



## **Welcome to the November-December edition of the *Amigos* Newsletter for 2016**

*Amigos* is a group of adults who have experienced mental distress and are interested in connecting with other adults who have had similar experiences, with a view to friendship, to help in their recovery, and as a stepping stone to further integration within the community.

*Amigos* is Spanish for friends, and we are always looking for more *Amigos*. So try one of the following groups to see what you would like to do, or feel free to try all of them and see what works for you. Either way, we look forward to seeing you soon ☺

The **AMIGOS CHRISTMAS BBQ** will be on the **13th December** at Troup



Picnic Area in Wiltons Bush ☺ We will be meeting at **11:30am at the bottom entrance/carpark**, then walking in to Troup Picnic Area, in the middle of the bush. Bring your friends and a plate. BBQ itself will start at 12pm at the picnic area ☺

## Coffee Club



This group meets weekly on a Tuesday afternoon in Newtown. It is a chance to meet some new people and some old friends in a low key and welcoming get-together for a friendly chat and a cuppa. Though the numbers are slightly down on previous months, people still seem to get a lot out of this friendly group and the pleasant café venue.

Since July, the time of the last newsletter, the coffee group has had an average attendance of about 11 people per week. Average numbers attending from *Te Whare o Matairangi* is about 2 per week. One time, a few months back, we actually had 23 people attend!

Here's a couple of feedback comments by those who have come to the group:

*A regular meet-up where everybody knows your name. Cheers!*

*A place where I can be me.*

We'd love to see you there!...Tuesdays 1.30-2.30pm @ Baobab Café (in Newtown shops), 152 Riddiford St (opposite Wilson St)

## Creative Writing Group



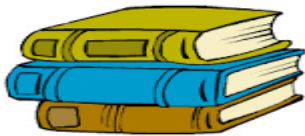
We are an informal group who meet every Thursday evening in the central city. As well as writing, it's a chance to catch up with others and discuss topics of the day. We use starters like ornaments, pictures or quotes (anything really) to stimulate our creativity, and then spend about 10 minutes writing. Then we share with everyone, if we want to, and it's always really interesting how we all have different takes on things. It's a good time to let your creativity run wild!

The group is a great place to get to know others and have good conversations. So if you feel creative and want to have a go at writing something, come along and have some fun. There's also the option to go have some kai together afterwards 😊

Times: Meets Thursday from 5.30-6.30pm.

Location: Clark's Café, Wellington Central Library, Victoria Street

## **Book Club**



This group meets the first Monday of the month.

A typical meeting involves members discussing books and articles that they have read and think others might be interested in. One participant describes their experience like this: "The discussion is often lively and you never know where the discussions are going to end up."

Time: First Monday of the month from 1.30-2.30pm.

Location: Penthouse Café, Ohiro Road, Brooklyn

## **Amigos has its first Barbecue 😊**



At midday, Thursday October 13, *Amigos* had their very first BBQ at Wilton's Bush. About 26 of us came along. It's a beautiful place for a picnic, and Wellington turned out a cracker of a day! Some people sat and relaxed in the sun; some threw frisbees around, and there was great food and great company! Some people shared good memories and stories of going there in their youth.

## Arts & Crafts Group



The Arts and Crafts group is another great place to enjoy your favourite hobby, or perhaps find a new one. One participant describes our Arts and Crafts group as a “great place to work on your project or just come for some company - either way, you are welcome.” Tea, coffee and materials are provided.

Times: Every fourth Saturday from 2pm-5pm.

Location: Ace House, 111 Brougham Street, Mount Victoria.

## Sports Group



The Amigos sports group started up again in mid-October after a pause of about 5 months.

Michelle is our enthusiastic and capable sports tutor and has introduced us to many fun indoor games. It is important to note that the title “sports group” does not denote a set sport but, rather, many different indoor activities from gentle stretching warm ups, to Floor Ball (using a small, perforated lightweight ball), to sticky softball and indoor hockey (the light plastic versions)!

People have taken part with great energy, and had a lot of fun running around for short periods. Typically, we have a total of about 11 people at these indoor games days, with as many as 6 people coming down from *Te Whare O*

*Matairangi* each time. Some go for broke and work up a sweat, while others take it more easy and spend some time on the sidelines.

We are not athletes!...all levels of fitness are catered for, and this is a good chance to get some exercise.

Newcomers are welcome, and the sports group is free. Our venue is Newtown Hall, Daniell Street, Newtown...outside Te Ara Hou flats. Many thanks to Wellington AfterCare Association for funding this sports group through the Vavasour Trust. The sports group will run to mid-December 2016.

## **Realities Group**



*Realities* is a group affiliated with *Amigos* that meets twice a month at Newtown Community Centre. The group is for those who are, or who have lived in a different/alternative reality.

