

August 2018

# Asthma Link

Newsletter of Asthma Waikato | Te Ha Ora Huango

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News, views and home truths to encourage and inform people with breathing difficulties

## From the Manager

Collaboration is a buzz word at present and over the last few months we have enjoyed teaming up and sharing our resources with other like-minded groups. In this edition you can read about our collaboration with Whare Ora - a wonderful organisation helping people attain healthy homes - and also the Waikato DHB Facebook team, in particular Mike Hadden-Jones, Clinical Nurse Specialist

in the Emergency Department. We know that there are so many hospital admissions that could be avoided if asthma was simply managed better and so our purpose behind these collaborations is to pool our resources to get the important messages across to the public.

We have also found an alarming amount of seemingly simple errors, misunderstandings and misconceptions in regards to asthma and its management in our consults which, once addressed and corrected creates a fundamental shift in the child's health. We have therefore dedicated time through our social media channels to address these concerns/errors and there has been a very positive response to this education.

I encourage you to check out our Facebook page to read these educational points and also to keep up to date with our news.

With winter upon us and what is generally a very trying time for asthmatics, remember if you have any concerns we are here to help. We are also happy to help with community education too and Asthma Friendly Schools.

Stay warm! Spring is around the corner.

*Sheryl Long, Operational Manager*



In recent times I have had the pleasure to provide community education to different centres, as well as deliver the Asthma Friendly Schools programme within schools, teaching both the students and the teachers.

The education provided was based on what asthma is, triggers that can cause asthma symptoms or asthma attacks and best ways to avoid these triggers. Education was also given on the difference between which inhalers are meant to be given at home twice a day such as the preventer inhaler, and which inhaler a child needs to bring to school in case a child is experiencing asthma symptoms e.g. the reliever inhaler. In addition, I taught asthma first aid and what to do in an asthma emergency.

It is recommended that all children with asthma have an Asthma Action Plan. During the school visits, it became apparent that not all children have one. An Asthma Action Plan guides asthma treatment and helps caregivers recognise when symptoms are becoming worse and when to act. A coloured copy of the child's Asthma Action Plan should be provided to the school as part of their asthma management.

There are more schools wanting to be involved in the Asthma Friendly Schools programme and what a privilege it is to be part of this! It is great to see the teachers wanting to make sure that their children at school are safe and willing to learn about how to ensure this. The students are so much fun to teach and so enthusiastic about learning all about asthma to help themselves and their friends.

Yehudit, Respiratory Nurse Educator



## Nathaniel's Story



Nathaniel is a heart kid and has also had rheumatic fever in the past. We never suspected anything else could be medically wrong with him as he had already been through so much. However, our world was soon to be rocked once again when he had what was later diagnosed as an asthma attack.

I remember the day as if it were yesterday. I decided to keep Nathaniel home from school as he wasn't feeling well and he hadn't had much sleep the night before. I monitored him throughout the day, but wasn't happy with his breathing so rushed him into the medical center.

When talking with the nurse he said he felt sick and went as white as a ghost; I knew something wasn't right. The nurse rushed us next door to the emergency room and while I was carrying him, he went unresponsive and stopped breathing momentarily. Thankfully the staff acted quickly and provided Nathaniel with what he needed. We were rushed through to Waikato hospital where he was diagnosed with having asthma. We were then referred to Asthma Waikato to learn about asthma and discuss a management plan.

We met with the Asthma Waikato nurse a few weeks later where we discussed what asthma was, what triggers it and how we can best manage it as an individual as well as a family. The nurse explained what medication he would be using, how often and how best to administer it through a spacer, which was easy to understand and Nathaniel got to keep his spacer and personalize it with a sticker, which he thought was pretty cool.

The nurse was very informative and easy to understand, she gave us advice on how to use the spacer, how to clean it and how to keep a record of usage for repeat prescription. We received an Asthma Action Plan which showed us what to do if we thought his symptoms were getting worse and helped us understand when he may need a blue reliever inhaler, especially at night when he starts coughing. Since following the plan we have found we don't need to use the reliever as often and this I am grateful for.

If we hadn't been referred to Asthma Waikato I don't think Nathaniel would be managing his condition as well as he is. I thank not only the nurse who saw us and was extremely informative, but also the whole team. It is because of all their continued support, advice and aroha we can now, as a family, help Nathaniel to live a life managing asthma and not allowing asthma to manage him.

*Tarsh Harland, Nathaniel's mother*

# Collaboration



WHARE  
ORA

Recently we collaborated with Whare Ora to film some Healthy Home Tips for Facebook. The Whare Ora Programme is a FREE initiative that supports whānau to create healthier homes that are warmer, drier, and safe. We got some great footage and you can check out the clips on our Facebook Page. Here's a summary:

## Healthy Home Tip #1 Stopping Draughts

A lot of valuable warmth is lost from homes via gaps and spaces around doors and windows. Draught stoppers are an easy way of helping this problem and although store-bought draught stoppers are fairly cheap, an even cheaper option for whānau is to make home-made draught stoppers using rolled up towels.

