

# outlook

Blind Foundation Community Magazine

Summer 2016



Rising  
to the  
challenge



**Blind**  
Foundation

Beyond vision loss



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**Cover:** Ben Geddes climbing Mt Tongariro on the 7 Day Challenge.  
Photo: Miranda Bucknell-Whalley.

## Feedback on our services

The Blind Foundation is committed to providing high quality services to all its clients.

To provide feedback on our services, please contact **Catherine Rae**, Client Job Seeker – Adaptive Communication & Technology National Manager, at [feedback@blindfoundation.org.nz](mailto:feedback@blindfoundation.org.nz) or C/- Private Bag 99941, Newmarket, Auckland 1149.

## Get in touch if your vision needs change.

Please get in touch if you have any changes to your sight loss-related needs that we can assist with. We are just a phone call away on **0800 24 33 33**.

Outlook is available in print, online, via email, in audio and braille. The audio CD is playable in any CD player.

For further information about the Blind Foundation or to change your preferred format, please phone **0800 24 33 33**, email [generalenquiries@blindfoundation.org.nz](mailto:generalenquiries@blindfoundation.org.nz) or visit [blindfoundation.org.nz](http://blindfoundation.org.nz)

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# Dear Readers,

Welcome to the final edition of Outlook for 2016.

It has been a busy and exciting year, full of success stories and new projects.

We're pleased to bring you more inspiring stories to take you into summer and the new year.

If you're interested in challenging yourself to do something epic in 2017, take some inspiration from the team that took on the 7 Day Challenge.

Check out our feature on the inaugural event and the experiences of the participants, who travelled an amazing 700km in seven days and tackled incredible physical feats.

There are stories about people pursuing their dreams, including Eilish Wilkes, who has had her first book published and Georgia Steel, who performs in the National Youth Orchestra.

Read about the FastTrack pre-employment programme, which was held for the first time this year and helped job seekers prepare for the workforce.

With Christmas just around the corner, we also showcase some

of the great gift ideas available from the Blind Foundation shop.

If you're wondering what to make for your Christmas celebrations, try out Julie Woods' recipe for Christmas pudding truffles. They will make a delicious addition to festive events.

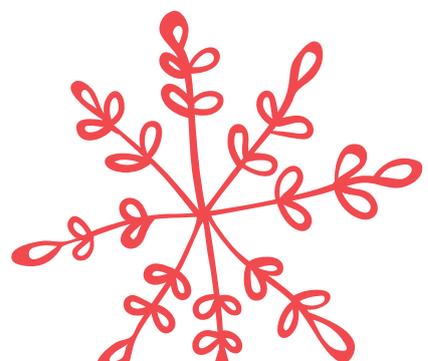
We hope you enjoy these stories during the holiday season and we look forward to bringing you more in 2017.

We love your feedback, so please stay in touch. We're always happy to share your ideas and stories whenever possible.

Please email us at [comms@blindfoundation.org.nz](mailto:comms@blindfoundation.org.nz) or call us on **0800 24 33 33** and ask to speak to the Communications Team.

We wish you a safe and happy holiday season.

**Jo, Jess and Janie**  
The Communications Team



## Message from the Chief Executive

With the end of the year fast approaching, it's a great time to look back at some recent achievements of 2016.



Sandra Budd, Chief Executive.

October saw seven clients take on the epic inaugural 7 Day Challenge with a dedicated support crew. They showed the rest of the country what we already know – that sight loss is no barrier to living a life without limits.

The participants tackled challenges like white water rafting, canoeing, running and climbing Mt Tongariro over a week. They not only accomplished their goals, but did an incredible job of raising awareness about sight loss and Blind Week. Read more about their experiences on page 10.

A film crew followed the team's progress and will turn the experience into a documentary, to raise awareness with a wider audience. The dream is to see it on screens at festivals one day.

We worked with the Wellington City Council, BlindSquare, Radiola and Kontakt.io to place more than 200 iBeacon location devices in the city centre.

The iBeacons broadcast via Bluetooth to iPhones that have the BlindSquare app installed. They provide key messages about the business the app user is entering, like the shop name and layout.

It was fantastic to see the Blindness and Low Vision Prevalence Study officially launched at Parliament in September. This important piece of research gives us a good understanding of the number of people in New Zealand affected by sight loss.

The research will be integral to our service planning. It shows that there are New Zealanders who could benefit from the Blind Foundation's support and services who we're not yet reaching.

Looking back on the year, I'd like to give thanks to all staff, volunteers and many other supporters who make initiatives such as these happen.

On a more somber note, it was with great sadness that we said farewell

to Braille Awareness Consultant Lisette Wesseling. Lisette passed away in September after battling cancer. Her death is a significant loss, not only to the Blind Foundation and the blindness community, but to all those whose lives she touched through singing and music. Many knew and worked with Lisette and will sorely miss her positivity, professionalism and boundless passion for braille advocacy.

As this is my final column for 2016, I would like to thank all of you for your ongoing support and dedication. We simply couldn't do it without you. Have a merry Christmas and a lovely summer holiday.

Warmest regards,  
**Sandra Budd**  
Chief Executive

## Message from the Chair

It has been another busy and successful year. I hope you're all looking forward to your summer break.



Rick Hoskin, Board Chair.

Before I get out the fishing rods, I would like to update you on some of the highlights from the past few months.

We had a great turnout at this year's Engagement Roadshow meetings, which were held throughout the country. More than 560 people attended and it was fantastic to get so much feedback. All of the comments will help to shape our direction in the coming years. Thank you to everyone who took the time to come to a Roadshow and share your views.

For the first time, Auckland Council worked with us to provide assisted voting for the local body elections. The aim was to make the voting process more accessible to those in the blindness community.

People who registered had a trained volunteer visit their home to complete their vote. It was a great example of collaborating with another organisation to break down barriers facing people with sight loss.



I would like to thank everyone who took part in the RNZFB Board elections. Dictation voting proved a popular option again, after being introduced for last year's elections. Our aim is to make it easier for members to vote and we would love to see more of you take advantage of the opportunity.

