

# THE ENCOURAGER

Issue. 164 | August 2019

The magazine of Elevate Christian Disability Trust

*Karen Menzies and  
Blair White moving down  
the "Prayer Tunnel" for  
their turn to be prayed  
for at the Dunedin CFFD  
prayer walk*





# A cheerful heart is



## How the “Can Do” attitude was instilled in me

Manuele brings a reflection on John 10:10

*“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.”*

- John 10:10

Manuele Teofilo has been involved in many National Camps and was a volunteer at the Centre last year. He has cerebral palsy, is in an electric wheelchair, and has joined us in the National Support Office as Social Media Coordinator through the Mainstream Placement Program. As well, he will support the ministry groups. Manuele was recently awarded the Chairperson Award at the Young Writers Conference in Melbourne.

.....

**B**efore I was a teenager I started saying that John chapter 10, verse 10 was my favourite Bible verse. It still is today. The words “live life to the fullest” or “abundantly” gripped my attention as a child. I read that as I got to give things a go, do exciting things and not live an ordinary “disabled” life.

My twelvish mind saw this verse as an inspiration to push through barriers. Thankfully, I never said that I could do anything at all. That would be foolish. Yet, it's always been a motivation to not let my disability

limit or prevent me from enjoying the best life I can. This verse instilled in me a “can do” attitude. For one thing, because I believe that Jesus will give me the strength to do the things He has in store for me. For another, I interpreted the verse as a command to live extraordinarily and to strive for the best.

As I got older and I read the Bible more, the motivation to live life to the fullest that John 10:10 triggered in me did not diminish. However, my understanding of the verse and the passage developed. I studied and understood what Jesus was talking about in this passage more.

Firstly, I read the whole verse and paid attention to the first bit of verse 10. The thief, the enemy, the evil one wants to “steal, kill and destroy” me? Well, humanity and all creation, but this is my reflection piece, so yeah, I’m one of his targets. Steal my possessions and resources through his agents. My joy, lively spirit and allegiance to Christ he continually tries to kill. Ultimately, he longs for my soul to be captured and destroyed.

I read further up the page and discovered that verse 10 is part of Jesus’ explanation for His illustration in verses 1 to 5. Jesus repeated the phrases “I am the gate” and “I am the good shepherd” in His explanation. It’s about Him! It’s about Jesus!

I tried to calm my excitement about my light bulb moment, and tried to articulate what I had realised. Even writing this excites me like that moment. The only way I can live a great life and live eternally is if I trust in Him and rely on Him. He wants the best for me, and frankly, my idea of the best life is probably not the best. So, not only must I rely on the strength of Jesus, I must also follow His guidance to stroll in the greatness God has set out for me!

It is a continuous decision I must make. Either, to look at what the thief is doing all around me to bring me down, or to keep choosing to trust Jesus who came so we “may have life and have it abundantly”!

Therefore, I believe that I can make the most of life no matter what the circumstances I find myself in. Driving around in a wheelchair doesn’t allow me to access some places. Having a speech impediment frustrates me when I can’t talk to someone because they don’t understand me. However, I can choose to not let my troubles bog me down, but to let go and allow Jesus to bring the best out of every situation. ■



ELEVATE NATIONAL CAMP 2019  
25TH - 28TH OCTOBER

# IGNITE

NEVER LET THE FIRE IN YOUR HEART GO OUT.  
KEEP IT ALIVE. SERVE THE LORD.

**Theme & Verse /** Romans 12:11-12 *"Never let the fire in your heart go out. Keep it alive. Serve the Lord. When you hope, be joyful. When you suffer, be patient. When you pray, be faithful."* Keep the fire in your heart stirred up! Stimulate it, provoke it. It's time to stoke the fire again not only in our own hearts but in others. Join us in praying that people's hearts will be ignited this year at camp.  
*Let's be a spark to others!*

**National Camp Speaker /** We are delighted to have **Pastor Suz Holmes from Manukau City Baptist** joining us this year as our camp speaker. As well as being a pastor, a mother of four daughters, and a widow, Suz has authored a book, and launched the Brave Love women's movement in NZ. In her book 'Missing You: Finding Hope in Hardship', she tells of the challenging ten years after her husband was diagnosed with a terminal brain tumor. Suz looks her God full in the face, and with rare honesty demands answers. Her passions in life include encouraging people to spend time with God every day, and helping people discover their potential in God.

## Registration is now OPEN

Register online or contact your local branch. Please register early to ensure you don't miss out.

### Fees

Adult	\$210
11-14 Year Olds	\$130
5-10 Year Olds	\$90
0-4 year Olds	Free

## Saturday Night Costumes

This year our Saturday evening will be **Let your Light Shine!** Use your imagination and get creative, we love seeing all the costumes people come up with.

## Volunteers

We rely on volunteer helpers like you to make this camp happen! Our biggest need is for volunteers to 'buddy' a camper for the weekend, supporting them to be at camp. There are also other volunteer roles we need filled. If you haven't been before, National Camp is a life-changing experience for both campers and volunteers. We would love you to join us!

