

beth shalom
auckland new zealand
בית שלום



October 2021
Cheshvan 5782

Teruah



*A strong, vibrant community with a spiritual heart
embracing Jewish life and its diversity.*

(ISSN 1177-2352)

Our Board members

Affiliated with the Union for Progressive Judaism (UPJ)

Charities Commission Registration Number CC29542

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- Educator, Debbie Miller educator@bethshalom.org.nz
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- Senior Outreach, Chris Shiller, shiller@orcon.net.nz
- Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society, Sue Berman ... 022 051 3589, ajbbs@bethshalom.org.nz

Service times are Fridays at 6:30pm and Saturdays at 10am.

Our services are currently on Zoom. That's the best way to ensure everyone's safety AND to be as inclusive as possible. Until further notice, we will continue to use this platform for any gathering that would usually occur in the building. We will remain careful: our communal use of Zoom may or may not align with government alert levels for Auckland. In so doing, we are prioritising the Jewish value of PIKUAH NEFESH - Saving Lives and Valuing Health. This is central to Jewish thought and practice. We will keep you updated.

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Opinions expressed in Teruah do not necessarily represent the views of Beth Shalom Board of Management.

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Coming up in October ...

- **Thursday 7 October, 7:30pm COVID-19 Q&A** As we consider how to return to the building safely once on Level 2, we are discussing additional measures. These may include setting an expectation for all those eligible for the Covid vaccine to be fully vaccinated. This would include our staff, our volunteers and our congregants. "Kol Yisrael Arevim zeh ba-zeh" – we are all responsible for each other. Please join Dr Michelle Wise, Dr Nic Szecket and RN Julie Dick on Zoom this Thursday evening at 7.30pm who will explain the rationale for this. The session will also offer an opportunity for you to ask questions and to provide feedback to the Board. Zoom link has been sent to all members by email.
- **Erev Shabat Service on 8 October.** We have a special treat with Rabbinic Student **Sarah Livschitz** and her flat mate **Leslie Goldberg**, a cantorial student also at Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, leading our service on Zoom.
- **Youth Leadership Council Religious Diversity Centre.** The Religious Diversity Centre (RDC) is seeking young people aged 16-35 to join their National Youth Council. This is open to New Zealand residents who are passionate about the work of building understanding and acceptance of religious diversity throughout our society. They can be of any religious affiliation and should be available for 1.5 hours every six weeks, over a two-year tenure. Induction and training will be provided. Click [here](#) for more information and [here](#) for the application form. **Applications close 9 October.**



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From the President

Wow – What a month!

Who could have guessed that online High Holy Day services could be as spiritually uplifting as in-person services! I've had feedback from quite a few people that they experienced these Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur services at a particularly meaningful level.

Much of this we owe to Naomi Johnson, the Ritual committee, and our wonderful service leaders, who gave innumerable hours to arranging the services. And with the unexpected lockdown and the issues with Rabbi Dean's work visa, had the unenviable task of planning for services 'with and without Rabbi' and 'in person and virtual'.

And then we had the joy of having Rabbi Dean back with us for the High Holy Days and the magic he brought to planning and conducting services. I know from the many letters and emails we've received that you shared my enjoyment of having Rabbi Dean with us. What you won't have seen is the amount of support he gave to Naomi, Ritual committee, service leaders, the B&B and the Board.

The other highlights of the month for me was the Beit Din which we ran just before Rosh Hashanah. In the end, running it in Level 4 meant that the three Rabbis who sat on the Beit Din took part remotely – Rabbi Fred Morgan from Melbourne, Rabbi Dean from New Plymouth and Rabbi JoEllen from Wellington. We then had our two community members – Rachel Zussman and me, in Auckland, two of our candidates in Auckland and two in Christchurch. Despite this, it was a wonderful Beit Din and we just have to wait until we're at Level 2 or 1 to complete the conversion process with immersion in the mikvah.

And of course, reminiscing about the month would not be complete without mentioning the superb Sukkot service, complete with Mona William's and Rabbi Dean's wonderful storytelling and the Klezmer Rebs.

And then there's the other side of the month – A month spent in lockdown. A month that was hard for many of us – emotionally, financially or health-wise.

I am also very sad that Alistair Kirk has decided to step down from the Board. He has been a wonderful member of the Board. He's contributed hugely, taking on the Vice-President role under Debbie Swiatek and me, filling in as President when Debbie left Auckland, running two rabbinic search processes, and fronting the Vision Project. He has also put in a huge amount of work for the Board and been a huge support and guide to me. He will be missed, both by the Board and by me. I know I speak on behalf of the whole Beth Shalom community when I offer thanks to Alistair for his outstanding service on the Board.

