



## Asthma Waikato Celebrates



President Andrew Fox awards our highest honour, Life Membership, to Dr Peter Rothwell.

### Issue Highlights

- ✿ Dr Peter Rothwell our newest Life Member
- ✿ Stress, Emotions and Asthma
- ✿ World COPD Day
- ✿ Barbara celebrates 22 extraordinary years



## From the Manager

### Asthma Waikato's first 40 years



The end of the year is drawing near and as we celebrate 40 years of helping and supporting you it's a great time to reflect on our proud past and our strong future.

2012 has seen unprecedented change and challenge for Asthma Waikato. Val and Barbara, our long standing educators both advised their intention to retire, I

have welcomed new nursing staff to the team and I have created a new administration role to help with all the work our successful Sailor Project has generated. We have also welcomed fantastic new board directors. Current economic challenges have altered our funding streams but rest assured that Asthma Waikato will always work to ensure better respiratory health for you.

Change provides opportunities to think creatively about new and better ways to achieve what is important to us. The board and I are finalising our new strategic plan and we have identified some exciting new opportunities for Asthma Waikato. Watch this space!

At our recent AGM, members were delighted to welcome Dr Peter Rothwell to our select group of Life Members in honour of his contribution to Asthma Waikato over the last forty years. Peter was a founding member, has been heavily involved in our organisation and has been our Patron for many years now, providing immense and greatly appreciated support.



January 2013 is our official 40th birthday and we will celebrate all year. Please help me to promote the great work Asthma Waikato has done over that time and let your friends and colleagues know that we need donations to help with our new

projects. We are excited about WEL Energy Trust working alongside us to highlight how funders support community to make great ideas happen. Asthma Waikato could not realise the amazing achievements that we do without the fabulous support from funders, volunteers, dedicated staff, sponsors, members and commercial partners/supporters. I take the opportunity now to thank each and every one of you and wish you a Merry Christmas and a happy, prosperous New Year.

Vikki Blundell - Asthma Waikato Business Manager

## What you need to know

### And it is goodbye from me.....



Barbara and Stewart practicing for retirement on Waiheke Island

This will be my last contribution to Asthmalink as an educator as I am retiring at the end of the year after 22 years. I've seen many changes and would like to share some reflections.

My initial job was to devise and present an Asthma Awareness programme for children age 8 years and over. This was a presentation to the whole class as most children knew someone with asthma. I had teaching skills but no asthma knowledge so underwent comprehensive training at the Respiratory Department, Waikato Hospital. Mrs Annie Fullerton, Asthma Educator, Waikato Hospital, was my mentor and I am endlessly grateful for the thorough education and support I received. Before I was let loose on the public I had to present my session to the respiratory consultants and check I had my information correct.

Time passes and what was once sufficient now needs updating. Sailor is a pathfinder, making asthma education more pertinent to today's children. I have once again been in schools speaking to children, accompanied by Sailor to a very enthusiastic welcome.

Over time, I completed further training and moved away from schools and into client education, especially COPD support. I also trained as a spirometry technician. Running education clinics and offering spirometry testing throughout the region became popular. I was also busy with Health Days, networking with other health professionals and public speaking. I often bump in to people who have heard my talk and am known as "the asthma lady"



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Barbara at Hamilton Asthma / COPD Support Group

Much has changed over the years. Initially I was the only educator here and worked from home. Now we have four staff and an Asthma Centre in Pembroke Street. We had cars that leaked water up to your ankles and one that the horn had a habit of coming off. Now we have Mitsubishi Colts that don't leak, have music and air conditioning.

I believe we have always offered our best and maintained professional services right through my time with the society regardless of the financial limitations. With the backing of a very astute business manager we have improved leaps and bounds in the services we now offer and I am confident I leave the society in good hands.



Shona Bramley and Barbara Lawrence

I would like to thank my colleagues, both past and present, for their support over the years and particularly to Shona Bramley, Board member and valued friend, who has been my mentor and leader in the COPD world. Without you Shona many initiatives would not have happened; a heartfelt thank you.

Best wishes to all of our members, many of you I have had the privilege of meeting over the years, and remember: "help is only a phone call away"

Barbara Lawrence - Community Respiratory Educator

## Stress, Emotion and Asthma

The year is flying by; the silly season is fast approaching and the countdown to Christmas has begun. With this joyous occasion approaching, some of us find our stress levels and emotions increase. Research is showing that stress and emotions can trigger asthma.