## Sponsorship

Would you consider sponsoring someone to come to camp? There are many who need assistance to make it. The cost, particularly for people needing to bring their own caregiver, is significant.

## Enquiries & Further Details

09 636 4763  
PO Box 13-322,  
Onehunga, Auckland 1643  
[nationalcamp@elevatecdt.org.nz](mailto:nationalcamp@elevatecdt.org.nz)  
[www.elevatecdt.org.nz](http://www.elevatecdt.org.nz)



## BALCONY PEOPLE

### PART ONE

Some years ago Margie Willers wrote a couple of articles on this topic, and has received such a huge feedback from so many that she felt called to spend a lot of time upgrading what she had previously written,

She writes: I was watching a FOCUS ON THE FAMILY video featuring the well-known Christian psychologist Dr James Dobson. He was addressing the need for the Church to listen to its people. He stated this listening had to be done so expertly that in essence it unwrapped another child of God to discover their true identity and their natural God-given vocation.

I'd never heard anything like it. I sat rivetted, soaking up the words as if they were water on a hard, dried sponge. For me, this was a new concept. It was something different. When he talked about the concept of our conscious and unconscious mind, I was, as the teenagers say, blown away.

He pictured our minds as a clear glass sphere, with the bottom two-thirds filled with dark, murky water: the unconsciousness. He explained that people around us reach through the murk to pull us down. Psychologists call such people "basement people".

Basement people work with negative comments like, "I told you you'd never amount to anything", or "You are so stupid I can't believe it!" or "How can anyone be such a dill-brain as that?" You know that sort thing. They drop subtle hints about our inferior qualities, or they build themselves up at our expense.

They thoroughly damage our personalities. Sometimes, their damaging words have such power we never rise again to discover who we really are, or what we can become with God's divine enabling.

Who are these 'Basement people'?

They may be anyone. People of influence or power are well placed to wound. A parent, a school teacher or an employer who verbally abuses you or cheapens you, pushes your head under the surface by what they say – or fail to say – may all be inflictors of damage. You remember drowning in their criticism.

I have a very vivid example of this in my personal experience: a particular school teacher whom I'll never forget. The incident was many years ago now. I was twelve years of age.

A hush fell on the noisy classroom as Mr Grafetti looked up from his desk. Something was about to happen, and my classmates instinctively knew it. The babble of voices died as they waited in anticipation. Grafetti raised his eyebrows, his bushy red moustache twitched as an unpleasant smile curled his lips. Leaning his face slightly forward, he peered over his horn-rimmed glasses and bellowed, "Rubbish! Just like yourself -garbage that nobody knows what to do with."

Graffeti had been recording results of a class test. My papers, never tidy in their presentation because of my physical co-ordination difficulties, had been mistakenly thrown into the rubbish bin, and a classmate had scuttled over to retrieve them for me so that my marks could also be recorded.

The "rubbish" analogy was irresistible to Graffeti, despite the fact I'd answered every question in the test correctly. He eyed me, then the trash can, then back at me again, and pronounced his evaluation of my life's worth for all to hear. In retrospect, I realise that this man had never encountered anyone



# one. Be the one to find the gold.

Is 11:7

quite like me – after all, I was ‘something uniquely different’. My degree of disability threatened him. He felt uncomfortable and embarrassed. Therefore, unable to rise to the challenges of imparting a positive impetus into my life and education, he simply chose to cop-out.

His embarrassment was simple and effective. He frequently removed me from the classroom, forcing me to work in the dismal isolation of a staffroom. To me, this teacher was both frustrating and infuriating.

However, let’s not despair. There’s also good news. Isn’t it true - Christian people are different? I’ve learned that along with basement people who aim to pull us down, we also have the extraordinary advantage of people whom they classify ‘balcony people’ in the top third of our minds. The murky fluid Dr Dobson talked about was only at the bottom. Above it there’s only clear air.

All around that sphere of clear air in our conscious minds there runs a balcony, filled with people who are practically hanging over the rail, cheering us on. They are united in inspiring us. They spur us forward, they cajole us to keep jumping hurdles that will move us into God’s bigger picture. They focus on our potential - not our problems.

These are people such as our wives, our husbands or our parents, friends, pastors, writers of inspiring books, David the Psalmist, the Lord Himself – they all play a vital part with encouraging us onward – upward. They lean over the rail of our consciousness shouting, “You can do it!” “We believe in you!” “Come on, shoot for the stars – aim at nothing less”. Problems become potentials in the face of belief and confidence. “And in the purposes of God, Margie, your potential is limitless”, the Dean of Faith Bible College the late Jim Hurn once assured me. I never forgot those words of encouragement, spoken at a very crucial time in my life.

Encouragement injects strength, courage, and a great surge of confidence. Thus we are rescued from

drowning in the tide of peoples’ callous attitudes or from mortified defeat by those who spew out brutal, cruel remarks.

