

53rd Annual Report

Upper Hutt Parents Centre

PARENTS CENTRE



Year End 31st March 2011

19th May 2011

President's Report

Sarah Kitchen

It is my pleasure to be able to present the Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2011. I took on the role of President in August 2010 and have enjoyed leading a team of dedicated, passionate, and fun volunteers.

The 2010/2011 year started off with the centre attempting to rebuild itself after a break in running childbirth education classes. Membership numbers were at an all-time low and while the committee had nine members the workload was uneven with a couple of members juggling several roles. Essentially the centre was struggling and volunteer morale was low.

In July national office recognised our centre needed help and offered its support with Bridget Best the Community Advisor coming along to share her expertise. From there things took a turn for the better. We managed to recruit nine new enthusiastic committee members who all accepted responsibilities for a specific role so the workload was evenly spread. Instead of reducing our services we were able to expand. Throughout the year the committee has said farewell to Richard Griffith, Kate Hunt, Cameron Thayer, Robyn Thayer and Lisa Haydon but we have recruited and maintained an impressive 13 committee members and four Friends of the Committee.

The committee includes a hard-working group of people (with 19 children and three bumps between us). We juggle young children, families, and often paid employment yet still find the time to give back to the community through Upper Hutt Parents Centre.

I am extremely proud to be a part of this thriving centre.

Childbirth Education

After taking a break from Childbirth Education classes for seven months in the previous year we resumed childbirth education classes in February 2010 and ran a total of six classes for the 2010/11 year - five evening seven week courses and one weekend course. Classes averaged nine couples per course.

All our evening classes were run by Kirstin Scott with Julia Oldroyd running the weekend one. As a committee, we highly value our childbirth educator's commitment and willingness to travel to Upper Hutt for each class. We get fantastic feedback from the attendees of the classes and look forward to another successful year with Kirstin and Julia onboard.

Finding someone to convene each class has been a struggle. Over the past year most members on the committee have at some stage been called upon to either take charge or share responsibility for a class. I would like to thank those committee members. I appreciate that this involves several hours of your family time and is often in addition to an already busy role you hold on the committee. Fortunately we have recently managed to recruit Kelly Irving who has agreed to convene evening classes from April onwards which will significantly reduce pressure on the committee.

Most attendees of our classes find out about us through word-of-mouth or on the recommendation of their midwife. We have been working hard to add to this by sending regular mail-outs to midwives,

having our brochure included in local GP and specialist's pregnancy packs, and advertising upcoming courses in The Upper Hutt Leader. This is creating a strong demand for our classes and we plan to run eight or nine classes during the 2011/12 year. We are also offering evening and weekend options in order to accommodate as many couples as possible.

Pamela Malcolm has been in charge of bookings since July 2010 and presents a great first impression to prospective members. She is highly organised, enthusiastic and very persuasive. Thank you for all of your hard work Pamela.

Judith Beaton has also become a Friend of the Committee and is now in charge of our CBE library and ordering supplies for the CBE packs we make up at our "pack nights". Thank you for your contribution Judith.

We also extend a big thank you to the Department of Internal Affairs for providing us with funding to cover some of the course costs. Without its help it would be very difficult for us to continue offering our classes at a competitive price. The Upper Hutt Cossie Club also provided us with funds to update some of our CBE resources which is greatly appreciated.

Baby & You

Baby & You is a post-natal course designed to follow-on from antenatal classes and is a great source of support and information for new mums. We haven't run the course for some time but in late 2010 decided to run a trial to determine if there was a demand for reinstating the course again. We created our own version of Baby & You and ran a trial in November. The course was received positively and has been added to our curriculum.

The course is now offered for free to those attending our childbirth education classes and Tania Watson, a new committee member, has taken on the role of Baby & You Co-ordinator. Thank you very much Tania.

We would also like to thank Cheryl Ganly-Lewis, Kim Black and Kelsey McGarry for running the sessions for us.

Parent Education

This year we continued to offer a wide range of parenting courses for members and the local community.

