

WINTER 2025



Bethany Harward

MID WINTER BALL



Up coming Events

Find out about up coming local events us well as Aspire run events and social club outings.

A Passion for Film and the Determination to Follow It

Bethany Harward talks about the hard truths of following your dreams.

What is Self Advocacy?

Learn how you can be part of the team and what self advocacy means to us.

Winter Newsletter

David Darling – CEO

Winter Wellbeing & Staying Involved

It's definitely colder at the moment, but we hope you are still getting out and about, even a trip to the movies or a walk in the fresh air can lift your spirits. If you are staying indoors, try some real home cooking, or take time to reconnect with friends. Small things can make a big difference and you reaching out may be what a person needs.

A big thank you to everyone who came along to the Mid-Winter Dance, it was really well received and a lot of fun! It is great to see people coming together and enjoying the energy of community events. We are looking forward to what is next on the activity calendar, there is always something new to try or get involved in.

We have been thinking a lot about advocacy recently, and how we can make it easier for people to share their thoughts. Advocacy meetings are a chance to have your voice heard. Come along, share what is working well, or suggest something you think would be a positive change. We all need reminders of why we are here sometimes, and helping shape the future is a powerful way to stay connected and make a difference.

Have you got a great photo from a recent activity or outing? We would love to include your favorite moments in the next newsletter! Let's make this a competition, send through pictures of you doing something different, not grocery shopping, I mean out in the community exploring or doing something, like milking a goat!.

The best photo will be selected by a small panel, and the winner takes a prize. So, send in your best picture by October 1st to be in the competition.



Janet Ross – Whanau / Family update

Kia Ora everyone, Hope you are well and managing to avoid the bugs going around. In June we hosted an evening with Nan Jenkins a lawyer specialising in disability law. Nan specifically focused on Enduring Power of Attorney and PPPR Act. It was a very well attended evening and very successful in terms of clarifying the differences between the two and the process involved. There were lots of very interesting questions asked and I feel that people went away with useful information. We will be organising another workshop in October, so watch this space. Please don't hesitate to make contact with me if you have any queries.

Regards, Janet Ross. rossij@xtra.co.nz



Gerard Knapp – off the cuff

Gerard has been working on his largest puzzle to date—an impressive 2,000-piece image of Venice! He's been at it for over a week and reckons he has a few more weeks to go yet.

Gerard had some "off the cuff" words to share with you today:

Kia ora, I hope you've all been keeping well. It was lovely to see everyone at the Mid-Winter Christmas Ball. I recently had to go to Waikato Hospital and ended up waiting a very long time. So, I'd recommend being extra careful with winter bugs—there's a new strain of COVID-19 going around that hasn't been named yet. You can wear a mask if you choose, and don't forget to wash your hands.

I hope to see everyone at the Shine Ball in September!

Self Advocacy

2025 SELF ADVOCACY SUB COMMITTEE

Thursday 21st August - 4.30-5.30pm

Thursday 23rd October - 4.30-5.30pm

*Where - Aspire 103 Tawa st, Melville
Dinner Provided*

Current topic's up for discussion

- Possible speakers for Large November Self-Advocacy Meeting
- Amendment to Complaints Brochure
- Process Review for House Advocacy Meetings
- Peer Support Program
- Newsletter changes
- Regular day / time for sub committee meetings

≡ Welcome ≡

Farewell to Shaye, and Welcome to Lee!

The Aspire team recently said goodbye to Shaye, a vibrant personality and valued member of our community. During their time with us, Shaye led the Self Advocacy team as part of their role as Outcomes Manager. We thank Shaye for their contribution and wish them all the best in their next chapter.

We're excited to welcome Lee Samuel as our new Outcomes Manager! Lee brings a strong background in the disability sector and has spent years advocating with and alongside the disabled community. She is also the founder of The Canvas Project, a creative non-profit initiative supporting the mental health of people with disabilities.

Lee is passionate about supporting the Self Advocacy team at Aspire and is looking forward to her first meeting in August — a chance to meet everyone and dive into the work at ground level. If you'd like to attend the meeting or have any questions about Self Advocacy, Lee is just a phone call or email away.

Lee.samuel@aspire.org.nz
022 496 7479



Self Advocacy

What is self advocacy?

Self-advocacy means speaking up for yourself and having a say in the things that matter in your life. It's about knowing your rights, understanding what you need, and feeling confident to ask for support or changes when you need them.

