

WOLLY Vibes

"We support, promote, value and encourage volunteering"



Greetings everyone

Greetings everyone, Tēnā tatou katoa.

On June 14th, 2025 we celebrated our

Annual Volunteer Recognition Awards.

This is always a fantastic opportunity to appreciate and thank those Awardees who do awesome mahi within our community.

It is thanks also to those people who take the time to nominate their volunteers who are also to be appreciated and praised. If it weren't for them spending the time putting the nomination together, we would not have any Awards to celebrate. I know the amount of time that this takes to put together a worthy nomination.

We have amazing volunteers in our community- who are all very humble and say that they don't do their volunteering for the accolades.

During the phone calls to congratulate the awardees, there were a couple of awardees who were reluctant to accept the Award- to this I suggested that this is a great way of showing others what possibilities there are upon retirement and also of promoting the Organisation; after this they agreed to accept – so delighted that these few words changed their minds.

In the last few years, I have realized why it is so special for me each year. It is because I read all the awesome citations about the amazing work that is ongoing with these volunteers and their Organisations (that most people have no idea about) . After the Awards the conversations is often – "we didn't realise that so much volunteering was happening in our community"

I then get to talk with those who are being awarded, and they give me a little



Recipients

insight about their why and then on the day I meet them, and I learn more about their who. Each year is as special as the previous.

This year it has been extra special to recognise Colin and Theresa Gibbon who have both worked tirelessly for Taranaki TET Athletics and Inglewood Athletic Club for 40 plus years and Taranaki Race Walking Club for 35 plus years. The Awards day was extra special for them both too, for those who were there saw Colin wheeled up to the ramp and he was determined to walk up onto the stage to receive his award and he then spoke in acknowledgement of their Award and then walked off stage back to his wheelchair. In hindsight, the strength of this couple is phenomenal as this was to be the last time Colin was to go outside. He had stayed strong till after this Award because this meant so much to him. Theresa & family please accept our sincere sympathy on Colin's passing.

Through the awardees citations we certainly

see a diversity of volunteering from those supporting people with disabilities & the youngest caring for our environment and those supporting people with challenges be it with household essentials, food provision, building confidence, health & wellbeing, sport support and animal welfare & protection as well as the outdoors style of volunteering of protection of our native fauna and flora and supporting others to enjoy the outdoors by caring for our wonderful reserve and then there are our family / whanau care and the wider Whanau of our Community Welfare and the Heritage recording as well as the awesome Pukekura Park buggy guides

All these diverse roles are all happening here in our local community. A huge THANK YOU and CONGRATULATIONS to all AWARDEES.

Continued next page

Awards

Individual	Nominators
Katy Quest	Flourish
Marie Rutten	Sustainable Taranaki
Robin Bublitz	Take Them A Meal
Couple	Nominators
<i>For Couples who volunteer together for an organisation or have both volunteered for a long period of time (5 years or more) (not necessarily for the same Organisation)</i>	
Tom & Linda Cloke	Alzheimers Taranaki
Colin & Theresa Gibbon	Inglewood Athletic Club
Long Service	Nominators
<i>This special award recognises and honours people who have been volunteering for 15 years or more in their community.</i>	
Barbara Hammonds	Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society
Elizabeth (Lee) Ross	St Vincent de Paul
Patricia (Tricia) Gillbanks	NP Riding for Disabled
Raewyn Bocock	Taranaki Cancer Society
Rowan Williams	Swimming Taranaki
Val Huffam	Waitara Swimming Club
Youth Individual	Nominators
<i>Youth Volunteers up to the age of 25 at close of nominations may be nominated in the Youth category.</i>	
Arielle Healy	NP Riding for Disabled
Gabriella (Gabby) Brady	Take Them A Meal
Grayson Armstrong-Wilson	Rotokare Scenic Reserve
Youth Team	Nominators
Stephen Bovett & Ryan Jamieson – City of NP Cadet Unit	Taranaki Cancer Society
Team	Nominators
<i>While the awards have traditionally marked the efforts of individual volunteers. The focus of this award is on either projects undertaken by organisations or effective and efficient service operations, and programmes run by organisations which involve a team of volunteers that make a positive community contribution</i>	
Roz Miller & John Konijn – Buggy Drivers	Friends of Pukekura Park
Pat George & Noreen Potts – Cemetery Project Team	NP Genealogy Society
Peter Johns & Shaun Gedye – Taranaki Māori Wardens	Taranaki Māori Wardens
Barbara Hooper & Heather Butler – VCA's	Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa
Tuku Iho	Nominators
<i>This category is for Family / Whanau that have 3 or more generations who volunteer. The volunteering does not need to be for the same Organisation. Information about each nominee is to be completed on their contribution to the Organisation and the community.</i>	
Marian & Nikki – Valentine Family	Inglewood Welfare Society
Kevin & Noah – Nielsen Family	Conductive Education Taranaki
Ray, Angela & Zach – Willy/ Wright Family	Rotokare Scenic Reserve
Weaving Together	Nominators
<i>This category, (chosen by the Manager) has criteria that the volunteer contribution of these people is significant across multiple groups or organisations.</i>	
Chris Herlihy- Long Service	Art Taranaki
Graham Dodunski – Individual	NP Riding for Disabled
Jo Parsons – Individual	Waitara Foodbank Pataka Kai
Yvonne Muskee – Individual	WISE Charitable Trust

