

HŌHEPA HAPPENINGS  
HŌHEPA WELLINGTON  
DECEMBER 2025

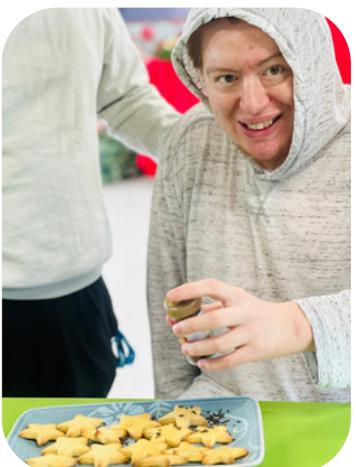


Hōhepa

every life fully lived

# 🎄 CHRISTMAS IS ALMOST HERE! 🎄

Christmas is just around the corner, and the people we support have been embracing the spirit of Advent in the most creative ways! Every handmade craft, every decorated cookie, and every smile tells the story of how much we enjoy this time of connection and festive cheer. These photos offer just a glimpse of the magic created! ✨



## CHRISTMAS ART WINNING ENTRY 🎅

Amy's fantastic Santa design stole the show at this year's Christmas Art Competition, and her smile said it all when she received her prizes from Linda.

With generous support from [Web2Print](#) in Ōtaki, Amy's artwork was transformed into festive Christmas cards - spreading joy and gratitude to our amazing community of supporters.



# FROM OUR GENERAL MANAGER

## Linda Windley



Kia ora koutou,  
This past quarter has been full of energy and progress.  
We received the final results for the new Group Home Funding structure, and although it was disappointing to see a small reduction in funding, we are confident in our continued ability to provide quality, meaningful support. Following challenges earlier in the year that affected our connection with the neighbouring community, our staff took part in an independent review to better understand the factors contributing to these events.  
We recently received the findings, and the overall feedback is both positive and insightful. Most respondents said they feel well equipped in their roles, confident in the support they receive from their managers, and satisfied with the training available.

At the same time, some staff raised questions about staffing levels, highlighting an area for further discussion.

The report included valuable feedback from staff and, in summary, outlined key recommendations. This gives us a great opportunity to reflect, and we're looking forward to working alongside staff to find ways we can keep improving. I want to acknowledge the fantastic staff participation rate in this review. It speaks volumes about the commitment and engagement of our Hōhepa team - and for that, we are truly grateful. Wishing you all a joyful Christmas, a restful summer, and a bright start to the new year. Thank you for being part of our journey

- Linda

## FROM GOOD TO GREAT

We're excited to share a significant milestone in our journey to create richer, more inclusive experiences for the people we support. With funding from the Ministry of Social Development, we're delighted to welcome

### **Sophia Kennedy as our new Engagement Facilitator.**

Sophia brings valuable hands-on experience, and an academic background in educational psychology. She conducted PhD research exploring meaningful engagement and quality of life for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She is passionate about supporting purposeful and enjoyable lives for all people. Having already worked alongside our community for two years, Sophia steps into the role with established connections to our people and values.

### **What does this mean for our community?**

The Engagement Facilitator role is all about enhancing the quality and variety of activities available to the people we support, with a strong focus on meaningful engagement and community connection.

Priorities include:

- Supporting individuals to participate in purposeful, fulfilling activities
- Promoting inclusion through onsite and community-based opportunities
- Aligning activities with each person's interests, goals, and support needs
- Broadening experiences and increasing choice
- Creating pathways for job and work experience
- Strengthening community connections



**"I'M LOOKING FORWARD TO CONNECTING WITH EVERYBODY OVER THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, AND EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES THAT SUPPORT EACH INDIVIDUAL'S UNIQUE ASPIRATIONS AND INTERESTS"**

# WHAT'S HAPPENING ONSITE?

As always, there's plenty happening to care for Hōhepa Wellington's whenua, deepen our connection with nature, and enhance our amenities.

 Thanks to a generous **Lottery Community Grant through Hāpai Hapori Community Matters**, we'll be building a large greenhouse onsite early in the new year. This new space will provide the people we support with greater opportunities to enjoy gardening and nursery activities - whatever the weather - while helping our community work toward self-sufficiency.

 **All the hard work in our vegetable garden is paying off!** Recently, Ina and the gardening team set up a communal produce fridge in The Studio, making it easy for all houses to help themselves to fresh, homegrown goodness whenever it suits. What a fantastic way to share the harvest and strengthen our sense of community!



