book they've read. Some creative and meaningful work has been created.



Friday outings have included walks, team building activities and sport such as soccer. This gives students a chance to enjoy education outside of the classroom and give them some physical activity - a fun and healthy way to finish off each week!





The Vocational Programme

Barbara Peterson

Since joining the staff at Ambury Park Centre earlier this year I have had the privilege of working in the Vocational Programme with our clients (Vocs) under the leadership of Julie Wharton and an incredibly passionate team (Saskia, Nina, Tina, plus our fantastic relievers!) The energy and dedication of these wahine toa to empower our clients who are facing diverse challenges is always inspiring, and the hard mahi that our Vocs do and the joy they bring to Ambury through their enthusiasm and unique perspective on life makes the job more rewarding than almost any other.



Highlights of the second half of the year include trips to Māpura Art group in Māngere Town Centre, a trip to Butterfly Creek, maintaining and adding to our beautiful māra kai and activities related to our life skills programme centred around teaching independence and awareness around travel, community participation and money management. Apart from this we also enjoyed usual activities such as swimming, exploring our local whenua, waiata group and the opportunity to celebrate our clients' riding and horse management skills at our annual Ribbon Day.

Wishing our clients and their whānau a happy and relaxing holiday, while looking forward to what the programme will bring in the new year.



How can you help?

The Centre being a '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 Debra in the office. Any assistance is greatly appreciated - Thank you! office@amburyparkcentre.org.nz

- Volunteer as a friend of Ambury on a weekly basis throughout the school term and in school hours.
- Spread the word about the programmes that we offer and the good that we do in the community
- Organise a volunteer group for a morning to help with gardening or other project work.



- Donate product or services that would benefit the programmes that we run, i.e. breakfast for our students, activities or outings for trips, or sponsor one of our lovely horses!
- Follow Ambury Park Centre Inc. on Facebook as we sometimes put shout outs for items we need
- Make a donation or become a Board member of the Centre. All donations to Ambury Park Centre Inc. account 06-01930-154558-26
- Horse manure is wonderful for the garden at this time of year and is readily available for bagging or to load onto a trailer for a koha.

Art

Ellen Williams

Term Four Art included fine line drawings of student's chosen "spirit animals", body paint, and sketching techniques. Ākonga have used our outdoor surroundings to develop their sketching skills, now culminating in making a multimedia tree image using various sketching and drawing techniques including stippling, shading, and hatching. Art offers students the chance to relax, create and be expressive without any pressure of right or wrong outcomes.



Physiotherapy Programme

Toni Foster & Marjolein an Harting

Hello everybody,

Just a little update from Toni and Marjolein to inform you about the exciting things happening during our physiotherapy sessions utilising the movement of the horse.

This term we have had a few of our clients graduating from the one-to-one physiotherapy sessions to the group RDA sessions. Congratulations Bede, Charlie and Mohammed! Have fun with the group activities while riding your horse.

This part of the year is so exciting as it gave us a reason to dress the arena and ourselves for Halloween. We balanced on the horse while throwing spiders in the web, we counted pumpkins, and we collected ingredients for our witch's potion. Thanks to all of you who came in costume as well and for joining in with the fun activities.

We also enjoyed the Christmas/holiday season activities

with the ponies in costume and arena dressed up complete with Christmas tree and our Santa bears. Please take care everybody, happy travels and a happy holiday.

Cheers Toni & Marjolein



Riding for Disabled Programme

Grace Goodman



Term three was exciting for our riders as they prepped for Ribbon Day. We saw an awesome increase of skills with all our riders as they practiced the course the week before hand. Everyone was able to show their skills off to an audience and smash their individual goals on the final day! This was a huge achievement.

Moving into term four we have changed up the skills drill and hope to perfect this routine in term one of next year. It involves a trot - walk - trot (or fast walk - slow walk - fast walk) speed transition, which will allow riders to give verbal commands throughout and hold the reins for control.

Our centre purchased some of Mary Longden's balancing bars that we were lucky enough to see in use by Mary herself during a coaching clinic. We started to use these bars in term four and have already seen great improvement in our riders' balance at the trot.

Term four also brought the excitement of Halloween and Christmas! With witches' potions made and Christmas presents delivered we look forward to seeing the term out with some great lessons and learning moments!



Volunteers

Debra Moore

As always, Ambury volunteers have been the life blood of the Centre which we could not have done without. We have welcomed and farewelled some, but have remained short of people on the ground this year due to continued apprehension around COVID.

There have been several celebrations throughout the year with the Riding for Disabled 60-year anniversary being the highlight comprising of a formal morning tea with the Governor General at Government House and a separate New Zealand wide RDA virtual celebration hosted by Lea Panapa and the NZRDA National Office team.

Our beautiful Karen Sims celebrated her 20-year volunteering anniversary this year also.

Thank you to all our amazing volunteer team – each and every one of you are shining stars valued by our community and staff! Until next year, Merry Christmas and have a lovely holiday season.



Thank you to the many donors in 2022:

Throughout the year many trusts, organisations and individual donors have supported Ambury Park Centre. The board and staff are deeply grateful for this support that enables successful outcomes in all areas. Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust, Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust, J M Thompson Charitable Trust, Woolf Fisher Charitable 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, 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, Jane Anderson, Ray White Mangere Bridge.

See you all back in 2023! Programs resume, Thursday 2nd February 2023.

