

# The Westerly

*"Te Hauauru"*

April (Paenga-whawha) 2005

## Brushing up on Oral Health

If you think it's a giant tooth you can see walking down the street, you may not be mistaken.

The latest addition to the West Coast oral health family is a giant tooth costume donated by the Gloriavale Christian Community.

The tooth is designed to be worn and will be used for such activities as adolescent oral health promotion, Christmas Parades and school dental service projects.

Sparkling white the tooth is made out of polystyrene and stands about 4 feet high. and of course a giant tooth needs a giant toothbrush to help keep it clean.

Two people have to help the wearer get into it and doors definitely have to be passed through side-on.

Primary school children have been invited to suggest names for the tooth and a good number have already been received.

Planning and Funding Analyst Melanie Penny said, "Some excellent names have been entered so far, with some genuine contenders."



The Tooth gets cleaned up by Acting Chief Executive Glenys Baldick

## Spring into Action Winners Announced

The West Coast DHB was delighted with the response to the first ever region wide Spring into Action competition, which began on the last day of January and involved more than 50 teams. After two months of competition the DHB today announced the winners.

The overall winning team was 'The Seaview Survivors' from the West Coast DHB.

Last year's winners 'The Kodak Kids' from Buller Hospital's X-ray Department followed closely in second place with 'The Social Butterflies' (Grey Hospital Social Work) in third place.

The most active organisation was the Cancer Society, followed by SF-West Coast and ACC.

Other categories included the most active council (Grey District Council), most active education facility (Tai Poutini Polytechnic) and the most active large organisation (also the GDC).

The most active individuals were Therese Keating, Sandra Schuddeboom, Sue Rapley (all WCDHB) and Vi McDermott (Westland DC) (first, second and third-equal respectively).

Feedback received from the entrants suggested the competition was highly enjoyed.

Melanie Penny said, "Many organisations have said they're keen to take part again next time, perhaps even entering more teams, and one team noted that a couple of its members had quit smoking."

"That sort of feedback makes all the effort



The Seaview Survivors accept their certificates.

worthwhile".

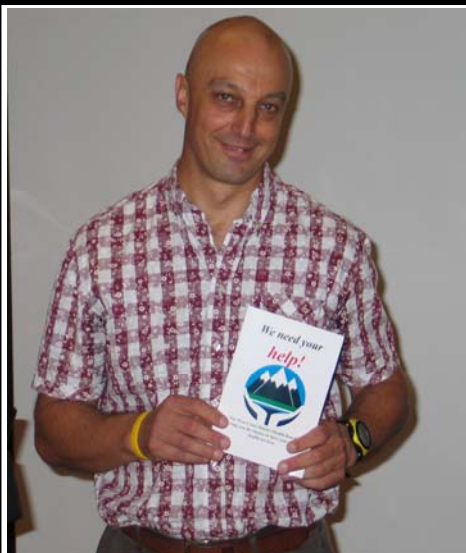
The date for the next Spring into Action has not been set, although it could take place in about 6 months, around the change to daylight savings.

"One thing's for certain – it will be back".

Miss Penny said the idea behind Spring into Action was promote exercise as an everyday activity, "We want to encourage people to build some form of activity into each day of the week".

"Thirty minutes of exercise everyday, whether it be walking, gardening or even vigorous housework, can help to improve your health."

## Talking to Coasters far and wide



General Manager of Planning and Funding Kevin Hague has spent the past few weeks travelling the West Coast.

Kevin has been seeking feedback from Coasters about what they see as the major priorities for health on the West Coast. These

views will be incorporated into the DHB's District Strategic Plan. For most people access to services has been the biggest issue.

But other views have also come to light, with some people wanting more gambling addiction services or services to help the elderly stay in their homes. People also wanted assurances from the DHB that it wouldn't be reducing services.

Since Kevin started his tour of the Coast around 200 people have attended meetings and 500 booklets complete with a survey have also been handed out.

It's not too late to have your say: check out the DHB's website for an information booklet and questionnaire and get your feedback into Kevin to ensure your views on health services have been incorporated.

## There are just eight weeks to go before the DHB starts the biggest ever public health initiative on the West Coast.

**When does vaccination against Meningococcal B begin on the West Coast?**

For children and young people enrolled in school vaccination against Meningococcal B will begin on June 7, consent forms will be sent home from school.

**No consent form, no vaccination.** Consent forms will be sent home from school in May.

If you have children under the age of five or teenagers not enrolled in school they can be vaccinated against Meningococcal B disease through their Primary Care provider for free, from June 27<sup>th</sup>

For more information please look at [www.westcoastdhb.org.nz](http://www.westcoastdhb.org.nz)

Or ring 0800 20 30 90 for more information.

