



The Champion Centre
Tamariki Toiora



AUTUMN | March 2018

CHAMPIONSHIP Newsletter



Welcome

to our first newsletter for 2018 and, as you'll tell from the size of this newsletter, what a busy few months it has been!

In this edition you will get a real sense of our commitment to building enduring partnerships with both the organisations and individuals with whom we engage. This is particularly front-of-mind for me at the moment, having just spent time in Gisborne at the Todd Foundation Hui.

For the last four years, we have received some partnership funding from the Todd Foundation and are invited to attend an annual hui. This hui brings together all of the NGOs who receive partnership

funding from the Todd Foundation, and provides a great forum to share our work, our aspirations and learn from each other.

One of the presenting groups ran an exercise which showed us just how easy it is to make false assumptions about partners we work with if we don't take the time and care to listen, to look at the world from their perspective, and to try to feel what they are feeling.

At the Champion Centre, partnerships with parents and whānau is at the core of what we do; and each parent comes to us with different experiences, aspirations, knowledge, and fears for their child and themselves. Our role is to offer ourselves as partners to families and to learn as carefully as we can how we can help.

At the same time, we are in partnership with each other as team members, combining our knowledge and skills in a seamless way to support each child and their family in their journey.

And of course, we partner with you, our supporters, without whom we could not continue to exist. With you too we need to listen and learn as carefully as we are able: Have we understood you well enough? How would you like to contribute? How can we make you feel a valued member of the Champion Centre community? Let us know! But in case you're not sure, this newsletter provides some ideas you might like to think about.

Dr. Susan Foster-Cohen
Centre Director

Ben's story

Ben* has significant developmental delays and he struggles to understand his world...

Ben is one of the 165+ children who attend the Champion Centre weekly, during school terms.

Ben has been coming along to the Centre with his mum for the past 2 years, where he participates in the full wrap-around programme.

This is Ben's story and his journey of engagement through the 'learning through musical play' programme, as told by Music Specialist, Julie Wylie.

Ben came into the music room peeking anxiously at me from behind his mother. I sang a song about the rocking horse and rocked the horse in time to my song which had the instructions "now get ready to stop" at the end. Ben watched and listened intently as his mother took over rocking the horse. This time he sang the last word "stop" in time with the music cue.

Ben's mum tried to help Ben onto the horse, which ended up with him sitting backwards holding tightly onto the tail. I sang step by step instructions about holding onto the reins at the front of the horse, putting his leg over the horse, sitting down with his feet on either side then

"ready, steady, go". He gave a little smile as his mother rocked him in time to the song.

The rocking action of the horse provided Ben with a sense of timing and predictability about the sequence of actions, as well as the calming, sensory experience of moving in time to the music and feeling a clear beginning, middle, and end of the song, knowing when to stop on cue.

The following week Ben came into the music room, ahead of his mum, and went straight to the horse. Once again, he tried to get on facing backwards but as the weeks went by, he began listening intently to the step by step instructions that I sang, to get on and off, and sit facing the front, he even joined in saying "go" and "stop".

Ben gradually began to explore different activities, beaming with delight when he discovered that I would copy his actions, such as holding and moving the ribbon sticks from side to side, or up and down. Together we would dance in front of the mirror with our ribbon sticks.

At first Ben's movements were jerky and dysregulated, but again, week by week the improvements were recognisable, and he started moving more freely until he could lead us in drawing circles or lines up and down and side to side, supported by me singing the narrative about what he was doing.

Through the use of repetition Ben discovered that he could stamp his feet, give little jumps, wiggle with his ribbon stick and lead us around the room with his mother and me imitating his every move. He beamed with delight watching us follow his directions enjoying the sensation of being the music conductor.

I look forward to Ben's arrival at music each week, with a great big smile beaming on his face. Of course we always start with the rocking horse song. I now get the cues as Ben tells me "two times, ready steady go", "one more", or "now get ready stop".

Because Ben knows how the session will begin, how we can progress with the song and how many turns he wants, he is empowered to be the leader in our play. He is gradually exploring a range of musical instruments and has just learned to play Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star on the colour coded chimes with me singing the corresponding colour for each note. Recently after several repetitions I sang the first colour "brown, brown" and he joined me

tunefully singing "blue, blue, black, black, blue". He looked incredibly happy and his mother looked so proud of her beautiful boy.

Ben's mum is a key player in our music games, with Ben taking the role as the leader of our musical play. By following her child through musical play there is a sense of empowerment, partnership and trust for Ben, as well as opportunities to bring about changes in mood, energy, attitude and attention.

