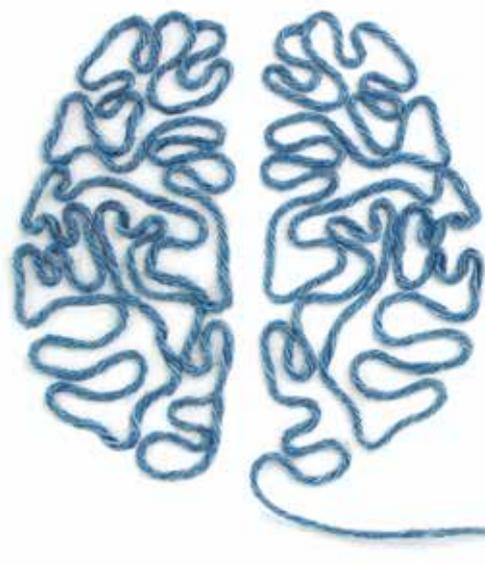


OUR MIND MATTERS

Quarterly update from Dementia Auckland



INSIDE THIS MONTH'S ISSUE:

Brain Health and preventing dementia



TAKE STEPS FOR BRAIN HEALTH

Our brain is our most valuable asset, so doesn't it makes sense that we should protect it? Everything we are, were and will be is stored in our precious brain cells. All the key moments in our lives, from our childhood, to friendships, first love, our wedding day and family shape who we are. Core moments like choosing a career path, building our capabilities and achievements are a part of our identity.

Dementia is the second most feared disease from a list of serious health conditions like cancer, heart disease, stroke and depression.* Despite an increase in the public's understanding of dementia, **1 in 4 people** still think there is nothing we can do to prevent it.

The truth is that dementia is the outcome of undiagnosed brain diseases, often starting because of common risk factors, many that can be modified. Changes in the brain can start in our 30s and 40s, lurking in the background where there is a long silent period until symptoms develop.

In our early years, the focus should be on using our brain through education and learning, in our middle years keeping socially, physically and cognitively active and in our later years addressing social isolation, hearing loss and managing cardiovascular risks like hypertension, obesity, diabetes and depression.

Research supports that modifiable risk factors can influence brain health, preventing, delaying, or even deferring the onset of dementia by up to five years. In this edition of Our Mind Matters, we explore 10 modifiable risk factors on page 8, and how to take proactive steps to improve our brain health.

*Awareness and perceptions of dementia report, Nielsen 2018

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT



My name is Ron Sutherland; I have been privileged to work as a volunteer for Dementia Auckland for 23 years.

When I came to Auckland from Tauranga aged 67 I looked for voluntary work and served on the Dementia Auckland Board. We started a Friday morning mens’s gym group which has been very successful and still runs today, giving the men much needed exercise and their partners a break.

Many friendships have been established and the gym environment provides top class facilities. Over the years, the faces of members and the Dementia Auckland team have changed but the success of the group remains without question.

I like to help people and see how much they are enjoying still being able to be active whilst living with dementia. I get a lot of joy and feel blessed to work with Dementia Auckland as a volunteer; it has given me something to give back to the community since I retired.



Stay up to date on all the latest news and info.

 facebook.com/DementiaAKL

 instagram.com/dementia.auckland

If you’re moving please get in touch so we can ensure you receive your next edition of Our Mind Matters

GET IN TOUCH

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 Website: www.dementiaauckland.org.nz

SHARE

If you have a helpful tip, idea or story you would like to share we would love to hear from you. Drop us a note at intouch@dementiaauckland.org.nz

MORE THAN A WALKING GROUP

By Terry Biltoft

"It's fun!" is a good reason to join a Dementia Auckland Living Well Walking Group.

The format is simple: rendezvous, walk and social time at a café. What's more inspiring is the magic that happens when people come together outdoors and at cafes, sharing their challenges and triumphs. Each walking group has a character and quality as unique as its people.

"Oh no, we walk regularly anyway!" is frequently heard by our Dementia Auckland team when inviting people to join. However, our Living Well programmes draw on evidence-based research. Our walking group's experiences are consistent with reported findings regarding a boost to mood and self-esteem after interacting with others with shared experience.

We are encouraged by mounting evidence for the claim that good quality of life; including sociability assists with maintaining a higher level of functioning. Physical activity such as walking outdoors in a group increases social networks and reduces feelings of isolation and loneliness, all known to be issues for many people living with dementia. Interactions with people other than close family and friends increases the challenge and potentially the cognitive rewards for people living with dementia through stimulus of neuroplasticity.

