

# CORRvolunteer

News for Volunteers working with the Department of Corrections

## Promoting awareness

The recent Volunteer Awareness Week brought with it a whole raft of inspiring stories of the excellent work done by many thousands of community volunteers throughout New Zealand.

This annual celebration provides an opportunity to acknowledge the work of the many 'unsung' volunteers who selflessly give their time for the benefit of the wider community.

The events of Awareness Week struck a particular chord with me, by illustrating the importance that 'promoting awareness' plays in running a successful and progressive prison volunteering operation. It is especially important that Corrections staff right across the country are aware of the vital service our volunteers provide to prisoners. Volunteers represent the community that our prisoners will ultimately be released into, and I am determined that all of our volunteers are treated with courtesy and respect at all times. It is my expectation that all staff recognise the value of volunteers and professionally facilitate safe and secure access into prisons.

Equally, it is important that volunteers maintain a keen awareness of the potentially volatile nature of the prison environment. In practice, this means keeping abreast of the basic safety rules and cooperating with custodial

staff at the gatehouse and while on the prison site.

It is through increasing awareness and working in partnership that we can make the prison volunteering experience a safe and rewarding one.

**Harry Hawthorn, General Manager,  
Prison Services**

## Celebrating diversity

A very warm welcome to the second issue of *CORRvolunteer*.

The reaction to the first issue was very encouraging and I would like to thank those who took time out to provide feedback. This newsletter has helped to open a two-way dialogue between the Department and individual volunteers and I have been delighted that so many of you have been in touch to discuss important volunteering issues, offer your views and support, and share the many wonderful stories of life as a prison volunteer.

With this newsletter being easily accessible on the internet, I have been particularly pleased to receive a number of expressions of interest from prospective volunteers, including some from the other side of the world! This has enabled us to add to the exciting and increasingly diverse range of activities and services provided to prisoners by volunteers, including guitar lessons, creative writing, calligraphy, pottery, quiz nights, genealogy,

meditation, pottery, bowling and much more. This is in addition to many church services and cultural support activities, including sycamore tree, alpha in prisons and kapahaka.

This high level of diversity is, I believe, a cause for celebration and I hope that we can continue to attract a *varied* body of volunteers able to offer a *varied* selection of activities and services. Achieving diversity will make the Department's work, and that of our volunteers, more relevant and more accessible to a wider range of prisoners.

Being part of an organisation that values diversity gives you, our valued volunteers, the opportunity to benefit from new ideas and fresh approaches, generated by people from different backgrounds and experiences.

It is interesting to note that our 2,700 plus 'approved' volunteers are represented by a total of 443 different voluntary groups.

Indeed, 'the diversity of volunteering' was recently chosen as the focus of Volunteer Awareness Week, which took place 17-23 June 2007. The adoption of this theme helped to underline the message that volunteers come from all age groups and from all cultural and ethnic groups within New Zealand.

In this issue of *CORRvolunteer*, the diversity of our prison volunteers is well in evidence. Kelly Buckley, from Prison Fellowship of NZ, shares her experiences of delivering the Sycamore Tree programme; Carol Gorham from SPELD Hutt Valley talks about literacy training and Dulcinea Cooper of the Māori Evangelical Group in Auckland, reflects on a remarkable lifetime of volunteering.

Enjoy and keep in touch!

**Russell Underwood**  
**National Advisor: Volunteers**

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Contact details for your Regional  
Volunteer Coordinator can be found  
on the last page.

## Working with the Department of Corrections Quick Quiz

How well do you know the Department of Corrections and the prison environment in New Zealand? Test yourself with our ten minute quiz (answers can be found on page 6). All answers based on latest available data.

1. Approximately how many people are in prison at the moment?
2. What % of the prison population is male?
3. What is the definition of a 'remand prisoner'?
4. How many prisoners are on remand as a % of the prison population?
5. Within Corrections, what is 'community work'?
6. How many offenders are currently undertaking 'community work'?
7. By how much, approximately, has the imprisonment of women risen since 2004?

please contact Carol direct at [richard.gorham@xtra.co.nz](mailto:richard.gorham@xtra.co.nz)

To find out more about SPELD New Zealand visit [www.speld.org.nz](http://www.speld.org.nz)

## My volunteering journey



For Dulcinea Cooper (pictured above) of the Maori Evangelical Group in Auckland, the path to prison volunteering involved a lifetime of helping others. Here she shares her journey.