Being a self-advocate might look like:

- Making your own choices and decisions
- Asking for the support or tools you need
- Telling people what works for you — and what doesn't
- Standing up to unfair treatment or barriers
- Being involved in decisions that affect your life

Self-advocacy is about being heard, respected, and in control of your own path. It's not about doing everything alone — it's about having a voice and using it.

You deserve to live with dignity, pride, and the power to shape your own future.



You can join the Sub committee!

If you're interested in joining the sub-committee of the Self-Advocacy Group, let Lee Samuel, the Outcomes Manager, know, we'd love to have you at our next meeting!

You can contact

Lee at: lee.samuel@aspire.org.nz

022 496 7479



Local events



interactionz
tari whakawhitinga

SPEED FRIENDING

***Join Us for a Fun-Filled Day
to Make New Friends***

Chartwell Cooperating Church

126 Comries Road

12:30 – 2pm

Dates From August to December 2025

21st August



25th September

23rd October



20th November

11th December



Birthdays

Celebrating

www.aspire.org.nz



Why Celebrate a Birthday? They happen every year.....

Birthdays are a chance to honor individuality, create lasting memories, and foster a sense of belonging. For many birthdays are a reminder that they matter, that they are seen, and that their unique contributions are valued. Celebrating birthdays promotes self-worth, joy, and connection, helping individuals feel loved and appreciated. It's a simple way to highlight the importance of inclusion, showing that every person deserves to be celebrated.



Sophie and Zoe had a joint birthday celebration with their families and friends. Staff did a great job with the preparations

well done, team!



Winter 2025

Birthdays

Celebrating

www.aspire.org.nz



Samantha turns 30

Samantha recently celebrated her 30th birthday in style. The decorations were beautifully arranged by staff, and the delicious catering came from her whānau.

It was a truly special day, filled with love, laughter, and a wonderful sense of inclusivity. Friends and family came together to mark the occasion, making it a perfect opportunity to meet and connect with whānau.

Three lovely ladies from nearby flats. Tania, Johanne, and Doreen, also joined the celebration and had a fantastic time.



Sophie's Pyjama Party Birthday Bash!

Sophie recently celebrated her 24th birthday with a fun-filled pyjama party at the house, planned by our amazing support staff who also decorated the space beautifully. Her parents kindly provided delicious catering, including cake, pizza, and dessert for everyone to enjoy.

Check out the attached photos including a lovely group shot of our five girls: Shannon, Zoe, Samantha, Sophie, and Sophie!



Winter 2025

Birthdays

Celebrating

www.aspire.org.nz



Johanne celebrated her 63rd Birthday with her flat mates, friends and cousins at The Helm.

Claire enjoyed a celebration at home with her "all Good" flat mates.



Happy Birthday, Jacinda and Larissa and Graeme who celebrated their birthdays with the most important thing... CAKE!



Celebrating

50th

Mandy Turns 50 in style

Despite not looking a day over 21, it's true, Mandy recently celebrated her 50th birthday! I popped around for a chat to find out what turning 50 is all about.

Mandy warmly welcomed me into her beautiful home and shared all the details of her big celebration. With the help of Aspire staff and her family, she hosted a fantastic party right in her garage. There were gold decorations, plenty of delicious food, and a great turnout—she invited all her flatmates and many friends from nearby. Mandy is clearly a very popular person!

Her love of Hogwarts and Harry Potter was on full display, with themed socks and banners among her gifts. She also received lots and lots of diamond art kits—one of her favourite hobbies.

The party was full of fun, music, and even a bit of dancing. Mandy is now looking forward to the Aspire High Tea event on August 19th. She enjoys dressing up, but says she might enjoy the yummy food even more! She's also excited about the upcoming Shine Ball in September.

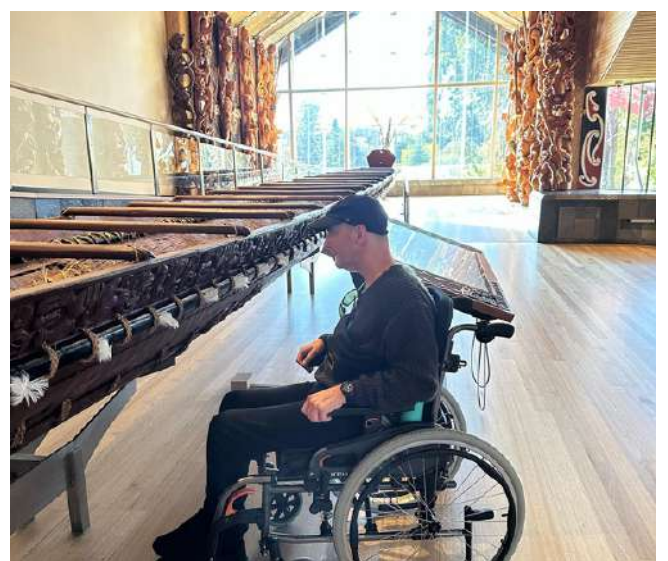
It was a pleasure to meet Mandy and see how she's thriving in her fabulous 50s!