Sometimes people arrive for the first time feeling quite uncertain, only to say later how relaxing and enjoyable they found it. They are relieved to have their experience validated and understood. Very quickly people look forward to their group and appreciate the structure it provides to their week. Feedback we often hear is, "Absolutely amazing! It's consistent. It's good to know it's on and look forward to it."

Dementia Auckland has offered walking groups since 2012: starting with Cornwall Park, followed by Blockhouse Bay, St Heliers, Tui Glen, Alfriston and Orewa. Our St Heliers group kicked off in February 2013 and is still going strong. Special mention must be made to the group's foundation members who walked with us for seven years and became a treasured inspiration – with the group snapping into spontaneous ovations on their return from rare absences. Their example taught us so much about love, loyalty and resilience.

As people's needs change over time, so the groups adapt - folding in one area to re-emerge in another according to demand and availability of staff. Our amazing volunteers are fundamental to the success of our walking groups. Luckily, for all their varied motivations (from community connection, experience for university studies and even, for some new Kiwis, practicing English), our volunteers say they come because they feel better for turning up, getting out in nature, meeting our inspiring people and for being part of something so rewarding.

And so to all in our walking group communities, we applaud your courage, good humour, loyalty and effort!

Dementia Auckland currently facilitates walking groups in Orewa, Milford, Hobsonville, Henderson, St Heliers, Pt Cheavlier and Manurewa.



JOIN US IN MAKING A DIFFERENCE

We are always on the look out for amazing volunteers to join us. If you would like to give back or have time available we would love to hear from you. GET IN TOUCH TODAY.

Contact sarah@dementiaauckland.org.nz or call 09 622 4230

*Celebrate all their
victories, they are
embracing the biggest
challenge of their life.*

LIVING WELL - CARER STORIES

DEB'S STORY



My husband Peter participated in Dementia Auckland's Cognitive Stimulation Therapy programme. For me, it was heartening to hear the groups activity, the ribbing and joking, reading and solving puzzles – the laughter, the laughter, the laughter. How healthy that truly sounded to me – wonderful support and stimulation. I've got to admit the challenge to the CST attendees to "cook something in a slow cooker or crock pot" was fun and Mongolian Beef will now be a meal enjoyed in the future. Peter approached the task with enthusiasm - measuring, chopping, grating, stirring, using the rice cooker and dishing up complete with finely chopped spring onion on the top. It was a sight to be seen!

His comment "thanks for supporting me on that cooking" was awesome and it was a memorable moment to go to bed with a smile on my dial! I am so grateful to Kelly and Sarah for their enthusiasm and ongoing ideas.

Now Peter's journey has taken another turn and living at home with me as his wife and carer has transitioned to a new level. In December we noticed Peter was really starting to slow down, walking was becoming harder and harder, strength and energy fading fast. He wasn't keen to socialise as much and if he wasn't stimulated he slept. We had a wonderful Christmas with our eldest son and family, and it became evident to me that I was nearing the end of keeping him safe (and me sane). So when Peter entered 14 days respite care early in January I knew in my heart, that if there was a room available for him at the end of respite, that he would remain there. I am grateful every day for the wonderful care and support Peter receives from the team at Bruce McLaren. He is still getting used to his new home and I can honestly say this massive change really hasn't hit me yet. I proceed to tick off the many jobs that were parked these last couple of years. I can say that when I pulled the pantry apart yesterday, I found four jars of bread making yeast, and three different sized pouches of Himalayan pink salt. I could go on with other duplicates/triplicates, but I think you've got the gist. The slow cooker will be fired up again shortly – I think I'll make Mongolian Beef!

Despite the challenges of COVID, 2020 was the absolute best possible year, full of many happy times and challenges. Peter was in an NRL rugby league tipping competition, and managed to come 1st equal of 40+ people participating – a goal he had had for many years. He knows nothing about rugby league players, team form or even names, but his weekly online research payed off. He has the winner's trophy in his room.

A huge thank you to Dementia Auckland for their unwavering efforts and dedication to keep supporting us as we walk our own dementia journey. Where we are today is thanks to the fabulous support from the Dementia Auckland staff. Our dementia journey has definitely been made less of a struggle with the support we've welcomed with open arms and now I feel I have the opportunity to give back by volunteering with the Botanical Gardens Walking Group.



