



The Champion Centre  
TAMARIKI TOIORA

## Annual Report

of the  
Christchurch Early Intervention Trust  
Charities Commission Number CC22708

**July 2010 to June 2011**

**"BUILDING FUTURES FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS"**

### *Our mission statement*

The Champion Centre is committed to providing high quality family and whānau based early intervention services for children/tamariki with multifaceted developmental delay. In partnership with our local runanga (Te Ngai Tuahuriri), The Champion Centre will educate about early intervention and act with parents/mātua of children/tamariki with developmental delay as advocates for adequate and appropriate community services for them and their children/tamariki.

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### Chairman's Report for the Financial Year 1 July 2010 to 30 June 2011

Simon Mortlock  
Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the  
Christchurch Early Intervention Trust



The Directors' Report, that forms part of this Annual Report, is a stunning endorsement of the work of the Champion Centre. I recommend to you the Directors' Report on achieving so many of the goals established in the 2010 / 2015 Champion Centre Strategic Plan.

The Champion Centre is now successfully combining its direct work with children and families with research, teaching and advocacy that is spreading the model of service to professionals and parents both nationally and internationally. Achieving the goals of the Strategic Plan is a direct consequence of the Champion Centre's contribution over many years that is now richly rewarded.

This success should be seen against the challenging time that the families that attend the Champion Centre, the staff, and all others associated with the Champion Centre have faced in this very difficult year. Also it is an endorsement of their commitment, their resilience, and the pursuit of excellence.

The Press article October 29, on a father's reflection on bringing up a child with Down syndrome was an amazing endorsement of the strength of a family offering a wonderful insight into the lives of many families. The Champion Centre was described as "a bright light in those early stages was the people of the Champion Centre which proved to be a lifesaver... the early intervention centre at Burwood Hospital gives the children and parents an invaluable head start in life".

"Not only do the specialised therapists push the limits of the children's development, the centre also provides parents with a priceless support group of parents who fight the same battles". This year we wanted to tell as wide an audience as possible about the wonderful work being carried out at the centre. "Life with Bella", providing as it did such compelling reading, will help ensure the Champion Centre becomes a household name and a by-word for excellence.

The Champion Centre is now actively seeking financial support from the community to ensure the long-term financial sustainability of the centre. We now have an active group of supporters providing financial support on an on-going basis. This is necessary given that moneys provided by the Ministry of Health, Education and Social Development do not adequately support the work of the Champion Centre. Without private contributions from family trusts, community groups and private individuals the centre could not continue.

We are fortunate that the building occupied by the Champion Centre has not suffered earthquake damage and notwithstanding the disruption that surrounds it, the staff and those that use the facilities have not been inconvenienced.

Thank you to the Director and staff and my fellow Board members for the excellent contributions that you each make. We hope that the coming year will not be interrupted by earthquakes and hopefully we can get back to some sense of normality.

### Meet the Board of Trustees of the Christchurch Early Intervention Trust

These were the trustees as at June 30th 2011

#### Simon Mortlock, Chair

Simon Mortlock is a commercial lawyer with accounting and economics expertise. He has had a close association with the Christchurch Early Intervention Trust for the past 30 years as a parent, and four years on the Trust Board as Chairman. Simon is also a trustee of the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust and the Employment Scholarship Trust and a director of Christchurch City Facilities Ltd, Jet Engine Facility Ltd, Vbase, Danne Mora Holdings Ltd, Westmoreland Nominees Ltd, Nevele R Stud Ltd, Spreydon Lodge Ltd, Asado Food Solutions Ltd and Santa Rosa Marketing Ltd. Simon is an active advocate for all children and young people and thrives on win-win outcomes believing real success is achieved when everyone knows they have played a vital and valued role.

#### Nathan Mikaere-Wallis

Nathan's current role is lecturer at Canterbury University's College of Education, School of Human Development and Educational Studies. Nathan is a father with a background in both Primary and Early Childhood teaching, child counseling, and educational management. Nathan is a founding member of the Te Wai Pounamu Brainwave Board, a Presenter for Brainwave and a trainer for Child Protection Studies. Nathan is a member of Te Runaka o Kai Tahu Ki Otautahi and has affiliations with the local Iwi Ngai Tahu. He works within his own consultancy called 'X Factor Education' which offers Professional Development.

#### Barbara Stewart, QSO

Barbara is a director of SKOPE Industries Limited, a Christchurch manufacturing company employing approximately 400 people. In addition to serving on the trust board of the Champion Centre, she is on the Cholmondeley Foundation, Chairman of the Court Theatre fundraising campaign and Co-Patron of the Diabetes (Christchurch) Society. She was involved as a local body, elected representative for 15 years, including three years on Waimairi District Council, three years as a community board member for the Fendalton ward of Christchurch City, and nine years as a city councillor for the Fendalton ward of the Christchurch City Council.



### Graeme H Daniel

Graeme has been a principal in special education settings for over twenty five years. He has been principal of Allenvale Special School since the beginning of 2008 having been appointed by the commissioner designated by the Minister of Education. Prior to this he was principal at Halswell Residential College for many years before being an evaluator with the Education Review Office. He is currently a member of the executive of SEPANZ and holds a range of qualifications in education and special education.

