

MAY 2017

# Asthma Link

Newsletter of Asthma Waikato | Te Ha Ora Huango

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## From the Manager

Where did summer go? I'm not entirely sure we had a summer this year and now with the foggy mornings and nip in the air it seems winter is nearly here. Time to think about stocking up on firewood, putting away some money for heating bills, finding your slippers to keep your feet toasty. A warm home is a healthy home. It's also time to think about getting your flu vaccination. If you are aged over 65 you are eligible for a free flu vaccination. Eligibility for a free vaccination also extends to pregnant women and those meeting certain criteria which you can check out here: <http://www.influenza.org.nz/eligibility-criteria>

It has yet again been a busy time here at Asthma Waikato. There have been a lot of changes including our new look and we are excited about what else is to come.

We have a bunch of new ideas in the pipeline this year, including rolling out our new donation collectors. These are a clever recycling campaign for old and used spacers to experience a new life collecting donations, as well as doubling as brochure holder containing information about Asthma Waikato and our services.



If you would like one of these to display at your business, or know someone who would, please get in touch with us.

If ever you are around Five Cross Roads in particular Claude Street Hamilton, pop in and say hello. We would love to see you!

*Sheryl Long, Operational Manager*



# A new look, new location and new website for Asthma Waikato



Asthma Waikato back in the community at its new premises.

Asthma Waikato has a long and solid history, serving the respiratory needs of the Waikato for over 40 years, with the vision that respiratory illness is not a barrier to a full life.

As part of our commitment to service improvement, the Board and management of Asthma Waikato made the brave decision to move out of the current CBD location and back into the community in January 2017. This was a deliberate and intentional relocation to improve our profile, visibility, accessibility and presence in the community. The new premises are at 67 Claude Street, a shared location between Asthma Waikato and other health professionals. We have an office and a clinic room. Our nurses see families for asthma education in the clinic, but we also still do home visits and community visits as required.

Along with the relocation we've also had various sponsorship from BlackPear and Em J Photography ([www.blackpear.nz](http://www.blackpear.nz) / [www.emjphotography.co.nz](http://www.emjphotography.co.nz)) to enable us to rebrand and launch a new website and logo. We deliver vital respiratory education of a quality and highly professional standard and we wanted our look to reflect that too. The new logo has a pair of lungs cleverly hidden in the 'm' and the lines of blue across the 'asthma' signify the waves of breathing and the flow of the mighty Waikato River.



The new brand looks fresh, vibrant and modern.

The new website is full of useful information and is fresh and easy to navigate. Have a look at it today:

[www.asthmawaikato.org.nz](http://www.asthmawaikato.org.nz).

Our Facebook page is also looking smart and is updated regularly; please 'like' our page to show your support and to keep up to date with what we are doing. <https://www.facebook.com/Asthma.Waikato>. Thank you to all the families who volunteered to be included in the photoshoot as part of our rebranding exercise and special thanks again to BlackPear and Em J Photography.

# Update from the Board of Asthma Waikato

The Board of Asthma Waikato currently consists of six passionate individuals committed to ensuring best practice, governance and strategic direction of the charity.

Robert Bull, **President**  
Grant Horan, **Vice President**  
Peter Granville, **Treasurer**

Tuangane Matangi, **Secretary**  
Stanley Koshy, **Board Member**  
Julia Crosby, **Board Member**

Recently we said goodbye to Mat Lawrence who stepped down, and we welcomed two new members, Julia and Tam.



Peter Rob Tam Grant Julia Stanley

## Meet Tuangane (Tam) and Julia

Tuangane (Tam) Matangi  
**Secretary**

Julia Crosby  
**Board Member**

Tam shifted to Hamilton about a year ago with her family and has recently started working for a local personnel company. She has a Bachelor of Law from the University of Canterbury and a background as a journalist. Tam has been taking minutes for the Board meetings since July last year.

Julia is a registered nurse, occupational health nurse, business owner and managing director for 20 years. She is also a Justice of the Peace. Julia brings valuable Industrial relations, Human Resources and Health and Safety knowledge to the Board. She is married and has two grown up children and two grandchildren.

**BOOK  
NOW**

**SPIROMETRY COURSE**

26TH & 27TH JULY 2017  
9AM-4PM

**GO TO OUR WEBSITE FOR MORE DETAILS**

[www.asthmawaikato.org.nz](http://www.asthmawaikato.org.nz)



Skin prick testing, 6 year old child



# Pippa's Story

## Skin Prick Testing – What is it?

Article checked by Penny Jorgenson, Allergy NZ

Skin prick testing is a test used to help diagnose allergies. In regards to asthma, skin prick testing may be useful to identify potential allergy triggers, such as house dust mites, pet dander, or food.