Botanical Gardens Walking Group



DOREEN'S STORY

Jeff my husband of many years, who was diagnosed 24 years ago with vascular dementia, recently suffered a stroke and was unable to attend his regular Wednesday afternoon Dementia Auckland dance group. Having made a good recovery Jeff was this week keen to return so off we went.

Jeff was in a wheel chair and when the music began and we held hands and a grin from ear to ear appeared on Jeff's face. Then when one of his favourite songs from way back was played Jeff stood up and began to twirl me round and round. This showed me that music and dance was possible regardless of physical limitations. I could not believe how the music had motivated him and then I realised it had brought back memories of when we first met at a local dance. We spent many happy Saturday nights dancing around Auckland's numerous dance halls.

Jeff was able to stand and move for quite some time and even held the left hand of a volunteer and my right hand to swing us both to some of his favourite music. Wonderful social interaction; Jeff was able to happily move with others. He did not have to solely dance with me. It is amazing what a wonderful trigger music and movement has on memory.

Thank you Dementia Auckland for providing such a wonderful programme.

PS: On the following Friday at the Men's Gym Group Kelly played a song "Hello Dolly" and a huge grin appeared on Jeff's face and he wouldn't stop smiling. I explained that my nickname was Dolly – a name I have had since I was born and all my relations and my mother call me by it. "That memory trigger again!"

JULIA'S STORY

My partner was diagnosed with dementia three years ago. Looking back I realise we had some clues (that we both ignored) for a couple of years prior that this was developing. I got in touch with Dementia Auckland at the recommendation of the gerontologist some months after that initial and very stark dementia diagnosis.

We talked with our Keyworker and took part in a variety of workshops and masterclasses run by Dementia Auckland to help with managing the condition. I attended a monthly support group for those caring for someone with dementia.

As my partner had only recently retired and lost contact with some old friends and work mates, he needed some 'man time' and Dementia Auckland suggested he join a men's group. The opportunity to get together with a group of similar aged men to do activities is something he really looks forward to each week.

Terry runs our men's group (they named themselves 'Positive Reaction') and she is inspirational – the guys have been involved in activities from Go-Karting to making pottery, climbing Auckland's volcanic landmarks, bowling, playing indoor cricket, visiting an eco-village, playing table tennis and playing orchestral music. Something I've noted is that each time we meet Terry has organised to run these activities so that they are respectful, not patronising and that's something that doesn't always happen when people interact with those living with dementia.

When the group went Go Karting at Extreme Indoor Karts, they were able to go when no one else would be using the track. Once there, the staff took everyone through the safety rules and then set up a competition. It turned out the guys were quite competitive! This was a great example of people living with dementia being able to do normal, adrenalin-inducing activity and loving it.

Living with someone with dementia can be challenging and personally I appreciate the community I've found in this group – as we understand better than most what each other is going through. Many of us share the task of transporting the guys to activities, so this also provides us with the occasional opportunity to take a break from being the carer. Without Dementia Auckland, we wouldn't have Terry, this group or the support from each other, so I'm very grateful.



NEW FACES AT DEMENTIA AUCKLAND

We are pleased to introduce you to two new members of the Dementia Auckland Team.



WINIFRED HENDERSON

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT MANAGER & EDUCATOR

I have had first-hand experience with dementia, caring for my Mum for eight years. She had a mixed dementia diagnosis of Vascular Dementia and Alzheimers that started my passion and curiosity for this disease. I set myself a career goal while caring for my Mum to become part of the Dementia Auckland team and it's a dream come true to follow my heart after selling my research business.

I'm passionate about others, who are on the same journey of supporting and caring for a family member with dementia and I'm excited to develop initiatives that empower people living with dementia. I'm full of optimism and not afraid to roll up my sleeves to get a job done. Currently I'm studying my Masters of Dementia with the University of Tasmania and have completed post graduate studies in Psychology.

SALLY AVISON

BRAIN HEALTH COACH & EDUCATOR

I'm very happy to be returning to this wonderful organization in the role of Brain Health Coach and Educator. I was part of the team back in 2012 as an Educator and it is encouraging to see the growth and the development that's happened during that time.

My background as a registered nurse, educator and recent experience working in the area of palliative care within the aged care sector, enables me to provide information as well as practical strategies for people to lead a happier, healthier life.