Next year is the International Year of the Volunteer IYV26 and we are excited to have many new things in the planning stages for 2025/26. So if you have an idea and or suggestion for a project or a celebration for 2026 or anything else you would like to be available for Volunteers or your Group or Organisation and if you are keen to learn more don't hesitate to contact us.

If you are in the Not for Profit (For Purpose) Sector, please contact us if you are interested in learning how we can support and offer resources to you and your Organisation.

Kindest regards

Nga mihi nui

Marie R

Marie Riordan, Manager



Katy Quest – Flourish Taranaki

Katy has poured the past five years — and every spare chair, rug, and plant from her own home — into building Flourish Taranaki, creating a space where caregivers feel seen, supported, and a little more human in the chaos of

parenting.

With a background in mental health, parenting, and community work, Katy is equal parts wisdom, warmth, and “let’s just make it work” grit. She’s the first to arrive to turn on the heaters, the last to leave once everyone’s safe, and the one you know you can call her anytime if things feel tough — and she’ll show up the next day, ready to go again!

Katy’s mum has donated her sofas and now her arms to also hold babies, and her whānau is the unofficial maintenance crew. She’s a living cycle-breaker, showing up for others so that every whānau has a chance to choose the village around them.

Katy’s worked way more voluntary hours a week, than paid, sacrificing her own opportunities so Flourish could stand strong. And she’s still going, because “she said she would.” It’s time we shine the light on her — because every parent and child held by Flourish carries Katy’s legacy forward.



Marie Rutten – Sustainable Taranaki

Marie Rutten has been a dedicated volunteer with Sustainable Taranaki since October 2023, contributing across multiple areas including nature cleanups, zero waste

events, and sustainable business support. Her commitment, initiative, and broad skillset make her an exceptional volunteer.

At zero waste events, Marie has volunteered over 70 hours, educating the public at waste stations, sorting waste, assisting with the wash trailer, and running a sustainable Christmas wrapping workshop at the Seaside Markets using Furoshiki techniques and second-hand materials. She regularly supports nature cleanups of awa and moana, demonstrating her hands-on dedication.

Marie brings professional expertise as a trained data analyst, significantly enhancing the Sustainable Business Programme. She identified and corrected errors in key spreadsheets, created a waste audit data template, and produced clear visualisations that led to actionable waste reduction insights. Her analytical thinking and questioning skills have greatly strengthened data use within the team.

Marie is proactive, often suggesting new initiatives and keeping the team informed about local zero waste developments, such as Solid Waste Committee meetings.

Her passion, reliability, and alignment with Sustainable Taranaki’s kaupapa and vision are clear in everything she does. Marie’s work exemplifies a deep commitment to sustainability and community impact.



Robin Bublitz – Take Them A Meal

Robin Bublitz has been a dedicated volunteer cook with Take Them A Meal for around five years, offering compassionate and consistent

support to families navigating difficult times. With her wealth of cooking experience, she prepares delicious, nourishing meals that bring comfort and care to those who receive them.

Robin plays a vital role in our team, ensuring our freezers are always well-stocked and ready for new referrals. Her generous contributions come frequently—often weekly—and always with thoughtfulness, even when she could justifiably prioritise her own needs. Her level of giving is phenomenal, and her selflessness is truly inspiring.

What sets Robin apart is her incredible attention to detail. Every meal is beautifully presented, reflecting her understanding that the act of giving a meal carries deep meaning. Remarkably, she seems to intuitively know when we're running low or need something specific, often arriving just when help is most needed.

