



Aspiehelp / The Aspire Trust

July 2016 Newsletter

Edited by Hazel Shanks

In this newsletter: Call for people interested in IT as a job and/or giving us a review, a reminder about library books and sausage sizzles, In Our Office, and Dave Farrell on Autism New Zealand.

Are you interested in working in IT?



We're investigating the possibility of working with a local tech company to help develop skills which could lead to employment for tech-competent aspies.

Working in IT, as a field, is generally highly friendly to people on the autism spectrum when compared to other careers. Information Technology is a highly technical subject that requires knowledge and precision, and is low on social interaction in the workplace.

If you have any interest in working in this field please contact Leith.

Sausage Sizzles soon

We have two sausage sizzle fundraisers coming up! Both of them are at Mitre 10 Beckenham, and will start at 9:30am and continue until roughly 3-4pm.

The first is this weekend, on Sunday 10th of July. The second one is next weekend, on Saturday 16th July.

If you're in the area, please come see us and have a sausage. All profits go to supporting the work we do here at Aspiehelp (... including funding future sausage sizzles, of course).

Our delicious high quality sausages are provided by Fresh Meats Barrington.

Call for Endorsements

Are any Aspiehelp clients available to write a short review of us? We're looking for a paragraph or two about good experiences you've had with Aspiehelp to use for marketing purposes.

If we've helped you out, now's a chance to return the favour! You can help us by writing up a few paragraphs about your experiences with us. Email your work to info@aspiehelp.com.

Aspiehelp Library books need to come back

For those of you who've borrowed books from the Aspiehelp library, please remember that we only loan books for one month. If it's been more than that, please return them to us.

We offer access to the library to members as one of our core services. We have some great books with a focus on autism, Aspergers, and coping with life. In order for us to share these wonderful books with more people... you need to bring them back!



You can return books to Leith at our social evenings (first and third Wednesday of the month), or drop them in to our office on Tuesday or Thursday between 10:30am and 4pm.

If you can't get them back to us in person, then contact us and we can give you our postal address.

In Our Office

It has been a challenging month for Julie, she's been learning the ropes. She's been on a fast track learning about different medications which need careful monitoring and the follow ups required for the many and complicated issues we deal with. However, having said that, sometimes the job is as simple as just listening, helping someone get a drivers license or even just a diary.

We've got a lot of clients: 3 new in the last month and 4 ongoing. The cases we are currently working on are quite complex and take a lot of time to work through.

We have two clients working through the diagnostic process at the University and another just referred. Diagnosis is vitally important to receive the most favourable Benefit and also to open the door to Supported Care while living independently.

There are also two people we have referred to Catapult Disability Employment Agency for help with employment. One client will be taking driving lessons soon to qualify for a licence to make him more employable.

We are in touch with the Office for Disability Issues regarding their new Disability Strategy and hope to be meeting with someone from that organisation regarding Aspie issues which currently are not on the Government's radar.



*Our staff, top to bottom:
Leith, Julie, and Hazel*

Membership fees

Membership fees are now due for the 2016-2017 financial year. If you haven't already renewed yours, please do so as soon as possible.

Membership in the Aspire Trust is \$10 for an individual, or \$15 for a family. Our bank account number is 03-1599-0445958-00 (put your name as a reference). Or, you can pay cash to Leith at the social evenings or at our office.

Social evenings

Our regular social evenings are on the first and the third Wednesday of the month, at a venue near Church Corner at 7:30pm. (Please contact Leith for the exact location). We have board games, hot drinks and biscuits, and a selection of books from the Aspiehelp library available every meeting.

The next two meetings are on the 20th of July and the 3rd of August.

You are welcome to attend.

(New members should contact Leith or Julie first.)

Our Patron is Stephen Mark Shore, PhD.

The Aspire Trust, Inc is a registered Charitable Trust. Charities Services registration number is CC46192.

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Is Autism NZ Exclusive?

Dave Farrell — Jul 1, 2016

On a positive note it is good to see that Autism NZ has dropped the Puzzle Piece from their logo and updated their vision "Empowering people living with autism".

Great on the logo change, suggesting that the autistic community is at least being heard if not listened to. Not so much for their vision statement for it alludes to ailment and suffering further augmented by their recent 2016 conference invitation.

The invitation announces "Two world-renown autism researchers from the University of California are headlining Autism New Zealand's national conference." Of concern is both keynote speakers work for an organisation with a questionably worded agenda "The aim of this world-leading centre is for its research to identify and treat those at risk of autism as early as 12 months". At Risk? Treat? REALLY?

To be fair, there will be two Australian speakers there to bat for us (I will resist any reference to sporting inadequacies). Which in itself is fine if we don't have capable Kiwi's with a local understanding to "empower" us.

The invitation, then stumbles through a poorly veiled effort to reassure those excluded - on the sidelines as it were (sorry). It reads "Most of the 300 delegates will be health and disability sector professionals, people with autism and their families and friends are equally welcome to participate in workshops and engage with other delegates." Despite the dire attempt to the contrary the statement raises issues of representation for conference and organisation alike. By omission the unprofessional "people with autism" (autistic people), their layman "family" and hangers on "friends" are "equally welcome" if they so wish or can afford it. The over-emphasis on "equally" duly noted and understood.

The issue is not the speakers and invited guests nor the participants of which some work hard and give of their best. It is the perceived insensitivity of an organisation that claims to represent the New Zealand autistic community yet excludes many ground-root organisations and groups - not just in their annual conference. How many have been invited/sponsored to speak and share their experiences on the community's behalf?

What is the objective of the conference and how is it "empowering" autistic people who are expected to "engage" and "participate" with "delegates" on their own accord?

Who are the beneficiaries other than those being empowered to ply invested interests and at what cost to our beloved spectrum?

Implying perhaps that Autism NZ's recent cosmetic changes are nothing more than a public relation stunt? Unlike their poor response when these same points were raised on one of their social network pages.

We're listening ...

"History is replete with ideologies of freedom, justice, liberation of the downtrodden and the exploited, that have been turned against the very people they had mobilised, or that have reproduced the same logic of exclusion and terror toward those whom they claimed to set free."

— Tariq Ramad