We ran a total of eight different courses and also provided a six week Parenting with Purpose course for the Hutt Valley Teen Parent Unit thanks to funding received the year prior from the Department of Internal Affairs.

Attendance at each course varied considerably but averaged at 10 participants per course.

The majority of our courses are run at little or no cost and we would like to thank Diana Bartle, Jackie

Hawkins, Matt Tyson, Melissa Holm, Dawn Nabbs, Kathryn Berkett, Megan Herbert, Camilla Peet and Michelle Selby for running such high quality and valuable courses for us.

To help promote the courses we signed up with an email marketing provider which ensures a more professional look to the advertisements, as well as advertising in The Leader, Tots to Teens and Chatter. We have also continued with promotion in our own e-newsletter and Sandbox magazine.

For the 2011/12 year we have decided to focus on the five most popular courses which fit the makeup of our current membership. This should help to reduce the workload and the occasional disappointment when a course has attracted a minimal number of attendees.

Paula Bloomfield has been in charge of bookings since September 2010 and also convened the majority of the courses herself. Her passion for parenting and willingness to go the extra mile for attendees ensures that everyone goes away with a positive impression of Parents Centre. Thank you very much Paula.

We also extend a big thank you to the Wellington Children's Foundation who provided us with funding towards the CPR courses and Upper Hutt City Council for funding towards the craft courses.

Membership & Renewals

We started the year with only 57 members, mainly due to the seven month gap when we didn't run Childbirth Education classes. Since resuming classes our membership has grown considerably and we finish the year with an impressive 102 current members.

As with all Centres, the majority of new members continue to be those who join as a result of wanting to attend our childbirth education classes. We did however attract a handful of new members who joined following attendance at a parent education course or upon moving to Upper Hutt.

We continue to encourage members to rejoin after their first year expires, as we believe we still have much to offer parents in terms of information and support as our children grow and develop into their toddler years. In October 2010 the committee agreed to reduce the cost to renew as an incentive to encourage renewals. We finished the year with a 26 percent renewal rate (excluding committee members) which is very positive.

Kelly Ratcliffe has recently taken over as Membership Officer and we appreciate her joining the committee and taking responsibility for a role that has a huge influence on our membership numbers. Welcome to the team Kelly.

Marketing and Publicity

We started the year off by signing up to a 12 month contract to advertise fortnightly in The Leader. While a considerable expense it has helped us to promote our classes to the local community and increase our profile. This was complimented with free advertising in Tots-to-Teens and Chatter as well as through posters at Plunket.

We had a stand at the Upper Hutt City Council's Parenting Expo in June which was a great opportunity to promote ourselves and network. We will be participating again this year.

Our Early Years Expo was held in September and it was a fantastic day with 32 stallholders and around 200 adults and children attending. While initially intended as a fundraising and community support event it has been great for our profile. The Upper Hutt City Council were so impressed with what we did that this year they have asked to come on as a supporter and will be helping out with venue costs, some advertising, and the cost of a guest speaker. The expo also brought us to the attention of the Upper Hutt Chamber of Commerce and we were offered the opportunity to set up a display in one of the empty shop windows on Main Street which was a great source of free promotion for several weeks late last year. We have recently managed to secure another shop window which will allow for further promotion.

In August 2010 Kara Tait joined the committee and she has been invaluable in improving on our existing marketing and raising our profile. Through her we now have a Facebook page, a much improved section on the Parents Centre website, and an email marketing tool for courses. She has also fostered a great working relationship with Rosemary McLennan at The Leader resulting in a number of articles being published about our centre and what we offer. We are extremely grateful for the expertise she has provided.

Social Events

In the later part of the year the committee decided a more conscious effort was needed to provide social events for members and for the committee. Michelle Bartlett joined the committee in September 2010 as our Social Events Co-ordinator and we have since held a committee lunch at Short Straw Cafe, a Children's Christmas Party at Harcourt Park which was well attended, and a committee BBQ. We plan to offer more events for members and the committee during the 2011/12 year and are extremely grateful to have Michelle on board to organise and lead these events.