One of my favourite balcony people is the Apostle Peter. Some years back I was writing my autobiography, *AWAITING THE HEALER*. It proved a marathon task. I often wondered if I’d ever complete this project. In fact, due to my unpredictable health and extremely stress-filled demands imposed over a lengthy time, writing a book almost took my life. It was words such as these that kept me pressing on: “ This suffering is all part of the work God has called you to.... .. don’t be bewildered when you encounter fiery trials, for this is no strange thing

... be glad, these trials make you partners

with Christ in His suffering. After you have suffered a while, our God

will personally come, pick you up and set you firmly in place and make you stronger than ever.”

The exhortations to a higher calling left behind so long ago by St. Peter both inspired me and birthed fresh hope.

Closer to touch than the Apostle Peter, there’s always been a beautiful group of personal friends in my balcony. Some have been present a long time; others are new to the cheering section. New or old, they are all there.

The writer to the Hebrews encourages us to run with patience the race that is set before us, “since we have a huge crowd of men of faith watching us”. That “cloud of witnesses” in our balcony, past and present ...what would we do without them?

I listed all my balcony people once, during the period of time when writing my book, ‘Awaiting the Healer’. When I’d completed the list I was most surprised to note how few there were present when the going became prolonged, tedious and tough.

Because of my limitations with written expression and vocabulary it became apparent from very early on that I would require some specialized assistance – people who’d provide me with their writing skills and expertise. My life is one of many facets, and writing its story proved no easy task.

**“They are united in  
inspiring us. They spur us  
forward, they cajole us to keep  
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us into God’s bigger picture.  
They focus on our potential  
- not our problems.”**





We scouted the nation for someone suitable. And God came through. He provided me a skilled editor, and some months later, a co-writer. There is no denying the task that confronted us proved both daunting and demanding. Books do not suddenly jump out from a computer. Every ounce of my energy became channelled into what we believed to be a God-assignment. These two people stuck it through to the end, no matter what the cost. AND, BELIEVE ME, IT DID COST. Nevertheless, we knew no suffering is wasted. Some of the greatest achievements in Christian service are born out of suffering.

It took three laborious years to bring that book to fruition. Writers are often forced to work in isolation, and I'll never forget the feeling of abandonment by friends – the sense of loneliness and aloneness. There were misunderstandings and sometimes confusion. The task seemed endless. I vowed I'd never attempt another book. Never – NEVER!!

A quote from the late Robert Schuller has an application: Tough times never last – tough people do!" It's so true. I've proved it. When God assigns you a task, a kingdom assignment, He is faithful to His promises. He did not fail. I'm ever so grateful today to those few balcony people who remained - those who

encouraged me and my 'assistants' and spurred us on to the finish line.

In hindsight, it appeared to me that it isn't the number of people that really count, but the high calibre and level of credibility they displayed. After all, it only takes one person to drown us in the murky water of failure and discouragement. Why not then the reverse? It only takes one person to lift us up and restore our sense of well-being.

Balcony People are always there for us, no matter what. That's how we know them. Regardless of our warts and imperfections, they love from the heart. They love us for who we are, not who we ought to be or what we ought to achieve. I've decided I've given enough attention to the basement people of my life. It's time to focus on those precious, God-given BALCONY PEOPLE, and on being such a person to others. There might be a whole spectrum of people ready to rise to levels they never dreamed of, if people like YOU AND I can make a habit of encouraging, blessing and affirming.

Featured in the next Encourager, will be part two:

**HOW TO BECOME A BALCONY PERSON**

## DISABILITY AWARENESS SEMINAR FOR HELPERS



**Saturday 28th September  
9am – 3pm**

We really want to encourage **ANY** helpers who want to hear personal experiences of disability and learn some of the practical basics of being involved with people with disabilities.

**A great opportunity to LEARN!  
And CONTRIBUTE.**

**Cost:** \$10 (includes morning tea)

Please bring your own lunch.

**To register:** Phone 09 636 4763 or Email [reception@elevatedcdt.org.nz](mailto:reception@elevatedcdt.org.nz)

**Held at:** Elevate CDT National Support Office, 173 Mt Smart Road, Onehunga, Auckland

# One's life reflects the heart.

Isaiah 27:18

## MARK REDDY'S THOUGHTS ON ELEVATE

Think of yourself as a tree with 7 branches hanging on the tree. On the tree's trunk are the words ELEVATE FAMILY. On the 7 branches are these 7 letters:

E  
L  
E  
V  
A  
T  
E

**E**levate is a place of **E**ncouragement

**L**ove, **L**ife and **L**aughter burst forth here

**E**verybody is somebody, and Jesus Christ is Lord

A place where **V**ision is cast, **V**alue is placed on people, and where **V**olunteers volunteer our time

**A** place where we **A**ccept one another and where we **A**ssist one another

A place where **T**ransformation of lives take place from the inside out. **T** also stands for **T**ogether - We are one in Him, and with each other

**E**xamples of Christ, to serve others, not only in here, but to go out into our world and be and do the same as He did



## MISSION CRUISE AND MORE

by Bev Duncan

For many years now I have wanted to serve the Lord on the mission field.