### Deborah Kerry

Deborah is a Bobath Trained paediatric physiotherapist working both at the Champion Centre and in private practice. Deborah specialises in paediatric neurology, having had experience in this field in UK, Australia and South Africa. She is a NZ registered physiotherapist and has recently been on the committee of the Paediatric Special Interest Group.

### Carol Bellette

Carol is a finance professional with governance experience in both the not for profit and commercial sector. Her current role is Chief Financial Officer for Landcare Research. Carol has been associated with the Christchurch Early Intervention Trust for the past five years as a parent and for one year on the Trust Board.

### Casey King

Casey Jane King is a parent of a child with Down syndrome who currently attends The Champion Centre. She has a keen interest in all children's well being and is also a member on the Family Advisory Council at the Christchurch District Health Board.

### David Kerr

David has worked as a General Practitioner in Christchurch for over 30 years. He was the founding Chair of Pegasus Medical Group, and has been the Clinical leader for Mental Health for this organisation for many years. He is the Chair of Ryman Healthcare Ltd, Deputy Chair of Pharmac, and Member of the Hospital Advisory Committee of the Canterbury District Health Board.

It is my pleasure to present this year's  
Champion Centre Annual Report.

Dr. Susan Foster-Cohen, PhD.  
Director



Photo: Paul Tattersson

To say that the year from July 1st 2010 to June 30th 2011 has been difficult is an understatement. No one amongst the families, staff and trustees has been unaffected by the series of earthquakes that hit Christchurch over this period. And while the fabric of the Champion Centre building has come through with what appears to be only minor damage, the psychological toll on everyone has been immense.

It is a testimony to the resilience of staff that the team has remained intact and, true to the values of the Champion Centre, we have been able to support those who have needed extra time to get through. I would like to acknowledge and praise every staff member for their loyalty and professionalism in the face of significant trauma. Even while they were sweeping up the devastation in their own homes, staff members were on the phone checking up on families to ensure they were alright. If ever there was a demonstration of the power of a relationship focussed service, this year has been it.

I would also like to thank the families for their loyalty and resilience. The Family Support Team has been busier than ever, as might be expected, and families have themselves varied in the extent to which they have needed additional support. However, only a very few families left the area and the vast majority were keen to come in for sessions as soon as possible after each of the major quakes when we closed to assess ourselves and our building. It is evidence of the importance of the Champion Centre in the lives of the families we serve that they wanted to be with us even before we were (emotionally and practically) ready to open our doors. But, when we did reopen each time, it was so wonderful to see and hear the children again, and to re-enter the relationships that are so important to all of us.

As already mentioned, the building appears to have survived the earthquakes, but there has been a significant impact on our ability to raise funds for the programmes we provide to children and families. We have had to cancel events that would have raised funds and we are finding it harder than ever to find sources of income for our ongoing work.

Finally, I would like to thank the board of trustees and Simon Mortlock (chair). They, too, have stayed strong in their support of the Champion Centre and their ongoing contributions to our work are hugely appreciated.

The balance of this report is a review of where we are in relation to the goals of the 2010 – 2015 Champion Centre Strategic Plan.



Review - Strategic Plan: Goal 1

Maintain core service funding:



- The current political and fiscal climate has made getting increases to government funding very difficult. However, we have received very modest increases to our Ministry of Health and Ministry of Social Development grants and we have been successful in applying for an additional grant from the Ministry of Social Development under the auspices of the Community Response Fund. We were also able to maintain government funding over the several periods of closure of the service following the major quakes.
- The Christchurch Early Intervention Trust has engaged the services of Compton Fundraising Consultants to kick-start a concerted effort to increase private funding. So far this has increased the automatic donations from supporters of the Champion Centre, has set in motion more activity from the Champion Foundation Trust for long-term stability, and increased our visibility via a revamp of our supporters' newsletter. The effectiveness of the work in collaboration with Compton will only be apparent over the long-term, but we have cause to be optimistic.
- The accounts presented with this report show that we run a lean organisation with our overheads running under 20%. Core expenditures are deemed to be specialist staff wages, compulsory employee overheads, staff professional registrations, training and supervision. The overheads are deemed to include building costs, administrative staffing, IT support and general expenses.
- This year the Champion Centre has collaborated with the Canterbury District Health Board in their efforts to improve the services they provide for children. This has involved leading a work stream around improved assessments of long-term outcomes of premature infants born in the hospital and involvement in another stream aimed at the greater coordination of services for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorders.
- Additionally the Champion Centre has continued to strengthen its links with other providers of early intervention through the Early Intervention Coordination Service single point of entry for referrals in the Christchurch area and the Independent Provider Group of NGOs offering early intervention nationwide.
- A joint paper on the innovative approach to referrals in Christchurch was presented on behalf of the Early Intervention Coordination Service at the International Society on Early Intervention Conference in New York in May 2011. This paper was co-authored by the Champion Centre and CCS Disability Action.
- Continued involvement in the development and auditing of specialist service standards for early intervention services funded by the Ministry of Education has involved audits of services across the country.
- Finally, we are happy to have been able to offer lodging to CCS Disability Action's Christchurch Early Intervention Team who have shared our premises since the February quake.