My earliest memories are of being fostered out to different members of the family. This was followed by my college years and a life spent living in a girls' hostel with 29 others.

It was as a married woman with two daughters, living in my first home, that I opened my doors to care for others from broken homes or institutions. There were spells too spent caring for a Probation Hostel in View Road, Mount Eden and working at Owairaka (described back in 1959 as a 'school for difficult boys').

The biggest family I lived with was when I attended the Bible College of New Zealand for 3 years, graduating in 1972.

## Training the trainers

Carol Gorham from SPELD Hutt Valley draws huge satisfaction from teaching prisoners to read. She strongly believes that many other prisoners could benefit from similar tuition.

Now Carol has thrown down the gauntlet and is offering to train other prospective literacy volunteers in the Wellington area to continue the good work.

SPELD New Zealand (the Specific Learning Disabilities Federation) is a not-for-profit organisation founded in 1971. The organisation provides assistance to people of all ages with learning problems, notably dyslexia. It is aimed at people who learn differently. It is thought that as many as 10% of the population may have learning problems, even though they are intelligent and may achieve very well outside the classroom.

If you are interested in equipping yourself to become a literacy volunteer,

Soon it was off to Port Augusta in South Australia working among Australian Aborigines and running a hostel.

A return to New Zealand saw a return to caring for many disadvantaged people in Auckland and a 15 year stint in a hostel for Maori boys. In 1994, this led to the beginning of prison work at Auckland Prison in Paremuremo, New Zealand's only specialist maximum-security prison for male prisoners. These days my volunteering work also takes in Mount Eden and Auckland Region Women's Corrections Facility (ARWCF).

With 48 years of care giving behind me and into my seventies, I still help people in my home.

## Feedback from CORRvolunteer # 1

Thanks to all of you who provided feedback on the first edition of CORRvolunteer. With a print run of nearly 3,000 copies, there are a number of logistical challenges involved in getting copies to all of our volunteers.

Gradually we are improving the integrity of the information we hold on our volunteer register and ensuring, for example, that volunteers living at the same address receive just one copy. Please help us to keep our records up-to-date by advising any change of address, contact numbers, circumstances etc as soon as possible.

If you are receiving this copy in error, please let us know.

If you are currently receiving your copy by post but would prefer to receive it electronically, please let us know.

In response to feedback received, we have sent this edition in PDF format. This is considerably smaller in size and should take a matter of seconds to download. If your PC is unable to open the attachment you can download the appropriate software link free of charge by visiting the link below; <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

## Did you know?

We currently provide a 'speaking tape' version of this newsletter to one of our volunteers with a visual impairment. Should you have any special requirements please contact us.

Comments on the first issue;

*I've just received a copy of the new quarterly newsletter for volunteers working with the Department of Corrections, and I'm most impressed! Well done! **RG, Christchurch***

*I think this newsletter is an excellent idea. Congratulations on the first issue. **JS, Christchurch***

*Thank you for sending the issue of CORRvolunteer. It is good to get news related to our work. **CG, Wellington***

*(The newsletter is) very big to download for 85% of us still on dial-up connections. Perhaps future ones could be re-formatted to a lesser definition for reduced size? **JL, Wellington***

Back issues of CORRvolunteer issue # 1 are available on request.

## Fuel for thought

In the last issue of CORRvolunteer, we invited your views on the current petrol voucher system and set out some of the inherent difficulties with the existing approach.

Many thanks for all of your responses. These will serve as valuable input in developing future policy.

Your replies underlined the confusion that exists currently about the tax treatment of volunteers' reimbursement payments. This confusion is not confined to Corrections' volunteers as the article below, reproduced from Volunteering New Zealand's May 2007 issue of 'VNZ Update' illustrates;

### ***Plans to review the tax treatment of volunteers' reimbursement payments welcomed***

*The Government's announcement that it will undertake work to clarify and streamline the tax treatment of volunteers' reimbursement payments and honoraria has been welcomed by Volunteering New Zealand.*

*Many of the more than one million plus volunteers in New Zealand pay for a range of expenses out of their own funds. Some receive reimbursement payments or honoraria from their host organisations as recompense for this, but there is considerable confusion and uncertainty about such payments in terms of taxation.*