Strong emotions like fear, stress or even laughter can sometimes lead to increased asthma symptoms. Whether it be a tear-jerking movie, disagreement with a partner or friend, stress of work-related deadlines or a joyous reunion, some people with asthma or other respiratory conditions can be left 'gasping for air'. Children can also be easily affected by high levels of emotions, from fits of giggles to screaming tantrums and the effects on their asthma can be similar.

These stressors and emotions can create physiological reactions in our body that may lead to airway constriction and changes in the immune system, all of which can be a trigger for asthma.

New research illustrates the need to further examine and address the influence of social and environmental factors on asthma.

### TIPS

#### Tips for stopping stress from affecting your asthma

- **Identify what triggers stress you. Note how they affect your body, thoughts and behavior.**
- **Relaxation can prevent or lessen the degree of tension you experience when feeling stressed. Identify and participate in relaxation activities that you enjoy.**
- **Exercise is a great way to let off steam and it is also excellent for your health.**
- **Learn more about your (or your child's) asthma (or respiratory condition) to ensure optimal health is gained**
- **Remember to always have your reliever medication with you just in case**

Sara Hubbard-Read – Community Respiratory Nurse

#### References:

*Psychosocial stress and asthma morbidity.* Yonas MA., Lange NE., Celedon JC. (2012) *Curr Opin Allergy Clin Immunol.* Apr 12 (2) 202 – 10. Retrieved from [www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov)  
[www.asthmafoundation.co.nz](http://www.asthmafoundation.co.nz)  
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**News**

**Medical Panel reinstated**

At our recent AGM, members agreed to reinstate Asthma Waikato's Medical Panel. We are in the process of developing that panel now and Dr Leong Leow, Respiratory Specialist Waikato Hospital has already agreed to be on it.

Members were captivated listening to Dr Leow's informative talk on Vitamin D at the AGM

**Asthma Waikato supporters farewell Barbara**



*Shona Bramley, Board Member and Vikki Blundell, Business Manager both spoke of Barbara's tremendous career and years of dedicated service to people with respiratory conditions*



*Barbara was presented with a gift, poem and flowers in appreciation of her 22 years of achievement.*



**November 14, 2012**

In New Zealand an estimated 1 in 7 people aged 45 and over has COPD (more than 200,000 people) with 85 percent of these smokers or ex-smokers. Spirometry is a test which is of great value for measuring exactly how much bronchial tubes have narrowed. Boehringer Ingelheim sponsored Asthma Waikato to provide a free spirometry clinic (lung function testing) and we had such a great turn out that we had to turn people away.

Its important that people with COPD keep up to date with new research so we were delighted to welcome Dr Zaheerodin Bhikoo to our COPD/Asthma Support and Exercise Group and some clients from Waikato Hospital's Pulmonary Rehabilitation programme. (Photo below)



We were also delighted to receive the donation of a brand new cross street banner from our friends at Vivid Images. Thank you Vivid Images!



**Asthma Waikato appreciates the on-going support of Di Pery-Knox-Gore and Boehringer Ingelheim for their generous support with our World COPD Day events every year**



# Summer Tips from Sailor



## Sailor's Tips for a Healthy Happy Summer

- Keep taking your preventer medication every day during the summer months. This will help your lungs stay healthy.
- Check the expiry date on your inhalers to make sure they are still in date.
- Ask a Grown Up to check that you have enough inhalers (preventer and reliever) to last you through the holidays. You might need to see your doctor to get some spare inhalers.
- Don't forget to pack your preventer and reliever inhalers and your spacer when you go away on holiday or away from home.
- Get some Vitamin D (which we get from the sun) but don't forget to slip, slop, slap and wrap between 10am to 4pm when the sun's UV rays are strongest.

And most important of all.... Have a fantastic and safe summer.



Check out the new Accuhaler video on Sailor's website [www.sailor.asthmawaikato.co.nz](http://www.sailor.asthmawaikato.co.nz)

Sailor is making his 5th video now with his friend Amber and her Mum. Soon you will be able to go onto Sailors website to see how your local Pharmacist can help you with your asthma too. Here are some photos of Sailor making his video.





