

## CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT 2010

2010 is an important year in the history of Citizen Advocacy Auckland Inc. The programme celebrates 20 years since we began and on November 19 & 20 we are holding an event at the Barrycourt Quality Hotel, Parnell to recognise this. Dr Patricia O'Brien, a cofounder of the programme, and now a professor at the University of Sydney will be speaking on Advocacy and Mike Gourley, Producer and Presenter, One in Five will be speaking on building community. We are really thrilled to have such distinguished keynote presenters to inspire us and point us in new directions for the next 20 years. Advocates and protégés will be sharing the stories and these will remind us how important it is to have Citizen Advocacy relationships. The Board hopes to see as many members as possible at this 20 year celebration and friends and supporters are also cordially invited to attend.

Deborah Espiner, board member and principal lecturer, University of Auckland is chairing the committee planning the celebration and she has done a wonderful job. Debbie is ably assisted by Yvonne Riley and David Hughes who are both board members. I am also part of the planning committee. We do urge you to support this event as it will be the highlight of the year for members and will also be our final year event.

The effects of the economic downturn on individuals' willingness to become involved are still a factor in recruiting and retaining advocates. However, through Ana Maria's hard work we are still managing to locate individuals with the right values and commitment who are willing to stand alongside a person with an intellectual disability as a citizen advocate.

In November 9-11 2009 John Armstrong and Jenny Smith from Citizen Advocacy programmes in Australia conducted an internal review of our programme to see how well it was keeping to the principles of Citizen Advocacy as outlined by Dr Wolf Wolfensberger, founder of Citizen Advocacy. As chairperson, I wish to thank Ana Maria and the Board for the open and honest way in which they participated in this review. Citizen Advocacy received a full and helpful report with practical recommendations for moving forward over the next year. Our programme is striving hard to implement these recommendations. I wish to acknowledge John and Jenny for sharing their vast experience and wisdom about citizen advocacy with us.

An important change for us is working harder to identify individuals in need of advocacy in the community rather than accepting referrals and then matching people. We have also adapted the way we train advocates as a result of the feedback we received. We are committed to working towards achieving a greater balance in the relationships we make. We greatly appreciated the opportunity to learn from our colleagues in Australia as Citizen Advocacy Auckland is the only programme of its kind in New Zealand and we need to keep ourselves energised and on track.

Ana Maria continues to promote Citizen Advocacy Auckland at various forums. A series of workshops have been held in various parts of Auckland for people interested in learning more about Citizen Advocacy. These forums involved advocates and protégées sharing stories of their relationships. Although attendance was disappointingly small despite good publicity, the workshops provided strong evidence of the power of citizen advocacy in action. I wish to thank all the advocates and protégées who took the time to be involved. I wish to acknowledge the Frozen Funds Trust Board for the grant that enabled these workshops to take place.

The Board extends its sympathy to the families and friends of people in our programme who have passed away during the year. We hope that you can gain some comfort from the involvement that your loved one had in Citizen Advocacy Auckland.

Citizen Advocacy would like to acknowledge the ongoing financial support which we receive through our contracts with the Ministry of Health and the Disability Resource Centre Subcontracted Services (DIAS). The programme could not function without these contracts. We would also like to thank COGS for its financial support of Citizen Advocacy Auckland. We also acknowledge New Zealand Post for its donation of some free postage to our programme and Mercury Energy for the furniture donated.

My sincerest thanks to Ana Maria who continues to do a wonderful job as Coordinator. This role is very challenging and requires a person who is very self directed and focussed. Ana Maria is untiring in her efforts to make Citizen Advocacy a quality programme and we thank her for that. Thank you also to David Hughes, board member who does an excellent job co-chairing the board meetings. A special thanks to Liz McAneny, secretary, Fred Yuen, treasurer and to Adele Brady, auditor. Many thanks to board Members Debbie Espiner, Jee Ho Rodriguez, Yvonne Riley, Annette Rogers and Kevin Rogers. I would like to also thank Fiona Spence and Clive de Vos for the support they give us with our website and IT. It's behind the scene support like theirs that keeps our programme running smoothly.

I am sad to announce that Jee Ho has decided to resign as board member this year after giving 9 years of excellent service. Jee Ho has been an enthusiastic and committed Board member and we will greatly miss her financial knowledge, skills and her willingness to become involved in all events. Many thanks to **iSign** for supporting CA with Debbie Lynch with her skilled services as an interpreter. Thanks to Kevin Rogers for the excellent job he does in cleaning the CA office. Many thanks to Gwenda Reid of \$Z and Sense Fundraising for her assistance with the Conference funding applications. Thanks also to Lyn Van Son for providing external supervision to the coordinator.