Robin quietly supports our mission with dedication and heart. While she never seeks recognition, her impact is significant and far-reaching. She is a true community hero—one of those rare individuals who makes a difference simply by showing up with care, consistency, and generosity. We are deeply grateful to have Robin on our team - our community hero.



Tom & Linda Cloke – Take Them A Meal

Tom and Linda have been dedicated team leaders with Take Them a Meal for about four years, bringing with them a wealth of experience and strong community connections. They

play a key role in monitoring our inventory and work weekly to ensure our cooks have everything they need to prepare meals and support whānau across Taranaki.

Their scope of work includes collecting donated food boxes from NP Post, preparing them for family deliveries, and managing the important relationship with our food rescue partner, On the House. This ensures our cooks receive regular supplies of donated food. Tom and Linda also oversee the storage and stocktaking of frozen meals ready for delivery, organise and run 2–3 fundraising events each year, and coordinate regular group cook-ups to keep our freezers well stocked.

Their proactive approach and steady leadership ensure that everything runs smoothly behind the scenes. Their kindness, reliability, and attention to detail mean families in need receive timely, nourishing meals week after week.

But their impact goes well beyond Take Them a Meal. Linda also volunteers at the Inglewood Lions Book Sale, fosters rescue kittens for the Taranaki Animal Protection Trust, works stage door for the Operatic Society since 2022, and organises food for the Taranaki Motorcycle Club—where Tom also volunteers. They even move out of their home to host Motocross Club national organisers. Tom continues to advocate for local roading and informs trucking companies of road closures and accidents. He can often be found mowing someone else's verge or lawn—just because it needs doing.

Tom and Linda are humble, generous, and tireless in their community service. They are the kind of people who quietly make life better for everyone around them. We are incredibly grateful for their dedication and proud to nominate them.



Colin & Theresa Gibbon – Inglewood Athletic Club

Colin and Theresa, both in their 80s, have been on the Inglewood Athletic Club committee since 1984 and remain active members. They

are life members, and Colin is the Club Patron. Both have received the Taranaki Athletic Centre Long Service Award and the Taranaki Athletics Life Member Award.

They regularly help set up events at the stadium for club nights. Colin handles the handicapping and continues in this role. On club nights, he is the chief judge and timekeeper. Theresa checks in all athletes and gives them their steps, from 1-year-olds to Masters, for every track event — a role she has held since 1987.

For every event, big or small, weekends or weekdays — Ribbon Days, NZ Secondary Schools, National Secondary Schools, Taranaki Senior and Junior Champs, Masters Games, all Inglewood primary school events, and Colgate Games — Colin assists with setup, acts as a track judge, and is also an A-grade race-walking judge. Theresa is one of two starting line assistants.

They have done these roles for nearly 40 years, in rain, hail, or shine. Their tireless dedication and contribution have been vital to the success of athletics in Inglewood and the wider Taranaki region.



Barbara Hammonds – Barbara Hammonds - Nga Motu Marine Reserve Society Inc

Barbara has been a driving force on the committee of the Society since she joined in 2001.

She is our long-term secretary and an enthusiastic contributor to all the projects we undertake. The first of these was the Application for the creation of a Marine Reserve, now the “Tapuae Marine Reserve”. She has remarkable writing skills which enable us to prepare long and complicated documents on specialised subjects to statutory authorities.

Barbara has a deep knowledge of the environment and skills in organising and participating in our community events and public presentations. Barbara plays a large role in program administration for “Experiencing Marine Reserves” snorkel days at Nga Motu Beach. She is a leader in the Little Blue Penguin monitoring project, ‘Korora Korero’. She is a DoC accredited bird bander, essential to our penguin studies which require birds to be microchipped. She keeps a sharp eye on project budgets and fund raising.

Barbara is a methodical archivist, ensuring that the years of information we have about the Taranaki coastal and marine environment are put to good use in education and fun activities. Her attributes will ensure that the Society is set to share our knowledge with the next generations



Elizabeth (Lee) Ross – St Vincent de Paul

Lee has worked with St Vincent de Paul New Plymouth for 20yrs. Lee has wrestled with many fitted sheets and duvets in her time with Vinnies. Last year we provided families in need with

298 bedding packs alone. The care and love that goes into the linen department is incredible. Lee takes home boxes of linen to air, wash and iron. All lined comes back folded all with the neatest edges. The level of care taken to provide linen to families is of the highest quality this in turn makes the recipient feel worthy.