I started off wanting to take Braille Bibles to China with Open Doors and Brother Andrew. However, the Lord said no not yet. Every time I heard of others going out on a mission I wanted to go as well, but the Lord still said no, not yet, as He had work to do on me before sending me out!

In October 2018, it was announced at my church, Manukau City Baptist Church, that there would be an opportunity for people over the age of 50 to go on a mission cruise to Fiji in May 2019. I was really excited about this opportunity, and this time the Lord said YES. There were several hurdles to overcome before embarking on the mission, such as finance, care of my guide dog and someone to share a cabin with and be my main sighted guide. All these things the Lord answered as I prayed about going on the mission.

We left from Auckland taking two and a half days to get to Suva. Whilst at sea the team of 16, ten from Manukau City Baptist and six from other churches witnessed to many passengers and staff on the Pacific Aria. At first I found it was easy to speak about surface things like, are you enjoying the cruise?, have you been on other ships?, what entertainment have you taken part in etc?

However, I prayed about this and asked the Lord how to share my faith, and tell about the wonderful life in Christ Jesus when you believe in Him. I asked the Lord to bring the many people back to me if He wanted me to talk with them further. He did this, and I was able to speak with them about our Lord. I am totally blind, so in some ways this made it easier for me as I couldn't see the body language of the people I shared with. Though none were led to Christ there and then, I believe many seeds were sown.

Again we talked with passengers and staff on the way back from Fiji, and we found many people were open to hearing what the Lord has done for us, and that they can also experience God for themselves if they repent of their sins and give their heart to the Lord. By the end of the nine day cruise our worship times had increased in numbers, attended by six other believers. Not only did we connect with non believers, but it was a time for the team to connect with each other. Many precious times were spent talking and praying together on the cruise and in the three ports of call in Fiji.

God uses ordinary people. It is not our ability but our availability that He wants. In church I asked the Lord what would He want me as a blind person to do to serve His people. I started off setting out the cups for morning tea as we regularly have approximately 500 attending our morning service. As I was seen doing this someone asked if I would be able to help them set up communion. I said I would give it a go, not knowing what was involved. Now I put the glasses in the trays and the bread in the dishes in the middle of the trays. Someone else pours the juice. I am also involved in the church prayer chain and in praying for people at church every second Sunday morning. I encourage disabled and able bodied Christians alike to make themselves available, and tell them God will surely use them in the Body of Christ.



## JONI EARECKSON TADA ANNOUNCES SHE IS FINALLY CANCER-FREE

By Danielle Jarvis

Joni Eareckson Tada, whose battle with cancer has been well documented, has announced that she is free from cancer.

The woman who is internationally renowned for advocating people with disabilities, Eareckson Tada had received a cancer diagnosis for the second time. However, after months of treatment, she has announced that cancer has left her body.

Making the announcement via the Joni and Friends website, she stated, "Proverbs 25:25 says, 'Good news from far away is like cold water to a thirsty soul.'" That perfectly describes Ken and me today.

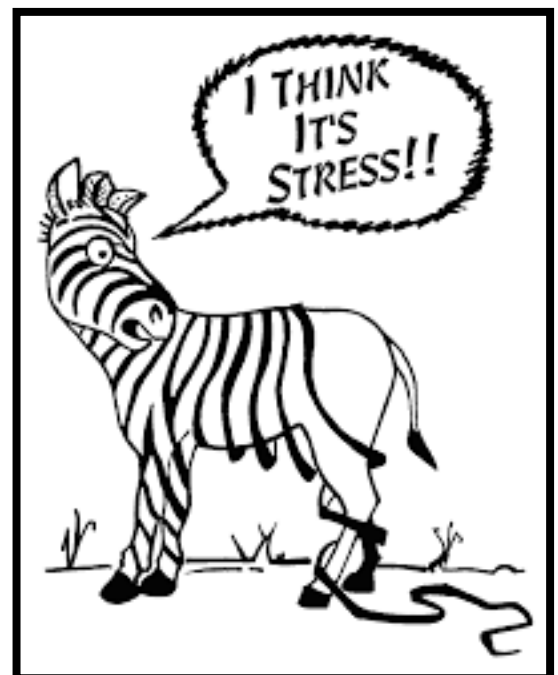
"We were prepared to gladly take whatever from the hand of God, even if it were from his left hand. But the Lord was gracious and heard the desire of our hearts – last Friday's PET scan shows that my second tumor that was removed last November... did not metastasize!

"Given the aggressive nature of that re-occurring cancer, this news is quite miraculous. So, THANK you for lifting us up before the Lord Jesus. For now, we have been spared more cancer battles. We humbly realize that may well change in the future; but for today, for now, we are rejoicing in those wonderful words from my medical oncologist: 'all clear!' Onward and upward..."

