



President's Report – October 2008

I would like to start off my Report by firstly thanking everyone for attending today's AGM, and for your continued support to the Cerebral Palsy Society over the last 12 months.

Since last years AGM, there have been a number of significant changes within the Society, of the most significant changes is the growth of members, we now have over 423 current financial members spread out over the entire country (330 in the North Island and 93 in the South Island).

The Society began its expansion by moving into a stand alone office at the Erson Ave complex. This is a reflection on how the Society (both in members and staff) has grown over the past year.

The Society now has 3 and a half (sorry Ross) fulltime employees, being Harvey Brunt, Michael Northcott, Janet Chapman and Ross Flood. Paul Munckhof has also done a great job as the webmaster for the CPS website www.cpsoc.org.nz/ and assisting Ross with the Review publication.

During December, the Society held Christmas lunches in Auckland (136 people) and Christchurch (36 people), both events were very well attended and special thanks for all those people who helped organize these lunches. The Auckland lunch had a very special guest in attendance, Santa Claus, who led the Pipe Band. Thank you Peter Atkinson for ending the lunch on such a high note.

In January, both Harvey and I had the pleasure of being invited to the graduation ceremony for mobility dogs in Auckland. This was an extra special occasion as one of the recipients and CPS member, Amy Hogan, was the first person in New Zealand with Cerebral Palsy to receive a mobility dog (Bonnie). The Society has been and I hope continues to be an active supporter for Mobility Dogs, so that hopefully more people with Cerebral Palsy will be able to enjoy the social and life benefits of having a mobility dog as a partner. I am sure that Amy will confirm that Bonnie has enhanced her life over the last 10 months and continues to enhance her life for many more years to come.

On April 6th, many members attended an afternoon get together at the Ellerslie Racecourse. The idea for the event came from Jocelyn Burgess, who wanted to put on an event for older members and their families. This afternoon was a great success by all accounts, thank you Jocelyn for putting so much effort into organizing such a wonderful afternoon.

On June 7th, the Society had the pleasure of being involved with the Playback Theatre, which put on an extremely entertaining performance at Focus 2000 headquarters in Coyle St. Unfortunately I was unable to attend this event, but by all accounts there wasn't a dry eye in the building by the end of the night and everyone was raving about how good the performance was. The Society looks forward to being involved in future Playback Theatre performances.

On June 22nd, we had another successful mid winter Christmas lunch, at Sorrento on One Tree Hill in Auckland, with 157 people in attendance. These events have become so popular with members that we had a 50% increase in attendance from last years mid winter lunch. Well done to everyone for continuing to support the Society and for using your getOutThere vouchers to attend. Special thanks have to go to Harvey for arranging such a wonderful lunch and afternoon.

Not to exclude our southern branch, on August 10th, 89 people attended a mid winter Christmas lunch, at The Elms Hotel in Christchurch. The Society was represented at board level, by Peter Atkinson and Paul Munckhof and by Harvey Brunt and Janet Chapman at a staffing level. A great afternoon was had by all accounts and special thanks needs to go to Michael Turner for arranging venue and day. Another wonderful example of members supporting the society and getting involved in society events.

On the day to day running of the Society, Harvey and his team have been busy supporting and managing the existing projects as well as implementing new projects that the Board and Harvey have recognized as important following on from Strategic Planning sessions earlier on in the year:

1. **getConnected** - Michael Northcott, continues to manage this project and to date, there are 9 members enjoying the benefits of this project.
2. **getOutThere** – we now have over 200 members signed up to the getOutThere programme, enjoying the benefits of subsidized taxi services from all over New Zealand. We hope that more members continue to sign up and take advantage of the subsidized transportation that this project offers.
3. **getThis&That** – this is a new programme (being trialed in Auckland) that allows members with Cerebral Palsy to purchase small items (initially from the DRC) that will support their daily living needs.
4. **getStructured** – more information will be released in coming weeks in regards to this programme, however it is intended to help members get their wills/legal paperwork in order so that in the event of death in the family, those members with Cerebral Palsy will be looked after.