I am passionate about looking at all aspects of life in a holistic way, establishing goals for overall health and wellbeing so someone can live their best life.



GET ADVICE FROM A PRO

Around the world, researches and health services are turning towards prevention rather than trying to find a cure for many illnesses. In Scotland, the government has made it a health priority to offer Brain Health Services to the public in an attempt to reduce the number of dementia cases.

Dementia Auckland will be developing a range of Brain Health Services, both one-to-one and in small groups which can assist with radically accelerating your progress and goals.

Coaching in the area of health provides an opportunity to view all aspects of someone's life- habits, lifestyle, routines, physical health, nutrition, home environment, and relationships. By tweaking or changing lifestyle factors and setting goals we can coach you through the process of bringing about and sustaining positive changes for you, your lifestyle and your brain.

If you would like to know more contact Sally - sallya@dementiauckland.org.nz

EDUCATION UPDATE

By Rhonda Preston-Jones

COVID 19 lockdowns played havoc with the Dementia Auckland Education Programmes with our Carer Education, Masterclasses, Side by Side and the Symposium all affected. While we were able to adapt our Carer Education Programmes for carers and families to run successfully on Zoom, Masterclasses and our ever-popular Symposium were unfortunately postponed.

In considering our education programme for 2021, COVID-19 validated the need to deliver accessible high-quality education programmes to our community. They needed to be adaptable should there be any potential COVID-19 alert level changes.

So, we are thrilled to announce the new programme for 2021. Delivering a comprehensive education experience that's better aligned to the four key stages of the dementia journey.

This improved education offering will mean getting the right information at the right time, empowering carers and families to understand what to do now and what lies ahead.

Dementia Talks – is our revitalised annual Symposium. An education series will be held four times a year featuring expert speakers on dementia, from the prevention or delay of dementia with brain health, getting a diagnosis and what that means, living well with dementia and managing the end stages of dementia. Dementia Talks will be held on a Sunday afternoon.

Both Masterclasses and Dementia Talks will be accessible face-to-face and online using Zoom. Check our website to stay up to date as registrations open.

WHAT'S COMING UP

<p style="margin: 0;">JANUARY</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">FEBRUARY</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">MASTERCLASS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">What is Vascular Dementia?</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">MARCH</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">DEMENTIA TALKS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Brain Health</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">APRIL</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">MASTERCLASS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">What is Fronto-temporal Dementia?</p>
<p style="margin: 0;">MAY</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">MASTERCLASS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">What is Lewy Body Dementia?</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">JUNE</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">DEMENTIA TALKS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">The diagnosis phase of dementia</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">JULY</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">MASTERCLASS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Managing the Middle Years Part 1</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">AUGUST</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">MASTERCLASS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Managing the Middle Years Part 2</p>
<p style="margin: 0;">SEPTEMBER</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">DEMENTIA TALKS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Living well with Dementia</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">OCTOBER</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">MASTERCLASS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Managing the Middle Years Part 3</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">NOVEMBER</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">DEMENTIA TALKS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">End Stage Dementia</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">DECEMBER</p> <p style="margin: 5px 0;">MASTERCLASS</p> <p style="margin: 0;">Caring for the Carer</p>

Dementia Auckland is placing a priority on developing culturally appropriate education programmes for Maori, Pacific, Indian and Asian communities. We have made a commitment in 2021 to consult with carers/families and community groups to work in partnership, adapting to better meet the needs of our diverse community. If you would like to be involved please get in touch with Rhonda Preston-Jones, Clinical Lead – rhonda@dementiauckland.org.nz

MODIFYING YOUR RISK OF DEMENTIA

BY LISA BURNS

Think of your brain as 'Headquarters' – the control room where all your core functions for your body and mind come from. It doesn't get a holiday or take time out, it's always "on", working 24/7, taking care of your thoughts, breathing, movement and senses even while you're asleep.



Everything starts and ends with our brain, so if it's at risk, there is a greater chance of developing the brain diseases that can lead to dementia.

The Lancet Commissions prevention, intervention and care report released in 2020 suggests, "It is never too early and never too late in the life course for dementia prevention."

We know there is a connection between poor lifestyle choices and dementia but the report highlights that 40% of dementia cases could be prevented or delayed by modifying these identified risk factors.

