



## Welcome to the June 2017 edition of the *Amigos* Newsletter 😊

*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 😊

Let's start off this time with a poem from Natalia:

### ***Amigos Peers***

*Friends around us*

*Encouraging each other*

*Helping each other*

*Listening to each other*

*Amigos peers*

*Friends around us*

Thanks Natalia! 😊

## Amigo's Sixth Birthday Party!



On Saturday afternoon, the 20<sup>th</sup> of May, 43 people celebrated 6 years of *Amigos*, and also farewelled Rick Shirley who is moving from Wellington to Hawkes Bay. It was held in Ace house with a shared lunch and had a Mexican theme.

To start things off, Jan Lowrie spoke about founding *Amigos* and its early beginnings. It was started in response to *Buddies* no longer outreaching into the community and also being purely hospital based.

She acknowledged the work done by volunteers in developing *Amigos*, including the committee and others who contributed to making *Amigos* successful. She handed out beautiful mugs she had decorated herself to thank those volunteers.

Jan was also thanked with a gift for her time and huge commitment to *Amigos*.

We then tucked into the long table of food that people had brought to share, much of it Mexican and very delicious – the Chili con Carne was a favourite.

Once we had eaten, we took time to farewell and thank Rick Shirley for his commitment and work with *Amigos*.

Jan spoke of his long involvement in Mental Health activism in Wellington and presented him with a gift in appreciation of his work with *Amigos*. Rick's gift was a montage of framed photos to remind him of people and of Wellington – he loved it. We wish him well in Napier.

After that, it was time to see who could break the *piñata* - it was hung up outside to break it open and get out the chocolates! For those who don't know, a *piñata* is a colourful container made of papier-mache (often in the shape of an animal) which is decorated and filled with candy. It is a Mexican tradition where people are blindfolded and try to hit the *piñata* with a stick to break it open. Fittingly, it was Rick whose final blow cracked it open 😊

This was one of the most fully attended events held by *Amigos*. Friends and family, and some members of Rick's church boosted the numbers, including a few children, and the afternoon was thoroughly enjoyed by all...plus we ate too much yummy food! *Happy Birthday, Amigos!!* 😊

## Coffee Club



This group has been running since May 2011 and offers a friendly, accepting setting for people to socialise and learn about other *Amigos* activities. This weekly get-together happens every Tuesday afternoon from 1.30-2.30pm throughout the year.

“*Arriba Arriba Amigos!* I’ve been coming to the coffee group for years. It’s a great melting pot of creative thinkers and supporters. Now I work in mental health, and introduce others to the *Amigos* way. It’s a fantastic opportunity to share some time together and connect.” *(from Simon)*

*From Steve:* In our recent Amigos User Survey people showed strong support for the group: “...something social and happy to look forward to each week”, and “...feeling of comradeship among peers”. And Thanks to *Baobab Café* who are supportive of *Amigos* and regularly reserve large tables for us. We continue to welcome people from the Mental Health Recovery unit, and they seem to get a lot out of visiting the café, particularly when the sun is out ☺

See you at *Baobab!*...152 Riddiford St, Newtown.

## Creative Writing Group



We are an informal group that meets weekly to write and share our writing together. All levels of writing are welcome. Come and join us and explore your creative side – everyone has one!

Our writing is inspired by starters that are given to the group by members of the group. It is fun to write in this way and it is always amazing to see what people come up with. It is a way to spark your imagination and end up with something that, if you want to, you can share with the group. It’s also a good time to socialize and catch up with others. It is a great way to get to know people and to build your confidence.

Afterwards we often get something cheap to eat ☺ *(Notes from Nick)*

Meets Thursday from 5.30-6.30pm.

Location: *Clark’s Café*, Wellington Central Library, Victoria Street

## Arts & Crafts Group



Lots of people love coming to *Arts and Crafts Group* ☺ --

*Aaron* – It’s so great to sit around a table with like-minded artists, talk and do art. It’s especially great for me cos I live in Porirua and I get to catch up with friends.

*Steve* – Nice...sitting, hanging out, relax and do your own thing!

*Warren* – Hey *Amigos!* Art classes help bring out my creativity. It wasn’t till a few years ago that I started to do more than just colour in pictures... Also, it has inspired me to explore my creative side more, so I’ve tried other arts groups too. Working on projects at Ace House has got me involved in doing more than “group therapy”. Thanks *Amigos!*

*Richard* - I enjoy visual arts with other people on the same wavelength, connecting. And it’s great for company and teas and coffee, lollies and gooey things ☺

*Kate F.* – I feel welcome even though I only come along occasionally. It’s a social event for me! And I feel comforted to know I can connect with like-minded people. The group gives me a sense of belonging. I feel free to pursue whatever activity I am in the mood for, and it’s usually crosswords/scrabble with Steve. It’s great to have the choice of being mentally active or joining in any of the conversations and being social. I also love seeing what other people create and the pleasure they get from it. After the group, the opportunity arises for continuing the social interaction at a pub or a café – this is an added bonus and positive for me. Long may the group carry on!