Lee has volunteered in the Shop 2 days a week and recently dropped down to 1 day due to health, but this doesn't stop her from wanting to do extra. She is the vacuum cleaner queen on Friday afternoons and will not rest till every bit of dust has been sucked up and emptied out.

Supplying linen to Organisations, transitional/emergency housing, and clients needing a hand up. The help with a pack of linen ensures families can have a comfortable sleep and reduce financial pressure when moving into a new home.



Patricia (Tricia) Gillbanks – NP Riding for Disabled

Tricia initially joined NP RDA in 1977. Over the years her involvement was interrupted by pregnancy, work commitments and moving cities, but she has always

returned. Two of her children have attended rides here, so she knows firsthand the benefit of RDA for riders and families.

Tricia has been volunteering weekly since 2015, and for the past six years has been RDA's grazing manager. This requires her to sort out the grazing plan for the week at Barrett Domain, and then the weekend grazing on Davis Road, along with holiday grazing at Wrantage Street. She communicates with the Horse Manager and Farm Manager to tell them what paddocks the horses are going into that week.

Tricia is the point of contact for members of the public about any horse-related issues. This means that she is called at all hours of the day and week, attends horse emergencies, and works independently and unsupervised.

Tricia volunteers as a leader and side walker on Wednesdays and Thursdays and will come in extra days to cover gaps. Each year she organises a play as a fundraiser for us. This is a huge amount of work and brings in much needed funds for us.



Raewyn Bocock – Taranaki Cancer Society

We are pleased to nominate Raewyn for the Taranaki Cancer Society Long Service Award in recognition of her 18 years of dedicated service. As a receptionist and

support group facilitator, she has consistently demonstrated the values of integrity, excellence, and respect. Her commitment to our mission is evident in every task she undertakes, ensuring that our community members receive the highest level of care and support.

Her presence at the reception and during support group sessions is invaluable. When she isn't around, the difference is immediately noticeable – tasks are left unfinished or not done, and the standard of service dips, which highlights her crucial role in maintaining the smooth running of our operations. Her attention to detail, paired with her compassionate nature, has fostered a welcoming environment for those we serve.

Through her tireless work, Raewyn has had a lasting impact on both the community and our organisation, helping to create a space of respect, trust, and support. Her long service is a testament to her dedication, and we are grateful for her ongoing contribution to the Taranaki Cancer Society.



Rowan Williams – Swimming Taranaki

Rowan Williams is the backbone of Taranaki's swimming community, having volunteered for over 15 years at local, regional, and national levels. Her extensive

experience and calm, kind manner make her a trusted and respected figure among swimmers, parents, and officials. As a technical official for Swimming Taranaki and Aquabladz Swimming Club, Rowan's impact extends far beyond the title.

She serves as the technical liaison with Swimming New Zealand, overseeing the selection, training, and mentoring of new officials. Her guidance on swimming rules and national competition standards is widely sought after and valued across the region.

Ali Hickford, Chairperson of Aquabladz, shares: "Rowan is totally dedicated to the sport and loves to see the swimmers improve. She helps at club nights and ensures everything runs smoothly."

Rowan is also instrumental in organising and running the iconic Flanagan Cup in New Plymouth and the Summer Series, a casual event encouraging wider participation. At these events, she coordinates timekeeping, announces races, and operates the starter gun.

Her tireless commitment and behind-the-scenes contributions are given with no expectation of reward. Rowan's passion and dedication make her an irreplaceable asset to swimming in Taranaki and an inspiration to the entire community.



Val Huffam – Waitara Swimming Club

Val has been the backbone of the Waitara Swimming Club for over 40 years. Starting as a swimmer at age six, she transitioned into coaching and has spent the last 18

years teaching hundreds of children how to swim and stay safe in the water. Val organises all volunteer coaches, groups the swimmers, and coordinates prizegiving's—sorting trophies, spot prizes, certificates and ribbons.

Beyond the pool, Val was once part of Waitara's surf lifesaving scene and ran beach safety sessions with local kids. She's also backed her children's involvement in sports like highland dancing, rugby, and basketball—always volunteering, always present.

Even after being diagnosed with breast cancer around seven years ago, Val never missed a session. Despite chemotherapy and pain, she continued coaching, showing extraordinary resilience and dedication. She has also dedicated time to teaching swimming at Waitara Central School.

Val is the heart of the club. Her energy, fun approach, and deep commitment make her a favourite with the kids and essential to the club's survival. Without her, it's likely the club wouldn't exist today. Val is one in a million, and Waitara is incredibly fortunate to have had her unwavering support and passion over the years.