### Review - Strategic Plan: Goal 1 (continued)

#### Maintain service effectiveness:

- The 2011 academic year has seen the successful implementation of a new organisational structure for the Centre in which each professional area (physiotherapy, speech language therapy, etc.) has a senior staff member who is part of a Senior Practice Team. This team meets weekly, led by the Clinical Manager and Family Services Manager. These two leaders then meet weekly with the Director to discuss clinical matters and with the Director and Office Manager to discuss administrative matters. This new structure is bedding in well and is an important part of ensuring that as older staff members retire we are building capacity in younger or less experienced members to take over the leadership of the programme.
- Strategic provision of practical training for students and staff has been achieved through a variety of activities including the annual training week. Held at the beginning of each year for all staff, this week ensures a time of important professional reflection. It allows staff to address key issues of quality service provision and teamwork. In the 2011 training week, there was a focus on working with a variety of personalities in teams and leadership roles. An external speaker funded by Te Pou (Ministry of Health) was an important part of this reflection. In addition to training week, reasonably priced opportunities for professional development of staff have been taken up during the year. Whenever possible, two members of staff have attended each event to discuss the implications of their learning for the Champion Centre and to collaborate on feedback to the whole staff at regular staff meetings.
- This year has seen a significant enhancement of the tracking of children's development in ways that allow outcomes to be measured more effectively. Beginning with those children aged between two-and-a-half and four, parents have been asked to complete detailed questionnaires about their children's development. Their responses have been combined with the clinical records of the team to create as clear a picture as possible of each child's development. Over time every child over two-and-a-half will have an enhanced record of development at six-monthly intervals. This work will be significantly aided by our move to the Filevision electronic record system.
- Despite the trials of this year and the stress on staff, there have been no resignations and the distribution of expertise has remained appropriate for the service. A modest decrease in staff hours had to be implemented as a result of forward planning for the 2011 school year, largely due to a temporary reduction in the numbers of infants born with Down syndrome. However, a recent increase in these numbers means that many of these hours will be replaced for the 2012 year.
- In the year under review the Family Support Programme has been reviewed by the Ministry of Social Development. As a result, we have accepted the Ministry's offer of a high trust contract which means we will need to be reviewed on a much less intense schedule than heretofore.
- We have also been reviewed for our relicensing as an early childhood centre, in compliance with the Ministry of Education's introduction of new regulations. This process is not yet complete as our landlord, the CDHB, must apply for an existing use certificate and approval of our emergency evacuation plans on our behalf.



### Review - Strategic Plan: Goal 2

#### Expand the impact of the Champion Centre both regionally and nationally:

- Centre staff are in the process of writing up key aspects of the Champion Centre model of practice. This year a focus has been on writing about the Relating and Communicating Programme for children with difficulties in this area. This work was carried out by Jan Murphy (speech language therapist), Robyn Ritchie (occupational therapist), Clare Tattersen (psychologist) and Louise Shand van Tongeren (music specialist). Robyn Ritchie travelled to New York to deliver a paper on the work entitled "Building Relational, Face-to-Face Intimacy and Engagement in Young Children with Disorders of Relating and Communicating" on behalf of the team at the Centre. It attracted considerable attention from specialists in the USA and elsewhere and is currently being prepared for publication.



- The year under review is the second of three years collaborating with the Seabrook McKenzie Centre for Children with Special Learning Needs, the Dyspraxia Support Group, and the Christchurch Special Needs Library to offer a pilot service funded by the Wayne Francis Charitable Trust for children with special needs in primary school who do not qualify for significant government support. Despite several set-backs occasioned by the earthquakes, the results of this work are encouraging and next year will see the completion of the project and the writing of the final report and recommendations.

- I continue to be an active member of the Specialist Service Standards review team and reference group of the Ministry of Education Special Education. In this role I have not only contributed to the creation of national standards for specialist services to children with disabilities but also to the application of those standards to providers across the country. This an important advocacy role for the Champion Centre to play and one in which the opportunities to impact outcomes for children positively are real.

- The year under review has seen an important development in the relationship of the Champion Centre with the University of Canterbury. In December 2010, the University officially launched its New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour (NZILBB) with the Champion Centre as one of only two local partners (the other being the van der Veer Institute). A cross disciplinary entity, the NZILBB has funded the installation of video equipment at the Centre to permit high quality recording of the therapy programme for clinical and research purposes.

Review - Strategic Plan: Goal 2 (continued)

Expand the advocacy role of the Champion Centre through training:

- This year was intended to see the development of face-to-face and on-line training and therapy services designed to generate income. However, the exigencies of the earthquakes have meant that all staff have been needed to maintain the service. We hope to progress these training and therapy services in the future.
- The Champion Centre is currently hosting an advanced undergraduate placement for a student of applied psychology at the Saxion University in Deventer, The Netherlands. Yvonne van Tilburg is learning about the Champion Centre through participating in therapy services and engaging in research so that she may take back to Europe a detailed understanding of our work to inform her future practice.
- A newly funded project with the New Zealand Down Syndrome Association will see the creation in 2012 of a DVD for parents of children with Down syndrome focussing on the role of reading with children to enhance their cognitive and communicative development.
- We have had a number of positive media events. We were acknowledged as one of the 150 Reasons to Love Canterbury in The Press. We also had positive exposure through a CTV interview with trustee and parent Casey King and have been written up positively in a number of newsletters of organisations such as the Todd Foundation Annual Report.