So, if you were offered a health prescription to protect the wellbeing of your brain you'd say – "where do I sign?!"

Below are the 10 potentially modifiable risk factors that can help reduce your risk of developing dementia.



LIFESTYLE Unhealthy diet and nutrition

An unhealthy diet with poor nutrition has a huge influence on brain health, our brain works best when it gets premium fuel. Eat a balanced diet with high-quality foods that contain lots of vitamins, minerals and antioxidants to nourish and protect your brain.

Excessive alcohol and smoking

Heavy drinking has proven links to changes in the brain, cognitive impairment and dementia. Smoking also puts the brain at a higher risk of developing dementia. Aim for three alcohol free days per week, stop smoking or reduce exposure to second-hand smoke.

Poor quality and quantity of sleep

Poor sleep quality and duration, insomnia or obstructive sleep apnoea may be associated with a higher risk of dementia. Sleep is vital for our body to repair, be fit and ready for another day. Aim for an average of 5-7 hours per night.



PHYSICAL Physical inactivity

Physical activity is vital for our heart, body and mind. Our brain need oxygen and blood flow to work efficiently. The recommended amount is 150-300 minutes a week with an emphasis on balance and strength as we age to prevent falls.

Brain injury

Protect your head from concussions and head injuries that are not good for your brain, elevate the risk of problems with cognition and increase the risk of dementia.



COGNITION Cognitive decline

If we don't use it we lose it, it's vital to maintain cognitive function by remaining mentally stimulated. Crosswords, puzzles, Sudoku, read the newspaper and books, learn something new, try an app like Lumosity and get creative on a regular basis.



MEDICAL HEALTH Hearing loss

Protect your hearing and get hearing aids if they're needed. A decreased level of input to the brain, means less processing occurs which can lead to cognitive deficits if not addressed.

Hypertension, diabetes, cholesterol and obesity

Aim to maintain a systolic blood pressure of 130mm Hg or less from the age of 40, have regular medication reviews, maintain a healthy weight which in turn will have an effect on cholesterol and other medical conditions like diabetes and heart disease.



EMOTIONS Depression

Depression can be related with the incidence of dementia and may be an early warning sign. It is important to get help and support for mental health and wellbeing to manage stress, anxiety, unresolved grief or other issues.

Social Isolation

Loneliness and isolation lead to poor health and well-being outcomes; cardiovascular disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, dementia and hormone imbalances. Maintain structure in your week, stay socially active, keep in contact with family, friends and enjoy time with other people.

Taking just one small step towards modifying our risk factors can have a positive effect on the overall health and wellbeing of our brain. Preventing dementia needs to begin early and continue to be a priority throughout our lives.

STEPS FOR DEMENTIA

HELP US RAISE \$144K TO FUND OUR WALKING GROUPS!

Walking is therapy for healthy people and people living with dementia. Walking and the Dementia Auckland walking groups are good for the brain, good for the heart and good for the soul.

Take the Brain Health Challenge this March and improve your own brain health.

Who will you take steps for?

- 1** Pick your challenge
 - Give up alcohol
 - Get more sleep
 - Stop smoking
 - Walk with a daily step target
 - Set a weight loss goal
 - Join our 5km walk on Sunday 14 March
- 2** Get support and donations from friends and whanau to reach your goal
- 3** Taking a step to help yourself, helps support those living with dementia



\$144,000

Annual cost for weekly walking groups across Auckland.



11

Walking groups needed across Greater Auckland



18

Staff and volunteers needed to support the walking groups.



\$25 sponsors a person to attend one weekly walking group

\$250 sponsors a walking group for one week

\$1,050 sponsors one walking group for a month

\$1,200 sponsors one person to attend their walking group for a year



**SUNDAY
14
MARCH
9AM**

STEPS FOR DEMENTIA EVENT

A 5km walk from Selwyn Reserve, Mission Bay to St Heliers and back

Places are limited

Individuals \$15 | Families \$50

*Families include 2 Adults and up to 4 Children includes FREE t-shirt

All funds raised will go towards supporting our walking groups.

TO FIND OUT MORE AND REGISTER VISIT
www.stepsfordementia.nz

STEPPING UP FOR MUM

BY Jude Dobson, Summerset Ambassador



My Mum had early-stage dementia before she died almost five years ago now. She never got to the stage of needing care, but I've often thought how hard that must be for family. Not just the care aspect but because of their advanced dementia losing parts of the person you love while they are still here.