Newsletter

Our monthly e-newsletter continues to be a source of useful information for members and a great way for us to promote upcoming events. Justine Henare has continued her great work as the Editor and co-ordinates the expanded content as well as writing articles and compiling the issue each month. The newsletter is well received and creates positive feedback for the Centre. Thank you Justine.

Thanks also goes to Lisa Haydon who provides newsletter support including sending it out monthly and Madeleine Booth-Smiths a Friend of the Committee who contributes a monthly article.

It is great that we are able to provide a quality newsletter to our members in addition to the bi-monthly magazines, Sandbox and Kiwi Parent.

The Sandbox editors, from each of the Wellington Centres, continue to meet regularly and work together to produce the Sandbox regional magazine. The team does a fantastic job and Sandbox continues to improve.

We would like to thank Kim Black and then Kara Tait who took over the role of Sandbox Editor last year.

Fiona Wright has also now come on board as a regular contributor.

Fundraising

As always, fundraising is a necessary part of being involved in a not-for-profit organisation. During the 2010/11 year we have sold Entertainment Books and Eardrops CD's, held a photo fundraiser with Jack n Jill and run an Early Years Expo.

The sale of the Entertainment Books and Eardrops CD's was relatively easy however the photo fundraiser ended up being considerably more work than anticipated due to an inefficient photographer. Jack n Jill were contacted regarding our concerns and offered a donation to help compensate for the extra time and effort that the committee had to put into the event.

A big thank you to Pamela Malcolm who got her first taste as a committee member by agreeing to take the lead with the photo fundraiser and spent a considerable amount of time sorting out problems. We have agreed to Jack n Jill running another fundraiser for us this year but with some strict criteria in place and for a guaranteed return.

The Early Years Expo ran in September and raised funds via an entrance fee, raffle, sale of Eardrops CD's, cookbooks and refreshments. We have already booked to run it again this year in October with the support of Upper Hutt City Council.

For the 2011/12 year we have managed to find a dedicated Fundraising Officer in Fiona Wright who is already working hard on selling Entertainment Books and tickets to our Mums Movie Night. Welcome to the team Fiona.

A new venture for us this year is the recent commencement of the sale of NZ Wool Blankets. The blankets are being promoted through our CBE classes, on our website and via the newsletter. While it has only been a short period of time sales have been good and we anticipate that this may help to reduce the pressure to continuously come up with fundraising events. New committee member Annabel Lee has taken on the role of Centre Sales Co-ordinator and is managing the sales and ordering process for us. Welcome to the team Annabel.

In Conclusion

I would also like to thank Kerry McGall our Secretary who continues to do a fabulous job taking minutes, writing letters, organising our statistics and ordering all of our Huggies supplies. We appreciate all of the time you put into your own role and the help and support you provide to others when needed.

Finally I would like to welcome to the committee Stuart Darvill who is taking over from Kim Black as treasurer. Stuart and wife Jo hadn't even started their childbirth education classes when he was approached, but with us needing to find a treasurer and Stuart being an accountant he didn't stand a chance. Thank you for coming on board Stuart.

Overall the 2010/11 year has been one of overwhelming success for Upper Hutt Parents Centre. We have grown in every avenue possible thanks to the hard work and dedication of our committee members and supporters. It is also important to acknowledge the fantastic support the committee

receives from their own families, be it helping to fold 100 flyers, being roped in to selling drinks at an expo or just being the one at home looking after the kids while the wife goes out to another meeting. A huge thank you to the partners and children that support what we do.

While this year has been fantastic there is still a lot of potential to keep growing in the upcoming year. My vision for our centre is to continue to build on all of the hard work from last year with a particular focus on increasing our membership by becoming the provider of choice for Upper Hutt parents, improving on member benefits and services, and raising our profile in Upper Hutt. We have been part of this community for 53 years now and if we want to be around for another 53 years it's imperative that we have a voice and a presence in Upper Hutt.

We would welcome any new committee members who would like to be involved with our vibrant centre in providing a great service to our members and the Upper Hutt community.

Thank you.

Sarah Kitchen
President
Upper Hutt Parents Centre