It is well known that Joni Eareckson Tada is a seasoned warrior when it comes to dealing with serious health issues. She has endured 51 years of quadriplegia,



chronic pain, and a previous battle against stage 3 breast cancer 8 years ago. She was also hospitalised during her recent battle with cancer. In 2010, she underwent a mastectomy and chemotherapy treatment, and in 2015 she was declared cancer free. ■





Whoever refreshes others will be refreshed.

Proverbs 11:25



## Leadership Camp

It was a very special weekend with lots of networking, fellowship, worship, discussions and strategic priorities. With lots of ideas on activities, finances and volunteer sources.

Geoff Wiklund (above right) gave two great messages on leadership, love, hope and encouragement, and Seven steps to victory, namely 1 Position, 2 Potentate, 3 Power, 4 Prevailing, 5 Purpose, 6 Partnership and 7 Presence. Charles Hewlett (right), shared on Strategic priorities.



## Philippines CFFD

*Leslie de la Ganar writes from the Philippines.*

It was really a touching experience when we did a home visitation with PM radios distribution to the elderly people this time. We saw their spiritual needs, and they were easy to evangelize and bring to Jesus. The group had an outing to the bowling alley, and for some this was their first time ever to participate in it.



Mr. and Mrs. Marcelo Simbulan are on their senior years. Mr. Simbulan's right eye became blind due to an accident when he was a teen-ager, while his wife stuck at home due to sickness. Mrs. Simbulan was suddenly crying when she heard God's Word. We believe the Holy Spirit touched her heart.



Mr. Idel with his wife received a PM radio. He has been suffering from a stroke three years ago. When we were talking to him at first he was a bit negative about his situation, but after he heard the Word of God he was led to Jesus by Pastor Dionisio. Now he utters positive words from his mouth. God changed his heart and perspective in life. Praise God!



*Stephanie Chung says:*

## *My autistic son changed my life*

**For most of her adult life, Stephanie led a double life.**

In public she was the beautiful and talented wife of successful businessman, Peter

Chung. A concert pianist, she was a celebrity in her own right. But what most people didn't know was that at home in her private life she struggled almost daily against the depression and stigma that came with being the mother of a severely disabled son.

In Stephanie's Korean culture, families are reluctant to admit to having children with disabilities. In fact, they are regarded as being a disgrace to their parents and bringing misfortune upon their families. For this reason, many people hide their disabled children and don't ever acknowledge their existence outside of the home.

Stephanie had five children. Her first child, Joseph, was born with autism, but she wasn't aware of it for a number of years. She noticed that there was a slight difference between her first two sons. But it wasn't until she tried enrolling him in preschool that Stephanie realized just how different Joseph really was.

"I think you should take Joseph to a doctor," the preschool teacher told her.

Still, Stephanie was sure it was just a matter of cultural or language differences that made her oldest son different from his peers. She decided to find a Korean preschool and bring him there. However, it wasn't long before his new preschool teacher suggested he might have some learning disabilities, and maybe he should see a doctor.

### *Joseph's Diagnosis*

Sure enough, doctors diagnosed Joseph with autism, a condition Stephanie had never heard of before. When she realised there was no cure for her son, she sank into a deep depression. In her darkest hours, filled with shame and hurt, Stephanie questioned why she or her son had ever been born.

Finally she learned how to live a double life. In public she seemed like she had a perfect life. Her husband was a successful businessman; she herself was a concert pianist. But few people saw the pain she suffered in private.

When Joseph was about eight his school went on a field trip – swimming at the ocean. Stephanie was consumed with last minute details for a wedding being held at their home that weekend. Swimming was one activity Joseph excelled at, and he was eager to be off for the day.

### *The Phone Call*

That afternoon, Stephanie received a phone call that would change her life forever. Her son was in the hospital from a drowning accident. When Stephanie asked if they'd been able to revive him the voice on the end of the line would only say, "Drive safely!" In that instant Stephanie realized she didn't care if her son was disabled; she only wanted him to be alive.

The ten minute drive to the hospital took forever. Stephanie pleaded with God to spare her son's life. At the hospital, the prognosis was dire. Her son had been found by a surfer, floating in the ocean. By the time they'd gotten help, he'd ingested so much water that doctors said if he didn't regain consciousness within 48 hours; they should disconnect him from life support.

Stephanie stayed by her eldest son's side that night, begging God to forgive her for her sinful attitude,



and to let Joseph live. The next morning she softly called Joseph's name and his eyes opened. Her prayers had been answered!

## ***Depression Lifted***

Somehow, during that awful night, everything changed for Stephanie. Her depression lifted. She says, "before I used to complain and ask God, 'Why me?'" Nothing has changed for Joseph, and yet now I am so thankful for him; so full of love towards him."