As Mum's short-term memory became regularly challenged, she needed Dad there to help her, even though a lot of the time she didn't realise things had changed, as help was quietly happening around her.

Other times she caught herself and remarked that perhaps she'd repeated herself. My non-committal go-to phrase was "I'm not sure about that. You're speaking to a menopausal woman who forgets things anyway!" Why comment on repetition when someone is unaware of it and unable to change it? It would just make her feel sad.

When Mum started to forget to cook dinner, Dad became a cook. When her health declined, he became a nurse. When she forgot to go to her usual patchwork and book club groups, he quietly suggested to her friends they might like to make a roster to take her. When she forgot to pay the bills, he asked my brother to set him up on internet banking.

Us 'kids' stepped up too and meals out at our homes became the norm most of the week. It gave structure to their day; something to look forward to for all of us, regular contact with grandchildren and the food issue was solved. I will forever be so proud of my children when I recall them often answering the same question at the dinner table ten minutes later as if it were never asked.

Mum wasn't always forgetful. Absolutely not. A well read, intelligent and quick-witted woman, on many a day she'd be operating at 150%. There were plenty of in-depth discussions about whatever was topical, most days I questioned whether there was anything amiss. Our shared GP told me that often those with highly active minds keep things at bay for quite some time. She was always a ray of sunshine too and I think perhaps as you age you become more of what you were, when the layers start to peel away.

Pollyanna was a loved childhood book and she often said it was a good thing to be Pollyannaish. And that was her – always looking for the good in things, sometimes when many of us would find that a hard ask. She was a child moulded by a depression, a divorce and a world war, making her resilient and grateful for any opportunity offered in her adult life and the family she made her focus.

In her last year of life, I recall her on more than one occasion sitting on the couch saying, "I am happy, right now". It was a conscious awareness of appreciating her world right at that moment and the reasons that made her feel that way.

But the grey matter was getting dusty and there were times she realised she had forgotten things that would never normally have escaped her, or confusion clouded things. Three of those moments happened at Christmas. I remember crying as I pushed my trolley round the supermarket two days before Christmas when she called me asking why she was in hospital and the nurse said she could not have breakfast? I explained that she was there to have a little op to fix something on her leg that was not healing. She sounded lost and confused and alone. It was a raw moment. Two days later she was a jovial guest on Christmas Day at home, so the pendulum had swung.

The next year, a few days before Christmas, she'd forgotten to make the Christmas pud. Unheard of. Daughter and niece were dispatched to ask if they could learn how to do it, buying all key ingredients on the way over to cook together.

And the last year, the joint pudding exercise again done, she arrived with the pud but without the famed brandy sauce. The sauce of the shaky pour from the brandy bottle and the juice of copious, fat lemons. She did not even comment there was no brandy sauce. An aha moment. It was bought custard that year, and nobody said anything.

I don't have anyone around me now who has memory challenges, but if you do - include them, be kind, don't remind them that they forget, reminisce about things long ago that are often easier to recall, and just drink them in.

My thoughts are with you if you have someone with memory challenges in your life. Just remember they are 'still me' underneath the fog.

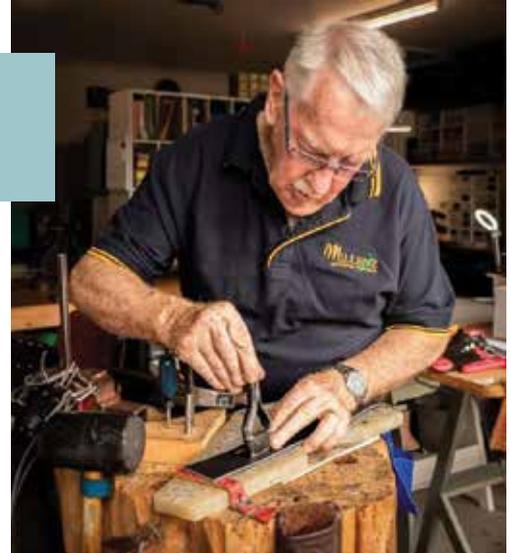
STILL ME

THE APRON MAN - One man's dream

By Lisa Burns

If ever there was a person whose story embodied the essence of 'Still Me' it's John Millen. A trailblazer in the New Zealand building industry known for changing the way leather toolbelts were designed and made.