There were six candidates vying for two general election seats and four candidates stood for the one associate seat. Following the voting, the new Board of Directors is:

- Rick Hoskin (Auckland)
- Peter Hoskin (Auckland)
- Carolyn Weston (Invercargill)
- Keith Appleton (Tauranga)
- Nicola Owen (Auckland)
- Julie Bartlett (Auckland)
- Judith Small (Hamilton)
- Clive Lansink (Auckland)
- Paul Sullivan, Associate Director (Auckland)

If you are not enrolled as a voting member, you can change that by phoning the Contact Centre on **0800 24 33 33**. You will then be able to take part in the next election.

I was delighted to attend the official launch of the Youth Engagement Strategy (YES) during Youth SEED, at Auckland's College Rifles Club. As young people are the future of the Blind Foundation, it was excellent to hear the Blind Foundation's plans to build more opportunities and involve youth.

The strategy will take us in an exciting new direction with young clients, who already have lots of great ideas for the future.

In closing, I wish you all a merry Christmas and I look forward to being in touch again in 2017.

**Rick Hoskin**  
Board Chair

## Challenge yourself with Team Guide Dogs

I'm supporting guide dogs!



Do you dream of running a marathon, taking on a cycling challenge or completing a mud run? Did you know that Team Guide Dogs enters teams into a variety of challenges and events across the country and around the world?

We're looking for enthusiastic individuals to join Team Guide Dogs in 2017 and help raise money for the Blind Foundation. If you are interested in taking on a challenge and fundraising, or would like more information, please contact the Campaigns Team on 0800 120 254 or [run@blindfoundation.org.nz](mailto:run@blindfoundation.org.nz)

## Stay in touch with free fridge magnets

We love for people to stay in touch with us.

To help keep the conversation going, we have free fridge magnets available with our 0800 number.

You are welcome to come to any Blind Foundation office and take a magnet to keep or give to family.



**0800 24 33 33**

## Blind Sports Festival a success

The chance to try blind football, blind lawn bowls and blind cricket proved popular at the Bay of Plenty Blind Sports Festival.

The event, held in Mt Maunganui in October, provided attendees with assistance in coaching skills and advancing game awareness. It also gave people the chance to play sports.

All the sessions were well-attended. The trial of blind football, which is a new game, got a particularly positive response.

The festival included a Dining in the Dark function, which attracted strong community support.

Thanks to the Bay of Plenty Blind Sports Club for organising the festival and providing people with new sport opportunities.



Two teams celebrate competing at blind cricket.

## Tackling the epic 7 Day Challenge

Seven Kiwis with sight loss, seven days, 700km to travel and a host of epic physical tasks were the ingredients for a unique and inspiring challenge.

The 7 Day Challenge was held for the first time in October as part of Blind Week. It proved to be an unforgettable experience.

Blair Gilbert, Blind Foundation National Manager Community, Recreation and Volunteer Services, came up with the idea for the event.

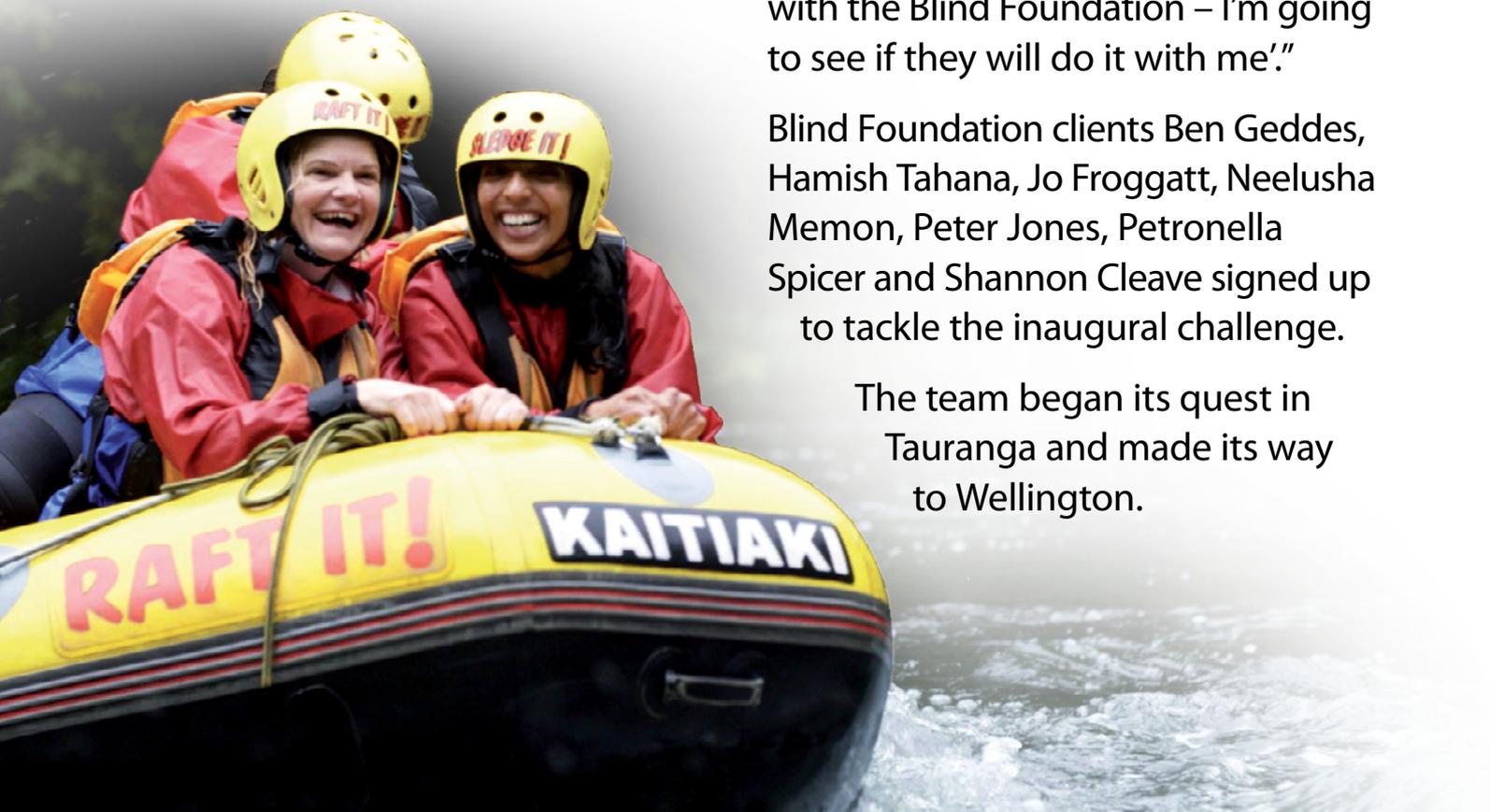
He had been thinking about the concept for some time. It was as he

