



Ambury Park Centre
Riding therapy with a difference

President's Annual Report 2015

Dear Members, Visitors, Staff, Volunteers and Whanau,

On behalf of the Board, I welcome you to the 2016 Annual General Meeting, Monday 25th July. It is really brave of you to venture out at this time of the year. We are grateful that you do.

In 2015 Ambury Park Centre experienced a successful year in which the therapy riders made pleasing progress, as did the school students and vocational clients. The Centre again received much support for the clients and students to reach their goals with welcome contributions from many charitable, community and gaming trusts, and donors. It is rewarding to realise that so many in the community recognise the good work that the Centre does to meet the many and often complex needs of its child, adolescent and adult clients, and students. Their needs are catered for through the Centre's three areas of operation - Riding Therapy, Second Chance Secondary Education and Vocational Training. The Centre is fortunate to have in its employ expert staff for its areas of operation and many that have stayed with it to give continuity and sharing of specific knowledge. It seems that Ambury gets under the skin. What better proof of this, is that in 2011 Director/Principal, Noel Morrison, returned to Ambury for a second stint in that role. His return brought even more stability and experience.

Recently I have re-read our History, 'A Horse Tale', published in 2011 and launched by the then Governor General, The Right Honourable Sir Anand Satyanand, and reflected on how extremely fortunate that from the beginning Ambury has been blessed with believers. There was Lionel Otto, whose dream and instigation Ambury was, as an all-weather riding Centre for people with disabilities, supported by people in the ARA including Bruce Robinson who became the Centre's first President and many others who ensured the dream became a reality. Maurice Paykel was a tower of strength in not only the development of Ambury Park Centre but also in continuing to ensure its survival. Today the valuable support continues with Mary Brook, his daughter, as our patron and the Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust, a very significant benefactor to the Centre. Lionel Otto's son Michael continues to frequent Ambury events, contribute with donations and very importantly promote the Centre in the wider community. From the early days the

Fisher family has been enormously generous and crucial to the continuance of Ambury Park Centre through the Joyce Fisher Trust, Lou and Iris Fisher Trust and the Woolf Fisher Trust. The Joyce Fisher Trust is a most generous donor to Ambury. Over a three year period beginning in 2006 the Woolf Fisher Trust donated \$300,000 as a capital emergency fund for the Centre. A task for the Centre is to consider how, eight years on, it can increase this fund. The Lou and the Iris Fisher Trust has greatly assisted the Centre with projects, some major. Janet Hepi (nee Fisher) is a long time Board member who has been very generous to the Centre over time.

The J M Thompson Charitable Trust (formerly known as the Anonymous Trust) is also a long term and substantial donor to Ambury Park Centre. As a community trust, Foundation North (formerly the ASB Community Trust) is a historic benefactor to Ambury, in substantially financing major projects and more recently assisting with operational costs. Both again supported Ambury Park Centre in 2015, as did the Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust and the Joyce Fisher Charitable Trust substantially.

There are other trusts and organisations that for many years, and again in 2015, have believed in Ambury and made significant grants and contributions: P H Picot Charitable Trust, Sir John Logan Campbell Residuary Estate, Chenery Memorial Trust, ARA Lodge no. 348 IC Charitable Trust, Samar Kand Trust, Geoffrey & Nell Erne Adams Charitable Trust, Mangere Markets Community Trust, Ziera Shoes NZ Ltd, NZRDA, Auckland Council and Rotary Club of Mangere.

Horses over a long period have been sponsored by the Kelliher Charitable Trust, Grove Hardware Ltd, REM Systems, and Warren and Caroline Grove. They again supported us in 2015. Several more horse sponsorships were received in 2015 as an outcome of the Arena Dinner and other donations to horse care. In relation to the Horsepower II Arena dinner, the Board is grateful for all who donated in a variety of ways on the night.

In 2015 there were welcome contributors. These were Mary Brook who ensured a very generous grant for the Centre, Martin Thompson, Tim Chan, Arthur Mathewson, Ansheng Huang, R Paterson, Ilmars Gravis, Sam Lotu-liga, Kerry Hoggard, Michelle Holmes, Vicki Latta, Tom Poole, The Hungarian Club, Baradene, Vincent Maire, Emergency Glass Ltd, Franklin Machinery, S Christian, Waitemata Riding, Epsom Totara Club, Doug Alexander, Ambury Park Riding for Disabled Foundation and many other individual donors.

Contributions from Gaming Trusts were again greatly appreciated and in 2015 these were from: Pub Charity Ltd, Four Winds Foundation Ltd, Blue Waters Community Trust, Infinity Foundation, Lion Foundation, New Zealand Community Trust, Mt Wellington Foundation, Blue Sky Community Trust and Trillian Trust. There was also funding from the NZ Lottery Grants Board.