In addition to the above, the Grants Committee has supervised the spending of over \$80,000 in grants during the last financial year. I would like to thank them for their excellent contribution and wisdom.

It is the Board's belief that the above programmes, together with the grants, has had a positive impact and is fulfilling our mission 'to enhance the lives of people with Cerebral Palsy' and their families.

Focus 2000 continues to evolve and service more clients each year. John Wade and his Executive team have done a wonderful job over the last 12 months in restructuring Focus to better align the business areas to meet the organizations needs and provide the highest quality of service to the clients.

Both Boards have identified the need for a broader set of experience and skills on the Focus 2000 Board. A recent recruitment process has identified a number of superb candidates and it is expected that the CP Society will shortly be in a position to ratify and approve 3 new directors to the Focus 2000 Board.

Cerebral Palsy Society – Director Retirement

On behalf of the CPS Board, I would like to offer our thanks and appreciation to the 3 board members that are standing down at this years AGM. They are - Glenis Lobb, Peter Atkinson and Peter Fergusson.

'The Peters' were elected in August 2005 and 2006 respectively. Peter Fergusson (elected in 2005) as Vice President and Peter Atkinson (elected in 2006) as Secretary/Treasurer. Both have been very supportive and passionate towards the Society and Focus 2000 over this period and have been instrumental in the growth of the Society (not to mention Focus). We have been through some hard times together and come through these with a stronger Society and Group - your skills, friendship and Board expertise will be greatly missed.

Between November 2006 and June 2008, Peter Fergusson was appointed to the Board of Focus 2000. This was a very challenging, and for a period a time consuming, role for Peter. Along with Craig Hobbs, Peter was involved with the employment of John Wade as CEO of Focus 2000. Peter was a great link between CPS and Focus 2000. It is sad that we are losing Peter on both Focus 2000 and CPS Boards, due to his conflict of interest with his new role at the DRC, but I would like to thank Peter for the thousands of hours that he has put into the Society and Focus and wish him well with his new challenges. The one good thing is that Peter is just across the driveway and not moving to far away from the Society's reach.

The Atkinson family have had a very emotional year and I would like to provide Peter and Imogen with all the support that the Society and its members can offer. Sue was a wonderful friend to the Society and her warm loving smile and friendship will be missed at Society events. Peter and Imogen, you are the strongest people that I know and thank you Peter for being a part of the Board for the last few years. Peter, your humour shall be missed at Board meetings; however I know that we will still be able to catch up at Society events and Boccia tournaments.

Although Glenis has only been on the Board for 1 year, her contribution has been immense and I know that the Society and Glenis will be working closely over the next few years as Glenis has a world of untapped knowledge that will be valuable with CP research that the Society wishes to undertake. Thanks for volunteering your time over the past 12 months Glenis, we shall miss your experience at Board level.

To the existing board of Todd Fernie, Tracy Wadsworth, Immanuel Koks, Paul Munckhof and Harvey Brunt (Ex Officio), thanks for your continued support (and your families) and dedication to the Society over the last 12 months.

To the new people joining the board - Dave Thomas, Amy Hogan and Rosaline Fuatai, we look forward to your contribution to the Society over the next 12 months to ensure that the Society continues to enhance its member's lives through the existing programmes in place and identifying any new opportunities that may arise.

I hope to see you all at the upcoming Christmas lunch on Sunday 7th December for our Christchurch based members and Sunday 14th December for our Auckland based members.

Things are looking really bright for the Cerebral Palsy Society and we are on the way to becoming a truly New Zealand based Society, with members scattered over the whole country. This has been one of our goals and thanks to Harvey and the team for helping to achieve this.

Yours sincerely,

Karl Sangster
President of the Cerebral Palsy Society of New Zealand