Arielle Healy – NP Riding for Disabled

Arielle joined NP RDA 3/8/2022. She volunteers every Wednesday and frequently picks up extra days each week. She always gives 110% of herself to RDA and regularly stays behind to help

with extra jobs, both with the horses and riders.

Arielle has a natural affinity with the horses, and they respond well and calmly to her when she is handling them.

Arielle's primary role is as a side walker./ This is a very important role in keeping the riders safe on the horse, prompting the set games and activities, and reading the rider's ability and mood to keep everyone safe.

For some of our riders, RDA is their only weekly activity, and the close bond they create with Arielle means that they get very upset if we must swap her rides! The younger riders gravitate towards Arielle, and she is very keen to dress up and have fun.

Arielle faces life's adversities with strength and determination that inspires the team at RDA. Her kindness, patience and laughter truly make Arielle a very special young lady, and a valued member of our team.



Gabriella (Gabby) Brady – Take Them A Meal

Gabby has been a valued volunteer with Take Them A Meal for nearly 2 years. She joined our team to support our social media efforts, helping us share updates

about our work, highlight areas of need, and keep both our broader team and the community informed.

Before Gabby came on board, we struggled to maintain consistency in our social media presence and needed someone with fresh energy and tech-savvy skills to step in. Gabby has filled that role beautifully.

She posts weekly updates featuring stories of how needs are being met, ways the community is contributing, business partnerships, upcoming fundraising events, team member spotlights, and more. Gabby ensures our content is timely, engaging, and consistent. She's also proactive in reminding us when something needs attention and has a strong understanding of the platforms she uses.

We are incredibly grateful for her contributions and truly enjoy having such a friendly, capable young person as part of our team.



Grayson Armstrong-Wilson – Rotokare Scenic Reserve

Grayson Armstrong-Wilson is a passionate and dedicated young volunteer who has made a significant impact at Rotokare since joining the

team in 2023. His work supports vital environmental goals focused on preserving biodiversity and biosecurity.

Grayson contributes to a wide range of tasks, including checking the pest-proof fence, servicing traps, clearing tracking lines, and ecological monitoring. His fitness and positive attitude make him an asset, particularly when working alongside older volunteers, some more than twice his age. He values their knowledge and is respected for his

contributions and eagerness to learn.

His development over the past year has been impressive. Gaining his learner licence allowed him greater independence, and he continues to approach every task with care and precision. Grayson has demonstrated a strong grasp of conservation issues, which he uses to encourage ownership and responsibility among his peers.

In late 2024, Grayson expressed interest in advancing his conservation knowledge and, with encouragement, explored study options. He was accepted into a relevant course at WITT, demonstrating his commitment to ongoing learning.

Grayson is a shining example of youth actively engaging with local and global conservation challenges. He consistently shows initiative, maturity, and motivation—qualities that make him an outstanding young volunteer.



Stephen Bovett & Ryan Jamieson – City of NP Cadet Unit – Taranaki Cancer Society

We are pleased to nominate the NP Army Cadets for a team nomination in recognition

of their exceptional support at our annual Relay for Life event. Their commitment and teamwork were evident throughout, playing a vital role in ensuring everything ran smoothly. After the event concluded, the NP Army Cadets stayed overnight to provide security for the equipment, demonstrating reliability and responsibility.

They were on call for the entire 12-hour duration, stepping in whenever needed, and assisted with the pack down the next day, despite challenging weather. When unexpected changes arose, the NP Army Cadets adapted without hesitation, showing true flexibility and unity.

The NP Army Cadets are a group of young individuals trained in leadership, discipline, and community service. Their values align closely with those of the Taranaki Cancer Society, as they consistently demonstrate dedication to serving their community. Their involvement at our event highlighted their commitment to helping others and working collaboratively.

We are grateful for their continued support. Their efforts made a meaningful impact on the success of the event, and we are proud to have them as part of our team. Their presence truly embodies the spirit of service and community we value.



Roz Miller & John Konijn – Buggy Drivers – Friends of Pukekura Park

The Friends of Pukekura Park Buggy Drivers provide an exceptional service, offering guided tours of the park in an electric 8-seater

buggy. This initiative began in 1998 with a 6-seater cart and evolved in 2008 when a formal agreement with NPDC was signed. NPDC now supplies and maintains the buggy, while Friends of Pukekura Park manage operations.

The dedicated team of eight volunteer drivers operates tours five days a week, 10:30am–3pm. Each driver undergoes initial and ongoing training, including Health and Safety, First Aid, and must possess strong knowledge of the park, its history, flora, and points of interest. Drivers also report any park issues during tours.