As we look forward, there are rays of light – We are at Level 3 and hopefully soon as Level 2. And we are moving forward with the process of appointing a new Rabbi. Once we have concluded initial discussions, we will be coming to the community to let you know who we are thinking of appointing and to seek your approval and support.

I wish us all a good month.

L'shalom, Olga

Thanks to all the people who made High Holy Days possible and memorable!

We are so lucky as a community to have such a dedicated group of people who worked both in 'public facing roles' and behind the scenes to make our High Holy Days service happen, and then make them such a success. It is both humbling and gratifying to see how many people were involved.

We offer our most sincere thanks to....

Rabbi Dean Shapiro: for his Rabbinic leadership and for giving us a very special High Holy Day experience. The deep dives were a wonderful addition to the services.

The Ritual Committee: Naomi Johnson, Chris Milton, Pam Miller, Trudi Sawyer, Bill Merrill, Terry Haffern and Jen Proctor. This team planned firstly for services in person, then had to undo much of the planning and start all over again to plan for services online.

The Service Leaders who led with Rabbi Dean: Pam Miller, Chris Shiller, Rachel Zussman, Paul Wilton, Elena Bloksberg, Chris and Jessamie Milton, Maureen Robinson and Naomi Johnson. Also to Pam Miller and Paul Wilton who led a beautiful Selichot.

The Torah Readers: Chris Shiller, Shai Aharon, Arie Rosen, Michelle Wise, Roger Reynolds, Lilach Cohen, Lucas Volodzkis and Judith Hunt.

The Shofar Blowers and Caller: Lenny Bloksberg, Anton Bruell and Phillip Gordon

E-Shammashim: Chris Milton, Lenny Bloksberg, Paul Wilton, Chris Shiller, Trudi Sawyer, Naomi Johnson, Leon Goldwater, Jen Proctor, Sue Berman, Jan and Zarina Fiala, and Dan Cohen

Also special mention to the following people/groups:

- Leonie Ariel who chanted the Jonah Haftarah on Yom Kippur afternoon so beautifully in Hebrew;
- Leon Goldwater who helped co-ordinate the High Holy Day honours. The Ritual Committee really appreciated his support on this important task especially as he was pulled out of "Ritual" retirement to help Ritcom.
- David Kranz who was our online help desk person and who found himself busier than ever imagined with the hiccup we had with the Erev Rosh Hashanah link.
- The singing group which had started practising each Shabbat afternoon until lockdown put an end to our cantorial bench.
- Rabbi Dean and the Burial and Benevolent Society for such a beautiful Kver Avot v'Imahot service.
- Debbie Miller for coming up with some fun High Holy Day themed programmes for our families in addition to the family services led by Rabbi Dean.
- Linda Kaye for leading us so beautifully in Hallel on Simchat Torah morning.
- Christine O'Brien for her flexibility working additional hours to get through the additional workload and who managed to keep her sense of humour throughout.
- The Board for their ongoing support and representation at our services.

Thanks to each and every one of you!

Rabbi Dean Shapiro



The cliffs overlooking Piha, out in the wild west, are my favourite place on earth. They plunge a hundred meters into the dark blue sea. Looking down, you cannot fathom what beasts live in the cold, deep water. Each wave makes and remakes the finest foam lace you've ever seen. In winter, mist rolls in and blankets the hillside. It will likely turn to rain as it moves east, and the creeks babble as they send the water home. In summer, the harakeke blossoms and tui dart to and fro, filling the air with their song. The land pulses with the hummm of insects. The black sand glints in the sunlight. I stand there and breathe deeply of the freshest air on the planet. I feel at once insignificant, and at the same time special, capable. My life feels full of possibility.

"M'lo chol ha'aretz k'vodo," said the prophet Isaiah - "The whole world is filled with God's glory" (6:3). Each and every bit of it, from mountain to mitochondria, is magnificent.

Who can but delight at an octopus or a chameleon changing colors? Who doesn't grin when they bite into a perfectly sweet strawberry? Whose love doesn't deepen beneath a full moon?

Our tradition embraces the concept of a wonderful, precious world. The earth and all its inhabitants are understood to be God's creation, and therefore both "good" and "very good." Human life is precious; saving it is the highest ideal. We violate most other orders, including Shabbat, to save a human life. Animal life is also precious; kashrut is a system of eating that respects animals in numerous ways. The principles of *"baal taschit/do not destroy or waste"* and *"tzar baalei chayim/avoid the suffering of animals,"* among others, are ways to enact our respect for the earth.