climbed to the summit of Mt Tapuae-o-Uenuku, in the Marlborough region, with a friend, that it took shape.

“I said to my mate, ‘Let’s do a 7 Day Challenge – let’s climb some mountains, paddle some rivers and run some hills. I want to show New Zealanders that people who are blind or have low vision really can do anything they set their mind to. I know so many strong, inspirational clients with the Blind Foundation – I’m going to see if they will do it with me’.”

Blind Foundation clients Ben Geddes, Hamish Tahana, Jo Froggatt, Neelusha Memon, Peter Jones, Petronella Spicer and Shannon Cleave signed up to tackle the inaugural challenge.

The team began its quest in Tauranga and made its way to Wellington.



Staff member Deborah Nash and client Neelusha Memon enjoy white water rafting. Photo: Moonsuit.

The participants were quickly immersed in the adventure, spending the first day white water rafting on the Kaituna River.

That included a massive drop down a seven metre-high waterfall, which is one of the world's highest commercially-rafted waterfalls.

"That was a real adrenalin rush," says Jo. "I enjoyed the water activities the most."

From there, they did a marathon relay from Tauranga to Rotorua and paddled a waka across Lake Rotorua. Once on the shore, they were welcomed with a kapa haka performance before staying at Tunohopu Marae.

"The welcome we received when

paddling the waka into Rotorua with school students doing the haka was very moving. The song they sang was beautiful," says Petronella.

Day three involved tandem cycling the Taupo Flyer route to Taupo and they barely had time to rest their legs before climbing Mt Tongariro the next day.

For Peter, climbing the mountain and eating lunch on the edge of the summit crater made it his favourite day.

"It was a magic moment for me."

After the heights of the Tongariro summit, the challengers spent a day jet boating up the Whanganui River. After visiting the Tieke Marae, the crew canoed back down the river.



The team gets ready for the tandem cycle. Photo: Jo T Cooper.



The 7 Day Challenge team prepares to go white water rafting.

Neelusha says her favourite part of the challenge was performing a karanga (call) in response to the welcome at the marae.

On the penultimate day of the adventure, they hiked down the Kapiti Coast.

The challenges of the final day were kept secret from the participants. They had to complete them in an Amazing Race style. New instructions were texted to them at each location.

They made their way to the Paekakariki train station and travelled into Wellington. Their finale was to climb Mt Victoria and dragon boat from Oriental Bay.

The 7 Day Challenge ended with a celebration and medal ceremony.

“I was stoked with my sub-20-minute sprint to the top of Mt Victoria,” says Neelusha.

Paralympic gold medalist Mary Fisher was a surprise guest at the event.

For their last surprise, the challengers were taken to the airport in hot rods by members of the Capital Rodders hot rod club.

The 7 Day Challenge doesn't end here, though. The entire event was captured by a film crew, who plan to turn the footage into a documentary.

“When I look back at what we achieved, it seems unreal,” says Jo.

Her advice to others is to grab such opportunities with both hands, even if they have doubts about their abilities.

“Just get up off the couch and get out there. There’s absolutely nothing like the feeling of achievement when you have given your all.”

Peter agrees. He was originally hesitant about putting his name forward for the challenge, but did so with encouragement from his wife.

“I’m so glad that I took part in this incredible opportunity. I know

the focus of the challenge was demonstrating a life without limits. As someone who lives with the constant life adjustments that progressive blindness brings, I fully realise that my life does have limits.

“But with the support of the amazing dedicated staff and volunteers at the Blind Foundation, a lot of these limitations can be overcome in a way that builds self-confidence and self-belief, to help one face both daily and future challenges in a life with blindness or low vision.”



Participants and support crew climbing Mt Tongariro.

# Remembering Lisette Wesseling

Elisabeth Jacoba  
Maria Wesseling (Lisette)

19 October, 1971 – 12 September, 2016

Passion, dedication and talent are some of the many qualities synonymous with Lisette Wesseling's life and work.

Lisette, who worked as a Braille Awareness Consultant for the Blind Foundation, passed away in September at the age of 44 after a battle with cancer.

Not only did she have a lifelong passion for braille advocacy, but was also a professional classical soprano and choral singer. Her musical talents touched many, and she was an international advocate for braille music as well as a voice teacher.

Among her many achievements was publishing her book, *Focus on Braille Music*. She also received a Highly Commended citation in the Arts Access Artistic Achievement Award 2014, presented at the Arts Access Awards.

"Lisette's manner, positivity and

approach to everything she did will be sorely missed," says Blind Foundation Chief Executive Sandra Budd.

"The legacy of what she achieved, and who she was, will live on at the Blind Foundation and in the hearts and minds of all her knew her."

Lisette championed the use of braille in mainstream society. She was the lead on official signage guidelines used by architects, builders and government, based on international standards.

She helped organise braille competitions with BLENNZ (Blind and Low Vision Education Network NZ). She created the concept of braille buddies and was instrumental in setting up braille letters from



Santa with New Zealand Post.