*Volunteering NZ understands that by the letter of the law, even*

*reimbursement of documented expenses should be declared in an annual tax return to the Inland Revenue, even if not then taxed. Other payments such as honoraria and petrol payments without supporting documentation may be liable for tax.*

*These are areas which the Government has stated it will be working on. That is positive news, as is the National Party statement that volunteers' reimbursement expenses should not be taxed. Reimbursement payments to volunteers should be treated in the same manner as those received by paid workers and this should include payments such as reasonable honoraria.*

*(Reproduced by kind permission of Volunteering NZ)*

A selection of your comments;

*The fact that I may have to start filling in tax forms for this \$100 allowance is the biggest put off I can imagine. **VJ, Invercargill***

*Assuming there is an administrative system in place now to manage the voucher system, how about moving to a claim system based on cost per km. **JS, Christchurch***

*Like most volunteers, I think, we consider the mileage cost as a commitment that goes with the job and any reimbursement as an act of grace. **JW, Rangiora***

*I think that you should hand the petrol voucher out after the visit at the gate. **MK, Henderson***

*The fairness of the system would not seem to be an outstanding issue for most volunteers. **CH, ChCh***

## Quiz answers

1. 8,000 2. 93% 3. A prisoner detained only by reason of the fact he or she is awaiting trial or is on remand in custody during the trial or before sentence 4. 20% 5. 'Community work' is a community-based sentence which requires offenders to do unpaid work in the community. The aim of community work is for offenders to pay something back to the community for the offence they have committed 6. 19,400 7. 34%

## Policy Review update

Thank you to the many people who have contributed their views and thoughts on all aspects of prison volunteering. This input has been invaluable in reviewing the effectiveness of the current volunteer policy.

Proposals for a revised volunteer policy that will support the strategic direction and outcomes of the Department and meet the needs of volunteers and their organisations, are well advanced. These should be published for consultation soon.

In the meantime, your views on any aspect of your prison volunteering, whether positive or negative, can be emailed to [volunteering@corrections.govt.nz](mailto:volunteering@corrections.govt.nz) or posted to:

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National Advisor: Volunteers  
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## Ceased volunteering?

Have you ceased your prison volunteering activities? Not been into the prison during the last 4-6 months? It is important to let us know.

Removal from the register of 'active' volunteers does not mean that you cannot receive future editions of *CORRvolunteer* (should you wish). Should you decide to recommence volunteering in the future, the process can be completed in about 10 days.

## Confessions of an 'unemployed, living-on-charity nut-bar!'



Kelly Buckley, Area Coordinator for Prison Fellowship of NZ (Waikato), (pictured above) shares her account of delivering 'Sycamore Tree', a Restorative Justice model in Waikeria – and of being dubbed a 'nut-bar'!

Having been part of the team who volunteer in Waikeria Prison for nearly 10 years, and now in a full time volunteering role, I am well used to people who think I'm a 'nut-bar'! When

they find out that I'm a Registered Nurse who has postponed that career to work with Prison Fellowship (PFNZ) full time, not to mention that I survive on 'charity', you can imagine the response. And then throwing in the whole God thing...well, many just walk away.

PFNZ run a model of Restorative Justice in prisons called 'Sycamore Tree'. In the last financial year, 26 programmes have been delivered in 11 prisons nationwide.

Sycamore Tree is a Biblically based programme using the story of Zaccheus' encounter with Jesus. It brings together six serving prisoners and six community participants who have been the victims of crime in eight two-hour sessions. We explore what crime is from a legal aspect and what God says about it. We talk about its effect on victims and the families of offenders. We discuss the power of forgiveness, apologies, repentance, restitution and, finally, restoration.

During the programme, relationships and trust build, sometimes between the most unlikely of characters. Picture a lady of 80 plus paired up with a young Samoan man who has lost the sight of one eye in a fight. He is six foot something and three times as wide as her! He saw this lady as the grandmother he never had and she saw him as a big teddy bear. On the evening of our last session, our graduation, this lady was taken ill and went into hospital. Less than 24 hours later, she passed away. We held a memorial service inside with the men, as this was very important to them. Tears flowed and the memories we shared from just those 16 hours we had shared together were so special. Amazing things happen on this programme.

These men have done some terrible things, but they are not terrible people. They are hurt and need to be loved as much as anyone. If God chooses me as the messenger to tell them that, it is my pleasure to do so. It's surprising how much reward and enjoyment I get out of being an unemployed, living-on-charity nut-bar!