Benjamin's Birthday at the Waikato Museum

To celebrate his birthday, Benjamin chose to spend the day exploring the Waikato Museum. With a mix of art, history, and hands-on exhibits, the museum offered plenty to enjoy and best of all, it's free to visit.

His day was a great reminder that birthdays don't need to be big or traditional to be meaningful. Whether it's a quiet outing or something more lively, it's all about choosing what feels right for you. For Benjamin, a relaxed day filled with things he enjoys was just the right fit.



How could you celebrate your birthday in a way that feels perfect for you?

Local events

Arts for Health

Arts For Health is a fantastic place that many of us visit for regular art groups.

They are a charity, and Making Changes is an annual art exhibition they run to help raise money so they can continue providing this great creative space for the community.

Anyone can enter the exhibition — it costs \$30 per entry, and your artwork will be displayed alongside a wide selection of other pieces. The entry fees, along with a percentage of the sale price from any sold artworks, go back to supporting Arts For Health.

I highly recommend this exhibition as a great starting point for any artist who might feel a little nervous about sharing their work for the first time.

If you don't create artwork yourself, you can still support the cause by spreading the word, telling friends and whānau, and going along to see the exhibition. Take some time to enjoy the beautiful artwork and celebrate local creativity!

ART EXHIBITION MAKING CHANGES



Abstract Foliage - Katherine Cook

Opening Night

Thursday, 23rd October 2025
at 05.30 PM - 07.00 PM

24th October - 22nd November
2025

Artspost Gallery
120 Victoria Street, Hamilton

WWW.ARTSFORHEALTH.CO.NZ



IHC ART AWARDS 25 July - 13 August



The IHC Art Awards provide artists with an intellectual disability the opportunity to have their talent recognised, their voices heard and to sell their work.

Webb's Wellington
23 Marion Street
Wellington

Monday - Friday
9:00am - 5:30pm
Saturday
11:00am to 3:00pm



Why not start planning
your entry for next year?

IHC Art Awards

Although the exhibition is held in Wellington, the artists come from all over New Zealand — including some of our very own Aspire artists!

Luckily for us here in the Waikato, we can still enjoy the show online. You can view every single entry and even purchase artwork if you wish — 100% of the money goes directly back to the individual artists.

Awards and exhibitions are a great achievement for all artists and give us something to strive for when creating. The IHC Art Awards have now been running for just over 20 years and give out thousands of dollars in prize money each year.

Support our artists by viewing their work, sharing the link online, or even purchasing a piece!

Local events



KARAOKE

Join Us for a Fun-Filled Day and Sing Your Heart Out!

Hamilton Cosmopolitan Club
32 Claudelands Road, Hamilton East



More Dates to be Announced Later

Karaoke will be held most Wednesdays from 1:30 – 2:30 at the Hamilton Cosmopolitan Club in the Back Room Next to the Bowling Green

Please Bring a Donation

Please bring support staff if needed
Support Staff please sign in after drop off

- 📞 Contact Ashley on 027 312 0165 for more information
- ✉ or email ashley@interactionz.org.nz to be added to the invite list.
- 👁 Keep an eye on Interactionz' Facebook page for more events.

HAMILTON NORTH SCHOOL PRESENTS

A Starry Night

A community ball for adults with special needs (aged 16 years and over)

WHEN: Friday 12th September 2025 (6.30-10.30pm)
WHERE: Fairfield Baptist Church - Heaphy Terrace, Fairfield
COST - \$20 per ticket (1x caregiver free of charge)

Tickets available (from Monday 4th August) at the Hamilton North School Office
10 Warwick Ave, St Andrews, Hamilton

If you have any questions please email: admin@hamnorth.school.nz or phone: 07 849 3029

Light supper provided. Refreshments available for purchase - cash only.