Tours cost \$5 per person and are booked via a dedicated phone and EFTPOS system, generating a steady income. In 2024, \$7,000 from tour earnings funded a new glasshouse for the Fernery. Tours now cater to all ages and abilities, including cruise ship groups, rest homes, and special events like weddings.

Drivers use the Cozi app for scheduling and wear branded clothing for sun and wind protection. Their enthusiasm, commitment, and friendly service enhance the visitor experience, making this team a vital and much-valued part of Pukekura Park.



Pat George & Noreen Potts – Cemetery Project Team – NP Genealogy Society

The Cemetery Project Team of the New Plymouth Genealogy Society has dedicated decades to transcribing and photographing headstones

across dozens of cemeteries in the New Plymouth district. This important work, which began in the 1980s, has continued with renewed effort over the past ten years, ensuring main cemeteries have been updated with accurate and current records.

The team has completed thousands of transcriptions in cemeteries such as Awanui, Bell Block Anglican, Bell Block Mangati Road, Huirangi, Hurdon, Inglewood, Lepperton, Oakura, Okato, Rahotu, St Mary's, Tarata, Tataraimaka, Te Henui, Te Henui Returned Services, Tikorangi, Urenui, Waireka, and Waitara.

These transcriptions are invaluable to those researching their ancestors, especially when headstones include names or details not found in official council records. In cases where headstones have become illegible, damaged, or lost, the team's work may be the only surviving record for families.

This long-term project aligns with the society's purpose: to promote the study of family, local histories and genealogies; provide public education; maintain a library of related resources; and assist local and overseas researchers. The Cemetery Project Team's work ensures the preservation of local history and supports countless individuals in reconnecting with their heritage.



Peter Johns & Shaun Gedy – Taranaki Māori Wardens

Taranaki Māori Wardens are a dedicated volunteer team committed to supporting community events across the region, come rain or shine.

Their presence ensures safety, smooth traffic flow, and a welcoming environment at a wide range of events—from large concerts like Matchbox Twenty and Globe Trotters to cultural gatherings such as Waitangi Day, Diwali, Te Matatini, Puanga, and community events like the Seaside Markets, ANZAC Day, Careers Expo, and more.

In 2023, the team logged 1,909 volunteer hours, and in 2024, 1,996.5 hours. The core team of eight members shares 131 years of combined service, with additional ten volunteers available as needed.

Their duties include managing parking and traffic, monitoring entry points, assisting attendees, offering general support, and providing positive, respectful interaction with the public. They are a trusted presence and an integral part of many local events.

Team Lead Peter plays a vital role—meeting with organisers, planning logistics, transporting gear, and managing volunteers on the day.

The Taranaki Māori Wardens are more than just event support—they

are guardians of community spirit, safety, and manaakitanga. Their tireless service and unwavering dedication make them truly worthy of recognition.



Barbara Hooper & Heather Butler – Volunteer Chaplains

There are 16 Volunteer Chaplain Assistants (VCAs) who visit patients weekly at Taranaki Base and Hāwera Hospitals as part of Hospital Chaplaincy Aotearoa. These dedicated volunteers offer

comfort, support, and reassurance to patients, often in vulnerable or isolated situations.

Each VCA brings unique experience to the role—ranging from mental health, education, and social care to personal journeys of recovery or caring for others. Their strength lies in the empathy and presence they offer, providing a quiet but powerful sense of connection and hope.

Many have served for 5 to 15 years, with each undergoing intensive training, police vetting, and reference checks. Ongoing monthly meetings offer a space for reflection, peer support, and professional development.

Beyond their weekly visits, the VCAs also organise an annual Plant Sale to fundraise for chaplaincy work across Taranaki. They rally support from churches and the wider community, demonstrating leadership and initiative. At Christmas, the VCAs bring extra joy by singing carols on the wards at both hospitals—creating a festive spirit for patients, families, and staff.

Their collective contribution, often behind the scenes, plays a vital role in patient wellbeing. The VCAs show us the power of presence and kindness—qualities that uplift others in times of need. Their service is heartfelt and humble, and they are deeply appreciated by all who encounter them.



Marian & Nikki – Valintine Family – Inglewood Welfare Society

The Valintine family has given over 50 years of service to the Inglewood Welfare Society Inc., the not-for-profit organisation behind

Marinoto Aged Care in Inglewood. Their story begins with W.B. (Bill) Valintine, a Returned Serviceman and member of Inglewood Rotary. In 1970, Bill envisioned transforming the derelict Inglewood Maternity Home into a rest home for the elderly. He led the charge—researching, fundraising, rallying support, and serving as President (1970–1985), then Patron until 2005.