Engage in appropriate research projects:

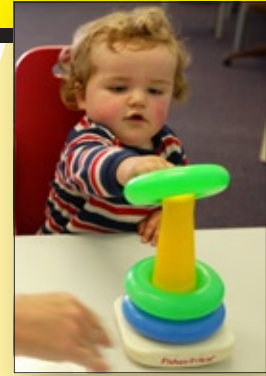
- As already indicated, a project supporting children in primary schools is two-thirds completed. This project provides visual supports to help children manage their routines and responsibilities at home and access the curriculum at school. Its results can be anticipated in next year's report.
- University of Canterbury student Tze-Peng Wong has completed her doctoral research work at the Champion Centre under the supervision of Dr. Catherine Moran (UC) and myself. This work has demonstrated the effectiveness of facilitative techniques used by parents and therapists to encourage children's communication. The first of several papers from this research has just been published in the international journal "Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics". (See full references on the next page). A summary of this work is provided on page 13
- The information gathered from both parents and therapists for clinical purposes is beginning to be collated (with informed consent) for a research project entitled "Understanding communication development in young children with developmental disabilities through parent-professional partnership reporting". (Ethical approval has been granted through the University of Canterbury.) External funding for this project was sought from the Lotteries Community Research Fund. Although the application was not successful, the research is going ahead nonetheless, under existing resources because of its immense value both for monitoring of children's progress and for its capacity to evaluate the efficacy of the Champion Centre's model of service, which is significantly different from that used by government providers. It is hoped that once a critical amount of data has been collected, external funding will be more easily secured.

Review - Strategic Plan: Goal 2 (continued)

Engage in appropriate research projects:

- New staff member Jessie Miller (speech language therapist) is combining working at the Centre with a master's degree funded through the University of Canterbury's New Zealand Institute of Language, Brain and Behaviour. Under the direction of Dr. Catherine Moran (UC) and myself, Jessie is exploring how changes in communication abilities of children influence, and are influenced by, changes in other areas of human development (intellectual, physical, social etc.).

- Dr. Anne van Bysterveldt, who completed her doctoral work at the Champion Centre in 2009 and is now a senior lecturer at the University of Canterbury continues to work with the Centre as an associate staff member. Currently, she is working to set up and evaluate the impact on children's communication development of coaching parents in how to share books with their children. Recent publications and presentations resulting from Anne's doctoral work and co-authored with the Champion Centre are listed below.



Wong, T.P, Moran, C., Foster-Cohen, S (2011) The effects of expansions, questions and cloze procedures on children's conversational skills. *Clinical Linguistics and Phonetics*. Early online 2011.

van Bysterveldt, A.K., Westerveld, M.F., Gillon, G. and Foster-Cohen, S. (2011) The personal narrative skills of school-aged children with Down syndrome. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, (in press)

van Bysterveldt, A.K., Gillon, G. and Foster-Cohen, S. (2010) A home literacy strategy to support young children with Down Syndrome. Athens, Greece: 28th World Congress of the International Association of Logopedics and Phoniatrics - Global Literacy: the role of phonological awareness in striving for early reading success for all children, 22-26 Aug 2010.)

van Bysterveldt, A.K., Gillon, G. and Foster-Cohen, S. (2010) Integrated speech and phonological awareness intervention for pre-school children with Down syndrome. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 45(3), 320-335. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3109/13682820903003514>.

van Bysterveldt, A.K., Gillon, G. and Foster-Cohen, S. (2010) Integrated speech and phonological awareness intervention for young children with Down syndrome. City University, London: Child Language Seminar, June 24th -25th, 2010.

van Bysterveldt, A., Gillon, G. and Foster-Cohen, S. (2010) Literacy environments for children with Down syndrome: What's happening at home? *Down Syndrome Research and Practice*, (early access online) <http://www.down-syndrome.org/reports/2111/>.