DRESS CODE - FORMAL
Please no stiletto heels on the church floor

SHINE 2025

Experience a dinner and dance 'in Paris'

13 SEPTEMBER 2025
3pm to 6.30pm
ZENDERS Cafe & Venue
44 Hopkins Road, Ruakura

LIMITED SPACE AVAILABLE!
Once full, registrations will close.

Contact Jenny Rosser on 027 333 7795
or jenny@hnlc.org.nz

This special event is held for and in celebration of individuals with disabilities, 16 and over, who light up our lives with their uniqueness.

THE ART OF SLEEP

Note2self
Workshops for Wellbeing

Brain Injury

When: Monday 8 September 2024
Time: 9am – 12pm
Where: Western Community Centre, 46 Hyde Ave, Newton

Ever struggle with sleep?
This workshop is designed to help improve sleep through sharing information and practical tips. We will cover sleep cycles and some lifestyle changes that can help improve sleep. It's a treasure trove of sleep wisdom. Plus, you'll connect with others facing similar struggles.

During this session you will learn practical and helpful science based strategies designed to help you improve sleep.

CONTACT DETAILS for RSVP:
Phone: (07) 839 1191
admin@braininjurywaikato.org.nz
www.braininjurywaikato.org.nz

Aspire Events

Encouraging New Experiences

Trying a new social event can be exciting but also challenging for someone who may feel anxious about new places or meeting new people. Your support can make all the difference—offer to go with them, visit the venue together beforehand, or start with smaller, familiar gatherings. By creating a safe and encouraging space, you help open the door to fresh friendships, shared laughter, and meaningful connections in the community.



Achievements

Bethany Harward

A Passion for Film and the Determination to Follow It

Bethany has always been a storyteller at heart. A lover of writing and film, she recently graduated from Wintec's Foundation Pathways programme in Professional Practice, studying part-time at the City Campus. She's now continuing her learning journey with the next course in the series, building on her dream of one day working in the film industry.

*Her love of film began in childhood, thanks to a family friend she spent time with during respite care. It was through them that she first discovered *The Chronicles of Narnia* and *Harry Potter*—stories that sparked her imagination and inspired her to look beyond what she thought was possible.*

That early interest grew into a fascination with animation and the filmmaking process. A visit to Wētā Workshop at age 13 made those possibilities feel even more real. "I thought, that could be me one day," Bethany recalls. "I've always been interested in the craft behind the scenes."

Academically driven and passionate about writing, Bethany says storytelling runs in her family, her nana wrote poetry, and her uncle worked for TVNZ. "I remember hearing about his work, how he got to travel, meet all kinds of people, and enjoy what he did. That really inspired me."

While the course she completed wasn't directly focused on filmmaking, it gave her a foundation for future study. Her goal is to attend film school or a writing college to fully explore the art of storytelling. "This is just the beginning," she says.

Bethany's journey hasn't been without its challenges. She's faced significant barriers to access, limited communication from academic staff, and at times, disheartening attitudes. "A tutor once told me I should quit," she shares. "But I've kept going—even when it's been hard."

Getting between classes on campus can take her 15 to 20 minutes, three or four times longer than her peers. And despite her confidence and capability, she's been told she cannot attend campus without a support worker due to health and safety policies. "I don't feel I need someone with me at all times" This means if she doesn't have support staff she cannot attend class. *She's also experienced gaps in communication: changes in Wintec support staff without notice, and emails requesting course information going unanswered. "There have been times I didn't know if a note-taker would even turn up."*

Bethany believes tertiary institutions need to listen more closely to disabled students. "They should ask us what support we need, not just assume what we can or can't do."

She sees potential for technology to help bridge the gap. "If I can't get to campus, I should still be able to access the learning. More resources need to be available online."

Support from CCS Disability Action has been crucial to making her studies possible. And although he lives at the other end of the country, her brother remains supportive, always there when she needs him.

Bethany also credits the encouragement of staff like Caroline and Joanna at Wintec. "They remind me I can do this, saying that they are willing to help me succeed, and that makes a big difference."

For Bethany, the journey is about more than just achieving her goals. "I want to be a physical representation for those who can't have a voice," she says.

We here at Aspire are so proud of Bethany's accomplishments and look forward to seeing her continue her studies and doing what we can to support her dreams.



