Thank you to our Volunteers

You may not all realise, but the association would cease to exist without all the wonderful people who volunteer for us. We have a hugely competent Board whose role is governance, however each member pitches in within their own area of expertise. They all have day jobs but give freely of their time to plot and plan for the betterment of our ADHD community.

In addition, we are lucky to have some regular volunteers helping with the newsletter, the library, facilitating the various facebook groups, managing support groups, and soliciting sponsorships.

On behalf of our membership and from me personally I would like to extend a huge THANK YOU to you all – Darrin, David, Anna, Michael, John, David, Sarah, Brett, Karen, Steph, Flo and Rod, Jeanette, Raewyn, Tracey, Lisa and Sheila. We couldn’t do it without you.

I’d also like to especially thank Di Wellacott who runs the helpline, for being wise, experienced and caring.

ADHD Association submission to Parliamentary Select Committee

Darrin Bull and I attended and spoke to our submission in front of a select committee including Catherine Delahunty, Judith Collins, Paul Foster-Bell, Tracey Martin, Jenny Salesa, Jian Yang and Paul Goldsmith.

Earlier submissions mentioned teacher training, early assessment etc, however we were asked particularly about the use of medication, the impact of the new open plan classrooms and issues raised in the survey we conducted for this purpose.

We were also represented by the collective “the invisible disabilities cube” of which we are a member. This group spoke strongly and presented postcards representing a range of individual student stories for the MP’s to take away.

The committee were receptive and supportive. Hopefully they can translate this into some effective policies in early childhood and schools to better cater to our community.

Marceline Borren

National Coordinator

Wishing you all a safe and wonderful christmas
ADHD HELPLINE
Diane Wellacott is available for enquiries on Wednesdays between 10am and 2pm. Please phone the office on (09) 625 1754
ADHD is a family issue. Whether we are thinking about a child who cannot concentrate and may be impulsive and hyperactive, struggling at school as well as at home or an adult with the same issues causing consequences at work and in relationships, inevitably those around will be affected and can be a help or a hindrance. There is a lot of good advice around on how to help the person with the problem but it usually assumes we are just dealing with an isolated individual.

But there is another fascinating aspect to coping with one person with ADHD. He or she is not alone! The inherited nature of ADHD means that probably 50% of children with an ADHD parent will have the same problem. And turning it around the other way it is highly likely that at least one parent will be the source of the ADHD. Sometimes two people with ADHD get together because they recognise familiar traits in the other person. Opposites attract so it is common to have one partner who is hyperactive and the other one who is a dreamer. What an exciting combination!

A child with ADHD, particularly the more hyperactive/impulsive type, can have a devastating effect on a couple’s relationship. Remember too how if at least one parent struggles with ADHD then it almost inevitably makes life so much harder for an ADHD kid.

What happens when a parent with ADHD tries to train a child with ADHD? The challenge of hyperactive kids can be enormous as their impulsivity provokes all those around them. As they go through the day they can leave a string of casualties behind them - some physical and financial, some verbal and emotional. Some issues are big and some are small. I try to encourage parents to help their struggling kids by picking their battles. As a couple they need to decide what matters and what does not. What behaviour causes real harm to the child or family and friends? We are more inclined to react to the prospect of physical damage to windows, furniture or walls. What is more important, a broken window or a broken heart, a hole in the wall or a hole in the family when someone gives up and withdraws?

To have the wisdom to recognise where the line should be drawn - and then the strength, love and patience to insist it happens - is vital to effective parenting.

If on the other hand we react to impulsive behaviour with our own impulsivity we achieve nothing.

There is a positive side to being an ADHD parent. We can really understand the struggle our kids are going through. For that to happen we need both honesty and humility. It is admitting ‘Yes, I made the same mistakes when I was growing up – and at times I still do.’ One helpful exercise is comparing school reports between one generation and the next. This can be enlightening. We would like our kids to regard our childhood as a model of how it should be for them. Yet we are in all likelihood trying to fool them and ourselves. In fact, school reports of a generation ago before the advent of political correctness were usually more revealing. Teachers back then did not hesitate to describe a rat-bag in the classroom in suitably colourful language. One of the most useful characteristics of an ADHD parent is a gentle sense of humour which allows us to laugh at ourselves. In this sense we laugh not at our kids, but with them.
Cooking 101

Cooking is a life skill we should be equipping our children with. And the holidays are a great time to start... over the next few issues we will be adding a few more basic recipes to the mix (!) these are more aimed at teens becoming independent than young children being creative.