Finally my thanks to all the advocates and protégés in the Citizen Advocacy Auckland Inc. programme. Some of you are new to the programme and some of you have been with Citizen Advocacy for 20 years. You can all be proud of the relationships you have built through Citizen Advocacy. Thank you for being involved. You really do make a difference. Please come to celebrate with us on November 19 & 20 2010!

Fran Hartnett  
Chairperson

### *COORDINATOR'S REPORT*

#### **Core Activity:**

The major activities are

- finding new advocates
- recruiting advocates
- keeping in touch with existing advocates and protégés
- administration duties
- networking with other services and the community.

Also Citizen Advocacy Auckland Inc. (CA) has a contract with the Disability Information Advisory Service (DIAS). CA is contracted to provide information about other disability services in the community when people request such information.

Finding new advocates and maintaining the matches is a big challenge for Citizen Advocacy Auckland. Nevertheless, 7 matches were made between July 2009 and June 2010 which is the latest period reported to DIAS. In the same period, 7 matches ended because of changed life circumstances.

From October 2009 to September 2010 the office handled:

- 2.696 e-mails,
- 1.023 phone calls
- 1.021 letters.

### **For my professional development:**

For the last two years I have supervision every 8 weeks which I enjoy and found to be a positive experience in my solitary role as a coordinator.

Citizen Advocacy Auckland is member of the New Zealand Federation of Disability Information Centres (NZFDIC). I've attended the NZFDIC conference for the last three years. The latest, in May of this year, was held in Queenstown. I must mention that each year I come back to Auckland inspired because of the conferences topics and the great people that I met at this event. This year the CA secretary (Liz McAneny) and I attended a one day training course to learn the basics about maintaining a website.

### **The Citizen Advocacy Board:**

Every six weeks, I present an administration and activities report covering the previous six weeks to the board. Since the internal review in November last year, Citizen Advocacy Auckland has followed the recommendations from John Armstrong and Jenny Smith.

I thank all board members for their support and contribution. Each board member contributes to CA in different ways with their personal and professional capacities on specific issues.

A sub-committee from the Board was formed to organise the Citizen Advocacy Auckland 20 year anniversary conference which will be held on 19, 20 November 2010.

### **Funding:**

We have contracts with the Ministry of Health and a sub-contract with the Disability Resource Centre (DRC) until 30 June 2011. Both these contracts require that CA submit a report every three months. I ensure that all records and information have been sent according to the contractual agreement. Last year the Frozen Funds Charitable Trust approved funding to promote CA and also we received funding for operating costs from Auckland City, Manukau and Waitakere COGS. The New Zealand post donated 100 stamped envelope.

I had the opportunity to apply to Mercury Energy for some second-hand furniture for CA office. The CA furniture looked tired and in need of urgent replacement. Thank you to Mr. Clive de Vos for handling our request. In July, we received two desks, one office chair and four small drawer units.

### **Advocates and Protégés:**

My role as a coordinator is to provide the advocates and protégés ongoing support throughout their journey. I do this by face to face, meetings, phone calls, e-mails, and publishing three newsletters each year.

The Frozen Funds Charitable Trust provided funds for six CA advocates and their protégés to share their stories of advocacy with the community of Meadowbank, Howick and Waitakere. Unfortunately not many people attended the presentations.

We currently have 43 matches with 44 dedicated Citizen Advocacy advocates.

Thanks to all protégés and advocates who collaborated with articles for our Newsletter and who shared their stories at the beginning of the year.

I thank Fiona Spenser for helping to maintain the CA website.

Many thanks to Citizen Advocacy South Australia (CASA) who are always prepared to help Citizen Advocacy Auckland with resources and support.

I recognize and applaud the perseverance of Citizen Advocacy advocates because CA couldn't exist without their commitment and support. Thanks to the CA board and supporters for another year sharing the CA vision to make a positive difference in people's lives.

This is my sixth year in my role as a coordinator for CA Auckland. Reflecting on these six years I have seen slow changes in the lives of people with intellectual disability. The needs for people with intellectual disability have been the same for the last six years. I encourage the Board, advocates and community to help us to promote CA.

Ana Maria de Vos Sánchez

The true meaning of life is to plant trees, under whose shade  
you do not expect to sit.  
~*Nelson Henderson*