I recently added my name to a Statement to the New Zealand Government regarding climate change. It was drafted by the New Zealand Religious Diversity Centre, representing many religious traditions. On 19 October, if conditions allow, we'll gather at Parliament to present the letter to government's Climate Ministers Sub-Committee, and then to all political parties. "The Statement briefly sets out a faith-based response to this great moral and spiritual crisis, and goes on to urge the government to commit to an ambitious target and a just transition process at the forthcoming international climate negotiations in Glasgow."

On Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, I encouraged you to encounter nature, to let it stir your heart. So too, we must be the voices for wild places in the halls of power. How incredibly fortunate we are to live in a democracy, where each and every one of us has power - the power to contact our Members of Parliament and other elected officials and let them know that the sustainable health of the planet matters to us as human beings, citizens, and voters. Individual actions matter, but governmental and inter-governmental action matters more.

When I return to Piha, I want to stand secure in the knowledge that I've done my bit for that special place, and the entire, fragile world. I invite you to join me in taking action. Let's use our power and voices now, while we still can.

"We're all just compost" – Megilat Kohelet – Sukkot 2021

On Saturday 25 September, a few Beth Shalom members linked in to the service at Temple Sinai to commemorate our good friend Jane Schaverien's yartzheit and to be there for her daughter Polly. Those who remember Jane, her intelligence, compassion and wit, will recognise how wonderfully her daughter has honoured her memory. **Helen Schamroth**

For those that didn't know my mother, Jane Schaverien, she was both a deeply spiritual and a very pragmatic woman. She was an avid gardner and a tireless social justice campaigner. She passed away four years ago, this Shabbat. This drash is in honour of her.

My mother had a saying. "We're all just compost".

At first hearing, it sounded utterly depressing. Is that it? Whatever we make of our lives, whatever good we do, the reality is, we end up pushing up daisies?

So too, it seems, when we listen to the words of Megilat Kohelet – the Book of Ecclesiasties – from which JoEllen read today. "The sun rises, the sun sets . . . the wind blows to the south, and then round to the north, all streams flow out to the sea, then the streams flow back again. There is nothing new under the sun". Later on, our author bemoans, everything is futile, everything we pursue is wind . . .

At first blush, this, like my mother's compost proclamation, has a positivity worthy of Eeyore. "Ah yes, there is the sun. Wearisome thing. It came up again . . . knew it would . . ."

But when Jane said, "We're all just compost", she said it with an upbeat tone of voice and a spring in her step. There was nothing depressing, pessimistic or Eeyorish about it at all. It was a source of joy to her – and not just because her love of gardening made her value compost rather highly!

To her, "We're all just compost" was an acknowledgement of four things – four things that I think are also captured in the words of the Megilat Kohelet:

- The first is that life is a fragile thing – It is ephemeral. It is fleeting.
- *The second: in this fleeting, existence, we were all equal.* The Koheletphilosophizes that no matter our wealth, career success, fame, or wisdom, all of us come to the same end.
- The third: life is circular – the tides come, and the tides go, the crops are reaped, and they are sown. We are born, and with certainty, we die.
- And fourthly: we are part of something so much bigger than our selves. As the Kohelet says, "One generaton goes, one generation comes, and the earth remains the same forever." [On that note, we can but hope, given the pace of global warming].

So, if we think of the messages contained in the Megilat Kohelet in this way, is it not a little awe-inspiring, that we get to play this tiny bit part in the amazing thing that is, planet earth?

And is it a coincidence, then, that we read Megilat Kohelet, this deeply philosophical book about the fragile, fleeting and circular nature of life, at Sukkot? The time of year when we are dwelling in fragile, temporary shelters? Each year we construct sukkot, and each year they are blown down in a Wellington wind. Yet we repeat it again the next year . . . nothing is new under the sun.

But as Rabbi Ilana Krygier Lapidés suggests, "Aren't we, in our bodies, also temporary, also sukkot? Aren't our physical bodies just the temporary dwelling places for our souls?"

If we adopt this idea, that our physical self is part of something so much bigger: Something grand, yet fragile. Something constant, yet changing, it can make us feel less het up about the fact that in the end, "We're all just compost"

Rather than feel depressed about the banal, inevitability of death, perhaps we can try to seek joy in the miracle of our fleeting physical existence.

As Rabbi Jonathan Sacks put it, "Sukkot is about knowing that life is insecure and celebrating it - not in spite of that, but because of it."

So on that note: Shabbat shalom and Chag Sukkot Sameach.

Polly Schaverien

25 September 2021



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Proud to serve the Jewish community

The Buzz ...

BETH SHALOM **בית שלום**

COVID-19 Q&A

Join us for a virtual Q&A session with health professionals Michelle Wise, Nic Szecket, and Julie Dick.