1. How to cook pasta
Although pasta comes in many varieties, it is all cooked the same way.
- Allow 80–125g dry pasta per person. This means a 500g packet will serve 4 – 6 people.
- Use 1 litre (4 cups) of water per 100g dry pasta, bring to boil in a large saucepan, add 1 – 2 tsp of salt, then pasta.
- Cook pasta until ‘al dente’. This means pasta is cooked through but still a little firm in the middle. To check, fish a bit out and bite into it.
- Drain well in a colander before using.

2. Cheese sauce
Basic cheese sauce can be used for tuna bake, macaroni cheese, lasagne, or as a sauce over vegetables.

(makes 1 ¼ cups)
1 cup trim milk
2 tablespoons flour
½ cup grated Edam cheese
2 tablespoons grated parmesan
1 teaspoon mustard
Salt and pepper, to season
- Blend cold milk and flour together with a wire whisk.
- Bring to boil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan. Turn down heat and stir until thick.
- Remove from heat. Add cheeses and seasoning.

3. Scrambled eggs
Whip up a tasty, nutritious meal of scrambled eggs, served with a salad, steamed asparagus or grilled tomatoes.
(serves 1)
1 egg
1 tablespoon trim milk
Salt and pepper, to season
1 teaspoon reduced-fat spread
- Whisk together egg, milk and seasoning.
- Melt spread in a small saucepan, add egg mixture.
- Cook over a low heat until set. Drag cooked mixture to the edge of the pan to allow mixture to cook evenly.

4. Cheese on toast
Tips for healthy, tasty cheese on toast.

Use high fibre bread, spread a tasty relish, chutney or mustard instead of butter under cheese, always include vegetables. Try tomato slices, sliced mushrooms, finely chopped red onion, sliced peppers, crushed pineapple, capers and cooked asparagus. Use a reduced-fat cheese such as Edam. Grate cheese to make it go further.
- Lightly toast bread. Add toppings, finishing with cheese.
- Place under a hot grill until cheese melts and bubbles.

Try these combinations: (topped with cheese)
- Tomato relish, creamed corn, red onion
- Grainy mustard, pastrami, red pepper
- Baked beans, red onion, green pepper
- Lean bacon, sliced mushroom, sliced tomato
- French mustard, lean ham, crushed pineapple
- Tuna, red onion, capers

For more ideas:
www.eatmovelive.govt.nz
Occupational therapy has been around for years - the use of meaningful occupation dates back to the 1700's. The concept began in the 1910's and became an official profession in 1920 (in the US). Initially the concept of using occupation in health was used in the mental health field, then later it aligned itself with the medical model during the rehabilitation movement seen after the World Wars. For a long time Occupational Therapists had a reputation for 'basket weaving' – some of you who have been around the medical field for a while might remember this! But our profession has come a long way since then and we now work in a variety of areas: mental health, paediatrics, physical rehabilitation, brain injury, vocational rehabilitation, stroke, equipment and housing modifications – the list is a long one!

Occupational therapists look at life as being made up of occupations. Occupations to us are not what you do for a living. Occupations are the activities we do every day which make up our world. We look at these 3 primary areas – performance (work), leisure (play) and activities of daily living. We find out what is meaningful to the person to create client-centred goals and then work towards those goals. Working with children we often use play as meaningful occupation.

But why would you need to investigate occupational therapy intervention for someone with ADHD? Here are a few of the areas we can help with:

1. Regulation and attention: we are able to support a person in finding natural strategies to help attention. This would typically look include sensory regulation techniques, mindfulness, and possibly cognitive-behavioural therapy. OT's will work alongside your medical professional to support these areas. We are not able to provide medication, though.

2. Social interaction: some people with ADHD find social skills a bit tricky. OT’s can help you understand what appropriate social interactions are and how to develop these skills appropriately.