*A civilisation flourishes when people plant trees under which they will never sit – Greek Proverb*

## Top recognition for Christchurch volunteer

Christchurch volunteer Ben Carr has been honoured for 28 years of work with prisoners and their families by Volunteering Canterbury.

At a special ceremony during Volunteer Awareness Week, Ben, 85, received a 'Volunteer Recognition Award' from Minister for the Community and Voluntary Sector, the Hon. Luamanuvao Winnie Laban. In all, 20 recognition awards were made with the Minister telling the recipients: 'You deserve this recognition and we need to continue to celebrate and value the positive goodwill that is in our people.'

Ben regularly visits prisoners at both Christchurch Men's and Rolleston Prisons, providing friendship and encouragement, without judgment. South Island Regional Volunteer Coordinator, Renee Jones, says: 'Ben is a caring and selfless person. His tireless efforts to support and motivate prisoners are greatly appreciated by both the men and staff alike. We are lucky to have him and benefit from his good work.'

Ben, a former World War Two merchant seaman, is no stranger to such accolades. In 2000 he received the Queen's Service Medal – awarded 'for valuable voluntary service to the community.'

## New report on Māori and volunteering

A new research report has been published which explores how and why Māori 'volunteer.'

Commissioned by the Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector (OCVS), *Mahi Aroha: Māori Perspectives on Volunteering and Cultural Obligations* is based on research by Pam Oliver and Associates and a literature review on indigenous models of volunteering and Māoritanga provided by Dr. Catherine Love.

The report reveals that volunteering for Māori is based significantly upon the notion of whanaungatanga (kinship) and the benefits, both for individuals and the wider community, derived from contributing to the common good.

A copy of the report (in PDF) can be downloaded by visiting <http://www.ocvs.govt.nz/documents/reports/mahi-aroha.pdf> or, alternatively, you can request a hard copy by sending an e mail request to [ocvs@msd.govt.nz](mailto:ocvs@msd.govt.nz)

## Subscribe to the OCVS newsletter

The Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector issue regular newsletter throughout the year. You can subscribe by emailing your details to [ocvs@msd.govt.nz](mailto:ocvs@msd.govt.nz)

## Working towards well being

Kia ora koutou e te whanau mahi aroha o te whareherehere o Aotearoa. Ka mihinui koutou.  
Ko Mangahaume te maunga,  
Ko Waipaoa te awa,  
Ko Mangatu te marae,  
Ko Aitanga a Mahaki te iwi,  
Ko Te Tairawhiti te kainga.  
Taku Matua: Tokikapu Peta.  
No Kahurautau te marae,  
No Whanau a kahu te hapu,  
No Te Whanau Apanui raua ko Ngati Porou te iwi.  
Taku Whaea: Titihuia Whiri – Peta.  
No Ngahina te marae,  
No Ngati Tawhake te hapu,  
No Tuhoe te iwi.  
Ko Rawinia Peta-Douglas taku ingoa.

Greetings to our family of volunteers who work in prisons around New Zealand. My family name is Winnie and I live in the Chatham Islands, where I am a Rural Health Nurse. Between 2001 and 2005 I worked as a Prison Nurse for GEO NZ Ltd in Auckland Central Remand Prison (ACRP). Throughout these years, to the present, I have been a member of the Sunday Pastoral team in ACRP, supporting Sunday church services for prisoners. This team (A team) is lead by Chaplains Heremaia Mutu and Eileen Barrington, Kaumatua Ben and Kuia May, affectionately known as Ma.

As an ex prison nurse and current volunteer in ACRP, the kaupapa is whanuangatanga. Right from the minute I walked into the prison walls, there was a sense of everyone looking after each other.

The Māori philosophy towards health is based on a wellness or holistic health model. One of these models is Durie's, Whare tapa wha model. With its strong foundations and equal sides, the symbol of the wharehenui or house. The Whare tapa wha illustrates the four cornerstones or sides of Māori health. These are taha whanau - family; taha tinana – physical; taha hinengaro – mental health; taha wairua – spiritual (Durie. 1994). Should one of the four dimensions be missing or damaged, a person/s may become unbalanced or unwell.