## The Champion Centre: A centre of excellence in early intervention 2010 - 2015

The Champion Centre provides specialist early intervention to infants and young children with disabilities and their families through a centre-based multi-disciplinary approach that:

- *Is based on the very best scientific understanding of child development and disability.*
- *Supports family and whānau to foster and encourage their child's development through playful relationship-based activities.*
- *Works holistically with infants and children to support all areas of development: social, intellectual, physical, emotional.*
- *Advocates with other agencies and individuals on behalf of children and their families/whanau.*
- *Is proactive in supporting a bi-cultural approach with all families and whānau.*

This strategy document makes the following assumptions: That **sustainability** of the Champion Centre involves:

- *Maintenance of a staff to client ratio that sustains the provision of a best-practice service.*
- *Hiring and retention of suitably qualified therapy and support staff who are fairly remunerated and adequately supported.*
- *Ongoing partnership with all client families at all levels of the service.*
- *Maintenance of physical facilities capable of supporting the programme.*

That the **advocacy** role of the Champion Centre for all children with developmental disabilities involves:

- *Dissemination of the Champion Centre model of practice to other professionals through training.*
- *Public education including of policy makers and others with power over children's lives.*
- *Engagement in appropriate research both local and nationally.*





## GOAL 1: TO PROVIDE LONG-TERM SUSTAINABILITY OF THE CHAMPION CENTRE SERVICE FOR INFANTS AND CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIONS	MEASURES OF PROGRESS
Maintain core service funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase government contributions to service delivery</li> <li>• Increase private support of service delivery</li> <li>• Develop a long-term funding plan that includes a capital base</li> <li>• Maintain prudent budgets</li> <li>• Explore opportunities for partnerships and joint funding with other appropriate agencies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government funding increases</li> <li>• Private funding increases</li> <li>• Maintenance of overheads at 20% or less of total expenditure</li> <li>• Appropriate service connections are maintained/developed</li> </ul>
Maintain service effectiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain appropriate ratios between staff and client numbers</li> <li>• Maintain appropriate distribution of staff expertise</li> <li>• Work towards market rates for all staff</li> <li>• Ensure succession of senior and junior staff</li> <li>• Maintain high professional standards of all staff</li> <li>• Maintain effective partnership with all client families</li> <li>• Maintain and develop connections with other providers</li> <li>• Maintain bicultural and multicultural effectiveness</li> <li>• Develop robust outcome data collection and tracking systems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A clear succession plan</li> <li>• Strategic provision of practical training for students and staff</li> <li>• Outcome data shows clear evidence of progress for all children</li> <li>• Maintenance of appropriate staff numbers and expertise distribution</li> <li>• Successful reviews by all the quality assurance bodies that govern the Centre's activities</li> </ul>

## GOAL 2: TO ADVOCATE FOR ALL CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES THROUGH TRAINING AND RESEARCH

OBJECTIVES	KEY ACTIONS	MEASURES OF PROGRESS
To expand the impact of the Champion Centre both regionally and nationally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase understanding among early intervention professionals of how to meet the needs of children with disabilities</li> <li>• Increase understanding among teachers of how to include children with disabilities in mainstream education</li> <li>• Increase understanding among child welfare professionals of how to meet the needs of children with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivery of face-to-face and on-line training designed to generate income</li> <li>• Delivery of pilot model services with a fee for service</li> <li>• Holding of symposia and conferences with international speakers</li> </ul>
To expand the advocacy role of the Champion Centre through training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work to change public perceptions of young children with disabilities and to encourage them being valued by the community</li> <li>• To help government and policy makers to understand the effectiveness of the Champion Centre model of service</li> <li>• To actively support initiatives from government and private sources most likely to support better outcomes for children with disabilities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive media coverage</li> <li>• Development of collaborative relationships with other organisations.</li> </ul>
To engage in appropriate research projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To engage in appropriate research in collaboration with local, national and international universities and other research units.</li> <li>• To develop the infrastructure to support research at the Centre</li> <li>• To collect new data and exploit existing data held by the Centre</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developed responses to tender invitations.</li> <li>• Publication of results.</li> </ul>



## Encouraging children with disabilities to talk

When children have difficulty learning how to talk, it is important that they have every opportunity to practice. So, how do you encourage children with disabilities such as autism and Down syndrome to talk in ways that are natural and useful? Well, you teach parents and other family members how to encourage their children to talk about what interests them at home, out and about, and in all their other familiar contexts. Sounds easy enough, right? But have you ever had the awful feeling when new at a party or other gathering where you just can't think what to say? When people ask you a question and you answer it, with a 'yes' or a 'no' and then you can't think what to say next? Well, children, with and without disabilities, are no different. Some responses to what children say encourage them to say more and other responses effectively shut them down.

At the Champion Centre we wanted to know what were the best ways to encourage our children to talk, so University of Canterbury doctoral student Tze-Peng Wong studied the effects of responding to children in different ways and found that when adults took what the child said and simply repeated it but added a bit more to it, it worked better than if they followed that up with another strategy such as asking a question or giving the child a sentence to complete. So, if a child was looking at a book about dogs and cats and said 'dog' it was best if the adult just said 'Yes, that's a little dog' than if the adult said 'yes, that's a little dog, and what's that?' or said 'yes, that's a little dog and that is a....?' This is subtle stuff, but really important that both parents and therapists know this if they want to encourage children to talk!

## Outcomes for children

It is too early in the project to present outcomes for a large group of children, but it is already possible to show change over time for a couple of children whose parents have completed an extensive questionnaire known as the ABASII (Adaptive Behavior Assessment Scheme) several times over a period of two years or more. The questionnaire asks parents to indicate what skills their child has in a range of areas.