3. Motor skills: this includes both gross and fine motor skills. Many people with ADHD have difficulties with motor skills. One study (Flapper, Houwen, Schoemaker, 2006) stated that up 50% of children with ADHD have motor coordination difficulties significant enough to meet criteria of Dyspraxia/Developmental Coordination Disorder. OT’s are able to work on the underlying areas of the problem (poor strength, coordination, attention) and also provide specific strategies (adapted equipment and environment) to help improve these skills.

4. Mental health: this is a major area for people with ADHD. Many experience anxiety and/or depression at some points in their lives. OT’s can help find the meaningful and engaging activities of a person's world to help them push through these difficult times. A lot of focus currently is placed on mindfulness. Emphasis is also placed on positive experiences and knowing what your triggers are.

5. Sleep: some OT’s can help with what we call ‘sleep hygiene’. This means creating a healthy sleep pattern to ensure your body has the time it needs to recover while you sleep. Some strategies often used are no screen time an hour before bed and having a consistent sleep/wake time.

6. Advocacy: OT’s are able to work with you and your family to advocate your needs. This will depend on your OT’s availability and which service you are accessing.

There are various ways to access occupational therapy support. What you ideally want to strive for is a connection with your therapist. This will help your journey together.

1. Private Therapists: many private therapists offer support to children and adults with ADHD. You might find them on the NZ OT Association website, through their websites, through social media or word of mouth. Ask your teachers, GP’s, paediatricians, psychologists, tutors, speech therapists and other health professionals who they would recommend. There often are limited criteria to access this service and you will need to pay privately.

2. School support: You may be able to apply for OT support through the Ministry of Education. Talk with your School SENCO (special needs coordinator) or Principal about your child’s needs and making a referral to this team. There are criteria for this service and you will not have to pay for them.

3. Mental Health support: your GP or family doctor can make a referral to your local mental health team. There are criteria for this service but you will not have to pay.

If in doubt, talk to your local ADHD support person!

Lindsay Mawdsley
Occupational Therapist
www.childsplay.co.nz
When you think of a great activity for people with ADHD, or as I like to think of us—people with a turbocharged brain—yoga might not be the first thing that springs to mind. Unless of course you already have personal experience of the benefits. My own experience, and that of my clients, is that well planned yoga routines can be extremely beneficial.

To clarify, when I say yoga, I’m not talking about stretch and strain gym classes labelled ‘yoga’, I’m talking about something more holistic, and more based on modern research.

What is Yoga?
Contrary to how it’s often depicted in the media, yoga isn’t synonymous with postures or ‘asana’. Achievement in yoga does not depend on becoming a human pretzel. Instead, authentic yoga is often said to have eight limbs that loosely translated, include: two sets of observances, postures, breathing techniques, sense-withdrawal, concentration, and meditation/mindfulness.

Collectively, the specific techniques associated with these limbs form a toolbox that a skilled practitioner can draw from to fashion a tailored programme that helps to regulate mind and body.

What is Yoga for?
At its most holistic, yoga is a way of life, but there are plenty of benefits to be gained without embracing every aspect.

Yoga is really about (re)integrating body and mind to develop better awareness of the present moment, or what many would call mindfulness. The purpose of yoga is to quieten the mind. With time, this makes us more in control of how we feel.

Once we have greater control of how we feel, we are more likely to act, rather than react.

What can Yoga do for ADHD?
Yoga isn’t just beneficial for ADHD in theory, or in my experience, more and more research is highlighting the benefits. Studies done in India, Germany, Australia, and the USA have shown improvements in ADHD symptoms in children and adults following yoga and related mindfulness practices.

The reported benefits of yoga in these studies included improvements in oppositional behaviour, academic performance, emotional stability, and impulsivity. These are only a few studies, but research in children with autism spectrum disorder also supports the benefits of yoga in terms of attention and emotional regulation, which suggests many kinds of brains benefit from yoga.

Of course yoga can also help to improve posture, increase flexibility, and enhance balance. So those with ADHD can expect similar benefits to people without ADHD—calmer more focused minds, and healthier more vibrant bodies.

How does Yoga work?
As the benefits suggest, yoga works first and foremost with the brain and other parts of the nervous system, and it’s often the breath that provides the gateway to the brain. Yoga encourages slower and deeper breathing, which helps shift us away from the stress response, often dubbed the ‘fight, flight, or fright’ response, and toward the relaxation or ‘rest and digest’ response. Several yogic breathing techniques, often called ‘pranayama’, have been shown to calm both body and mind.