Three Ministries contribute to the Centre's operations: Ministry of Health to Riding Therapy; the Ministry of Education to student numbers only; and the Ministry of Social Development to the vocational programme. While these are relatively modest amounts they are not only appreciated but vital to the Centre's survival. Also vital to Ambury are the various referral agencies that bring and fund some of our students and clients. These include Alternative Education, CYFS, Group Special Education, Ministry IWS (Intensive Wraparound Service), Te Kahu Toi (a recent alternative Ministry Wraparound service for troubled youth), CAMHS, NHS, YTP and CFU, medical professionals and schools. We are of course also reliant on direct whanau enrolments and fees.

The Centre is blessed with this historic and more recent financial and moral support that encourages those involved in the Centre to stay relevant and promote its therapies. That so many trusts and individuals have believed in Ambury over a long period is the mainstay in its survival and development. What Ambury Park Centre offers with its combination of riding therapies, an alternative education and successful vocational programme is relevant and innovative. The challenge it welcomes is to be more so and to search ways to extend the Centre's profile and its financial security.

The Centre seeks to support this by ensuring it has suitably qualified and experienced staff in each position in all three programmes. The enterprising manager of the Equine, Debbie Freeman, is highly qualified in riding therapy and horse riding instruction; the head of the school, Elizabeth Warden, is a skilled teacher of English and head of the school, and the Vocational manager, Keating-Oakley Brown is talented and experienced in his role. All three are effective managers and ensure the smooth running and positive outcomes of their programmes. Pastorally they manage and support the clients and students. The emphasis at Ambury is holistic and student/client centred with the goal of achieving the best outcomes for all in their care. With Noel Morrison, Director/Principal at the helm this is very much promoted in the vein of a Restorative Justice approach when complex situations occasionally arise. Noel has expert skills in this area and ensures a calm supportive environment. Noel supports the Centre in many ways working to run it efficiently and promoting it to the wider community.

The Board encourages both Centre-wide and individual professional development to ensure the Centre's needs are met for professional learning and that there are opportunities for staff to pursue apt individual interests. The Board seeks funding to finance appropriate professional development, an essential ingredient in maintaining Ambury as a quality institution. The professional development opportunities in 2015 were provided both for whole staff learning and for individual specific learning and

aspirations. Staff were represented at the RDA conference and training in Christchurch in May. The teachers maintain association with subject specific cluster groups with other schools and at the end of every year First Aid Training for all staff is facilitated at the Centre. Whole staff PD was provided in FASD, Non Violent Intervention and PEP (Pacifika Education Plan). Individual staff attended courses in Equine Assisted Learning, Veterinary and one run by MSD.

The board wishes to acknowledge all staff for their contributions to the Centre's successful year. Frequently parents, caregivers and agencies express their very high opinion of our staff.

We had one change staff, when Claire Cooke resigned at the end of the year for family reasons, after a very successful year as Remedial Coach. She was replaced by Marja Van Der Meulen. Marja is a qualified teacher with considerable experience in teaching, including special education, riding and instructing. The Centre is most fortunate to have found this winning combination.

In mentioning the effective running of the Centre and its successful outcomes the very many volunteers must be acknowledged in the Centre's Riding Therapy. Volunteer side walkers and leaders turn out in all weathers to support our riders. They are integral in the system at Ambury for which the Board is deeply grateful. Carol Wiltshire finished a 3 year stint as Volunteer Coordinator at the end of 2015, having implemented an excellent system, supported Ambury events and introduced a new volunteer uniform in a cheerful azure colour. The Centre welcomes the new Volunteer Coordinator, Debra Moore, who is already enthusiastically embracing the role.

Several Volunteer groups, mainly through volunteering Auckland, dedicated days to the Centre to clear outdoor areas and plant gardens. Other groups worked on much needed tidying in the indoor arena building. It is pleasantly obvious when the Centre has had a visit from a Volunteer group! Volunteer groups that came to Ambury in 2015 were Lotto, Chorus, BNZ, ANZ, ASB and a hair dressing group.

The development of Ambury's three programmes of Intensive and Remedial Riding Therapy for children, adolescents and adults, Secondary Schooling for students who cannot manage in mainstream education for a number of reasons and Vocational Training for adults with disabilities makes for very interesting reading in 'A Horse Tale'. It is heartening that the tale continues.