And instead of hiding away, mired in depression, Stephanie focused on God's plan for her. She says that despite the depression and the feelings of self pity and anger, in her heart of hearts she always knew that God loved her. This was the string holding her to God and the hope which enabled her to carry on. And now she knows that instead of allowing negative feelings to overwhelm her, she needs to pour out her heart to the God who loves her and who alone knows the plan and the purpose for Joseph's life – as well as her own.

## ***God's Plan for Stephanie and Joseph***

God used a seemingly random occurrence to reveal His plan for Stephanie and Joseph.

Stephanie was scheduled to accompany a famous Korean singer at a concert in Vancouver. A local reporter contacted Stephanie to interview her to get the 'local angle'. Usually when she was interviewed, and the topic of her family came up, Stephanie would skim over each child very quickly, in particular avoiding the topic of her oldest son, Joseph. For some reason on this day, the interviewer pressed her for information about him. Without thinking, Stephanie blurted out, "he's disabled, and he's a blessing."

Well, when the interview was printed the title was, "Stephanie Chung has an angel; his name is Joseph." And there was barely a word about the concert in the article!

Up until now, some people had known that Stephanie and Peter had an autistic son, but it certainly hadn't been something that was widely known. With this article, not only was she letting the world know about Joseph's condition, she was telling them how proud

she was of him and that he was indeed one of the biggest blessings in her life. Through the article, Stephanie invited women in similar situations to contact her.

"I knew what these women were going through," shares Stephanie, "I'd been there. I wanted to be that shoulder for them, to hug them, cry with them, and let them know it would be okay."

Still, she was amazed when the phone calls started. Not long after the article was published, Stephanie met with four other mums at a local restaurant. They met as strangers. After two hours of sharing their common pain, their loneliness and their frustrations, they left as sisters.

## ***Support Group and Bible Study Group***

From these women meeting together a Bethesda Parents' Society was formed. At first it was just the five of them. They met once a month and pooled their resources and their own experiences to help each other. They laughed and cried together. Eventually God told Stephanie to start a Bible Study. Stephanie knew from her own experience that she couldn't have made it without God.

"Sure, other people comforted me throughout this, but true comfort and peace; you can only get that from God."

And that was the message that the small Bible study talked about each week. At first it was just the core five women: three Christians, an agnostic and a Buddhist. But within six months the Buddhist mother had committed her life to Christ. Not long after this the women were talking and her friend exhorted her,

"You know, Joseph is a missionary. It's because of him that you started this group, and without this group I would never have become a Christian."

Tears begin to fall as Stephanie shared with me,

"I'd never shared this with anyone before. But when I was pregnant with Joseph, my husband, my pastor and I prayed together. I told God that I wanted to give my son to Him, to be a servant. I was hoping that he would be a pastor or a missionary."



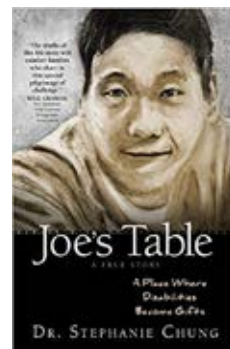
She continued, "I've always quoted Jeremiah 29:11: 'For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper and not to harm you.'

But when it came to Joseph I always thought that God had to heal him before he could fulfil God's plans for him. My friend showed me that God was already using Joseph."

Today more than 35 mothers and fathers of mentally handicapped children belong to the Bethesda Parents' Group and there is also a group who meet weekly for Bible Study. Through this group Stephanie has had the opportunity to share the gospel with people who never would have met and they have come to know Jesus as their Lord and Saviour.

If you're interested in starting up a group in your own area, Stephanie's advice is simple. "Everyone's circumstances are different. Having an autistic son has opened up doors for me to witness to people I never would have been able to approach otherwise. Ask God to show you how you can use your own unique situation to begin witnessing. If you're a mum, connect with other mums at a preschool group. Be available and God will make the way." ■

To learn more about Stephanie's life changing journey with Joseph, read her new book ***Joe's Table: Hi, my name is Joseph. What's your name?***



## Yvonne Redwood writes,

*In the following article Ken Gire sums up for me the whole area of ministering to people with disabilities. It was actually recollections of his own father that he wrote down, and shows how we all deserve to be treated equally.*

# I Remember

by Ken Gire

One Saturday when Dad was home, often he wasn't because he worked so much. I answered a knock on the door. A disabled boy, possibly seventeen, stood on the other side of the screen, selling socks. He introduced himself and went straight into his sales pitch.

I have a picture of a mentally disabled boy, treated with dignity and kindness. Dad never sat me down and told me, "Son, this is how you treat someone less fortunate than yourself, someone who's disabled or disadvantaged." He never told me that; he simply showed me- but with the purity of never knowing he did. A flushed mingling of fear and sorrow came over me. With an awkward politeness I excused myself to get Dad.

He invited the boy in. I sat on the living room chair and just watched. The boy opened his briefcase, revealing an assortment of what I thought looked like "old-

men's" socks. You know, the sheer see-through kind that nobody wears anymore, except old men.