Another way yoga works to relax and focus is likely by stimulating different nerves, especially the vagus nerve. The vagus nerve is heavily involved in our relaxation response; it influences our heart rate, breathing, blood pressure, and digestion among other things.

Yoga also increases gamma-amino butyric acid, or ‘GABA’ for short, in the brain. GABA helps make nerves less excitable, which helps with any kind of overstimulation. Basically, yoga has the potential to influence every aspect of our physiology to make life more enjoyable.
How can Yoga be made more suited to the Turbo-charged brain?

Yoga can be made very well suited to the ADHD mind by keeping instructions simple and divided into a sequence of tasks. With younger children, it can help to tell a story that they act out with their bodies and breath. We like to build on clear fundamental positions, and combine visual, auditory, kinaesthetic, and tactile stimulation to keep attention focused. It is easy to start and finish each session in the same way to provide continuity, and each session provides ample opportunity for praise to foster self-esteem.

What can you do now?

I'm going to be exploring different techniques in upcoming newsletters, for now I want to show you my go to posture for many clients – simhasana or ‘lion pose’. This combines posture, movement, and specific breathing into something that is fun. I love this pose because it helps to release pent up frustration and emotional tension. You don't need to get every little bit right to experience the benefits, but here is a description of the classic pose:

1. **Kneel on the floor and sit on your heels.** Your knees should be a comfortable distance apart. The toes of both feet should remain in contact with each other (or sit cross-legged if more comfortable).

2. **Lean forward** and place the palms of your hands on the floor between the knees, with your fingers facing away from you. Spread your fingers wide and press them firmly into the floor. Relax your whole body and keep your mouth closed.

3. **Roar.** Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose. As you exhale, open your mouth wide and extend your tongue out as far as possible towards your chin, and let out an audible sigh ‘aaaah’. Be sure to engage the muscles in your arms by continuing to push your fingers into the floor as you roar. Hold the pose for as long as feels comfortable. This is one round. Repeat up to 5 rounds.

*References are available on request for the research cited in the article. For more information you can contact Danika Michelle at: Email: squirrelyoga@gmail.com. Website: www.squirrelyoga.co.nz
There is so much one could write about ADD: the diagnosis, parenting strategies, academic difficulties and school relationships, medication, inappropriate behaviours and social skills -- one could go on and on. The one thing that I didn’t expect to have to confront was ongoing parenting and the feelings of loneliness. I am not talking about social isolation here, but rather the definition of loneliness encapsulated by a Facebook message: ‘Loneliness is not about how many people are around you; it’s about how many of them understand you.’

When I reflected on the nearly 40 years of parenting a child and adult struggling with ADD behaviours and emotions, I became aware that I have been lonely for many of those years. Our daughter, whom I will call Jane, was not diagnosed as having ADD until her early 30’s, following a number of personal crises. Parenting, however, has been continuous.

Identified as very bright, and possibly gifted as a pre-schooler (not by her parents!), Jane struggled through her schooling with both academic content and to a lesser extent friendships. This produced a social isolation of sorts for her, and a helplessness and a parenting loneliness for me as her mother. Jane’s schooling was in the 80’s and 90’s, when some forms of ADD were being identified, but much of the blame for behaviours and inattentiveness was still being laid at parent’s feet, particularly mothers. It was during these years that I began my quest to determine what was actually happening in Jane’s life, by the process of elimination. It was only when a number of events and information collided that I became convinced that Jane had ADD. Again this was when she was in her late 20’s, and it took another 4-5 years to convince her that perhaps she was not the cause of the all the multiple crises in her life.

During Jane’s life I have identified her many strengths and many attributes. She was and continues to be enormously compassionate, translating this concern into action by involving herself in animal welfare and rescue, as well as participating in and partially organizing a choir for the disadvantaged. Her ability to ‘hyper focus’ at times has allowed her to organize a successful fund raising event, with no previous experience. Her cooking and food presentation skills are extraordinary, and her dinner parties for 10-12 people are to ‘die for!’ Talented in music art and craft, she is a loyal friend to those who have taken the time to know her.