Lisette also set up a programme to introduce braille in libraries across New Zealand.

In 2009, Lisette travelled to Paris to attend the formal celebrations of the 200-year anniversary of Louis Braille's birthday.

Blind from the age of three months, Lisette's parents instilled a love of music in her, which continued into her student years at Homai College.

She enjoyed competing in talent quests and was a member of the Auckland Youth Choir. She also attended music camps in Australia.

Lisette completed a music degree at Auckland University then moved to

Melbourne to complete an honours degree. Taking her talents further afield, she headed to London to study at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama.

While living in London, she met her husband Neil Jarvis when he installed her new computer system. The couple moved to New Zealand in 2004.

In 2013, she achieved her lifelong dream of releasing a solo album, entitled *Music in my Mouth*. The cover included braille. In addition to her CD, she also appeared on many other recordings throughout her career.

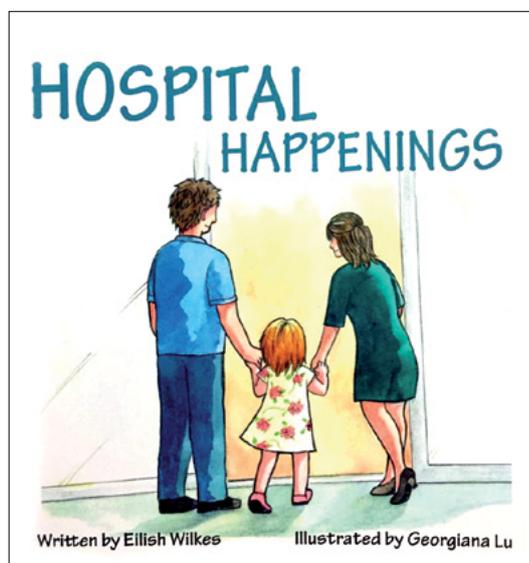
Throughout Lisette's professional singing career, she performed alongside many household names in the classical music field, especially baroque music.

The UK-based Hilliard Ensemble, for instance, asked her to perform with them at their appearance at the 2006 Wellington Festival. This renewed a long-standing partnership which stretched back to her time in London.

Lisette was a well-respected, popular staff member who taught braille to many other staff over the years. Her dedication and influence will live on at the Blind Foundation.

## Book helps children cope with hospital visits

Spending time in hospital as a child can be a daunting experience and one that Eilish Wilkes is using to help others.



Blind Foundation client Eilish published her first children's book, *Hospital Happenings*, to make other children feel better about medical appointments.

"My main inspiration for writing this book was my own personal experience as a small child, constantly being in and out of hospital and being so unwell," says Eilish, 20.

"There was no resource like that available. At the time, it would have been hugely helpful. I wanted to help other children feel more able

to cope with the experience of going to hospital."

Eilish was diagnosed with a cancerous brain tumour at the age of two and underwent neurosurgery and 18 months of chemotherapy. The tumour left her legally blind, but she still has a little sight and can use a magnifier to enlarge text for reading. She received guide dog Loie last year.

Eilish spent more time in hospital after her initial treatment, suffering a brain bleed at the age of nine. Last year she was diagnosed with SMART syndrome, which causes stroke-like migraine attacks after radiation therapy.

She has a passion for writing and after doing a creative writing course last year, wanted to write a children's book.

*Hospital Happenings* features a young girl, also named Eilish, going to hospital and experiencing a check-up, a blood test and an x-ray.

The book was published by the Young Authors Project. The trust helps young people who have incurable or inoperable life-limiting illnesses achieve their dream of becoming authors.

Hospital Happenings was the first book published by the trust.

Founder and chair Julie Fennell says she was delighted to be introduced to Eilish by a mutual friend.

“It just seemed like a natural fit that she would be Young Authors Project’s first author. She was eager to get her book published. Once I read through the Hospital Happenings manuscript, I fell in love with the story.



**From left:** Young Authors Project chair Julie Fennell, author Eilish Wilkes and illustrator Georgiana Lu.

“I was incredibly inspired by Eilish’s goal of helping other children with her story. I am very proud of both the book and its young author.”

Eilish read her book to children at Ronald McDonald House and says the kids loved it.

“It was a wonderful opportunity.”

**Hospital Happenings is available from the Blind Foundation library.**

**Copies of Hospital Happenings can also be purchased on the Facebook page, [Facebook.com/hospitalhappenings](https://www.facebook.com/hospitalhappenings)**

**For more information on the Blind Foundation Library, phone 0800 24 33 33 or visit [blindfoundation.org.nz](https://www.blindfoundation.org.nz)**

## Tablet makes all the difference for musician

Technology is helping Georgia Steel, who plays the viola in the National Youth Orchestra, to achieve her musical dream.



Georgia Steel playing the viola in the National Youth Orchestra. Image courtesy of the NZSO.

Blind Foundation client Georgia, 22, uses a tablet to display her music at a size that she can read. She has low vision and can see things well at close range, but little beyond that.

"I used to have A3 folders but they're a bit of a nightmare because if you turn the page too fast, the whole

thing comes falling down.

I eventually got a tablet and I cut each A3 page into three sections so it fills up the whole width of the screen, which means it's a lot bigger than the A3 music.

"I've found that's been so helpful because I can sit back further when I'm reading music. For a string instrument, that's really important because you don't want to be too close to the music and trying to use your bow."

Georgia has played the piano since the age of eight but didn't start playing the viola until she was 17.

"You have to sight-read a lot as a pianist. I can't really sight-read that well, so it didn't seem to be an option that was worth continuing. I decided to switch to the viola."

The viola only requires reading one clef, rather than two for the piano, and gave her the chance to be involved in orchestras.

"I've had some amazing opportunities,

which is great. One of the reasons I picked up the viola is that I really like orchestras and orchestral playing. I wanted to be involved in that. Violas are always needed.