Bethany receiving flowers from support manger Vikashni

Local events



The poster features a central purple square with the word "LaunchEd" in large white letters. Below it, in smaller white text, is "CELEBRATING DISABILITY CULTURE THROUGH MEDIA, ARTS & DESIGN". Surrounding this central square are several light purple circles containing the words: "Photography", "Singing", "Acting", "Music", "Dancing", "Magic", "Arts", and "Poetry". Below the central square is a colorful illustration of various musical instruments including a violin, guitar, drums, and a trumpet, with musical notes floating around them. At the bottom of the instrument illustration are three logos: "WEL ENERGY TRUST", "Trust Waikato TE PUNA O WAIKATO", and "Hamilton City Council". The date "18TH SEPTEMBER 2025" is written in purple, and "Casting Call" is written in a large, black, cursive font. At the bottom, registration details are provided in black text.

Photography

Singing

Acting

Music

Dancing

Magic

Arts

Poetry

LaunchEd
CELEBRATING DISABILITY CULTURE
THROUGH MEDIA, ARTS & DESIGN

WEL ENERGY TRUST

Trust Waikato
TE PUNA O WAIKATO

Hamilton City Council
Te Kaitiaki o Hamilton

18TH SEPTEMBER 2025

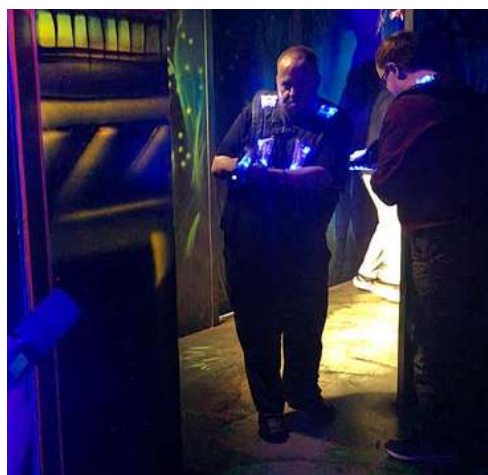
Casting Call

REGISTRATION CLOSES: 8TH SEPTEMBER
EMAIL TO REGISTER: LAUNCHEDNZ@GMAIL.COM
WHERE: SOUTHWELL SCHOOL PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE

Highlights

Game on at City Centre Fun Zone!

Ross, Lashkar, and Sophie geared up for some fast-paced fun playing laser tag at Fun Zone. Dodging lights and chasing targets, they threw themselves into the action with big smiles and loads of energy. It was a great way to shake up the day, share some laughs, and enjoy a new experience together.

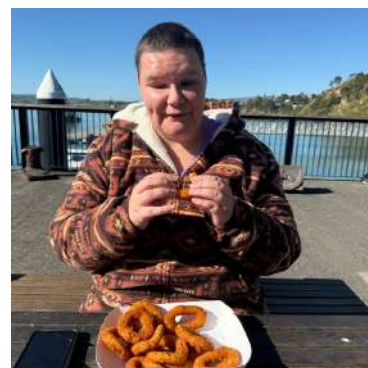


Highlights

Road Trip!

Sunshine and Smiles in Raglan!

Our three lovely ladies enjoyed a stunning day out in Raglan. With perfect weather and beautiful views, it was the ideal setting to relax, explore, and enjoy each other's company. A day filled with fresh air, good conversation, and plenty of smiles, what more could you ask for?



Highlights



Rain or shine, the zoo is always a wild adventure!

Rebecca Marshall, Rachel Fletcher, and Jessica Manning recently enjoyed a day trip to the zoo as part of our Aspire community. Even with a bit of wet weather, the excitement of seeing lions, monkeys, and meerkats up close made it a day to remember. Outings like this offer more than just fun—they're a chance to explore, connect with others, and create lasting memories. For many, the zoo brings joy, curiosity, and a sense of wonder, no matter the weather!



Community

Highlights

www.aspire.org.nz

A day of discovery beneath the waves!

Shona, Lynda, and Jacinda recently visited SEA LIFE Kelly Tarlton's Aquarium in Auckland and had a fantastic time exploring the wonders of the ocean. From penguins to stingrays and everything in between, there was so much to see and learn. Trips like this offer a chance to experience something new, build confidence, and enjoy quality time together. The joy on their faces said it all—an unforgettable outing filled with curiosity, laughter, and connection.



