# Blind Foundation news August 2017

Welcome to your Blind Foundation News update for August 2017.

This update includes the Japanese Youth Group visit, Retina International World Congress and the annual engagement roadshows. It also includes Blind Week, the launch of blind lawn bowls and upcoming Equipment Display Dates.

If there is anything within this update that you would like to know more about then please get in touch with the communications team, whose details are at the end of this update.

# Access Matters: Open Letter

* We have launched an open letter on 1 August. So far, 1,126 people have signed the open letter and called on all Parliamentary Party leaders to show leadership by committing their party to introduce accessibility legislation, including enforceable accessibility standards.
* Check out the Access Alliance Facebook page and the Alliance website – accessalliance.org.nz.
* We have made great progress in lobbying parties across the Board. The Greens have already shown leadership and committed to introduce accessibility legislation. We are working closely with all parties, and are making progress to get National, Labour, the Maori party and New Zealand First across the line.
* With just 5 weeks to go until the election, we have achieved a lot and we couldn’t have done it without your support, so thank you.
* If you haven’t signed the letter yourself, please do so as soon as possible.

# International visitors

* The visiting Japanese Youth Group has now returned to Japan. They had a fantastic time in New Zealand and are very grateful of our support. They started their visit at Guide dogs before coming to Awhina house, where they made a recording of 3 Japanese songs. Over the weekend they had the kiwi homestay experience before travelling to Rotorua for a Marae stay.

# Retina International World Congress

* The 20th Retina International World Congress will be held in Auckland from 7 to 11 February 2018. This is a significant event for New Zealand. Retina International 2018 will offer patients and their families, clinicians, rehabilitation professionals, students and anyone with an interest in retinal disorders with interactive learning and networking opportunities. This will include short scientific presentations, expert panels, treatment approach plenaries and social events.

# Engagement Roadshows

* The Blind Foundation’s Chief Executive Sandra Budd, a group of Board members and members of the leadership team are ready for the annual Engagement Roadshows. The first one takes place on the 12 September in West Auckland. It is a fantastic opportunity to get first hand feedback on how we are doing and what else we could be doing for our clients.
* All the details of the dates and locations are on the Blind Foundation website - blindfoundation.org.nz.

# Blind Foundation podcast

* We are in the process of creating a Blind Foundation podcast. It will tell the stories of clients (through interviews) around the country, and we need your help.
* We’re looking for people to be featured on the show. If you or someone you know is a Blind Foundation client, and willing to be interviewed about your adventures (whether epic or everyday) please email Ellen Boucher – [eboucher@blindfoundation.org.nz](mailto:eboucher@blindfoundation.org.nz).
* Everyone has a story, and we’re keen to talk to people from all around New Zealand.

# Blind Week

* This year’s Blind Week Appeal is at the beginning of October, with the street collection on Friday 6 & Saturday 7.
* If you’re keen to volunteer your time as a collector or coordinator, then you can register now at blindweek.org.nz.
* Last year Blind Week raised over half a million dollars and saw over 1,500 amazing volunteers taking to the streets in support of the appeal.

# Launch of Blind Lawn Bowls in Canterbury

* Earlier this month, the Burnside Bowling Club hosted a fun event to launch the Canterbury branch of the New Zealand Blind Lawn Bowling Association (NZBLBA). Over 52 people attended, including the CEO of Bowls Canterbury, Mel Mather and upcoming NZ Trans-Tasman players, Tayla Bruce, Bruce Wakefield and Sue Curran.
* This was a community lead initiative, sponsored by Blind Sport New Zealand and supported by our Christchurch Recreation team.
* Greg Johnson, former NZ Blind Singles champion from Auckland, was the keynote speaker. Greg shared an inspiring story about his life and the challenges of his journey with blindness. Greg captivated the audience with his humorous anecdotes.
* The event was a great success; raising the profile of this sport in Canterbury and over $1200 to kick-start the local Blind Bowls team.
* If you are Christchurch based and would like to try this sport, there is a social tournament scheduled for Sunday 29 October where you can ‘have-a-go’ as a director or player.  For more information, e-mail Erin Eyles, Community and Recreation Advisor – [eeyles@blindfoundation.org.nz](mailto:eeyles@blindfoundation.org.nz).

## Staff profile

* This month we get to know Jane Moore, Board Secretary, based at Awhina House.
* Jane supports and assists the Board Chair and Directors, drafting and circulating their meeting agendas and recording all meeting minutes.  She also manages the Annual General Meeting and is the Returning Officer managing the annual Board elections.
* Every day is different and sometimes, she never quite knows what will come her way. Jane spends a lot of time in meetings, always focused so she doesn't miss out on anything important that needs to be captured or actioned.  She also gets to speak and liaise with members, assisting with any queries they might have relating to Board matters.
* A particular work highlight for Jane was attending the Blind Foundation's 125th Anniversary event at Government House in Wellington in 2015.  She loved dressing up and meeting members and clients she'd only ever emailed or spoken to over the phone.  She was also honoured to meet the Governor General and his wife, as well as Sir John Key.
* Jane has worked at the Blind Foundation for five years and absolutely loves the people – she finds everyone really friendly, which makes it a fun place for her to work. Previously, she worked for a firm of commodity traders as Company Secretary, based in the City of London, United Kingdom.
* Jane's hobbies include: Golf, golf and more golf and then tennis, badminton and skiing.

## Equipment Display Days

The following equipment display days are for now until the end of October 2017. As these may be subject to change, please call your local Blind Foundation office to confirm details.

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| Area | Venue | Date and time |
| Levin | Senior Citizens Hall, Cambridge Street, Levin. | 6 September, 1pm – 3pm. |
| Upper Hutt | Blind Foundation Wellington Office, 121 Adelaide Road, Newtown, Wellington. | 20 September, 11:30 – 2pm. |
| Invercargill | Blind Foundation Invercargill Office, 172 Queens Drive, Richmond, Invercargill. | 26 September, 1pm to 3pm. |
| Hamilton | Hamilton Social Centre, 15 Liverpool Street, Hamilton. | 27 September, 10am – 12pm. |

For further information on any of the above, please contact the Communications Team at [comms@blindfoundation.org.nz](mailto:comms@blindfoundation.org.nz) or 0800 24 33 33.