Sensory musical play activates every part of the brain and helps children to listen, watch, feel, anticipate, move and develop a strong sense of self in relation to others. It structures the moment, helping children like Ben to make sense of their world.

* Not his real name.

On the hunt for a couch

Do you have a surplus lounge suite that is in good condition which you would be willing to donate? We are looking to replace the very worn couches in the whānau room to make this a more homely space for our families.

Let us know if you can help us with this need in any way.

Calling all helpers

Like most not-for-profits we need the help of supporters from time to time to assist with particular projects, events, fundraisers, and even help to open doors.

In 2018 we have some ambitious plans, and we would love the help of those who are able to assist us by donating some time and/or expertise.

We would love to hear from you if you are able and willing to offer a hand. Here's some of the skills we are hoping to find, however we are eager to build on our network of support, so if you have time or expertise in other areas we would truly love to hear from you.

- Would you be happy to talk to us or one of our volunteers about your experience at the Champion Centre, so that we can share your story?
- Are events your thing? We are eager to pull together an event working group to support our operational fundraising efforts!
- Do you have time to assist with folding newsletters and stuffing envelopes? We'd love to have an occasional working bee to help ensure we can continue our momentum by sharing and celebrating Champion news!
- Does your organisation or employer participate in community sponsorship, payroll giving, or donate to worthy causes? Would you consider helping connect us with the decision-makers to discuss opportunities to support the Champion Centre?
- Do you have a network of contacts that you believe we should be talking to about opening doors, supporting our cause, or helping advocate for changes to benefit those we work with?

Drop us an email if you are keen to assist us with volunteering some time or assistance. We would gratefully welcome discussing ways in which you can get involved!

Email us on: office@championcentre.org.nz

What's happening

2018 is already flying by, with some great achievements already! Here is a snapshot of what's been happening at the Champion Centre over the past few months.

In the last week of January all of the Champion Centre staff got together for our annual training week. This year we learned the skill of practicing Mindfulness, with Neave Ross-Wallace from MindWise; we heard about a multi year research project being undertaken by our Centre Director, Dr. Susan Foster-Cohen; we advanced our competencies in both Te Reo and sign; we participated in a key messaging workshop with the Champion Centre and Champion Foundation Trustees; and we skilled up around privacy requirements which are relevant to us, and the work we do at the Centre.

Over the past couple of months we have said farewell to three long serving team members (with a combined tenure of more than 60 years!). We wish Paddi Thompson, Lesley Drew and Sue Longden all the very best - Don't be strangers, ladies!

Four new team members have joined us since January! Welcome to the team Beth Rees, Miriam Dawson, Leanne Flanagan and Marissa Moore.

Since our last newsletter we have welcomed 15 new families to the Champion Centre programmes, all of whom we are looking forward to working with and forming strong relationships with throughout the year.

We have had mixed emotions as we have said farewell to 16 families, all of whom are embarking on the next stage of their development journeys. We wish them all the best for the next chapter.

Among the visitors that we have had at the Centre so far this year, we were delighted to welcome Christchurch Central MP, Dr. Duncan Webb, who came to learn about the work we do.

Graduates

Here's a few snaps from recent graduates who have headed on to the next stages of their educational journey. We wish all our graduates the best of luck as they transition from the Champion Centre.



Harriet (above left), pictured here with her big sister Georgia, graduated from the Champion Centre in December 2017. Harriet has headed off to Merrin Primary school which we hear she is loving! Way to go Harriet!



Sam (above) was super excited to be joining his big brother Lukas, as he headed off to Roydvale Primary school in March 2018. We love your enthusiasm Sam!



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Save the Date

Saturday 13th
October
2018

We are celebrating our **40th anniversary** in style with a black tie fundraising gala event...

Tickets will be going on sale soon, so **register your interest** by emailing abby.shaw@championcentre.org.nz to be kept up to date and be notified when tickets are available for purchase.

A mad hatter...

Angela Milner, the grandmother of Kiara, who attends the Champion Centre each Monday during school terms, was eager to create a family day out, with proceeds raised going to support the Centre.

After a slight hitch, aka 'Tropical Cyclone Gita', the rescheduled event took place on Sunday 18th February, with a Mad Hatters Fundraising Fete at Angela's Homestead in Leeston.

Angela has already been asked by a number of those who attended if she would consider making it a regular event in the calendar... clearly highlighting the success of the day. With craft and gift stalls, a best hat competition, sack races and more, there was something for all ages to enjoy.