“I have really thick glasses, but it makes it quite difficult for me to see the conductor, so I don’t usually look at the conductor at all when I’m playing. I can’t do both at the same time, so I’ve learned how to manage it all without looking at the conductor, which is a good skill to have, but also comes with its challenges.”

Georgia played in school orchestras and went on to do a music degree at Waikato University.

She is currently in her second year of a performance degree at Victoria University.

To help with her studies, Georgia received a grant from the Oppenheim Tertiary Education Trust Fund, which provides assistance to Blind Foundation clients in tertiary education.

**For more information on educational grants available to Blind Foundation clients, or using technology, phone the Contact Centre on 0800 24 33 33 or go to [blindfoundation.org.nz](http://blindfoundation.org.nz)**



Georgia uses a tablet to read music. Image courtesy of the NZSO.

“It’s been fantastic in helping me pay for my uni fees.”

In addition to playing in university orchestras, she successfully auditioned for the National Youth Orchestra for the first time last year.

“They re-audition every year. I auditioned again this year and got in, which was really surprising and fantastic.”

Her ultimate goal is to one day be a professional orchestra and group ensemble player.

## On the FastTrack to employment

A new programme to help Blind Foundation clients become ready for employment has proven a hit with participants.

Nine clients from around the country, aged between 25 and 55, came to Auckland for 10 days in August and September for the intensive FastTrack pre-employment programme.

Employment Services Practice Advisor Stephanie Lange says the participants were job seekers at a similar stage of being ready for work. The participants did self-evaluation exercises and researched the job market in their regions before going on the course.

The programme covered a range of topics related to preparing for employment. There was a focus

on areas specific to people who are blind or have low vision.

The course included exploring different types of workplace technology with Adaptive Communications/Adaptive Technology Services.

“A big focus was on how you talk about your vision impairment and explain it to employers in a positive, functional way. We did a lot of role-play around communication and networking because that can be quite difficult for someone who is blind or has low vision,” says Stephanie.



The participants and organisers of the inaugural FastTrack pre-employment programme.



Participants worked on communication and presentation skills and listened to a panel of people with sight loss who had recently become employed.

“They talked about their journey and experiences and what worked for them. It was hugely beneficial and was one of the highlights of the programme that people identified.”

On the second to last day, a panel of employers from different companies held mock job interviews with the participants.

“We wanted to create as realistic a situation as possible. Each participant had an interview with a panel of two people and got feedback. After that, we had a panel discussion with the HR people where each side got to ask questions.”

The exercise was so successful that one client was offered a real job interview on the strength of the mock one.

Stephanie says the employers also benefited from the programme.

“We’re supporting them around the appropriate recruitment of people with disabilities. It’s a real two-way thing. We’ve developed those relationships since.”

All the participants left with an action plan to help them move forward on their employment journey.

Cheiree Ohs, who has retinitis pigmentosa, took part in the programme and says it was an exceptional experience.

“The content was such that it positively impacted on everybody. I can’t speak highly enough of it.”

Cheiree previously worked in high-level management and spent her working life using an old-fashioned magnifying glass. She was amazed to discover the range of workplace technology available.

On the last day of the programme, each participant took turns being given positive feedback from their peers, which was transcribed and sent to them.

“That was an incredibly moving and amazing experience,” says Cheiree.

“I read it every now and then and it feels great. It’s up on my office wall.”

**For more information on the Blind Foundation’s employment service, phone 0800 24 33 33 or visit [blindfoundation.org.nz](http://blindfoundation.org.nz)**

## Youth set to benefit from new strategy

Young clients from around the country are set to benefit from the Blind Foundation Youth Engagement Strategy (YES), which launched in October. YES sets a bold new direction for the Blind Foundation to connect with clients aged 17 to 25 years old.

The aim is to enable young people to lead independent and productive lives as individuals and in their community. The Blind Foundation will support the aim through a range of initiatives. Some highlights are:

- Youth-specific social activities and groups.
- A better flow of information about services.
- A closed youth Facebook group.
- An annual youth event.

Key to the strategy's development was involving young people every step of the way. A co-creation model was adopted, with a team of youth and staff having an equal voice.

Blind Foundation Chief Executive Sandra Budd said she was impressed by the dedication of the young people involved. They committed to meet with staff every second Tuesday night throughout the year, completed surveys and helped plan focus groups.

YES will unfold over the next two years. Already the Facebook group is live and planning is underway for the annual event.

**To find out more about YES, call 0800 24 33 33 or check out the Blind Foundation website, using YES as a key search word.**

The second annual Youth SEED leadership programme was held in Auckland early in October.

Participants from around the country took part in the three-day programme designed to increase self-awareness, confidence and leadership skills.

Aged from 17 to 25, the 11 participants did a mixture of classroom based learning and physical outdoor challenges. For some the high ropes was the highlight whereas others found the goal setting very useful.

**If you will be between 17 and 25 years old next year and would like to take part in the Youth SEED programme, please get in touch with the Contact Centre on 0800 24 33 33.**

## Developing young leaders at Camp Joe

Four young Blind Foundation clients travelled to Canada earlier this year for Camp Joe. This was an inaugural youth leadership and development programme, run in association with the CNIB (Canada) and Vision Australia.

Amanda Beaver, Daniel Holt, Leah Morris and Rachel Shardlow attended sessions on different aspects of leadership.

They also took part in activities like waterskiing, canoeing and tandem biking, while spending time with Canadians who were blind or had low vision.

“It was extremely rewarding,” says Rachel.

“It was challenging, but everyone’s world views changed a lot. Two of us had never left New Zealand before and one had never even been on a plane, so it was quite a new experience.”

Rachel says they found that their

Kiwi attitude to blindness was quite different to that of their Canadian counterparts.

“They were quite surprised that we had jobs and studied. They thought that they couldn’t do any of that.”

Rachel, who is doing a media degree, says she and the other Kiwis learned a lot from the leadership sessions and extensive networking.

The four attendees gave a presentation on their Camp Joe experiences to the Blind Foundation Board and received much positive feedback.

