

Ace House Annual Report 2007

Ace House has provided a wide range of innovative and dynamic activities over the last year including: community participation, community brokering, vocational, social, recreation and leisure, art, music and daily living programmes. During August 2006 Ace House ran a very successful winter holiday where nine people visited Turangi to enjoy the snow, chairlift rides, sledding, thermal pools and a daytrip to Taupo. In January / February of this year we ran our traditional summer holidays taking a sum total of 25 people to Napier, the Kapiti Coast and Taranaki. In addition, the social group has been on holiday to Opunake and Turangi.

Ace House continues to run a number of outing groups with participants visiting local museums, cafes, libraries, sport centres, swimming pools and nature reserves. Our goal has been to try and reduce the numbers going out together in these groups so that more meaningful community participation can occur. This has been very successful with a range of our community groups now running with only 3-5 people in them rather than 8-9 people. This has enabled participants to integrate more readily into the community and to develop their confidence and skills more quickly. We have recently purchased two smaller vehicles to replace one of our older vans. This will help us to increase the number of individuals being able to access the community while ensuring that the groups stay small in number. Ace House has continued in its endeavours to join groups already established in the community rather than duplicating services. This has resulted in more individuals accessing community activities by themselves in the evenings and weekends.

Since July 2006 (with a couple of months break over Christmas) we have had a mixed ability cricket team entered in the Wellington Indoor Sports social league. While we may not have won many games the amount of interaction occurring between our team and others in the general public has been significant and the improvement in cricket skills has been marked. We are very grateful to the Wellington City Council who has funded this project. The "Aces High" indoor cricket team was the subject of a presentation at the NZASID (NZ Association for the Study of Intellectual Disability) conference in Wellington in November 2006 and was also the topic of a display at the Ministry of Social Development Disability Service Providers conference in May this year.

I would like to express our gratitude to the Tertiary Education Commission who have funded our Pottery, Harakeke and Alexander Technique programmes. These have been extremely successful and well received groups. We have also been fortunate to have established good community links with the Music Therapy programme run at the Conservatorium at Massey University and the Te Whaea: National Dance and Drama Centre in Newtown where students have come and participated in (and helped develop) programmes relevant for the people we work with.

Our community brokering programme has now been running for almost three years. We are continuing to see some good results and now have a total of nine individuals accessing the community independently or with limited staff support.

The groups have been fun with highlights including: using a rock climbing wall, abseiling down a tower, the music group performing to and jamming with ARGO

Trust, watching the Kimi Ora band perform in a lunch time concert at Civic Square, the visit to Tapu Te Ranga Marae and Lee Rutene's Ace House Idol performance of "Let's Just Kiss and Say Goodbye" at last year's AGM.

We have seen an increase in awareness around employment issues and in peoples' belief that they have the opportunity to gain paid employment. One of our clients with very high needs has started work with help from ACEmployment and his 1:1 support worker which is a very exciting development.

We have said farewell to a number of staff over the last year while quite a few new positions have been created due to the organization developing and expanding. As a result we now have an almost totally new staff team. During the year staff have been involved in a number of training opportunities and some have also attended various conferences – the Building Inclusive Communities Conference in Rotorua and the Pathways to Inclusion and Supervision Conferences in Wellington.

Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to the dedicated staff team, relievers and volunteers at Ace House who are abundant in skills, talents and creativity and who work to ensure all programmes encourage independence and the ability of all participants to lead fulfilling lives within their community.

Nerys Roberts
Service Manager