I didn't know much about money back then, other than how much you could get for cashing in coke bottles littered along the roadside. All I knew was, we never seemed to have any. And what little we had never stretched far enough to cover to the end of the month. So, I listened to see how my Dad would send the boy away.

But he didn't send him away. He listened to him with patience, spoke to him with kindness, treated him with respect. He examined the socks, and, to my round-eyed surprise, bought three pairs of those frightful things. black, brown and navy if I remember right.

The boy shook my Dad's hand and said good-bye. Then he shook mine, smiled and stuttered something. I nodded as if I understood and smiled back.



## ANT ASPECTS



**Ants are not something one would readily consider watching, other than watching them die as you apply poison.** Here in Florida we are plagued with ants the year round, and if you aren't careful they will take over your yard, and work their way into the house. There have even been reports that "killer ants" are making their way throughout the south taking over open fields a little at a time.

The Bible brings up ants in two places and both are very applicable. Proverbs 30:25 (NIV) *Ants are creatures of little strength, yet they store up their food in the summer;* Proverbs 6:6-8 (NIV) *Go to the ant, you sluggard; consider its ways and be wise! (7) It has no commander, no overseer or ruler, (8) yet it stores its provisions in summer and gathers its food at harvest.*

If you ever watch a colony of ants you'll notice the ants are in continual motion. There is no stopping them, even when you place an obstacle in front of them. They are on a focused mission, and the Bible tells us we'd do well to think about how the ant works. The lesson is simple. We all have things we are putting off today for a more convenient time.

Sometimes that convenient time never comes, and things get so out of hand calamity comes in our health, our wealth, our jobs, etc, all because we kept putting things off. It's almost time we needed someone on our case, standing over us, pushing us to do what we needed to do. So God brings up the little pesky creature known as the ant, whose brain is about the size of a pinhead if that. He reminds us that the ant does not have someone pushing it to move, yet will not stop until the job is done.

It's not a lesson in becoming a workaholic, rather a lesson in overcoming procrastination. If the ant can do it so can you. What have you been putting off? Take the first step today by taking action, however small it may be, take some action. Even if the first action you take is to make a list of things you have been putting off, at least that's action. The next step is to do something to get the work going. Once motion is begun, let momentum take over. Next time you go to poison or crush an ant, remember God's lesson before you do, that He has placed that ant before you as a reminder – don't procrastinate.

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## Free offer...

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The photo on the right of Jesus with Graham and his wife

Joan was done by their 9 year old grandson who had received no adult training or help.

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*If you need help, email Ian Sinclair [igsinclair@gmail.com](mailto:igsinclair@gmail.com) or call 022 045 1064*





## WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING IN THE FAR SOUTH?

We thank our heavenly Father for the fun, fellowship, joy, meaningful interaction and 'family' atmosphere we enjoy at our meetings.

There is increased 'spiritual awareness' of many of our folk as we seek to gently teach God's truths with the simple Bible stories (many in rhyming language) that we tell, and we have a particularly gifted storyteller in our midst called Felicity.

There is a lovely, caring atmosphere in our usual prayer times as people spontaneously pray for each other. Some move their wheelchairs to where the person being prayed for is situated, especially when there are tears involved, and it is moving to see the empathy and support that is extended from one to another.

We love the joy that the worship evokes with percussion instruments, voices, DANCING, flags as banners, and heartfelt love and adoration of our mighty LORD.

The acceptance, compassion and integration by the church members is heartening for a number of our CFFD folk who now attend the local church.

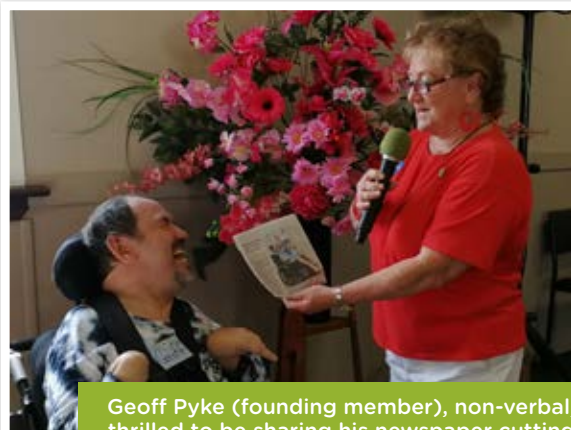
Over the last three years we have had a different theme each month: 'decorated hat' days, 'crazy hat' days, quizzes, talent quests, guest singers, local choir group, 'prayer tunnels', 'show and tell' days, Communion twice a year, picnic with half-hour 'singalong' to start the year, an annual wheelchair dance with 77 in attendance, including 17 wheelchair friends, and Disability Awareness Sunday services at a different church every year.

We thank God for two people who tithe into our CFFD account so we can pay for all our transport costs

Dunedin CFFD is very grateful to God for the innumerable blessings He has given us over these past three years. Our number of attendees has increased, so that means many more are under the beautiful umbrella of our LORD Jesus Christ. This has meant an increase in the number of 'Carers' being in our meetings, hopefully being blessed mightily. It is noticed that quite a number of them sing when our worship music is in progress.