They will now go on to complete a youth-focused community project with their newfound skills and knowledge.



**From left:** Staff member Heather McGill, Daniel Holt, Amanda Beaver, Leah Morris, Rachel Shardlow and staff member Stephanie Lange at Camp Joe.

## Joan is sewing up a storm

The gift of a commercial sewing machine has Joan Davidsen sewing up a storm.

The Blind Foundation client, who has dual sensory vision and hearing loss, was given the machine by her brother. She has since been busy making products for animals, including cat and dog beds and bandanas.

“It keeps me happy and busy and gives me something to do,” she says.

“I’ve got a new overlocker as well and hopefully one day, I can make my own skirt or top with it. That would be great.”

She is especially fond of using fabrics with animal prints for her sewing projects. They’re proving a hit, with some already being purchased.

Joan, who loves animals, has two cats named Casper and Cherry. She enters them into cat shows, along with some of the items she makes.

The two cats love to sleep on cushions at her feet, says Joan.

Deafblind Services Coordinator Lloyd Ellison says working with Joan for the past six years has given him an insight into the unique challenges



Joan Davidsen with her new sewing machine.

she faces with dual sensory loss.

“Joan decided about two years ago to look at herself, where she had been and what she wanted.

“With support from her brother, the Blind Foundation and CCS Disability Action, she decided to remove as many barriers as possible.

“I’m proud to see the direction Joan has taken and the wonderful achievements taking place. The road ahead is full of happy adventures for her.”

**For more information about Blind Foundation’s Deafblind Service, please contact 0800 24 33 33 or visit [blindfoundation.org.nz](http://blindfoundation.org.nz)**

## Refreshable braille display on the way

An affordable electronic braille device will soon be available from the Blind Foundation.

The Orbit Braille Reader is the result of more than four years' work by the Transforming Braille Group, a consortium of blindness organisations from all over the world.

The Blind Foundation contributed to the project, which aimed to make low-cost refreshable braille displays accessible to more people.

Neil Jarvis, Blind Foundation Executive Director Strategic Relations and Accessibility, says the Orbit Braille Reader is expected to be available for purchase around Christmas time.

"The purpose of this device is to give people more affordable access to electronic braille and open up the world of electronic information to many more people than has been previously possible.

"Currently, electronic braille devices cost thousands of dollars to buy, whereas the Orbit Braille Reader will cost a few hundred dollars. Pricing is still being finalised and will be determined by factors like exchange rates."

The refreshable braille displays work by electronically raising and lowering pins to produce a display of information in braille.

The device will enable people to read electronic braille books and includes a basic note-taking facility.

It will connect to computers, smartphones and tablets so that users can read information on the screens of their devices right from the Orbit Braille Reader.



Neil Jarvis with the prototype electronic braille display.

## Book deal makes new releases accessible

For the first time, Blind Foundation library members can read new books at the same time as the rest of the public.

A new agreement with Penguin Random House New Zealand gives the Blind Foundation access to selected new titles before they are released. This allows time for the books to be made into accessible formats.

These are then available through the Blind Foundation's library service on the same date as the print version is released.

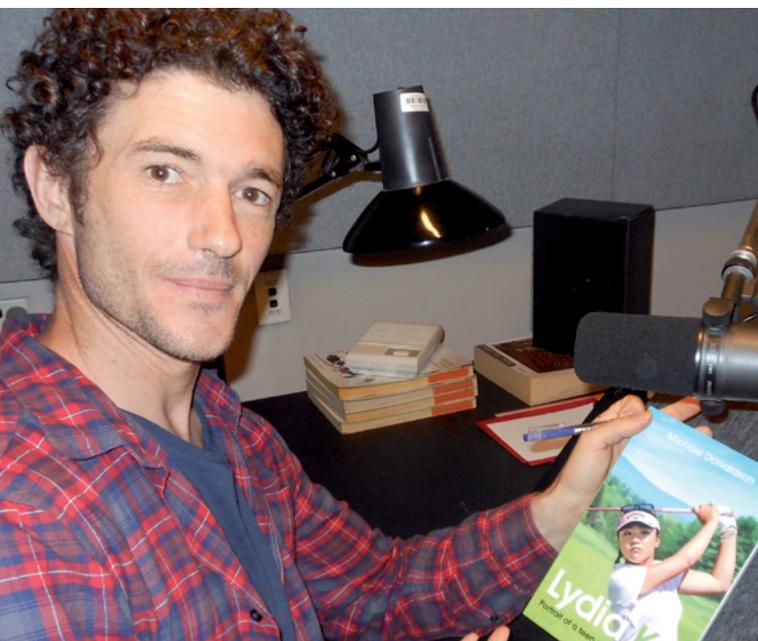
The first book under the new agreement is Lydia Ko, Portrait of a Teen Golfing Sensation, by Michael Donaldson.

"We are very grateful to Penguin Random House for making this possible," says Blind Foundation National Library Manager David Klassen.

"One of the frustrations for our readers is waiting for new releases to be available for us to produce in accessible formats. This new agreement gives Kiwis with sight loss the same access to a selection of new books as everyone else."

David notes the BookLink app, which is now available as part of the library service, also helps speed up delivery. He says BookLink means people simply download the book and no longer have to wait for their CD delivery.

Penguin Random House Publishing Director Debra Millar says the company was pleased to support the Blind Foundation's efforts for access to information.



Blind Foundation narrator Francis Mountjoy with a copy of the book Lydia Ko, Portrait of a Teen Golfing Sensation.

For more information about the library service and BookLink, phone 0800 24 33 33 or visit [blindfoundation.org.nz](http://blindfoundation.org.nz)



# Christmas pudding truffles

By Julie Woods

This recipe came into my possession when I was searching for New Zealand's best truffle recipe on the Cooking Without Looking show in 2011.

We had lots of great entries, but this one from Robyn Nation really hit the spot. What makes it great is that it solves a problem that arises every Christmas – what to do with those Christmas puddings you are given but never want to eat. This scrumptious recipe is the answer.