# Come and see Sailor at your school



Sailor has a brand new asthma presentation and is visiting Waikato primary schools. He hopes you love his new song and he is planning another one that you can sing along to. Sailor will tell you all about the asthma triggers. Do you know what they are? Which ones affect you? What do you do to manage them when they make it hard to breathe?

'Hey kids, Chris from The Funky Monkeys here! I had lots of fun helping Sailor write his first song! It's very catchy!

Thanks to Clint Harris from the band 'Late 80's Mercedes' for singing it!



## Play Sailor's Matching Game!

Match the pictures to the triggers

Smoke

Virus

Cold

Pollen

Animal fur

Dust mite



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## How we have helped

### Baby Harley and Asthma



*Harley Nga Manaakitanga at his Birthday*

Harley Nga Manaakitanga, a bright bubbly two year old toddler has faced many challenges in his short life. As a whanau we are privileged to share our story.

Earlier in the year Harley was very sick especially during the winter months. He often experienced breathing difficulties even though he was taking his Flixotide medication regularly and Ventolin. On many occasions Harley required the nebulizer machine, which meant taking him to the Doctor's surgery all hours of the day and night. This was especially frightening and often ended in tears for us all. It was at this time we realised we required extra support for his asthma.

We made contact with Asthma Waikato; immediately strategies were put in to help manage Harley's asthma. This included educating the whanau about asthma, putting an asthma management plan in place, with the option to review his medication as required. They arranged an appointment for Harley to be assessed by a Paediatrician. However, before the appointment took place, Harley suffered a severe asthma attack and was immediately hospitalised. We then discovered Harley was clinically known as a brittle asthmatic.

On his discharge the Serevent inhaler was added to his Flixotide medication and after a review by the GP it was changed to Seretide x2 puffs daily, once in the morning and once at night.

The week following Harleys discharge, Asthma Waikato visited, to update Harley's asthma management plan and educate us further on the signs and symptoms of an asthma attack and the different types of medication needed to treat and manage his asthma. Asthma Waikato supported Harley

by providing the staff of his Te Kohanga Reo with an asthma management plan and asthma education packages for the families there.

Asthma Waikato has made a difference in our lives and continues to support Harley. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their help and support to our whanau and especially to our two year old little man - Master Harley Nga Manaakitanga.

*Written By Harleys mother, Lana Puru.*

### The importance of having an asthma action plan

It was great working with this whanau. Lana is a pro-active mother who sourced our services herself. We were able to share our knowledge and ensure Harley's health and wellbeing needs were met.

The advantages of having an asthma action plan are often underestimated. In Harley's case, like many others with asthma he had a life threatening attack. Lana and I had previously designed a personalised action plan identifying Harley's warning signs and symptoms of asthma and his deteriorating signs meant that he needed urgent action. The action plan was a vital tool for Lana to use on this occasion.

Harley is fortunate to have older siblings who also care for him. It was important to Lana that they also knew how to look after Harley in an emergency. I was able spend time going through the asthma action plan with them also.



## TIPS

**Make sure you have an up-to-date asthma action plan.**

**Know what to do in an emergency situation.**

**Ensure all family members who care for your child know how to use medications and know when to give them.**

*Written by Jolene Dalziel, Community Respiratory Nurse.*

## How we have helped *continued...*

### Dear Nurse

**I have heard that Buteyko breathing may help my asthma, what is Buteyko breathing and where can I find out more information about it?**

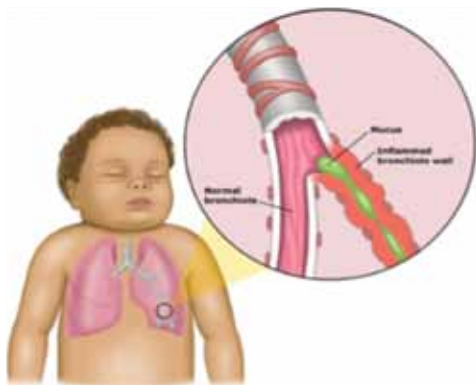
The Buteyko Method is a breathing technique that focuses on nasal breathing, breath holding and relaxation. The main concept behind Buteyko is that people with asthma tend to breathe more deeply and more rapidly (hyperventilate) than they need to. Through a series of breathing exercises Buteyko teaches people how to breathe less deeply and less rapidly. Breathing through the nose is encouraged. Lifelong practice of this technique is recommended.