Bill's wife, Betty, who had a nursing background, played a key role in resident selection in Marinoto's early years. Their children Liz and Tom were raised with a strong connection to the rest home, with Tom mowing the lawns as a teenager. In 1992, Tom's wife Marian joined the Inglewood Welfare Society Committee and has contributed over 30 years of service. She's been a vital force behind fundraising, resident support, facility improvements, and governance, including the major 2018 Hospital Wing expansion.

Their daughter Nikki Valintine has contributed well beyond her paid employment at Marinoto. Notably, she volunteered significant hours during the planning and installation of the new kitchen—helping organise, coordinate trades, and fill gaps to keep things moving. She continues to step in for maintenance jobs and operational tasks. Nikki

is known for her hands-on, can-do attitude: "If there's a job to be done—just get in and do it." Whether staying overnight to cover shifts during COVID or quietly fixing what's needed behind the scenes, her commitment is unwavering and deeply appreciated.

Also involved is Liz Valintine, Bill and Betty's daughter, who shares the family's passion for service, and Aimee Kells, Nikki's daughter, who helps when needed—another example of this family's deep roots in community support.

The Valintine family's contribution spans three generations, each stepping up in different ways but with the same unwavering commitment. Their selfless service has helped Marinoto not just survive but thrive. They embody the heart of Inglewood's community spirit and are truly worthy of recognition.



Nielsen Family (Kevin, Karin, Craig, Megan, Zak, Noah & Jed) – Conductive Education Taranaki

The Nielsen family are the heart of volunteering at Conductive Education Taranaki. Kevin, our Treasurer, is a regular behind

the BBQ and supporting events with his wife Karin whose famous mad hatters' fundraisers have become iconic.

They have passed their passion on to son Craig, one of the co-founders and long-standing board member. Craig's wife Megan continues the tradition of putting in huge fundraising hours.

Their sons Zak, Noah and Jed are loyal volunteers at every event. Zak is Conductive's poster boy, and the reason the Nielsen's are involved. Zak is an original user of the service, and his impact has seen huge amounts fundraised.

Craig & Kevin have also been Trustees with Enabling Good Lives Taranaki for 2 years

Kevin has been in a variety of roles currently President for Riding for the Disabled.

Karin has been with Hospice shop for 23 years which currently has her banking & cash up for 2 day a week & counter on Saturdays.

Megan and Craig are heavily involved with the awareness & support of Pitt-Hopkins Syndrome



Ray, Angela & Zach – Willy/Wright Whānau – Rotokare Scenic Reserve

The Willy/Wright whānau are the kind of family every community hopes for—generous, committed, and full of heart. For over 20

years, three generations have volunteered with the Rotokare Scenic Reserve Trust, giving their time, energy, and skills to conservation and community work.

Poppa Ray (Ray Willy), now in his 9th decade, has lived in the area all his life. He's been involved with Rotokare since his youth—hauling boats to the lake, clearing bush tracks, and helping construct the pest-proof fence. Ray has served as a committee member, education guide, and weekly fence checker. His volunteer work extends beyond Rotokare—he's been treasurer of Maata Hall for 20 years, served on school boards, coached rugby, and mentored through Big Brother Big Sisters.

Ray's daughter Angela began volunteering at Rotokare in 2006, returning in 2010 with her husband Steve. Together they've contributed

countless hours to fence checks and guiding. Angela is also treasurer of the Eltham RSA, Chair of the Vogeltown Home & School Committee, and bakes monthly for Good Bitches Baking. Steve volunteers on the Digital Technologies Teachers Aotearoa committee and gives his time to Rotokare alongside his family.

Their sons William and Zach have grown up volunteering, deploying tracking cards and navigating steep trap lines. William recently became a Rotokare Youth Ambassador, gaining conservation knowledge and sharing it with others.

The entire family travels over 60km from New Plymouth every fifth Sunday to contribute to Rotokare, often staying for the BBQ and gecko sightings. In March, they volunteered together at WOMAD, raising over \$6,700 for Rotokare as the event's official charity.

Their tireless efforts have had a profound impact. Without them, Rotokare Sanctuary wouldn't be what it is today. Their legacy of service will be felt for generations to come.