*Mandy W.* – I enjoy going to the group because I can catch up with people and have a great chat and a few laughs. I can also do my adult colouring-in book where there is heaps of space so I can put the full picture out on the table – the



picture is very long!! I also love what the others are creating. Everyone has their unique thing going on.

Times: Every 2nd and 4th Saturday from 2pm-5pm.

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

## Van Trip



On April Fool's Day two van-loads of eager *Amigos* took to the road from Ace House – destination Makara Beach ☺ It was a little chilly, but at least it wasn't raining!

Everyone enjoyed the sea air walking along the coastal track, and some of us climbed the promontory to get a great view of the South Island. After working up an appetite, we all loaded up to go have afternoon tea at the *Saddleback Café*, at Ohariu Valley Stables. What a different atmosphere it is there...all sorts of memorabilia on the walls, and a real-live wagon hanging from the ceiling! Yummy food ☺ We drove back via Johnsonville. (*Notes from Rick*)

The next Van Trip will be on Saturday, June 17<sup>th</sup> – destination is a mystery at the moment, so watch for a text sometime this week ☺

## Movie Outing



Our last movie outing was in December to see *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. It was a good turnout with 15 people attending at the lovely *Empire Theatre*, in Island Bay.

The movie is a prequel and spinoff from the *Harry Potter* movies, and unlike them, is set in 1920s New York. It follows the adventures of Newt Scamander who arrives fresh off the boat from England. Newt is a keeper of Magical Creatures (referred to as a *Magizoologist*) and keeps them in his suitcase, which is magically expanded to house multiple magical creatures.

His suitcase goes missing, as it gets confused with another similar one, and some of the beasts are released. The movie follows their capture and the revelation of the unusual personalities of the magical beasts.

Meanwhile, a bad beast is released (not one of Newt's) causing damage to New York, and Newt is blamed. The beast devastates the city while Newt tries to stop it.

The movie has great visual effects throughout. I really enjoyed it and would recommend it, as it was fun to see some of the types of magical beasts in the witches' and wizards' world. It is not a children's movie, but I would highly recommend it for teenagers and adults.

We had some delicious refreshments afterwards (thanks to *Amigos*) and some of us caught up with people we hadn't seen for a while. (*Notes from Nick*)

## Curry Catch-Up



Join in the fun at *Curry Catch-up*, 1.15pm every second Monday.

Our hosts, Shahina and Badal serve delicious Indian food, treating us to their \$10.00 lunch-time special of curry, rice and naan. We are regarded as valued customers, and our patronage is rewarded with individual discount loyalty cards.

See you at CurryHeavenNewtown 1.15pm - 2.15pm, Monday 19 June.

## Realities Group



### *Magic Moments...*

To advertise the *Realities* groups we put up posts on *Facebook* before the day. As soon as this topic was posted, our resident *Realities* DJ put up a musical reference: the song *Magic Moments*, which was written by the illustrious Burt Bacharach and Hal David, and subsequently covered by Perry Como and Lou Reed.

The topic was proposed by Portia-Rose, who unfortunately had a veterinary emergency with her little dog on the day and could not attend, so Barbara and Dennis co-facilitated the group.

The part of the group that Barbara facilitated started with a group member singing a few bars of this song as a memory jogger. The premise of the song *Magic Moments* - being unable to erase the memory of a magic moment - led into discussion about our own special experiences, which may have been:-

***Simple*** - making someone's day; being a force for good; reading a statement that brought things together; having a conversation with someone and feeling that they really listened.

***Heroic*** - conquering a significant fear; saving someone's life.

***Awesome*** - achieving something when others had doubted; falling in love; a spectacular place or view.

The group shared freely and generously, with each *magic moment* rekindling powerful memories and feelings, touching a special spirit deep within. Those listening learned a little more about their peers, and were touched and inspired in turn.



We acknowledged that recalling those heart-warming events is often difficult when we're in a difficult place, and some spoke of creating a *Magic Moments* scrapbook to lift and inspire them when things get tough.

The part of the group that Dennis facilitated talked passionately about:-

- People who keep popping up in our lives at odd but incredibly opportune moments;
- Intuition about others and about life choices;
- Moments of distress when it seems that events link up;
- Times when people have intuition affected by distress;
- Times when intuition has been incredibly right / incredibly wrong;
- Whether we trust our intuition;
- Whether or not we think our distress has made us more sensitive.

It was a stimulating evening ☺ (*Notes from Dennis and Barbara*)

If you would like to come and be involved in such a discussion, come join us at 5.30pm at the Newtown Community Centre on the second Wednesday of the month, and the fourth Wednesday of the month.

Next dates: June 14<sup>th</sup> and June 28<sup>th</sup>

***And here's a couple more photos from Amigos' 6<sup>th</sup> Birthday Party :)***



Pinata fun ☺

Friends and yummy food 😊



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## Do you have 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 is supported by these wonderful organizations: Kites Trust, The Christine Taylor Foundation for Mental Health, and Wellington After-Care Assn Inc.