Figure 1 on the opposite page shows that Edward (not his real name) whose development has been significantly impacted by a seizure when he was a few months old has acquired new skills in all areas over a period of two years at the Champion Centre. Importantly, although he is delayed when compared with his typically developing peers, his scaled scores (not shown here) reveal that he is the same distance behind them at four-and-a-half as he was at two-and-a-half. This is important because children with disabilities are at significant risk of falling further and further behind their peers as they get older. So the fact that he has kept pace is an excellent indicator of the effectiveness of the programme.

## Outcomes for children (continued)

And the little boy 'Robert' (figure 2) has Down syndrome, but that has not stopped him from making impressive gains over time at the Champion Centre. In Robert's case his scaled scores (not shown here) reveal that he has moved closer to his peers without Down syndrome as he has grown and developed. This is excellent progress indeed and cause for great celebration.

It is extremely important to remember that every child is different. Each one has a different starting point and a developmental path that is theirs alone. For each child at the Champion Centre, however, we aim to see three things over time:

- 1) That each child continues to add new skills and capacities as they grow.
- 2) That children either track in parallel with their typically developing peers or gain on them.
- 3) That the profile of children's development is as even as possible, rather than some areas outstripping all the rest. We must remember, however, that at different ages children are working on different skills, so some unevenness is all part of healthy development.

If all the children show the kinds of gains that Edward and Robert are showing, we shall be pleased and proud of them, their families, and the teams of therapists who work with them. And it will be clear evidence of the effectiveness of the Champion Centre model of therapy.

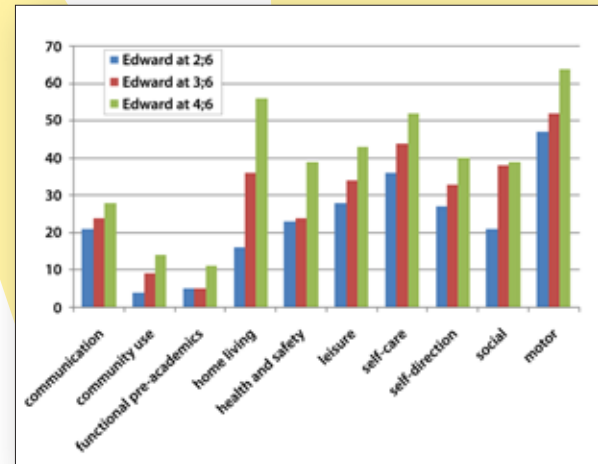


Figure 1: Raw scores on ABASII (parent form)

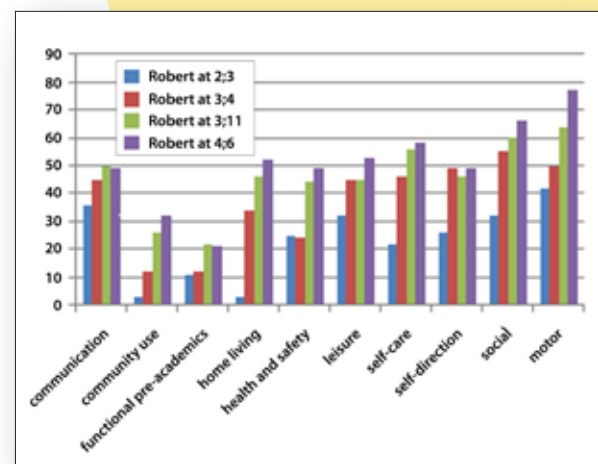


Figure 2: Raw scores on ABASII (parent form)

Some comments from the 2010 annual consumer survey are:

- Marvellous warm, encouraging, professional and skilled staff. Thank you people, amazing place = amazing progress.
- Very much appreciate all the help I get and advice. Thanks to all the staff for their encouragement, knowledge and strategies.
- We love attending, great to see the progress being made.
- You guys are fantastic and we will miss you all when our daughter goes to school.
- Thanks so much for the time, enthusiasm and dedication of all the staff. It's great to have a place where we feel "so normal".
- Every visit we are greeted with a warm smile and friendly welcome. You are all very professional, dedicated, caring and understanding. Your help and guidance is invaluable to us. Thank you.
- I know that everyone at the Champion Centre always does their best for our son. Words can't begin to express how grateful I am.
- I would like to thank the team for their overwhelming support shown to us over the past 7 months. Their help and assistance has been awesome. They go the extra mile to ensure everything is ok e.g. contacting us outside work hours to make sure our son has been ok and this is greatly appreciated. They are such a caring and loving team.
- Love it, feel very sad that many babies/children/parents in NZ don't have access to the same programme in other parts of the country. Glad we live in Christchurch.
- You guys are truly amazing, we are so lucky to have such an experienced team at the Champion Centre.
- Without it we would be lost. Dreading when we leave for school in 2012.
- What the team has done for my son this year is fantastic. He has made amazing progress and he/we could not have done it without your help.
- Very friendly and informative team willing to go that extra mile for home visits. Much appreciated.
- The whole place is fantastic, I am constantly telling people how great the staff, therapists and our programme are. Thank you very much.