## Wildfoods Festival... too wild for some

*Submitted by Erik Hogan*

During the Wild Foods Festival 2005, I witnessed a level of drunken stupidity unlike anything I have ever seen before. Oh wait; there were also the times when I went to the Wild Foods in 2003 and 2004.

I was really looking forward to going to the Hokitika Wild Food Festival this year. It's a great opportunity to eat disgusting foods and then brag to your mates about what you had eaten. In previous years I had indulged in possum droppings, worm sushi, haggis, a roasted scorpion, seaweed jam on crackers and most bizarrely, a chocolate covered banana. Unfortunately this great opportunity seems lost on a lot of young people, who only seem to want to brag to their mates about how much they can poison themselves with a combination of alcohol, herbal pills and nitrous oxide instead of the wild foods.

At the Wild Foods Festival there was a barrage of boozers who had started drinking Friday, continuing

to drink all throughout Saturday without having anything to eat despite there being a huge variety of "food" on offer. Surprisingly, none of these people were left with the ability to walk or hold anything inside their stomach.

Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined seeing so much beer, vomit, public urinating, uncanny clothing and bizarre behaviour all in one place. Bizarre behaviour I have witnessed at Wild Food festivals includes a man running beside a moving vehicle while having a conversation with the driver and a man who was opening asking bystanders for substances that would only be legal in a Green majority government. Sometimes I wonder if the enforced teetotalism of Islam wasn't such a bad idea, and I clearly wasn't alone in this sentiment, as a man dressed in a white robe with a turban went around shooting drunks with a toy AK-47.

If one needed an explanation of

why we have such a large budget surplus, or how we can afford to pay for the salary budget of TVNZ, then they don't need to look any further than the tax dollars made from the 20 years and below drinking market during this festival.

By lunchtime there were beer cups and cans as far as the eye could see. You could have walked from one side of Hokitika to the other on the garbage without ever touching the ground once. Perhaps Nandor should be asked to explain why he supports the lowered drinking age when this clearly creates an annual pollution problem in Hokitika.

There is one final thing that confuses me even more than the people who come from all over the country just for the festival and get so drunk that they have to leave after an hour to get their stomach pumped at the Hospital, is why is it called the 'Wild Foods Festival' when clearly 'Wildly pissed and out of control Festival' would be a more accurate name.

# From the Boardroom

This is a new feature in the Westerly to keep you updated with what's happening in the Boardroom.

This month the Board passed the Primary Mental Health Strategic Plan that will have big benefits for the region.

The plan, which will cost over \$250,000 to implement, was designed to specifically meet the needs of the West Coast community. It took over a year to complete and will lead to a more cohesive primary and secondary care mental health service.

Around 20 percent of West Coasters will experience some form of mental illness during their lifetime. Three percent will have a severe or enduring mental illness, while 17 percent will be treated for a mild to

moderate illness through their GP such as depression, anxiety or problems associated with alcohol or drug abuse.

It is the 17 percent of the population who have a mental illness that the plan has been specifically written for.

Lead planner Shona McLeod said the strategy was developed in consultation with Primary Care Providers and users of mental health services, as well as community groups, school councillors and other interested stakeholders.

Shona said the feedback had enabled the development of a plan that will provide a collaborative and more comprehensive service for people accessing mental healthcare through their Primary Care Provider.

"The earlier someone receives help the less likely they are to require specialist level care."

As well as providing a cohesive mental health plan she wanted to provide an integrated primary mental and physical health service.

"Its about meeting peoples needs physically and mentally."

The plan will see two new mental health workers piloted on the West Coast - one to liaise with GPs to provide an additional level of support to primary mental health services and one position to provide a brief intervention service.

The second position will see the person employed travelling the West Coast providing a face-to-face counselling service for those referred by their GP.

## Health and Safety Recognition Awards

Its been a good month for staff at Seaview Hospital, with the Seaview Survivors taking first place in the Spring into Action competition. Their efforts saw them not only get healthy but have also been awarded the Health and Safety Recognition Award. The teams will have an afternoon team at Rural Villa on April 21, to celebrate their success.

Pauline Schroder also wins an award for organising herself an electric wheelchair so she could to continue to work prior to her operation.

## Obstetric Nurses celebrate 80 years

15 obstetric nurses from around the country arrived in Greymouth this month to celebrate 80 years of obstetric nurses.



