

Te Toka Tumai

Volunteer Centre News



Easter 2025



Dear all, A very warm welcome to this Easter edition of the Te Toka Tumai Volunteer Centre Newsletter!

Easter in the Northern Hemisphere often signals the arrival of Spring, and although we're firmly in the embrace of Autumn here in Aotearoa, it seems the spirit of a good old-fashioned Spring Clean caught up with me! Over the past week, I've been on a mission—decluttering, tidying, and giving the Volunteer Centre a fresh new feel. It's now a beautifully organised and inviting space once again, ready to welcome you all.

In this special edition, you'll find a variety of inspiring stories and updates. We take a look back at the heartfelt efforts of our volunteers on Christmas Day and celebrate the incredible milestone of the 100th hand-knitted blanket gifted to patients in the Mana Awhi wards.

We're also excited to share that the Site Ambassador program at Greenlane Clinical Centre has now been extended to include Saturday morning shifts—providing extra support for patients navigating their way to Women's Health, Radiology, and the ever-busy Eye Clinic.

A warm welcome to Tosha Bhatt, our newest Ambassador, who began on April 5th, guided by the wonderful Zia Prasad.

You'll also hear from Candy Schroder, who many of you met at our Christmas party. She brings us the latest updates from the Auckland Hospital Foundation—be sure to check it out on page 2.

As we head into the cooler months, a gentle reminder to get your flu vaccination early. I'll be sure to keep you informed about where and when you can receive your jab at both Greenlane Clinical Centre and Auckland City Hospital. Keeping well means we can all continue to volunteer safely and confidently.

Thank you for your ongoing kindness, time, and dedication. On behalf of the Volunteer Management Team, I wish you a joyful Easter season and happy reading!

Lindy





Claudia Cachay
Foundation Coordinator



Jennifer Porter
Communications Manager



Candy Schroder
Director

Message from the Auckland Hospital Foundation

The Auckland Hospital Foundation team is reflecting on a summer full of warmth, thanks to hospital supporters and volunteers like you, and I'm so happy to connect with you. Together, we are a powerful community, for the good of every patient!

Thank you for being a vital member of our Auckland City Hospital | Te Toka Tumai whānau.

Our supporters share our belief that everyone deserves access to world-class healthcare, and they understand it cannot be achieved with government budgets alone. While government funding supports the healthcare essentials, we exist to go above and beyond.

Fundraising and donations enable advancements and enhancements in our hospital, which would otherwise remain beyond reach. Thanks to our supporters, we are making progress across our four fundraising priorities:

- 1) accelerating world-class facilities and technology,
- 2) increasing world-class research opportunities,
- 3) enhancing the patient and whānau experience, and
- 4) advancing the healthcare workforce at Auckland City Hospital.

Being New Zealand's largest hospital and clinical research facility, with specialities that serve the nation, we must strive to help teams deliver the best possible care that enhances the health and extends the lives of our families. I personally believe there is no greater cause!

I am immensely grateful for your gift of time and energy to patients and whānau in their toughest times, and while just a few of you feature in this Easter newsletter, we celebrate and thank every volunteer who helps those in our hospital.

As the hospital's Foundation, we only exist because people like you want to enhance patient care through acts of kindness and selfless support, and we are honoured to be on that journey with you.

If you have any questions or wish to connect, email us at hello@ahf.org.nz, and sign up to our updates at www.ahf.org.nz.

With my gratitude and warm wishes for a happy Easter. Ngā mihi nui,

Candy Schroder
Director, Auckland Hospital Foundation

A rainy day, squishy socks & sneaky sips

Written by Lesley Rae,
Tea Trolley Volunteer

This morning's walk into the hospital to do my Tea Trolley volunteering shift could best be described as... soggy.

I was absolutely drenched—shoes squelching, socks soaked, and looking like I'd swum to the hospital instead of walked. Luckily, Hospital Supporter James came to the rescue with a pair of cosy hospital socks. Bliss! Not only did my feet thank him, but so did the patients—who had a great laugh at my expense (or perhaps with me—I'll take the kind version).

Later, I showed off my fashionable new footwear to a staff member. Apparently impressed, or just deeply sympathetic, he offered to get me a coffee! A win in my books.

Speaking of coffee... while passing near Planet Espresso, a patient cleverly asked me if I could get them one. I politely declined, explaining, "We don't serve near the café—it wouldn't be fair to them." But something in the air felt off. A little suspicious, if you will.

Sure enough, minutes later, I spotted the same patient sitting in Reception D—clearly waiting for me to circle back. Sure enough, I was asked again, and I fetched them a coffee; only to see them make a beeline for the exit not five minutes later! Coffee in hand, mission accomplished.

Never a dull moment when you're volunteering—rain or shine!