There do not appear to be any obvious safety problems with the Buteyko technique as long as it does not replace normal asthma treatment. The advice given by Buteyko to use relievers when required and continue with preventer medication is in accordance with current medical advice.

**For more information on the studies done on Buteyko check out the Asthma Foundation Website [www.asthmafoundation.org.nz](http://www.asthmafoundation.org.nz).**

**Why didn't the doctor diagnosis my daughter with asthma until she was 2 years old even though she would cough and wheeze whenever she got sick?**

It is difficult to diagnose asthma in children under 2 years old due to their small airways. We know that people with asthma have sensitive airways in their lungs. The airways may tighten, partially close up, swell inside and make more mucus when faced with certain triggers. This makes it hard to breathe in and even harder to breathe out. We also know that under 2 year olds can be affected by viruses causing bronchiolitis which also cause swelling and mucus production in their small airways. They often cough and wheeze as do people with asthma. After about the age of 2 years most children's airways are large enough to have grown out of bronchiolitis and just have common cold symptoms. If your child continues to cough and wheeze during a cold, at night, during active play or when exposed to a trigger, the doctor will do a medical assessment and may diagnose asthma. However if there is a strong family history of asthma or your child also has eczema they may diagnosis it sooner.



**I was told that aspirin could trigger off my asthma, is this true?**

It has been shown that 10-20% of people with asthma may find that their asthma worsens if they take aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs). It is therefore advisable to discuss with your G.P. before using the medications listed below if you have asthma.

#### NSAID available in New Zealand:

- Aspirin
- Diclofenac – Cataflam, Diclax, Voltaren
- Ibuprofen – Anafen, Brufen, Motrin, Nurofen, Panafen
- Indomethacin – Indocid, Arthrexin, Rheumacin
- Ketoprofen – Orudis, Oruvail
- Mefenamic acid – Ponstan
- Naproxen – Naprosyn, Noflam, Naxen
- Piroxicam – Piram
- Sulindac – Saldac
- Tiaprofenic acid – Surgam
- Tenoxicam – Tilcotil

Also complementary/Herbal Products: Such as Echinacea, royal jelly.

Paracetamol has been regarded as the safest medication for occasional use to treat aches, pain and fever in people with asthma.

**I cannot afford to wash my sheets in 55 degree hot water to kill the dust mite what else can I do?**

It takes 60 degree heat to kill the dust mite and most domestic washing machines do not reach this temperature. Although in a domestic machine, at 25 degrees the mite will not be killed, the allergen (the faeces of the dust mite) will be removed. When you do the washing, hang things out in the sun to dry. Regular weekly washing will help.



The single most effective measure you can take is getting bedding covers which provide a barrier to the dust mite. Look for evidence that the cover has been tested against dust mites and achieves a 90% efficacy rate; has strong sewn seams; totally enclose the bedding item; can be damp-dusted rather than having to be removed frequently to be washed; and allows moisture out.

*Written by Jolene Dalziel, Community Respiratory Nurse.*

Don't chase asthma symptoms  
with a blue inhaler.  
Seek control instead.<sup>1</sup>



If you're using your blue reliever inhaler more than twice a week, chances are your asthma is not as good as it could be.<sup>1</sup> Work with your doctor to help control your asthma.

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**References:** 1. Global Initiative for Asthma; *Global Strategy for Asthma Management and Prevention*. Updated 2009. 2. Woodcock AA et al. *Prim Care Respir J*. 2007;16(3):155-161. 3. Bateman ED et al. *Am J Respir Crit Care Med*. 2004;170:836-844

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- \* Asthma Links with Matamata

**Koha appreciated**

- \* Expert respiratory speakers for groups

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- \* Spirometry testing (certified)
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- \* Allergy relief bedding sales
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**IF you are UNSURE about anything, ALWAYS ASK. Get an ASTHMA MANAGEMENT PLAN from either your FAMILY DOCTOR or LOCAL ASTHMA SOCIETY. It is best to ALWAYS BE PREPARED for any problems.**

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