Nurses from Hamilton, Tokoroa, Christchurch, Dunedin and Balclutha came to the West Coast to celebrate and share their memories of a career in obstetric nursing.

# Green Prescriptions - leading the way

Green Prescriptions are the way of the future.

They will of course never completely replace drug prescriptions, but they have been proven to be effective when measured by both health gain and monetary savings<sup>1</sup>.

Prescribed exercise results in improved activity levels for patients and a resulting better quality of life. People who receive a GRx must be medically stable, participate in less than 2.5 hours of activity per week and be ready or open to change.

GRx is funded by PHARMAC and the Ministry of Health and the service is free to the patient. The patient receives information on goal setting, negotiating barriers, FITT (Frequency, Intensity, Time and Type) and ongoing support and review.

Doctors send a Green Prescription (GRx) to the local Sports Trust who follow this up with the patient. Time is spent ensuring the activity plan is appropriate, achievable and

enjoyable in the interests of sustainability.

The regional sports trusts do not live in the same boundaries as the DHB, with Sport West Coast overseen from Canterbury and Sport Buller from Nelson.

A GRx coordinator was employed for Sport West Coast late last year and the increase in calls made since then reflects the additional capacity.

Although the number of referrals received per month has not changed, typically ranging from three to five in each of Grey and Westland.

In Buller, the Sports Trust is concerned about the numbers using GRx. They suspect that sub-optimal utilisation reflects the high turnover of GPs, and their unfamiliarity with the programme.

A recent training day held in Greymouth by Sport West Coast was well attended by DHB staff, especially mental health staff.

Sport Buller hope to be able to offer a similar event for local health professionals soon.

Watch this space...

People with a huge variety of conditions can benefit (see graph). To find out more about how GRx might benefit your patients contact:

Don Monk (Greymouth)

03 768 0775

Helen Gillespie (Hokitika)

03 755 8321

Robyn Lawry (Westport)

03 789 6779

<sup>1</sup> Elley, R. Kerse, N. Arroll, B. Swinburn, B. Ashton, T. Robinson, E. (2004) Cost-effectiveness of physical activity counselling in general practice. *New Zealand Medical Journal*. Vol 117 (1207): available online.



## Putting the pieces together

Jigsaw is a five-day course currently being piloted by Community and Public Health. The first sessions have been running over the last couple of weeks to a small, but appreciative audience.

The course is an introduction to Health Promotion and covers the Ottawa Charter, working bi-culturally, community development, adult learning, social marketing, working in settings and much, much more.

C&PH make the most of their resident experts to deliver the modules, with input also from C&PH staff from Christchurch.

It is a very practical programme, and participants can choose all or some of the modules. From this participant's perspective, it is to be highly recommended!!

It will be back, but the date has not been set yet. Contact Gerrie van der Zanden for more information: (03) 379 9480 ex 753 or email: Gerrie.vanderZanden@cph.co.nz. Alternatively, contact Planning and Funding to browse the workbook.

## Upcoming events

April 25 Anzac Day, why not find a memorial service near you.

April 26 Postgraduate medical students arrive for work experience on the Coast.

May 5, International Midwives Day

May 10, Disability Network Meeting

May 10, Lets Connect Hui

May 12, International Nurses Day.

## Fluoridation Myths Busters

**Myth:** Water fluoridation = Water medication

**Fact:** Fluorides added to water are not medicines and water with adjusted fluoride levels is still pure water. It is the equivalent of adding iodine to salt, calcium to milk or iron to bread.

**Myth:** WCDHB is using "selective" research to prove it's okay

**Fact:** A search on any medical database will produce thousands of articles about water fluoridation. Reviews of these articles have been done by many reputable scientific bodies around the world and all have found water fluoridation is safe and effective.

**Myth:** The Aluminum industry funded the first research

**Fact:** The first research was conducted by dental scientists in the US in the early 1900's. Some people will believe any conspiracy theory...

**Myth:** We should educate our children better

**Fact:** Education is *already* being provided to children by dental therapists, schools and parents. Unfortunately, better knowledge does not mean better action. For example, we all know 30 minutes of exercise a day is good for us, but most people don't do it. Water fluoridation works because people don't have to change their behaviour.

**Myth:** Water fluoridation is banned in some countries

**Fact:** NO country anywhere in the world has banned water fluoridation... some already have high natural levels and some use other methods e.g. fluoridated salt. NO legislation exists anywhere that outlaws water fluoridation.

Send your questions or comments to:  
[teeth@westcoastdhb.org.nz](mailto:teeth@westcoastdhb.org.nz)