### Amelia starts school

On August 1st 2011 hundreds of five year old children around New Zealand prepared for their first day of school – and Amelia joined them. She dressed in her school uniform, and added a string of beads. Although every young lady likes to wear jewellery, Amelia's beads served more than a cosmetic purpose – she likes to shake something when she gets nervous; it helps to soothe her.



When Amelia arrived at class her teacher knelt down, held her hands and talked directly to Amelia – not Amelia's Mum – and set the tone for the rest of Amelia's first week. Mum Haley says "Amelia's teacher was a little nervous at first, but has made a real effort. She and Jackie (Champion Centre Education Support Worker) made sure everything was in place for this first week."

Amelia attends school part-time at the moment, and for three days each week she's lucky enough to have Jackie in class with her. As Jackie is part-time at the Centre, she's been available to work as Amelia's support right through pre-school and now on to primary, which has made her transition even smoother.

However Amelia's ability to stand up for herself should not be underestimated. Haley relates the story of Amelia's first music class – "The children went to a different class with a different teacher. They were in a circle playing a memory game where each child made a noise or action as their 'identifier' to be remembered later. When it came to Amelia's turn she happened to tap her forehead, so the teacher made that her 'identifier'. Later, as the teacher went around the circle remembering each child's action, she missed out Amelia. Even though Amelia is non-verbal she started to tap her forehead. The teacher apologised for leaving Amelia out and tapped her own forehead, which made Amelia laugh."

"The Champion Centre has been instrumental in getting Amelia to the point of going to school. Each year there (she has been there just over 5 yrs – started at about 3mths old) we have dared to dream a little bit more of what might be possible for her to achieve. Thanks to the staff (therapists and the ESWs) believing in Amelia, she is doing things that we never imagined would be possible. We have been totally blessed to be part of the Centre."



The Champion Centre would like to acknowledge with thanks, all donations received during the financial year ending June 2011

The Champion Centre is sincerely grateful for the generous support of our community, through donations of time, energy and funds during the past financial year.

Recognising the increased demand for the fundraising dollar in the community, a campaign to increase funding was put in place toward the end of 2010. Unfortunately, some of our events were cancelled due to the Canterbury earthquakes, reducing our expected income for the year. But with the continued support of the community, alongside the growth of the Champion Foundation, we look forward to a renewed fundraising campaign in the years ahead, ensuring the Champion Centre continues to be a part of the community well into the future.

We thank the following for donations of \$500 and over:

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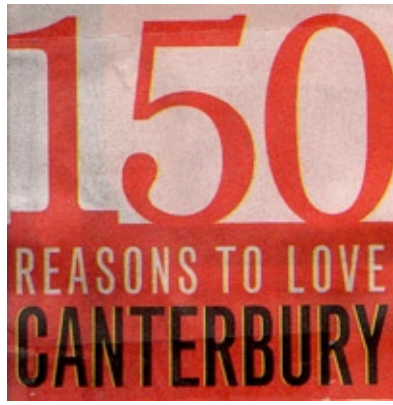


Published in the Press Newspaper.

Right: May 2011

Centre: July 2011

Bottom: July 2011



**The Champion Centre**

A discreet star of the Christchurch scene is The Champion Centre. Quietly supporting children with disabilities and their families for nearly 35 years, The Champion Centre is a beacon of hope for almost 200 families every year. Significant disabilities resulting from premature birth, genetic anomalies, birth accidents or trauma impact the lives of children and families across the city and from all sectors of society. And if you have benefited from the support and expertise of the highly skilled team of therapists and specialists in this world-renowned service, you will know just how much of a difference it has made to the life of your child. The pre-school years are vital to any child's development, and this centre prepares some of our most challenged wee ones to meet the future with hope and expectation. There is only one Champion Centre in the world, and its home will always be Christchurch.

SUSAN FOSTER-COHEN



Refugees: Varasofas holds Charlie, 3, with Awa Pina in the background. The family has returned to Christchurch after moving to Wellington following the February quake.

## It might be shaky, but it feels like home

Nicole Mathewson  
nicole.mathewson@greene.co.nz

A Samoan family who left Christchurch after February's earthquake have moved back to the city at their children's request.

Awa Pina, 46, and his wife, Varasofa, moved from Samoa to Christchurch just after the September 4 quake to give their six children a better education.

Their youngest son, Charlie, 3, has Down syndrome. However, there were no support services in Samoa.

In Christchurch, Charlie attended the Champion Centre, which provides speech and language therapy, and physiotherapy.

Awa Pina said his mother warned them against moving to Christchurch because of

The kids didn't like the environment there [in Wellington]. It might be because Christchurch is their first destination in New Zealand, so they prefer Christchurch as their second home.

Awa Pina  
awa.pina@gmail.com

the quakes, but he assured her they would be safe.

"I just told her 'don't worry - God is everywhere'. God can protect us wherever we go."

Pina said the family initially chose Christchurch because he had been offered a job in Ashburton.

A hand injury forced him to take time off work, but he was enjoying the chance to spend more time with his children.

However, February's earthquake closed the children's schools and caused

minor damage to their home.

"We were new in this country; we didn't know where to ask for help," he said.

They relocated to Wellington, but stayed for only a month before realising their hearts were still in Christchurch.