Planting for the Future  We're already getting ready for next year's harvest - pumpkins have been planted in a newly created addition to our vegetable garden area. **What we nurture today becomes the gift of tomorrow.**



## MEET THE LOCALS *with Elle*

Elle posed some hard-hitting questions to our new Service Manager, **Gordon Cumming**, who started in his role in October.

What is your favourite food?

*I love a lamb roast with all the trimmings - mint sauce AND gravy. I really don't like bananas and tomatoes.*

Do you like watching TV/movies?

*I don't really, but my favourite movie is Metropolis - a 1927 silent movie by Fritz Lang.*

Where did you grow up?

*Levin*

Do you have any pets?

*No. But I do have a cat made out of Lego, which my daughter bought me for my birthday.*

Do you have a middle name?

*James - after my father.*



Can you play any instruments?

*I play guitar, and a little bit of piano.*

What's something you're really good at?

*I'm good at photography, particularly black and white photography.*

Do you snore?

*I have no idea! I'll record myself and let you know 😊*

# A WORD FROM THE BOARD

## Shane Gaskin



Kia ora koutou,

I'm the father of Tessa, who was born with Down's Syndrome, and my connection to Hōhepa began when Tessa joined the Hōhepa community as an 18-year-old, first in the Hawke's Bay and then eight years ago, when Hōhepa Wellington was established on the Kāpiti Coast.

I spent most of my working life in the IT world, starting out as a Computer Operator when mainframes ruled, and moved to running Data Centres for Unisys, and then senior IT roles in Education.

My role now with Hōhepa allows me to influence how Tessa and all the people we support can live their best lives. Through her, I've learned patience, advocacy, and the importance of creating spaces where people of all abilities can belong, thrive, and be seen. These values are what drew me to serve on the Hōhepa Wellington Board, and more recently to step into the role of Chair of the Development Committee.

I am motivated to find practical ways to help ensure that the people we support have the opportunities, environments, and experiences that allow them to flourish. I'm especially excited about the projects our Development Committee is currently exploring, including the next phase of development of our Otaihanga site, expanding the use of our whenua, and how we grow opportunities to deepen our engagement with community-based activities.

As a Board member, I see every day how much our collective effort matters. As a father, I see how these efforts impact positively on Tessa's life.

Ngā mihi nui,

Shane

## WELCOMES AND FAREWELLS

It has been a busy period in the recruitment space since our last newsletter! We're excited to welcome six new permanent Support Workers — Manti, Anandu, Leeza, Gurpreet, Hemi, and Mable — along with four new casual team members: Arun, Tina, Kepoe, and William Jr. This growth, in part, reflects the increase in the number of people we support, which has now reached 25.

We've also seen some internal movement: three of our casual Support Workers have transitioned into permanent roles, while two permanent team members have opted to join our casual pool for greater flexibility.

Lastly, we said farewell to three Support Workers and Olga, one of our House Managers.

We thank them for their contributions and wish them all the very best in their next endeavours. We also want to say a HUGE thank you to our HR Administration superstar, Lisa. She keeps all the plates spinning and is the welcoming first face of Hōhepa for all our new staff.



# FRIDAY JAMS | NIKAU FOUNDATION



Thanks to a generous grant from the [Nikau Foundation](#) we've launched two exciting onsite initiatives that are bringing joy and connection to our community!

Our **cooking classes** have been sizzling away for a few months now, and the latest addition? **FRIDAY JAMS!**

On Friday afternoons, talented musicians from the Kāpiti community join us to share their music and create moments of connection. It's a wonderful opportunity for the people we support – and our amazing staff – to come together, enjoy live tunes, dance and have fun. What a vibe! A huge thank you to [Henare Parker](#) and [Clare Christian](#) for sharing their incredible musical talents with us so far.



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# HELPING HANDS

A huge **thank you to Jan Koberstein and the Biodynamics Association of New Zealand** for their ongoing generosity, gifting us knowledge and a wonderful donation of Prep 500. This powerful preparation enriches soil by improving structure, boosting microbes, retaining water, and supporting root growth - helping enliven the whenua in harmony with cosmic rhythms for vibrant plant life. The meditative stirring is a key part of the process, and is enjoyed by members of our estate management team.

**Looking to help?** There are plenty of ways you can volunteer or support what we do. Please reach out to Shelley Elliott on 0272515422 or [Shelley.Elliott@hohepawellington.com](mailto:Shelley.Elliott@hohepawellington.com)



## **WARM CHRISTMAS WISHES FROM HŌHEPA WELLINGTON TO YOU AND YOURS**



**Hōhepa**  
every life fully lived

We're working hard to raise Hōhepa Wellington's profile and share all the incredible things the people we support, and our staff, do every day.

Please follow us on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). The more you like, share, and comment the better!

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