## Healthy Home Tip #2 Thermal-backed curtains

Thermal-backed curtains can help keep heat escaping through the windows. Thermal lining can be bought from places like Spotlight and simply cut to size and clipped to the top of existing windows. However, a cheaper option is simply to use an old sheet to line curtains as this will work in a similar way.

## Healthy Home Tip #3 Getting rid of mould

Mould is a big problem in homes as the spores that it releases can be a strong asthma trigger. It is important to clean mould away and it isn't necessary to purchase expensive products. A cheap, chemical-free option is to use a spray bottle (about \$2 from a \$2 shop) and fill it with a ratio 70% white vinegar to 30% water. Spray it on the mould, wait about an hour then scrub it off with a scrubbing brush.

## Healthy Home Tip #4 Bubble wrap for double glazing

For most whānau, double glazing costing thousands of dollars just isn't an option. However, a cheap way to double glaze can be achieved by using bubble wrap. A large roll of bubble wrap costs about \$50 from Mitre 10. Simply cut it to the size of the window glass, lightly spray the window with water then stick it on, making sure the flat side of the bubble wrap is against the glass.

## Healthy Home Tip #5 Condensation

Condensation left unchecked creates damp, which can rot window sills and lead to draughts and a cold home. It can also create a breeding ground for mould which is detrimental to lung health. It is important to spend a few minutes every day, usually in the morning when condensation is at its worst, to wipe the condensation away. Make sure you air your home regularly too and if extractor fans are available in the kitchen and bathrooms, use these also to direct excess moisture outside. A dry home is a healthy home.

## Healthy Home Tip #6 Drying clothes

Drying clothes is often a challenge, especially in the winter. Where at all possible, it is best to dry clothes outside as drying them inside can return as much as 2L of moisture to the home, creating potential damp and mould. If a clothes dryer isn't an option, try and dry clothes on the outside line, or on a clothes horse in the carport or shed outside of the home.



Yehudit and Sheryl met with the team running the Waikato DHB Facebook page and together we filmed some clips to create a short social media video to educate the public on correct MDI inhaler technique. It was great fun and it was wonderful to be able to share our resources to get this important message across.

*Thank you*

# World Asthma Day and Balloon Day

Asthma Waikato would also like to say a huge thank you to some special centres that fundraised for us on World Asthma Day, in particular:

Kio Kio School who raised \$300 by baking things like blue coloured cookies, cupcakes, cakes and other sweet treats and selling them at their school. They also all wore blue shirts in support of this cause.

The Hamilton Keas (a division of the Scouts Group) invited us along to talk to them about asthma and join in their blue balloon games. They raised \$32 for us through gold coin donations.

Hopscotch Childcare and Preschool in Otorohanga had blue activities such as gloop and collage art work and discussions at mat-times about asthma and the effects it has on children and their families. \$40 was raised through contributions and Hopscotch matched that figure to donate \$80.

JumpStart Educare Cambridge held a Blue Day at their centre and raised \$33.60

MidCity Childcare raised \$28.40 having a Balloon Day for Asthma Waikato.

Thank you to one and all of our wonderful supporters!



Kaylee



Rory

# Congratulations

Asthma Waikato ran a colouring competition to celebrate World Asthma Day. Congratulations to our winners! Huge thanks to BlackPear for sponsoring the design and to The Warehouse Hamilton Central for donating the prizes.



*Thank you to our all our supporters and sponsors*

Without the generous support of these organisations throughout 2018, Asthma Waikato would not be able to function. We are so grateful! Thank you!



## Welcome two new Board Members

Graeme Allen a Hamilton business owner with post grad quals in management and governance from Waikato Uni as well as 20 years business experience.



Ofa Pouono, a Tongan now living in Hamilton and lawyer by profession, is looking to use his knowledge and skills in a community organisation.

plus...

*The Warehouse, Gallaghers Charitable Trust, Hillcrest Pharmacy, Columbus, FastLane Café, Tui Medical Centre Te Rapa, Pharmacy 547, Unichem Rotorua, Beerescourt Life Pharmacy, Punnet, Steve Outram, Lochiel Golf Course, Unichem Pharmacy Cambridge, Duke Street Medical Centre Cambridge, Cambridge Medical Centre*



*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

67 Claude St, Fairfield, Hamilton  
PO Box 7013, Hamilton East,  
Hamilton 3247

P 07 838 0851  
E info@asthmawaikato.org.nz

f [facebook.com/asthma.waikato](https://www.facebook.com/asthma.waikato)  
[asthmawaikato.org.nz](http://asthmawaikato.org.nz)