Riding Therapy works on the proven principle that the gait of the horse strengthens the muscles from the pelvic floor upwards and so overtime enables clients to sit upright on the horse, stand or attain a better gait. At the same time the therapy often leads to improved speech, social development and cognitive improvement. It is the case that the therapy is frequently sought for a number of issues relating to behaviour, social

confidence, anxiety, people on the spectrum (Asperger's, Autism), learning challenges and mental health. The list goes on. The Centre employs an Occupational Therapist or Physiotherapist for Intensive Riding therapy and a Therapist/Coach for the remedial programme. Together the therapy can cater for 80 plus riders. Riding therapy is about the horse and innovative challenges for the riders using games and simply, in good weather, the variety of the outdoor environment. The remedial riders are mostly less disabled physically and have the other needs mentioned above. A number of clients graduate from the Intensive to the Remedial. Regular assessment of and reporting on client progress is documented for whanau, agencies and available to the Ministry of Health. A letter received this year that demonstrates the specific and broader effects of Riding Therapy is most worthy of sharing.

The secondary school continues to be an ideal place of learning for students who struggle for various reasons in mainstream schooling. The combination of horse riding and horse care, and individualised programmes, work to motivate and bring success for students who may have behavioral, learning, psychological, psychiatric and emotional challenges. The horse is an instrument for positive change from learning a challenging skill, the therapeutic influence of riding and the relationship with a horse. Ground therapy with the horse is another approach used sometimes at Ambury that engenders self-knowledge and personal development. The school that can cater for 25 -30 students has an English and a Mathematics teacher and two teacher aides employed by the Centre. Some students have funded teacher aides, which can be helpful to the whole group. Subjects other than English and Mathematics are studied through Te Kura Pounamu and supported by the school staff. Several students study for their NCEA with considerable success and for others different pathways to career courses are sought. The Centre's Art facilitator works with both the school students and the vocational clients. The head of Equine and another riding instructor are responsible for the riding and horse care with the students. They also offer qualifications in Equine, including some standards for NCEA. Literacy and Numeracy assessments are conducted twice yearly using standard measuring tools, the outcomes of which are reported to the Board, whanau and agencies if relevant. Progress with NCEA standards are likewise assessed and reported. Progress has been steady and positive. There is further feedback to whanau and agencies through meetings to plan and evaluate Independent Learning Programmes (ILPs).

The Auckland Central Alternative Education Consortium continues to guarantee Ambury Park Centre funding for at least six students. There are students funded by CFYS and others with ORS or GSE support. Intensive Wraparound Service and Te Kahu Toi students also come with Teacher Aide and other supports. There is financial gain

through the latter agencies and considerable administrative and pastoral input required, but Ambury is an environment which is likely have a positive outcome for these young people.

The Vocational clients are offered a stimulating programme both at the Centre and in the community. They take part in learning skills such as cooking, dealing with money, healthy lifestyles and are encouraged to keep up with Literacy and Numeracy skills. They also enjoy a lively weekly art programme. In the community the clients regularly go swimming, attend aerobics and dance, go shopping and use the local Library. On many occasions they travel to enjoy outings and events. The Vocational coordinator and three support staff facilitate this course for 27-29 clients. ILPs for vocational clients are planned and evaluated with whanau and agencies if relevant.

The year for the students and clients culminated in the annual prize giving in December, where the achievements of all were celebrated along with the individual prize winners. In 2015 we experienced less clement weather but the enjoyment of the event was not diminished by being indoors. The riding display demonstrated the significant improvement and absolute skills of the riders. The certificates and trophies reward improvement, effort and achievement for therapy clients, school students and adult vocational clients.

In 2015 there was a significant increase in the number of NCEA Standards achieved, which was a tribute to the students and staff. At the end of the year two senior students transitioned to a Foundation Course at MIT and another to a Youth Guarantee Scheme to study Motor Mechanics.

The Horsepower II Arena Dinner, March 28, 2015, was fully described in the 2014 Annual Report. It is worth mentioning it again as a glamorous occasion in an indoor arena transformed by strategic lighting by Multi Media. Neil Rusden and Vanessa Preece for Creative Refinery again produced wonderful advertising and props for the night, supported the Board to offer fine dining (Scoff Catering) and a lively comedic performance and auction by James Elliot. People are still talking about this evening and asking about the next one. It was a lot of work but a most rewarding night for all. After the first Horsepower dinner in 2013 the Board hoped this would be a biennial event.

The staff held their annual car boot sale day in March, which brings out many people and vendors. The Centre offered a white elephant stall, horse rides, a sausage sizzle and face painting. These were very popular. The staff are to be congratulated for running this event, the proceeds from which help to fund education outside the classroom and fun trips for the students and vocational clients. During the holiday periods the Equine

staff, supported by volunteers, continued to run three days of riding lessons for the public. It has several advantages as a fundraiser, meeting a community need and in opening the Centre to the public, increasing awareness of what it offers.