In a traditional Māori approach to health, the inclusion of the wairua, the role of the whanau, and the balance of the hinengaro and tinana are as important as the physical dimensions in health. For many Māori, especially prisoners, (Māori make up the highest percentage of prisoners in NZ's prisons), the major deficiency in modern health services is taha wairua (spiritual dimension) (Durie, 1994)

*The spiritual well being of the person –* As a health advocate, working and supporting Sunday karakia services, my mahi is aiding in the well being of prisoners, staff and visitors, especially in their spiritual journey, using all types of resources, music, drama, art teaching etc.

*The values and belief that determine the way people live –* What your beliefs are in comparison to another culture? - Listening to other beliefs. What values you have been brought up with.

Here is where I like to awhi and support people in what they believe, and what their values in life are, no matter what race they may be. Being culturally aware and responsive to the needs of the whanau in the whareherehere.

*The search for meaning and purpose in life and personal identity and self awareness –* Believing in ones self. Feeling good about who you are - you are a unique being.

Being in prison can be a positive or negative experience. I have always felt that people are special, and need to be told so, no matter what their circumstances are.

*Taha Tinana – Physical well being.* The body, its growth, development, ability to move and ways of caring for it (Durie. 1994).

*Taha Whanau – The social well being.* Family relationships and other interpersonal relationships. Feelings of belonging, compassion, caring and social support (Durie. 1994).

*Taha Hinengaro – The mental and emotional well being.* Coherent thinking processes, acknowledging and expressing thoughts, feelings and responding constructively (Durie. 1994). For me, utilizing Durie's framework is how I work and practice in the whareherehere, using all that I am; a whaea; a nanna; a teacher; a nurse; a person with life experiences; to portray aroha, understanding, empathy, as our tupuna would want us to do.

Being committed to doing my mahi, for the betterment of all. Teaching and encouraging life skills to your fellow man, equipping them with the necessary skills to carry on with life to the full when they leave the whareherehere.

References:

Durie, M. (1994). *Whaiora: Maori Health Development*. Auckland: Oxford University Press.

*When you cease to make a contribution, you begin to die – Eleanor Roosevelt*

## Anxious first steps

Marijke Pritchard is a relatively new volunteer, providing literacy support in the Youth Unit in Rimutaka Prison. Here she gives a very personal account of the anxieties that can beset a new prison volunteer.

I was very nervous when I made my first visit to the Youth Unit to work with a lad to support his literacy programme. The education tutor in the unit selected a prisoner he thought would progress more quickly with one-to-one support.

This was an area I had little or no experience in, but the Regional Volunteer Coordinator gave me some key strategies to use to help the lad develop some word attack and comprehension skills.

Nevertheless, I was very aware of how unsure of myself I felt on the day of my first visit. It turned out to be very brief and consisted of him studying with great intensity – his feet! His verbal responses were mumbled and I was shaking like a leaf.

The next two visits were somewhat painful and we were both thankful when they ended.

During the third visit, I somehow made him laugh and, for the first time, he looked at me properly. At that point I realised I ‘had him.’

After that, the visits lasted one to one and a half hours long and I saw an incredibly determined young man struggle and fight his way through his Correspondence School work. I know it wasn’t easy for him. He was aware that his five year old nephew could read better than him.

After three more successful and enjoyable visits, he was suddenly and without warning transferred to another prison.

I cannot describe how it made me feel to see his confidence growing and feelings of self worth developing. I wish him well.

This experience, even over a short period of time, has made me determined to carry on with this work. I am very thankful to be given the opportunity to be involved in helping prisoners help themselves.

## Contributions invited

Contributions from the ranks of our valued volunteers make *CORRvolunteer* the interesting read it is.

You are cordially invited to submit items for possible inclusion in future editions, particularly;

- Personal accounts of your prison volunteering experiences;
- Personal profiles of yourself and your ‘volunteering journey’;
- Examples of ‘good practice’ in prison volunteering – what has worked well? How could this be adapted for use by others?;
- Views on topical volunteering issues.

Contributions should be ideally no more than 400 words in length and respect the confidentiality that underpins prison volunteering. If you have a photograph to illustrate your article, all the better!

You can e mail or post your contribution, using the contact details provided on page 2.

## Regional Volunteer Coordinators

The Department of Corrections' Regional Volunteer Coordinators (RVCs) are responsible for the overall coordination of volunteer engagement, training, administration and monitoring and are your first point of contact for all local issues. The RVCs are;

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***Please remember to contact us straight away should you change address/phone number or should you no longer be volunteering on a regular basis***