Julie Woods dressed up as a Christmas pudding truffle.



## Ingredients

1 medium-sized Christmas pudding  
 2 tablespoons of whisky, brandy or liqueur  
 1 packet of glacé cherries, nuts or ginger, finely chopped  
 1 packet of dark chocolate buttons  
 2 tablespoons of oil to thin the chocolate

## Method

1. Crumble the Christmas pudding into a bowl.
2. Add the whisky or other drink of choice.
3. Add the finely chopped glacé cherries, nuts or ginger.
4. Let the mixture stand for a bit, for anything from an hour to overnight.
5. Roll into small balls and place on a tray lined with baking paper.
6. Melt the oil and chocolate in the microwave, stopping regularly to stir the mixture until the chocolate is runny. Stopping and stirring is critical.
7. Dip the truffles into the melted chocolate and place on the lined tray. If you can, try to fit the tray into the fridge. Otherwise, wait a bit longer for the chocolate to set before transferring into snap-lock bags and store in the refrigerator.

This is the best way to eat Christmas pudding. Merry Christmas to you all.

## Book review

### **Lydia Ko: Portrait of a Teen Golfing Sensation, by Michael Donaldson**

By Lance Girling-Butcher

This is not a book review I ever expected to write.

Other than a childhood attempt with a bent pipe, I have never played golf or taken more than a passing interest in the game.

Well, that is not totally true – I have noted outstanding successes by New Zealanders because of introverted parochial pride.

The story of Lydia Ko's remarkable rise to international fame is far more than a golf story.

It is a fascinating chronicle of dedication, hard work and sacrifice that puts the puny efforts of us other mortals to shame.

So do the rewards of becoming the best female golfer in the world, as well as a double millionaire at 17 years of age.

The story is not only attention-grabbing, it sounds more like a miracle and far more than just the



self-indulgent account of yet another sports celebrity.

Discovering just what drove this amazing young woman to such devoted dedication to her self-chosen sport is well recounted.

Readers, like me, will find themselves forced to read on to discover more about her motivation and its dream rewards.

I recommend it to all who are fascinated by the study of humankind.

I must also commend the Blind Foundation for making this book available for our enjoyment so soon after publication.

This is remarkable in its own way and portends well for the future of this much-loved service for those who cannot see, but have dreams like everyone else.



# Engagement Roadshow

The 2016 Engagement Roadshow saw more than 560 people attending events across the country.

The Roadshow is a series of events for the community to talk to the Board Chair, Board Directors, Chief Executive and staff. It is a chance to discuss what's working well and what can be improved.

This year the first events took place in autumn, followed by a spring series in September and October. A record number of clients, volunteers and support people attended.

Another change was the introduction of some weekend events and more evening ones, to encourage working people to join the conversation.

**This year, a wide variety of topics were discussed, including:**

- The challenges facing people when first faced with sight loss.
- Who people turn to when faced with sight loss.
- Which organisations the Blind Foundation could partner with.
- Governance of the Blind Foundation.
- Local and national challenges.

**Some key themes that arose include:**

- Blind Foundation services meet many needs of people when first facing blindness, and are appreciated, but improvements can be made.
- Families and other support people often need support and assistance themselves.
- Building social connections is key to sharing information and reducing isolation.
- Lack of awareness of blindness amongst the public continues to be an issue.

Chief Executive Sandra Budd says that the Roadshow is a particular highlight of her year.

"I enjoy being out in the community, meeting some people for the first time and reconnecting with some familiar faces. It's wonderful to hear people's thoughts and learn how we can improve what we do at the Blind Foundation," she says.

**A full report will be available at the end of the year. If you would like a copy, please contact the Communications Team by calling 0800 24 33 33 or emailing [comms@blindfoundation.org.nz](mailto:comms@blindfoundation.org.nz)**

## Related organisations

There are a number of national organisations that work with the Blind Foundation to support the blind and low vision community.

These organisations are available to Blind Foundation clients and whanau; some groups also cater to blind or low vision people who are not clients.

To find out more, please contact the groups using the details below.

### **Association of Blind Citizens**

**New Zealand Inc.**

**Blind Citizens NZ**

0800 222 694

enquiries@blindcitizens.org.nz

blindcitizens.org.nz

### **Blind Sport New Zealand**

(09) 979 1536

dan@blindsport.kiwi

blindsport.kiwi

### **Deafblind (NZ) Inc.**

027 443 4338

deafblindnz@clear.net.nz

deafblind.org.nz

### **Kāpo Māori Aotearoa**

0800 770 990

info@kapomaori.co.nz

kapomaori.com

### **New Zealand Vision Impaired**

**Empowering Women (NZ VIEW)**

(07) 348 2765

aislabie@clear.net.nz

### **Parents of Vision Impaired**

**New Zealand (PVINZ) Inc.**

(04) 293 8236 or 0274 402 073

david@pvi.org.nz

pvi.org.nz

### **Retina New Zealand Inc.**

0800 569 849

retina@retina.org.nz

retina.org.nz

### **Retina Youth**

0800 569 849

youth@retina.org.nz

retinayouth.org.nz and Facebook group

### **Support and Education for our Youth, their Families and their Friends Inc.**

**(SEYFF)**

021 0235 4395

seyffnz@gmail.com

### **The Albinism Trust**

(06) 367 5900

albinism@inspire.net.nz

albinism.nz

These details are correct at the time of printing. Please check the Blind Foundation website for updated details and more information at [blindfoundation.org.nz](http://blindfoundation.org.nz)



## Parents of Vision Impaired: What we do

Parents of Vision Impaired (PVINZ) is a non-profit organisation made up of parents committed to providing support to other parents of children who are blind or have low vision, often with additional disabilities.

PVINZ began in the early 1980s to fill a gap in advocacy and parent networking. We have developed a significant network throughout New Zealand and internationally and present an advocacy voice for parents supporting their children.

We continue to have an active voice in parents' concerns around education, health and welfare.