Chris Herlihy - Long Service – Art Taranaki

Chris has made a remarkable and lasting contribution to New Plymouth through decades of voluntary service across the arts, tourism, and LGBTQI advocacy. His

impact is wide-ranging and deeply rooted in community development.

For nearly 25 years, Chris has served on the Friends of the Govett-Brewster Art Gallery committee, including three years as Chair. During this time, he has been involved in organising exhibitions, concerts, openings, and events, while also supporting fundraising for the Gallery's collection. His commitment extends to other arts initiatives, including involvement with the Taranaki Arts Trail, Arthouse Cinema, and the Bowl of Brooklands Trust. He has also actively supported community arts projects such as the Len Lye Centre, Wind Wand, Art in Public Places, and Puke Ariki.

In tourism, Chris has served as Vice Chair of the Rhododendron Festival Trust, a board member of Tourism Taranaki, and a committee member for the NZ Historic Places Trust (Taranaki branch), contributing to regional promotion and heritage protection.

Chris has also been a passionate advocate for the LGBTQI community. As a founding force behind Pride Taranaki, he helped establish the region's first Pride Week in April 2024, celebrating diversity and fostering inclusivity, equality, and community connection.



Graham Dodunski – Individual – NP Riding for Disabled

Graham began at NP RDA 15/3/2016. A retired farmer, he brings a lifetime of knowledge and experience which is invaluable to us,

managing the multiple properties we lease for the grazing of our team of horses.

Graham's commitment and dedication has improved the quality of our pasture, through weed management, fertiliser applications and fencing. We are now at the stage where we can cut our own silage, not once, but twice a season. This has eliminated the need to purchase extra feed at great cost for us, and ensures we know what our horses are eating.

Graham has built and repaired numerous fences, giving us horse-sized paddocks, allowing us to not waste grass, and keeping our horses in top shape.

He works unsupervised, around our ride times, and just gets on and does things in all weather conditions. If we see something that needs to be done, it is done before we can raise it with him. Graham is a strong advocate for RDA and his efforts certainly allow us to have safe and effective farm management.

Our team sum up Graham as “a lovely kind person and hard worker, who doesn’t do idle”



Jo Parsons – Waitara Foodbank Pataka Kai

Jo is one of those volunteers who truly inspires others. She takes newcomers under her wing, encouraging, nurturing, and supporting them

wholeheartedly. Jo has been volunteering with us for two years and is an essential part of our Pātaka whānau.

Her superpower is her ability to support others—whether it’s our clients, volunteers, staff, or donors. Her empathy, compassion, and outstanding organisational skills are simply amazing.

Even as a manager, I find support in Jo. She is a trusted pillar of knowledge and wisdom. Our kaupapa is to ensure no one goes hungry, and Jo helps ensure our parcel receivers gain not only food but the confidence, knowledge, and connections to maintain food security.

Jo’s background with Knox Church catering and her work with youth make her an even greater asset. These experiences have equipped her with practical skills and deep compassion that align beautifully with our mission. She often offers advice and tips, always with empathy and care for our people.

Jo brings manaakitanga to every interaction and is a shining example of what it means to serve with heart. Thank you, Jo, for your dedication and for being such a valued part of our community.



Yvonne Muskee – WISE Charitable Trust

WISE Charitable Trust is proud to nominate Yvonne for her outstanding commitment as a volunteer in our Curtain Bank. For the past six months, Yvonne has shown up every week—rain or shine—bringing

care, aroha, and skill to every task. From washing, sorting, and measuring to sewing and preparing curtains, she ensures that each set meets the needs of our whānau.

When Yvonne joined, there were no systems in place. With a background in software development, she built detailed spreadsheets to streamline operations, improving efficiency as demand grows. Her exceptional sewing and fabric knowledge means nothing is wasted—every piece finds a purpose.

Yvonne never seeks recognition. She’s supported many clients who fall outside traditional support channels, including elderly people and families with unwell children. Thanks to her, many Taranaki homes now have warm, double-lined curtains—helping reduce illness and improving wellbeing, especially for tamariki and kaumātua.

She is reliable, generous, and thoughtful, with a fantastic eye for detail. More than that, she brings warmth and kindness to our team. Her manaakitanga, whanaungatanga, and kotahitanga shine through in

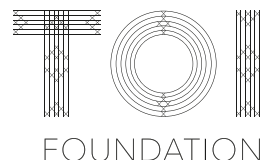
everything she does. Yvonne has helped create a positive, welcoming environment and made a lasting impact on our community. We’re so lucky to have her.

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