However, Jane, now in her late 30’s, diagnosed, and receiving proper medication, still struggles with ongoing emotional and financial crises. (Depression is always circling, and sometimes wins.) This is despite achieving a degree, and two academic diplomas. It is difficult to explain to someone that Jane has a disability with these achievements behind her. How does one explain the differing functions of the normal brain, and then how your child’s brain functions differently when some feel that the adult child only needs to ‘Grow up’. Well meaning advice based on minimal if any knowledge of ADD conditions is isolating.

While I have many friends who are genuinely concerned for me, I know that they do not really understand how debilitating ADD is. It would be much easier to explain a serious physical illness, or a well known (and dare I say accepted) mental illness than it is to explain ADD. The trouble is, for many ADD adults, they function fine on the surface: only the family sees the financial disasters, and the emotional pain as a result of depression and lack of understanding by others.

Thus, the challenge of the parenting the distance: Always being there, frequently alone, to support and encourage with whatever means you have, your precious offspring.

A member’s story Nov 2015
Percy Jackson and the Olympians
Kids love the five books in the Percy Jackson and the Olympians 5-book series by Rick Riordan, which have created huge interest world-wide in Greek mythology. Percy is a son of Greek God Poseidon and a mortal mother, and throughout the series his super-human gifts and skills are developed as he battles his way through a number of quests. He is aged twelve when the series begins, struggling with ADHD and dyslexia, and previously expelled from a number of schools. He’s almost seventeen at the end of the series. Riordan’s stories were inspired as bed-time stories for his own son Haley who has been diagnosed with ADHD and dyslexia. The first two books have been made into movies. Recommended age group 9 – 12 years.

My Kete & Ezy Essays
Teacher Charles Leota has developed two Apps to assist students with dyslexia and other learning disabilities. My Kete is an App for laptop and desktop computers which can be used for NCEA exams in place of a reader-writer, while Ezy Essays an App for cellphones which uses the functions of My Kete, to help students write essays. In an exam situation, using My Kete, student’s answers are put into a text box which can then be read back and edited before being formatted into an answer. An interview with Charles can be found on the Radio New Zealand National Programme website pages (broadcast on Nine to Noon on 25 November 2015). You can find the Ezy Essay App on Google Play - the App is free - thanks to an AMP Scholarship Award given to Charles. For queries about My Kete we recommend contacting Charlesleota28@gmail.com

SibCamps
Have a look at the video of Tiffany Wilkinson talking about SibCamps. Tiffany has a younger brother with a disability and she is now a trained facilitator of the SibSupport programme. A SibCamp is run over a weekend for children aged 8 – 18 years who do not have a disability, but have a brother or sister with a disability. The camp combines formal workshops and adventure activities. This is a free programme and there may be assistance given in getting to and from the camp. Siblings are able to learn techniques for dealing with issues, and make new friends. Shorter SibDays for the same age group are also available nationwide.

Thanks to our members for the following tips; some of these have been edited.

Julie - a pack of Bell Herbal Teas is heading your way!

Leading up to Christmas day we have our own special advent calendar/elf on the shelf. Each day the elf is doing something naughty or funny and has a task for us to do that day; picnic in the park, Xbox challenge against mum, make Xmas decorations, backwards day (pudding for breakfast and breakfast for dinner), find glow worms late at night... a couple of days the task card is blank for my boy to write his own suggestion of what we should do.

Tony describes activities he’s organised for his kids in the past...

One was with our trampoline, I’d buy them bottles of dishwashing liquid and we’d put the sprinkler on under the tramp to wet it then they would put the dishwashing liquid on the tramp and jump up and down and make heaps of bubbles; they’d all end up looking like snowmen. After several hours of this they end up very clean and worn out and all for a few dollars. I also bought some strong polythene from Bunnings and unrolled out on the back lawn and once again with the hose and dishwashing liquid they would dive and slide along the polythene for hours until they were worn out and clean.

I used to buy boxes of big chalk and they would draw games like four square or hopscotch on the drive and play for hours, then they would draw pictures by the hour; it can all be left to the rain to wash off or washed off with the hose.