In the early 80's John originally worked making the beloved school shoes "the nomad". After being inspired by his neighbour "you just can't buy a decent toolbelt from the shops" he started taking leather home and experimenting. From there he made it his mission to make builders toolbelts that worked. John would spend hours with tradesmen on building sites understanding what was needed, and he was the catalyst for changing the course of builder's toolbelts in New Zealand and America. No one was safe from his passion, even his son Glen and daughter Chantelle who would spend hours riveting aprons after school.



John's had his fair share of medical hurdles to overcome, falling out of a window as a toddler and surviving a brain haemorrhage at 47. Since then he experienced a slow decline and after many years, received a diagnosis of dementia just three years ago. However, despite these huge challenges nothing has dampened the love for his leather craft making Millenz an iconic brand amongst those in the construction industry.

John and his wife Sue have been married for 47 years, together for 50. She remains his biggest supporter and now his full time carer. "The changes were slight at first, but had become more noticeable in recent years". "It's tough watching your husband die daily," she said. "Just watching day by day the person you know just slowly slip away. Yet thankfully there's so much of him that's still the same. I married him for his heart and his heart is still the same for his family and friends."

Overcoming the odds, nothing stopped John's passion or dreams that to this day is still a big part of who he is. The diagnosis hasn't prevented John doing what he loves, being a part of his business, riveting toolbelts and connecting with his customers. His leather skills and a love for his work is deeply engrained in his memory, aided by the love, encouragement and support of his family.

Infamous for saying "sh*t hot" with his thumbs up it's become somewhat of a tradition for customers to have their photo taken with 'The Apron Man' when they collect their toolbelt.



John's caring heart is what makes him so loved by his family, friends, community and customers. "He still remembers his family, and not too many people have slipped his mind." Sue says. As time rolls on basic tasks become tougher for John, who is slowly more and more dependent on Sue.

"I can't have a normal conversation with him anymore. Just getting him to talk normally is tough," she said. "We can go out and do all these things and when we get home he tells me all about them like I wasn't with him all day."

Millenz remains a family business, now managed by Sue and three generations, of Millens, John, his son Glen and Glen's daughter.

Celebrating a legacy of 40 years, there's no doubt that we think John is SH*T HOT too and he's left a lasting legacy in New Zealand that his family can be proud of.

CHEQUES PHASING OUT IN NZ

With most banks phasing out cheques in 2021, we appreciate it's not always easy to adapt to new payment methods.

There are alternative options available so you can continue to support Dementia Auckland.



Internet bank transfer | Phone banking | Direct Debit
Credit card | On our website (with credit card)

Dates these banks are phasing out cheques:

- Kiwibank - February 2021
- ANZ - May 2021
- BNZ - July 2021
- ASB & Westpac - Date TBC

Talk to your bank about options.

IN TOUCH

The latest issue of our Carer newsletter
In Touch is ready to read now!



Sign up to receive In Touch today - intouch@dementiaauckland.org.nz

AWAKEN THE SENSES

Inspired by their personal family experience of dementia Anders Hansen and Toni Marquard founded the **inmu**.

It can be difficult to create a sense of comfort and safety for a person living with dementia. The inmu is a soft cushion with a gentle vibration and musical tones that has a relaxing, soothing effect. Diverting attention, easing anxiety, frustration and improving sleep. The benefits need to be seen to be believed. The front pocket makes it easier to hold.

Dementia Auckland has 12 inmu's available to hire at \$30 for a period of three months.*

*You must be a registered client with Dementia Auckland and caring for the person with dementia at home.

To book [email reception@dementiaauckland.org.nz](mailto:reception@dementiaauckland.org.nz) or give us a call on 09 622 4230.



WE JUST WANTED TO SAY *Thank You!*

We truly appreciate all the amazing people, volunteers, sponsors, friends, donors, funders and supporters. Your support, kindness and generous contributions makes it possible for us to make a real difference in the lives of people affected by dementia. In this issue we would like to give special mention to:

- Elaine Butterworth and Anthony Quirk
- Rob Nicholl
- Catherine Hynes
- Stanley Hoffman
- Shona Clarke
- Oceanbridge Shipping
- Noel Leeming
- Freemasons of Almoners
- The Fresh Connection
- Four Winds Foundation
- One Foundation
- James Russell Lewis Trust
- Blue Sky Community Trust