Over \$2,000 was raised from the event, and beyond that the generosity of the community groups and organisations which also supported the event was phenomenal. A huge THANK YOU goes out to all of the events supporters.

When Angela was asked why she decided to take on the job of organising a fundraising event to help the Centre she shared:

The Champion Centre has been a lifeline, a home away from home. The support that has been given, not only to Kiara but the family, has been amazing. Friendships and supports have been made and ones that will follow through our children's/grandchildren's lives. No words can be put in place to express the gratitude we feel.

A huge thank you to Angela and everyone who supported the Mad Hatter event. Your generosity of time and support, is greatly appreciated.

Todd Foundation Hui

Recently our Centre Director and Development Director joined with a group of like-minded not for profit 'change-makers' at the annual Todd Foundation Hui.

The Todd Foundation, which has provided the Champion Centre with significant funding over the past four years, under its partnership funding model, hosts an annual hui, bringing together all the charitable entities they support. The time is invaluable for networking with other charitable organisations from across the country; but above all it provides a forum for shared insights and learnings.

We are inspired by the work that others in the charitable sector do and acknowledge that together the outcomes are focused on creating a safe and inclusive New Zealand.

Although our funding through this partnership programme comes to an end next year, we are truly grateful of the support from the Todd Foundation, and what their funding has enabled us to achieve.



Centre Director, Dr. Susan Foster-Cohen presenting at the panel discussion alongside representatives from Parent to Parent.



Boogie woogie night out for the Champion Foundation

There's nothing better than a good ol' boogie woogie, and we were delighted that the Champion Foundation made the most of rock and roll legend, Ben Waters, being in Canterbury for another event, by snapping him up for a toe-tapping night in support of the Champion Centre. Hosted by Addington Raceway, an audience of 85 were treated to a two-course buffet and a night on the dance floor. Ben and his crew of musical heavyweights kept the crowd entertained with many classic rock and roll sing-a-longs. It was a great night, which raised over \$2,000. A huge thanks to John Tooby, Mike Norris and the Champion Foundation Board and fundraising committee for pulling together such a great night.

A big 'shout-out'

We are so fortunate to have so many supporters who help 'keep the lights on' at the Champion Centre. We couldn't continue to do the work we do, without you all!

The Champion Foundation Trust is tasked with raising significant capital funds, which will support the longevity of the Champion Centre. The Foundation would like to make a big 'shout-out' and say thanks to the recent contributions made from the **Jelinek family** and also the **Hickman Family Trust**.

Thank you so much for your support. Through this, you are playing a key role in ensuring that more families can benefit from the services of the Champion Centre.

We would love to share your story

It's not unusual for one of our team to run into a past parent, or graduate, in the supermarket aisle, which always follows with a "how is *Emily* or *Timothy*, what is *she* or *he* up to now?"

We love keeping connected. We want to hear about how your family are doing, the challenges you have overcome, and in some cases the adversity you may have faced... After all, we too feel that we have played a small part in your journey and would welcome hearing more about what our families have gone on to achieve.

As we mark our **40th year**, we would love to share some of the stories from both our current and past graduates and their families, so that others can learn about the services and support provided at the Champion Centre.

Would you like to share your story with us? Let us know by dropping us an email at: office@championcentre.org.nz **We can't wait to hear from you!**

Dates to remember

Here's a few key dates to remember; so mark them down in your diary!

- **End of term 1**
13 April 2018
- **Start of term 2**
30 April 2018
- **40th Anniversary Gala Event**
Saturday 13 October 2018
- **Mum's Pamper Evening**
Wednesday 24 October 2018
- **Children's Christmas Party**
Thursday 6 December 2018

Hey dads! We are keen to have an event for you to enjoy. Let us know if you could help make this happen!



Caught on camera

The smiles were abundant as the camera was snapping some of our children and parents recently for some new photography to promote the Champion Centre.

A huge thank you to everyone who participated and welcomed our photographer Tony Stewart as he manoeuvred around sessions to get

some great photos. We are delighted with the results and know that the families who participated are too.

A huge thank you to Tony from Photoshots who generously donated his time to undertake this work for us.

Contact us

The Champion Centre is open
Monday - Friday 8.30am - 4.30pm

Phone 03 383 6867
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Find us on Facebook:
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Your details

We are moving to a new data system which will better support our communications and correspondence with families, supporters, and donors alike.

To help us reduce on mailing costs, and to ensure that you get news and information in a timely manner, **please let us know your preferred email address** so we can include this in our records for electronic correspondence.

Please send us an email or give us a call to confirm your details.
Phone 03 383 6867 or email office@championcentre.org.nz