



Caring for Our Community

This week's feature Group – Parkinson's Society

"Keep moving, keep fit" is the theme of Parkinson's Awareness week this week, November 1 to 7.

Parkinson's is a progressive, neurological disorder which can affect everyday activities such as talking, walking, swallowing and writing.

The condition occurs when cells in the part of the brain that control movement are lost. These cells produce dopamine, a chemical messenger that enables people to perform smooth movements.

Regular, moderate exercise has been shown to improve motor function, without an increase in medication, for a person with Parkinson's.

"People with Parkinson's are advised to get around 20 to 30 minutes of exercise each day," says Parkinson's New Zealand national director Deirdre O'Sullivan. "Exercise helps to improve body strength and muscle tone, and may slow the progression of the disease. Stretching exercises are particularly beneficial."

Exercises to build strength and flexibility are part of an exercise booklet and poster, produced by Parkinson's New Zealand, as part of this year's Parkinson's Awareness Week.

Sara Reeve, field officer for Parkinson's New Zealand in Kapiti and Horowhenua, continues to take the message about exercise to her clients and their families and care-givers in the Kapiti and Horowhenua regions.

"We have monthly support meetings for people with Parkinson's and their caregivers in Waikanae on the fourth Wednesday of the month

and in Levin on the third Tuesday. These are really important for linking members for mutual support and sharing ideas and information so the person with Parkinson's and their caregivers don't feel so isolated and alone in managing living with the disease. Our division boundaries are Pukerua Bay to the south, Levin and Shannon in the north. I do home visits to people in the area, to offer support, information and referrals to other agencies and health services as needed."

Sara also has a role in community education about Parkinson's and will speak to community organisations if asked.

"The management committee who employ me for 25 hours a week is made up of volunteers who are responsible for raising funds for our division and promotion of awareness of Parkinson's Disease in the area. We also have volunteers helping with tasks in the office and to answer phone enquiries while I'm out on the road visiting."

A cake stall to be held outside the Mahara Gallery, Waikanae, on Saturday morning November 6, is an opportunity to raise funds to enable the organisation to continue developing its support and care for local people living with Parkinson's.

Local Division chairperson Colin McLennan says: "this is a wonderful opportunity for local people to learn more about Parkinson's and to help fund the training and development of Parkinson's field officers, a role that is essential in helping and supporting people with Parkinson's in Kapiti and Horowhenua."

The local contact person for Parkinson's Kapiti/Horowhenua is Sara Reeve, field officer. To find out more about Parkinson's New Zealand services phone 0800 473 4636 or 04 904 4240, or write to PO Box 385, Waikanae or visit www.parkinsons.org.nz

Adventure of the week

Wharemauku Stream

Starting to the left of the Kapiti Coast District Council buildings on Rimu Street, this walk follows the Wharemauku Stream.

Crossing several stiles the walk takes you to Tui Road East, where you can turn left and loop around onto Kiwi Road and back onto the stream track. Or you can take a right on Tui Road, then left onto Matatua Road, and left again onto Raumati Road. Walk to the end, then take Rimu Road left and finish back at the start.



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