Again in October the staff took some Ambury horses to the Regional Park's Farm Day for pony rides. This is a modest fundraiser for the Centre and very much about acknowledging the goodwill bestowed on the Centre from the farm staff and the Parks in general.

The annual March "meet and greet" evening barbecue for whanau, caregivers, clients, students and staff enabled people to get to know one another, learn more about the programmes and see around the Centre at a quiet time

In relation to raising funds there are two projects that the Board is seeking funding for in the near future. One is the historic drainage/quagmire issue between the back of the main building and the barns and the other is to finance the fencing of a paddock into 5 smaller spaces to better manage the horses and the paddock maintenance. Both projects will cost approximately \$40,000 dollars each.

In the past year the Centre has hosted several visits from groups and individuals, as word of the Centre's activities is heard abroad. When people do visit, their responses are invariably tinged with wonderment.

Ambury Park Centre works closely with many agencies to enhance the benefits of its programmes to their clients. The agencies are to be congratulated for their efforts for their clients, and Ambury, in turn, is grateful for their support. In 2015 Ambury worked with Child Youth and Family Services, Group Special Education, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (Whirinaki, Kari Centre, Marinoto West, Marinoto North), the Child and Family Unit, Youth Transition Programme, Alternative Education consortiums, Ministry IWS Programme, Te Kahu Toi, many schools, special schools, other youth and adult providers and transition coordinators. Professionals frequently visit the Centre and the young people. This is beneficial to all.

The 2015 School's evaluated strategic annual plan, involving learning, pastoral, transition and administrative goals has been evaluated and sent to the Ministry of Education along with the proposed annual plan for 2016.

Our herd of 26-28 horses served the Centre well in 2015. Inevitably we had some losses but we procured two lovely additions, named Cruz and Max.

The Centre was able to continue the upgrade of its IT equipment with the purchase of six laptops for the school students. This was possible with grants from Pub Charity and Grass Roots.

It is evident that much happens at Ambury Park Centre and there is an emphasis on relevance and progress. This requires dedication from many quarters, not least the Board. I acknowledge this commitment and thank all members. Treasurer Claire Lingman and Secretary Caroline Grove especially carry much responsibility. I am grateful for their constant support. Ian John our Vice President is most supportive and also greatly appreciated for his filming and other artistic talents for Ambury events. All members are vital to the combined outcomes for Ambury so sincere thanks to Deane Maule, Doug Alexander, Janet Hepi, Vicky Latta, Christine O'Brien, Auckland Council Mangere and Otahuhu Local Board representative, Trent Taylor, (Parks- recently replaced by Steve Whelan), Janine Nillesen from Ambury Farm who attends some meetings, Noel Morrison as Director Principal and Belinda Sharp as staff representative. Parks and the farm staff keep the Centre informed of developments. Janine and the others at the farm work with the Centre to carry out remedial and enhancing work to our corner of the Regional Park.

As mentioned from re-reading the Centre's History, 'A Horse Tale,' one is poignantly reminded of individuals, trusts and professional bodies that have through most of its existence been there for Ambury Park Centre. BDO Auckland (formerly PKF Ross Melville) have for 24 years audited the Centre's Annual Accounts free of charge. Impossible to calculate, but this is a massively appreciated donation to Ambury Park Centre. On behalf of the Board I particularly acknowledge Graeme Lynch, Blair Stanley and Julian Barno.

Of course Mary Brook is the Centre's patron. Mary is an advocate for Ambury with the Maurice Paykel Charitable Trust and in many other respects. The Board and the staff thank Mary most sincerely for this and for continuing in the role as our patron. I am grateful for the personal support that is just a phone call away.

Although, as an incorporated society with charitable status, it does not cease to be a challenge for the Centre to raise about a third of its annual income from grants, donations and fundraising, there is a heartening commitment from the all associated with the Centre to endeavour to reach this. The contributions from our patron, the many trusts and donors, friends of the Centre, board members, staff, whanau and caregivers, agencies, students and clients are greatly valued. The Board and the staff, knowing the belief many have in Ambury Park Centre, see it continuing well into the future as a renowned facility offering inspirational riding therapy, an alternative secondary education, vocational training and more, with the horse therapeutically central in all. And to be, by innovation, as relevant in 21st century, as it was in 1985 and is now.

Gaynor Brown QSM

President Ambury Park Centre 25 July, 2016