The test is reliable and painless, involving small drops of the “allergen” being placed onto the forearm or back, then the skin is pricked to allow a tiny amount of the allergen into the skin. Reactions are then measured and reported to, or observed by, the doctor.

Although the test may indicate a suspected allergy, the person’s clinical history is crucial in confirming a diagnosis. It is important that the results are interpreted by an experienced doctor or allergy specialist, and coupled with other test results and your actual allergy and reaction history. For example, negative skin prick tests may indicate a different type of response, and positive tests do not necessarily mean that you are allergic to that food, or that that particular allergen is the sole reason for your asthma.

In the case of food allergy, an immediate-type allergic response when a specific food is eaten, or a severe reaction such as anaphylaxis on first time a particular food is introduced to a young child, a diagnosis of allergy to that food may not need a test to confirm. Where it is not as clear, your doctor may advise you to keep a food and symptom diary. Over a period of a week or two, a pattern may emerge. However, it is important to note that if reactions to a particular food are obvious, the food in question should be avoided until you have consulted your doctor. In the case of a child, they may then be referred to a specialist.

A blood test called RAST or EAST can also be used to help with diagnosing allergies, and may be preferred where someone is not able to have a skin prick test because other medications they are taking, such as anti-histamines, could interfere with the results.

If you have questions about skin prick testing, talk to your GP or the helpful team at Allergy NZ [www.allergy.org.nz](http://www.allergy.org.nz).

After three hospital admissions with breathing problems over the winter in 2015, and three admissions from 2013-2014, my then three year old daughter Phoebe was diagnosed with asthma. We had a referral to Asthma Waikato to discuss a management plan. This was a huge relief, as previously we could only react to her symptoms, with blue reliever inhalers, Redipred, and oxygen.

We met with the nurse in September 2015. We had an hour’s consultation, where she discussed what asthma is, what can trigger it, and ways to prevent it from getting to an emergency. The nurse came up with management plan which gave us details of what medication to use and how often, and explained what the medication does to the body. This was extremely helpful and easy to understand as she had a model of the tubes into the lungs which gave us a visual image of what was happening.

We received copies of a symptom diary, so that we could record what was happening if my daughter started to have a worsening of symptoms. This was really helpful for the time that the symptoms did get worse, as I followed the emergency procedure of using the reliever more

often, and when we did go to the doctor, they could use our record to see what had happened so far. This is one of the most useful tools for us. The nurse also gave us handy tips such as how to clean the spacer, how long a preventer should last and therefore when to get a repeat prescription.

In the year since we started the asthma management plan, Phoebe’s health has been so much improved, and our lives are so much better now that she sleeps properly, as it was affecting her sleep badly. Phoebe has settled into the routine of twice daily inhalers, and knows how to do it herself (although we still do it for her). She is starting to get to the stage where she can tell us when she feels the need for the blue inhaler, which is another step forward, as we know it is time to start recording her symptoms.

Thank you so much for the care, advice and understanding you (Asthma Waikato) have given us. The consultation has been a life changer for us.

Best wishes

Pippa



## Nurse Visit Review

“An amazing outcome for Malachi after following advice given by the asthma nurse. After making a review appointment with his GP and discussing current symptoms we were able to have his inhalers increased to correct dosage, new spacer (who knew they needed yearly changing!!?) and a nasal spray for his hay fever that triggered asthma symptoms. First time in 4 years we really feel on top of both asthma and hay fever – he’s a different boy!! Lots of energy, no runny nose, happy! Many, many thanks.”

Renee SooChoon



Rob (Asthma Waikato President), Teresa (Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of NZ, GM - Education and Research), Sheryl (Asthma Waikato Operational Manager) and Chris (Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of NZ, Entertainer) together at the launch of the new Asthma Waikato brand and location.

# > SAILOR SAYS Farewell...

Asthma Waikato were delighted recently to have Teresa Demetriou from the Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of NZ and Chris Lam Sam, entertainer, attend our celebration event in order to officially wish Sailor the Pufferfish well on his new role.

Sailor the Pufferfish was born in the Waikato and spent many years travelling around the schools of the Waikato region with entertainer Chris Lam Sam, delighting kids with their important educational asthma message. However, now owing to the partnership formed between Asthma Waikato and The Asthma and Respiratory Foundation of NZ, the Sailor show is embarking upon a mission of a national scale, to reach asthma kids throughout the

whole of NZ with asthma education. We wish Sailor well on this new adventure and we hope to see him up this way again soon!

We wish to thank everyone who supported, funded and got behind the Sailor project over the years and enabled it to be the success that it is.

*Thank you to everyone who helps Asthma Waikato, in particular our Primary Supporters:*



*Kiwis of all ages are dying from asthma each year!*  
You can help save their lives by supporting us to educate and prevent this happening...



DONATE NOW

**Asthma**  
Waikato

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