Lesley Rae shows off her new footwear



The Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust

Written by Lindy Lely,
Volunteer Manager

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of meeting Lillian Haskin, Community Coordinator at The Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust (RYALT).

A proud Port Waikato resident since 2019, Lillian was drawn to the Trust through her personal journey with literacy challenges—her brother's ongoing experience with dyslexia and her son's neurodiversity have deeply shaped her commitment to this cause. These experiences inspire her passion for supporting others, and she is now dedicated to empowering both learners and volunteers across Aotearoa.

RYALT fosters a warm, inclusive environment where individuals can build their reading and writing skills at their own pace—often online—with the encouragement of tutors and fellow learners. Volunteers play a vital role in this mission, helping to connect with rural and isolated adults and teenagers who may be struggling and in need of support.

In addition to tutoring, volunteers contribute to a range of essential areas such as database management, website development, and the creation of training materials—each role helping to strengthen the foundation of the organisation.

If you're interested in learning more or getting involved with this impactful organisation, you're warmly encouraged to reach out. You can contact RYALT on 0800 891 339 or 09 280 4348, Monday to Thursday, between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm.



L-R: Gracey, Ann and Gracey, Scruffy

Ann & Gracey: Bringing smiles through volunteering at Auckland City Hospital

Written by Ashley Narayan, Contractor, Auckland Hospital Foundation

Every week, Ann Connor and her therapy dog, Gracey, walk through the doors of Auckland City Hospital, ready to bring comfort where it's needed most.

Whether it's an anxious patient, a busy doctor, or a child feeling overwhelmed, the presence of Ann and Gracey makes a real difference.

Ann began volunteering with Outreach Therapy Pets in 2009, after retiring and deciding she wanted to give back in a way that also involved her beloved dog, Scruffy.

Over the years, Ann, Scruffy and Gracey have visited Te Whetu Tawera, Starship, Wards 51, 42, 82, the Ambulance Bay and the Emergency department where a few minutes of petting Gracey helps ease the stress of patients and provides staff with a much-needed break for a few moments.

It's the small moments that make all the difference. One memorable moment took place when Ann met a distressed woman who, after just a few minutes with Scruffy, visibly relaxed, smiling and much calmer. Another time, a child struggling with motivation to complete her exercise found

encouragement in Scruffy. As they walked side by side, Scruffy's presence helped her push through and complete her walk with a smile.

Ann has always had a deep love for dogs and has had five over the years. Her journey began with Scruffy (pictured above, right), who was the first to join her in what has now become 15 years of dedicated volunteering.

Another memorable moment occurred in Critical Care when a patient, feeling very unwell and uncomfortable, had young children in the room who were visibly distressed. The nurse and the children's grandmother moved them to a quiet space and asked Ann if she could bring Gracey in. As the children sat on the floor, petting Gracey, they started to seem more at ease. By the time Ann left, the children were smiling and hugging Gracey, their worries temporarily lifted.

For Ann, these heartwarming moments are what keep her coming back week after week. "I come away with quite a high," she says. "Even a few minutes with Gracey can change someone's whole day."

Ann's work is a reminder of how simple gestures can bring comfort during life's most difficult moments.

Message from the Awatea Ward about the Christmas Day celebrations

Written by the Mana Awahi management team

We would like to thank the volunteers who came on Christmas Day to meet and greet patients in our wards.

Feedback from patients in the Mana Awahi wards:

- A patient in Rangitoto Ward, who had a hip fracture, was really grateful and emotional when we went to wish her a merry Christmas and gift the knitted Christmas pudding. She said this was a very kind thing to do; she was tearful and thanked us for our time and visiting her on Christmas day.
- A patient in Awatea Ward was very grateful for our visit and the magazines we brought for him; he chose a few magazines and was very thankful for our time.
- Many patients were really thankful for the Christmas gift - knitted Christmas pudding - saying it was one of the kindest gestures ever and they were thankful for the magazines we gave to them.



Spreading cheer: Thank you to our Christmas Day volunteers

Written by Rodney Whitmore, Volunteer Coordinator

As we look back on the holiday season, we want to take a moment to celebrate and sincerely thank the incredible volunteers who gave their time and hearts on Christmas Day.

We had a wonderful turnout, with a dedicated group of volunteers stepping up to provide companionship, support, and festive cheer to patients who, unfortunately, had to spend Christmas in hospital. While being in hospital over the holidays is never ideal, the warmth and kindness shared by our volunteers helped brighten the day and lift spirits across the wards.

Whether it was through heartfelt conversations, shared laughter, or simply being a comforting presence, your efforts made a real difference. Many patients expressed their gratitude for the thoughtfulness and care they received.