It began with the idea of starting a Hearing Voices Network group in Wellington. I came up with the name “Reality” for it. Upon consulting interested people, it was decided that “Realities” would be a better name, as it encompasses the view that people do not live in one reality, but in different realities.

So far, the group structure has been people giving talks – mostly informal – followed by lively discussion. We have also had groups with facilitated discussion. The group also acts as social peer support, and we have anywhere between 12-24 people attending each time.

Please contact Dennis on 022 0727 147 if you have any questions.

Time and Place: 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of the month, 6-7.30pm, upstairs in the Newtown Community Centre

## Movie Outing



On July 27, *Amigos* put together a lovely event at The Empire Cinema, in Island Bay. There were 20 of us, including four from the ward, *Te Whare Matairangi*. The treat included subsidised movie passes and free hot drinks for everyone. The film showing was *Ghostbusters – Who you going to call?* It was great to see female protagonists having as much fun as did the jokers in the original film. A good time was had by all!

***Next Movie Outing – TUESDAY, 6<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER, 1.30pm – to see “Fantastic Beasts” at the Empire Theatre, Island Bay, only \$5 each, including free coffee. Please arrive early for Steve to get us all organised ☺***

## Saint John’s First Aid Course



On 26<sup>th</sup> October, six *Amigos* attended a one-day, intensive first aid course. This was paid for from money from the Vavasour Trust, via Wellington AfterCare Association (WACA). Many thanks to WACA for this valuable opportunity.

The course ran from 8am to 5:15pm and covered many scenarios, including choking, collapse, heart attack, stroke, bleeding etc. Our tutor was Denny who had, in real life, handled many emergencies, and taught us how to assess a scene and what questions to ask the victim (if victim was conscious).

We practiced techniques for handling choking, and CPR and performed these techniques on mannequins that came in 3 sizes: adult, child, infant. We also



had instruction on the use of defibrillators, which are more common these days, and are kept on site in many buildings around town.

This was a most useful course, and we learned a lot in one day.

At the end of the course, Denny said: *I hope today was a completely wasted day, so that you'll never have to use this in real life.*

## **Working for Recovery Workshop**



Everyone who participated in the Hearing Voices workshops with Ron Coleman and his wife, Karen Taylor, during 9-11 November, had positive comments to make about the couple's skills and insights into improving our relationships with our voices. About 7 members of our **Realities** group attended for one or more days, so here's some of their comments –

*I really enjoyed Ron and Karen's workshops on Narrative Approaches to Psychosis. The workshops were inspiring, interesting and challenging. They spoke of a different way of looking at different realities and hearing voices (and other different perceptual experiences) rather than looking at them as part of a chronic illness, and then gave us demonstrations of strategies to deal with these experiences. A particularly interesting way of dealing with them was to reason with the voices and try to find out why they are there, and what they are trying to say.*

*Then, on Wednesday the 23rd November at Realities Group, we had a debrief and animated discussion around the Workshop, which led to plans to carry on the learning and work started at the Workshops...watch this space! (Dennis)*

*I was really grateful for the opportunity to participate in the workshops and meet Ron Coleman. I worked on his voice profiling technique with my navigator, and thanks to that I'm not afraid of the voices so much for when they come back. I really wanted to thank Ron in person, and the workshop gave me that opportunity. (Natalia)*

*It was so uplifting to learn a simple and constructive approach to creating more understanding and positive power in our relationship with our voices. I particularly loved Ron's "Profiling" and "Sculpting" strategies! These both have the power to get our voices more out of our head, out of the dark places*

*from which they can spring on us at any time...therefore, because we can “see” them more clearly, we can start to handle them better. It was so great to see everyone with more of a smile on their face at the end of the workshop! (Portia)*

## **Round-the-Bays Van Trip**



We're planning another van trip before Christmas. It will be a leisurely **drive around the Wellington Bays, on Saturday, December 10, from 2-5pm.** We thought it would be nice to stop along the way at *Spruce Goose*, in Lyall Bay, and have a cuppa and a walk along the beach. Everyone interested, please text your name to Portia on 021 918339....and put in an order for a lovely fine day ☺

## **Have you got any questions for Amigos?**

Feel free to contact us: Monday to Friday 9am-5pm only on 0204 069 4484

Or by email on: [steve.kohler@xtra.co.nz](mailto:steve.kohler@xtra.co.nz)

Find us online here:

<http://amigosnz.wix.com/amigospeersupportwnz>

Amigos is run entirely by volunteers and are supported by these wonderful organizations: Kites Trust, The Christine Taylor Foundation for Mental Health and Wellington After-Care Assn Inc.