The heart and vitality of any parents' support network revolves around the exchanges of experiences, challenges, successes and failures with our disabled children.

To begin the journey, we ask questions and search for information about disabilities. Confusion and frustration are common feelings when being advised by the professionals – be they medical, educational, social or rehabilitation, as well as friends and family.

From this background emerged our parent support network. We found other parents and families and the sharing began. We had an instant engagement with another mother or father who knew our emotions, our predicament or our space.

We found families who had solutions to problems we had agonised over, we found families who could advocate, who could climb the odd bureaucratic mountain, or understand some of the professional environment we were now part of.

We are a national organisation which advocates on your behalf. We have created parent networks where you can discuss issues with other families and we operate a closed Facebook group for such matters.

We also have an active website and an open Facebook page as information sources for parents and families.

**For more information, visit [pvi.org.nz](http://pvi.org.nz) or phone David Heather on 0274 402 073 or find us on Facebook at [facebook.com/pvinz](https://facebook.com/pvinz)**

# Christmas gifts at the Blind Foundation shop

With Christmas just around the corner, it's time to start thinking about gifts for friends and family, or yourself. Check out some of these great items available from the Blind Foundation shop.



## Soccer ball with bells

Kicking a ball around the backyard is an excellent way to get the kids outdoors and build their confidence this summer.

**Client price: \$39**

Full price: \$57

## Board games

Fun games for those long summer evenings with family and friends.

Scrabble with Braille, Uno with Braille, Tic Tac Toe, Tactile Connect 4 and assorted playing cards in braille and for those with low vision.



## Calendar clock

This attractive and simple-to-use talking calendar clock not only speaks the time, but also the date, in a male voice, with easy-to-use functions.

**Client price: \$85**

Full price: \$112



## Aftershokz headphones

Bone conduction technology delivers music through your cheekbones, ensuring your ears remain completely open to hear ambient sounds.

**Client price: \$64**

Full price: \$86

For the full range of items, visit the online shop at [blindfoundation.org.nz](http://blindfoundation.org.nz) or phone the Contact Centre on 0800 24 33 33.



## Recreation activities

The Blind Foundation helps support clients to participate in a variety of activities, special events and groups.

The Blind Foundation and other related organisations run events in communities throughout New Zealand.

The Blind Foundation's Community Volunteer and Recreation (CVR) team is also working with external community organisations and local clubs to help clients connect with others who share their interests.

With 34 volunteer support groups located around New Zealand and staff from the CVR team also based regionally, there is a contact person close to you who can help you get involved.

**Contact the CVR team on 0800 24 33 33 to learn what is happening in your area or to get help setting up a group of your own.**

**The following social and recreational opportunities are currently available in locations around New Zealand:**

Active Adults	Gardening Group	Outward Bound
Art Gallery Tours	Goal Ball	Sailing
Aqua Aerobics	Guys' Group	Sculpture
Blind Sports	Horse Riding	Self Defence
Braille Buddies	Indoor Bowls	Social Support Groups
Book Club	Keep Fit Classes	Tandem Biking
Bollywood Dancing	Leadership Courses	Walking Group
Coffee Group	Lunch Gatherings	Waka Ama
Crafts & Textiles	Music Appreciation	Wine Tasting

**For more activities and locations visit [blindfoundation.org.nz](http://blindfoundation.org.nz)**

## Dates for your diaries

The Blind Foundation holds regular equipment display days across the country to introduce clients and the community to specialist equipment and services for people who are blind or have low vision.



As the dates below might be subject to change, please contact your local office or phone our friendly Contact Centre staff on **0800 24 33 33** to confirm. To view the latest equipment display days visit [blindfoundation.org.nz/events](http://blindfoundation.org.nz/events) or users of TIS can listen using the TIS menu **3 7 8**.

Please note that magnifying and lighting assessments are not available at equipment display days listed below. Please contact your local office to organise any assessments you might require.

Area	Venue	Date and Time
<b>Mosgiel</b>	Mosgiel RSA, 6 Church Street, Mosgiel.	9 February 2017 11am - 1pm
<b>Hokitika</b>	All Saints Lounge, 57 Bealey Street, Hokitika.	21 February 2017 10am - 1pm
<b>Invercargill</b>	Blind Foundation, 172 Queens Drive, Richmond, Invercargill.	21 February 2017 10am - 1pm
<b>Greymouth</b>	Uniting Church Hall, 203 Tainui Street, Greymouth.	22 February 2017 10am - 1pm
<b>Westport</b>	Club Buller, 44 Queen Street, Westport.	23 February 2017 10am - 1pm
<b>Waipukurau</b>	30 Jellicoe Street, Waipukurau.	2 March 2017 10.30am - 12pm
<b>Balclutha</b>	St Marks Anglican Hall, 19 - 21 Renfrew Street, Balclutha.	14 March 2017 10am - 1pm
<b>Kapiti</b>	Senior Citizens Hall, 2 Utauta Street, Waikanae.	9 March 2017 2pm - 3pm

Area	Venue	Date and Time
<b>Tauranga</b>	Blind Foundation, 160 Seventeenth Avenue, Tauranga.	16 March 2017 11am - 1pm
<b>Hamilton</b>	Blind Foundation, 15 Liverpool Street, Hamilton.	22 March 2017 11am - 1pm

## Christmas closures



All Blind Foundation offices will close for business at midday on Friday 23 December, 2016 and will reopen at 8.30am on Monday 16 January, 2017.

The last day of normal service for the library will be Thursday 22 December and service will begin again on Monday 9 January. BookLink will still be available throughout the shut-down period.

The magazine studio will be closed during the Christmas break, with the last magazines being recorded on 20 December. A reduced service will start on 9 January, with full service resuming in February.



# Will you help me grow into a guide dog?



Please volunteer a couple hours for the  
Red Puppy Appeal on 24 - 25 March 2017.

Call **0800 120 254** or visit  
[redpuppy.org.nz](http://redpuppy.org.nz) for details.