The kids didn't like the environment there [in Wellington]. It might be because Christchurch is their first destination in New Zealand, so they prefer Christchurch as their second home.

The family moved back to

and taking part in sporting activities, and the family no longer felt isolated, he said.

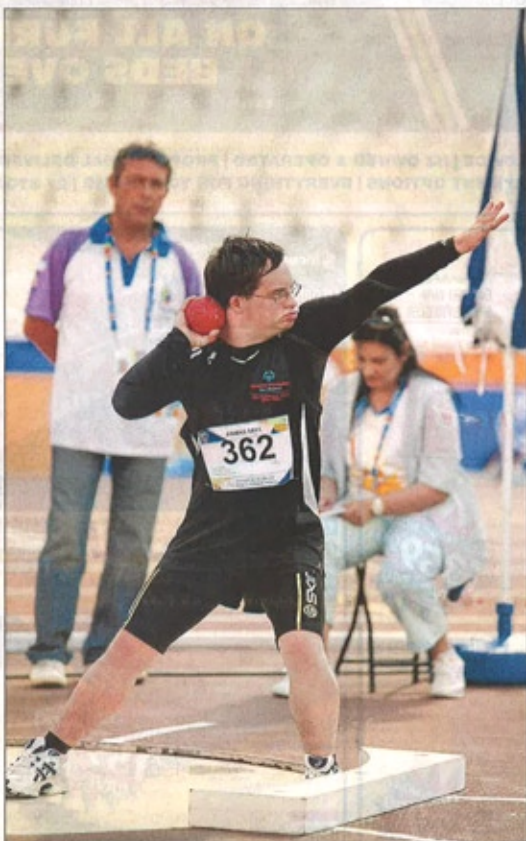
Varasofa marketing and communications executive Catherine Orr said the charity was receiving daily requests for help.

It had given out \$10,000 since February's quake, helping 255 Christchurch children, and still had \$27,000 to distribute.

Another 70 Christchurch children would benefit from about 2000 in sports club grants, and Varasofa had helped fund libraries, library books and school equipment for hundreds of school pupils.

The charity was still taking funds for its quake appeal, including a recent \$65,000 donation from Tupperware and \$20,000 from Federated Farmers.

### SPECIAL OLYMPICS



Medal winners: Andrew Oswin, left and middle, wins gold in the shot put at the Special Olympics in Greece, while Hayley Long won silver in the 400 metres.

## Silver and gold as Kiwi athletes hit their straps

Nicole Mathewson  
nicole.mathewson@greene.co.nz

Two Christchurch athletes have won New Zealand's first track and field medals at the Special Olympics in Greece.

Andrew Oswin won a gold medal in the shot put, the first track and field medal of the games for New Zealand, while Hayley Long won silver in the 400-metre sprint.

More than 7000 competitors from 180 countries are in Athens for the games, including 35 New Zealand athletes and support staff.

Head athletics coach Max Brooking said Oswin's win was impressive because he had needed medical treatment after running in the 4x200m relay two days earlier.

"He needed a lot of TLC to get him here today. The travel and sitting around in the sun takes its toll on the athletes," Oswin said he had been

nervous, but was "over the moon" with his effort of 4.51m.

"I've worked very hard for this. I've been training for this for almost eight years."

The 22-year-old first competed in Special Olympics events in 2008, aged 14. His hero and inspiration was Olympic and world champion shot putter Valerie Adams, and Oswin said the win had become his "golden memory".

Brooking said although Oswin did not have the body of a shot putter, he certainly had the "spirit" of one.

"He puts everything into it and this is what can happen in Special Olympics."

Long overcame training disruptions because of the Christchurch earthquakes to win silver in the 400m event with a personal best.

Her father, Warren Long, said she did not show nerves until she was on the track.

"You can tell how she's feeling by her warmup routine. If she's jumping around a lot, she's nervous."

Hayley Long said temperatures over 30 degrees Celsius did not bother her because she did a "really good warmup" before the event.

"I've been running since I was 12 years old. I'm really proud to have achieved so much and I'm just pleased I was picked to be part of the team."

Meanwhile, Christchurch man Al Robson, head coach of the New Zealand basketball team, said the team were competing in the semifinals of their pool today.

"We're in division three, which is the highest division any New Zealand team has achieved at the World Championships for Special Olympics in basketball, so we're pretty happy and chuffed we got to that point," he said.





The Champion Centre  
TAMARIKI TOIORA

"Tuia te rangi e tū iho nei. Tuia te papa e takoto nei"  
"As the sky joins the earth, so people depend on one another"

THE CHAMPION CENTRE  
BURWOOD HOSPITAL  
PRIVATE BAG 4708  
CHRISTCHURCH 8140  
NEW ZEALAND

PHONE. 0064 3 383 6867  
FAX. 0064 3 383 6866  
EMAIL. [OFFICE@CHAMPIONCENTRE.ORG.NZ](mailto:OFFICE@CHAMPIONCENTRE.ORG.NZ)  
WEB. [WWW.CHAMPIONCENTRE.ORG.NZ](http://WWW.CHAMPIONCENTRE.ORG.NZ)