77 people, with 17 wheelchair friends included, having an absolute ball to the Rock'n Roll music being blasted out



Geoff Pyke (founding member), non-verbal, thrilled to be sharing his newspaper cutting about being the first 'wheelchair-bound' person to use the new Dunedin Moana Pool Hoist



Laurence Buchanan's favourite pastime is marching and he loves to lead the 'Conga' around the hall, imitating a 'Pipe Major'.



# ness never leave you.

bs 3:3

We continue to be amazed at our wonderful God's faithfulness and love for each of us, and as we enter our 39th year in September we are in good spirits at what "The Holy Spirit" has in store for us.

We have started combining with the rest of Dunedin for our end of year picnic which is held as 'Christmas in the Stadium' in our wonderful covered 'Forsyth Barr Stadium'. It has all the facilities that we need, is weather-proof, and there is non-stop entertainment for our folk. It is run by a Christian Charitable Trust, and is a gift to the Community of Dunedin.



As the dance comes to a close everybody's giving it their joyful best



**Attention - all those who have changed their email addresses PLEASE tell us your new ones**



Did you know that we can email you when the latest Encourager magazine is up on our website? To sign up, scan this QR code, phone us or update your contact details on our website.

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<b>Emmanuel Ministry</b>	Contact Centre	09 636 4763
<b>Torch</b>		
Auckland - Leyna Coleman	leyna@actrix.co.nz	09 832 0130
<b>Joy Ministries - National, Auckland Central, West &amp; East</b>		
Jan Bridgeman	bridgeman@extra.co.nz	027 641 2653
<b>Hamilton - Jeni Hawker</b>	jenihawker@gmail.com	020 401 47198
<b>Whakatane - Wanda Hughes</b>	bwtroop@gmail.com	07 312 3330
<b>Hawkes Bay - Brad &amp; Karen Spurgeon</b>	spurgeonnz@gmail.com	06 876 1106
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<b>Masterton - Brenda Morgan</b>	bpbeacgan996@gmail.com	06 377 3125
<b>Blenheim - David Clode</b>	clode11@slingshot.co.nz	03 578 0598
<b>Other ministries around the country</b>		
<b>Able to Worship - Warkworth Methodist Church</b>		
Jenny Trotter	k.jtrotter@gmail.com	09 422 7358
<b>Kumbayah - St David's Presbyterian Church - Palmerston North</b>		
Ann Bennett		06 355 2818
<b>Bible Friends - Wanganui</b>		
Louise Rostron	rostrons@extra.co.nz	06 344 5955
<b>THRIVE - Greerton Bible Church, Tauranga</b>		
Ron Raikes	thrive@gbc.org.nz	021 032 9660

If you would like to help with our costs you could send a donation to: ELEVATE P.O Box 13-322, Onehunga, Auckland 1643 or direct deposit ANZ 01-0142-0029706-00

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# National Volunteer Week

**Teremoana Va'a writes,**

We are blessed to have volunteers who are of different ethnicities and ages. They find it rewarding and fulfilling to simply give back. Many of our volunteers take this opportunity to upskill themselves. Some have language barriers, and use this experience to polish up on their English language. Then there are those who find it valuable to connect and socialize with people in their community. Our volunteers are often facing their own trials and health conditions, and yet they make the effort to turn up and help wherever they can. For whatever reasons they come, we appreciate so much the time and energy they take out of their day to spend time with us.

**“The role of our volunteers is worth all their weight in GOLD.”**

The role of our volunteers is worth all their weight in GOLD. They invest their time to make a difference in someone else's life. The support they provide allows our friends with disabilities at Elevate the opportunity to get out of the four walls of their home environment, and to take part in our programmes. National Volunteer Week was in July, and we had the opportunity to celebrate our volunteers, to show our thanks for their servant hearts.

To all the volunteers who give of their time, skills and talents, we at Elevate Christian Disability Trust applaud your contribution with gratitude. You are a pillar in our organisation, and a valuable part to our folk for those that attend our Drop In Centre.

Philippians 2:7 Rather, He made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.



## WHAT IS ELEVATE CHRISTIAN DISABILITY TRUST ALL ABOUT?

We are an interdenominational parachurch organisation.  
We run meetings and camps throughout NZ.  
We have four groups:

- **CFFD** (Christian Fellowship for Disabled) mainly for folk with physical disabilities.
- **Joy Ministries** mainly for those with intellectual disabilities.
- **Emmanuel** for families with children with disabilities.
- **Torch** for those who are blind and visually impaired.

We have a Centre in Auckland which is our main office, and where we also run a **Drop In Centre** three days a week. We welcome people with disabilities, volunteers and family members.

*“We  
welcome  
your  
enquiry”*

## NATIONAL SUPPORT OFFICE

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