We are incredibly grateful to each and every volunteer who chose to spend part of their Christmas Day giving back. Your generosity of time and compassion truly embodies the spirit of the season. You brought joy, comfort, and a sense of community when it was needed most.

Thank you for being part of something so meaningful. Your contribution helped make the day a little brighter—for patients, their families, and hospital staff alike.

A heartfelt thank you to our wonderful Knitting Club – 100 knee blankets

Written by Rodney Whitmore,
Volunteer Coordinator



We would like to take a moment to express our deepest gratitude to the incredible members of the Knitting Club from the Epsom Village and our “independent knitting contractors” for their beautiful, handcrafted creations gifted to the patients at Auckland City Hospital.

Your dedication, talent, and generosity have not gone unnoticed. Each item you’ve lovingly created brings more than just warmth. It brings a sense of comfort, care, and human connection to patients who may be facing challenging times. The textures, colours, and craftsmanship of your pieces add a personal, heart-warming touch that can’t be replicated.

Many patients have commented on how receiving one of your handmade items made them feel seen and supported.

For some, it was a bright spot during a difficult stay; for others, it was a reminder that people in the community are thinking of them with compassion and kindness.

Beyond the stitches and patterns, what stands out most is the spirit behind your work. The time you dedicate, the thought you put into each piece, and the love you knit into every row—all of it makes a meaningful difference. The ripple effect of your kindness touches not only the patients, but also their families, the hospital staff, and everyone lucky enough to witness your generosity in action.

We are so fortunate to have such a thoughtful and creative group as part of our extended hospital community. Thank you for sharing your incredible talents and for reminding us of the power of acts of kindness. You’re helping to wrap our patients not just in wool—but in warmth, love, and hope.

With heartfelt appreciation.

If you would like to get involved, please contact me at rodneyw@adhb.govt.nz.



The Auckland Hospital Foundation has set up a [JustGiving](#) page, inviting donations of \$25 to cover the cost of wool for a blanket, to help these fabulous knitters who light up patients’ lives with their precious gifts.

[CLICK HERE FOR DETAILS](#)





Kicking off the year with connection: February Companion Volunteer Event

Written by Rodney Whitmore,
Volunteer Coordinator

I'm delighted to share a recap of our very first Companion Volunteer event of the year, which took place in February—and what a fantastic way to start 2025!

The event had a great turnout, bringing together a wonderful mix of new and familiar faces from our Companion Volunteer team. It was heartening to see such enthusiasm and commitment from everyone, setting a positive tone for the year ahead.

We were fortunate to have two guest speakers join us: Marion from the Fraser McDonald Unit and Karen from the Hapaitai team. Both shared valuable knowledge and perspectives that deepened our understanding of the services and support available within our wider healthcare community.



Their presentations were not only informative but also inspiring, sparking thoughtful conversations and plenty of appreciation from those in attendance.

After the formalities, we had the chance to unwind and connect over refreshments. It was lovely to see everyone mingling, sharing stories, and getting to know each other a little better. The friendly, welcoming energy in the room truly reflected the spirit of our Companion Volunteer program.

Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the event such a success. Your passion and kindness are what make this group so special.

Putting Kiwis' hearts and lungs in the safest hands

Written by Jennifer Porter, Communications Manager, Auckland Hospital Foundation



The Auckland City Hospital team that treats every New Zealander facing a critical heart or lung condition is getting the world's best simulation training equipment, thanks to a generous grant from The Lion Foundation and other kind donations to the Auckland Hospital Foundation.

Gifted to the country's top cardiovascular team and the only provider of ECMO (the miracle life-support machine), this new technology will build clinicians' critical care skills and extend their learning like never before.

The Lion Foundation's \$136,000 grant is for SimMan 3G Critical Care Manikin, one of the world's most realistic simulation manikins, which allows the team to train for every life-threatening scenario in a

risk-free "real-life" setting. The team is immensely grateful for this state-of-the-art equipment, which sits above and beyond government funding, and would have otherwise remained out of reach.

Cardiovascular specialists across New Zealand will also come to Auckland City Hospital for training with SimMan 3G – broadening clinicians' skills nationwide. This life-saving gift demonstrates the value of community funds benefiting all New Zealanders.

We are so grateful to everyone who has empowered our incredible team to save more lives, and we can't wait to welcome SimMan 3G when he lands here later this year!

For more news from the Auckland Hospital Foundation, [click here](#), and sign up to receive our updates [here](#).



Above and Top: The team's existing manikin being used for ECMO simulation training

A bit of fun – Happy Easter

EASTER WORD SEARCH



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EASTER
 CHICK
 JELLYBEANS
 GRASS
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EGGS
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 HUNT
 DECORATE
 CANDY
 CELEBRATE