Winter 2025

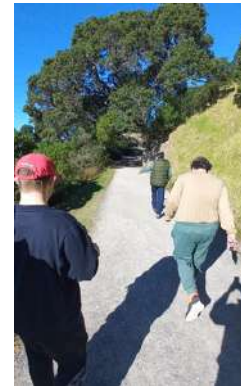
Community _____

Highlights

www.aspire.org.nz

hello WINTER

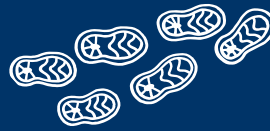
A winter walk is the perfect way to boost your mood, get some fresh air, and enjoy the beauty of the season—even in the chill!



Winter 2025

Community Highlights

www.aspire.org.nz



CHECK IT OUT



Celebrating Sophie's Achievement!

Sophie received a Certificate of Recognition for her consistent cheerfulness, bright smile, and growing willingness to try new things during daily activities. Her enthusiasm and positivity have had a noticeable impact on both Enrich staff and her peers. Sophie's readiness to engage in unfamiliar tasks reflects her personal growth and inspiring openness to new experiences. A huge congratulations from everyone at Aspire—we're so proud of you, Sophie!

Winter 2025

upcoming

www.aspire.org.nz

Aspire Events



Hamilton Zoo trip

**Saturday 20th
September**

10am

recomended to BYO lunch

No registration needed

Each individual will be in charge of their own payments.



Highlights

Aspire Mid-Winter Ball



Community Highlights

www.aspire.org.nz

Aspire Mid-Winter Ball



Community Highlights

www.aspire.org.nz

Aspire Mid-Winter Ball



Winter 2025

Community Highlights

www.aspire.org.nz

Aspire Mid-Winter Ball



Community _____

Highlights

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Aspire Mid-Winter Ball



Community

Highlights

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Aspire Mid-Winter Ball



Community Highlights

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Aspire Mid-Winter Ball



Winter 2025

Community

Highlights

www.aspire.org.nz

Aspire Mid-Winter Ball



Aspire staff



Lee Samuel

What's your name and your role at Aspire?

My name is Lee Samuel and I'm the Outcomes Manager here at Aspire.

How long have you been working here?

I started on June 30th, 2025.

What do you love most about your job?

I'm really enjoying being part of a big team after working for myself for the past two years. I love helping the people we support discover their passions and watching them thrive.

What's a small thing that never fails to make you smile?

When someone creates a piece of artwork they're proud of and can't wait to show it off—it brings me so much joy.

What's a smell, sound, or taste that brings back a ridiculous or funny memory?

The smell of gas from a burner instantly reminds me of my Grandmother cooking pancakes. She used to flip them in the air... and they often ended up stuck to the ceiling!

Bernadine Faber

What's your name and your role at Aspire?

Bernadine Faber, Roster Scheduler

How long have you been working here?

3 weeks – I started on 21 July.

What do you love most about your job?

Rostering is like building a puzzle – fitting all the pieces together just right to make everything run smoothly.

What's a small thing that never fails to make you smile?

Flowers

If you had to live inside a TV show or movie universe for a week, which one would it be?

The Blacklist – I would be Raymond Reddington's sidekick for the mix of high-stakes crime, international travel, secret deals, lots of danger, great food and wine, and wild stories.

What's the weirdest or most unusual job you've ever had (or wanted)?

Somewhat unusual, as not many people have worked at Disney World Orlando, USA. I worked in Disney's Animal Kingdom as a Safari Driver.



Contact us



Feedback

We'd Love to Hear from You!

Got a story to share, photos from a recent event, creative writing, or artwork you'd like to see featured? We're always looking for contributions to make this newsletter reflect the voices and talents of our community.

Have feedback, suggestions, or ideas for future editions? Drop us a line, we'd love to hear how we can make this even better for you!

✉ Email us at: Lee.samuel@aspire.org.nz

☎ 022 4967479 - Lee Samuel, Outcomes Manager

Let's keep building this together—your input makes all the difference!

You can also use the form below for any feedback on the newsletter or other wise at any point.

Complaint

Compliment



We value your feedback . If you have any concerns or a compliment, please reach out to us.

07 839 0183

reception@aspire.org.nz

Head Office, 103 Tawa Street, Hamilton

www.aspire.org.nz

OR you can fill in your details below and drop to our Head Office.

Name

Phone

Email

If you prefer you can contact the Office of the Health and Disability Commissioner Directly

PO Box 1791, Auckland 1140

Fax: 09 373 1061

Email: hdc@hdc.org.nz

Freephone: 0800 11 22 33

Website: www.hdc.org.nz



aspire
COMMUNITY SUPPORT