I used to buy some strong polythene from Bunnings and unrolled out on the back lawn and once again with the hose and dishwashing liquid they would dive and slide along the polythene for hours until they were worn out and clean.

I used to make up games whereby I would hide some money somewhere and give written clues to lead them to the next clue, this made them read and think and see who was clever enough to work it out.

We used to go golfing, that was where the boys would go through the water troughs on the golf course looking for wayward balls or over by the Mount golf course, there’s a stretch of land there by the main road and we’d collect heaps of balls and then we’d sell them back to the players at the club house.

I bought some cheap powerful magnifying glasses and a half sheet of plywood and the kids would lie in the sun and burn names or pictures on the board using them on bright sunny days.

I bought some kites and on windy days we’d go to the local school and send our kites up and see who could get theirs up the highest; also you could put a piece of paper over the string and push it up a bit and then bit by bit the wind would blow that piece of paper all the way up until it reached the kite, we would see who could get the most bits of paper up the string.

Tony.

Get an online advent calendar from Pinterest or google. Do the activities as a great lead up to Christmas. Look out for events to attend and arrange your calendar so there’s some space for flexibility too if needed - check out local papers, Facebook area pages etc. for events running locally. Build a slip slop slap routine while schools still in so you don’t forget and have painful burns. Things to do: scavenger hunt with friends (great templates for this online), an ice cream and market visit in Pokeno on Sundays, make slime/gloop/playdough using online recipes and have messy sessions then shower or swim, problem solve - try the BP challenge website for creative technological ideas - www.starters.co.nz/bpchallenge-index

Meagan.
End of School Year

The end of the school year is chaotic. Preparation for the new school year often gets overlooked by families in the preparations for Christmas and holidays and often gets put off at school due to end of year reports, graduation ceremonies and general planning. If you have a child with anxiety problems or special needs in a mainstream school environment you need to start to prepare your child for the new year before this year end by:

• Having classroom visits with the new teacher so the child can see what the teacher is like when they are teaching in the classroom
• Take photos of the new teacher, classroom, toilets to be used etc and use these to put together a book about the new year that you can read with your child several times over the summer holidays. DottyWobble has a template book for you to simply add your photos to, saving you time working out what you need to include.
• If your child has a teacher aide or support, find out if this will continue, how many hours support you will have and who will be providing support.
• Let your child be a part of making or buying something as a thank you to those people who have provided support and help throughout the year.

Summer Holiday Preparation

Holidays can be refreshing and relaxing or just plain stressful. Planning is essential when taking individuals with special needs away, new surroundings and changes of routine can be overwhelming. Here’s some ideas to make your holiday easier to manage:

• Make a book with photos of where you will be going, staying and what you will be doing. Photos are easy to get from travel and accommodation websites. Keep it simple with simple text. Read it often before you set off.

• When away keep visuals close by to refer to when needed. Examples are beach, beach is unavailable, car time, social/behaviour cues, calming techniques.

• A daily planner showing what you will be doing the morning, afternoon and evening.

• If you are staying with friends or family, make a book for them on how to treat your family member with special needs. DottyWobble’s custom made service can help with your preparation. Simply email info@dottywobble.com to discuss your needs.

Alicia.

Find out from your child’s school where they will be placed next year – their teacher, other children in the class, classroom number, timetable. Use a calendar as a visual aid for when school finishes and starts and an advent calendar before Christmas. Theresa.

Prepare a Christmas gifts shopping list before you go shopping, and do not shop alone. With the list in your hand and your friend by your side you will get the items you need, save money by not getting drawn into the shops that offer sales and you will have some spare time to enjoy a nice cup of coffee with your friend to celebrate the start of this wonderful season. Nathalie.

Two great venues: Stardome www.stardome.org.nz - Planetarium shows, telescope viewing (at night), Space Gallery and exhibits; every school holidays there are space-themed activities, we are aliens show – 3D viewing, the space room – mask, space lessons, launch rockets. Gloputt Minigolf – 28 Barry’s Point Road, Takapuna, phone (09) 489 1139. An indoor, Glow-in-the-dark course (free on your birthday). Check the website www.gloputt.co.nz or facebook page for opening hours as they do vary according to day, and opening is earlier in school holidays. Open later on Friday and Saturday nights – 10pm last entry. Cost $15 adults, $11 child, $13 seniors and students. Some flashing lights. Di.

Get hold of an A4 size diary and write in your plans for all six weeks of the holidays. Leave on the breakfast bar so all can read and everyone knows what’s on. Alicia.

Find out from your child’s school where they will be placed next year – their teacher, other children in the class, classroom number, timetable. Use a calendar as a visual aid for when school finishes and starts and an advent calendar before Christmas. Theresa.

Prepare a Christmas gifts shopping list before you go shopping, and do not shop alone. With the list in your hand and your friend by your side you will get the items you need, save money by not getting drawn into the shops that offer sales and you will have some spare time to enjoy a nice cup of coffee with your friend to celebrate the start of this wonderful season. Nathalie.

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Brett Harrington
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STRUCTURE STRATEGIES SUPPORT
WINZ accredited, daily programme of activities including abseiling, archery, body boarding, climbing, giants ladder, kayaking, mountain biking, outdoor survival paddle boarding, raft-building, sailing, slingshot, snorkeling, stackem, surfing and tree climb. For ages 7 – 13 years only, 15-21 Dec and 11-29 Jan 2016, $35 per day, 8.30am – 4.30pm; $5 extra for 7.30am – 4.30pm. Located at 1045 Beach Road, Long Bay. Ph: (09)473 0714. www.merc.org.nz or www.facebook.com/sirpeterblakemerc

Indoor and Outdoor programmes in East Auckland, rugby (touch and skills), soccer, basketball, netball, athletics, volleyball, request sports, golf, American sports, martial arts, boot camp, tramping, kids cross-fit and more; for ages 5 – 13 years. www.triesportnz.co.nz

OSCAR Holiday programmes focussing on sport and physical activities for kids aged 5 – 13 years, various locations. www.kellysports.co.nz

Active and challenging programme, Mairangi Bay. Thu 17 - Fri 18 Dec and Mon 21 - Wed 23 Dec, 8am – 2.30pm, 5 – 13 years, $40/$45 per day. www.autmillennium.org.nz

onboardskate 9am – 3pm, $60 daily including gear, Henderson 15 Jan, Ponsonby 26 Jan, Albany 18 and/or 19 Jan. www.onboardskate.org.nz

Also check out: www.psyv.org.nz

Peter Snell Youth Village Christian camps at Whangaparaoa, for kids in school years 5 – 9; www.flyingpigs.nz, for teens aged 12 – 16 years, leadership, life skills and inspiration holiday programme; www.recreate.org.nz, and www.childsplayot.co.nz.

For kids into the performing arts, check out: www.timbrayproductions.org.nz who are running a few short workshops at the Pumphouse, Takapuna in December, and their “Hit the Stage” A Summer Theatre Workshop, 9am – 3pm, Mon 18 – Fri 22 Jan 2016 at TAPAC Western Springs. Show on Friday evening, $290 ($259 additional child)), 7 – 10 years and 11 – 14+ years.

Camp for teen musicians, 14 – 18 Dec, Clarks Beach, meet and play music with other teens, classes, instrument technique, mentors from the industry, gigs etc. Ph: (09) 377 8584. www.rockcamp.co.nz

Summer in the Square, Wed 2 December – Fri 19 February 2016. A multitude of activities including live music and performances, dancing under the stars, markets, festive weekends. See www.aucklandlive.co.nz.


The 5km Colour Dash Fun Run or walk www.colourdash.co.nz is a fund-raising event for the Ronald McDonald House. Participants are splashed with coloured dust as they run. Up-to-date information on www.facebook.com/colourdashnz. Venue Barry Curtis Park, Botany Downs, 9am – 2pm on Sunday 6 December. Colour explosion party, water, food…could get messy! Gate sales on the day - Adult $55, Child $35, Family $150, or purchase earlier online from www.eventfinda.co.nz.

Indoor and outdoor activities for kids with or without disabilities, Lloyd Elsmore Park, Pakuranga, Ph: 09 533 6360, deearna@lifekidz.org.nz. www.lifekidz.org.nz

If you or the kids are into cycling go to www.at.govt.nz/cyclingsthego to register for free courses in cycling/maintenance and other events and activities.