Thursday October 7th, 7:30PM



Thank you, Beth Shalom

To the Service Leaders, Singers, e-Shamashim, Ushers, Torah Readers and Blessers, Staff Members, Board Members, B&B Leadership, and Organisers who worked so hard to create our unique and meaningful Jewish experiences

and to the entire Beth Shalom community for your willingness to experiment and adapt, and to create community in a whole new way.

What a joy to share the Days of AWE with you!

--Rabbi Dean



Our Annual Appeal is online and you can find it [here](#). Let's enable new initiatives and continue to support the existing ways we come together as a community socially and spiritually. Your support will allow us to try new ideas that help us connect with each other and our Judaism. We need creativity and flexibility now more than ever. More information is available on our [Givealittle page](#); you can also contribute through internet banking , through the Beth Shalom website or by calling the office. Thank you to everyone who has supported the appeal already.

Community Security Group

Serving the Jewish Community in New Zealand

Phone: 0800 AUCK CSG or 0800 2825 274

Post: PO Box 68 728, Auckland

Email: contact@auckcsg.org.nz



CSG is looking for more people!

THE COMMUNITY NEEDS US – WE NEED YOU.

If you are aged between 18 and 80 and would like to contribute to your community then please contact the CSG using the details above.

Shabbaton postponed ...

We have had to postpone the Shabbaton based on the information we received today from the government. It would probably take at least 6 weeks to get through the 3 stages of level 3 to get us to level 2 which would take us past the October 26th decision date required by Carey Park to change the date. It is also clear to us also that the 50 person limit will not make a Shabbaton financially viable based on the cost to reserve Carey Park.

We are planning to have a **Taste of Shabbaton on Saturday, November 27th** at Beth Shalom. It will include tefillot, workshops and havdalah. We will decide on if the activities will be in person at Beth Shalom or remote, based on the government requirements closer to the date. We might even do small group gatherings.

We will keep you posted but we feel it is crucial for our community to celebrate and learn together as much as circumstances will allow.

Shabbaton Committee



RABBI SACKS (Z"l) MEMORIAL LIBRARIES

RSVP to RSVP@AHC.ORG.NZ

PLEASE JOIN US FOR

Launch of the Rabbi Sacks (Z"l)

Memorial Libraries



WHEN: TUESDAY OCTOBER 26H AT 6PM
WHERE: AUCKLAND HEBREW CONGREGATION
108 GREYS AVE, ASTOR HALL

PLEASE RSVP BY OCTOBER 15TH TO RSVP@AHC.ORG.NZ

[RSVP HERE](#)

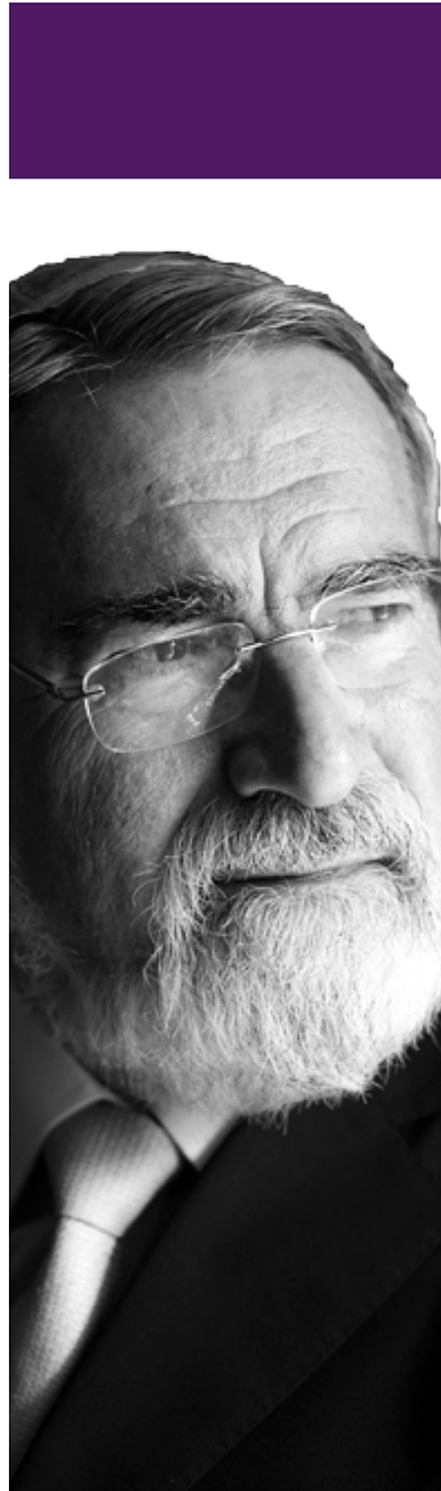
THIS EVENT WILL ALSO MARK THE FIRST YARTZHEIT,
WE WILL BE JOINED
(VIA ZOOM) FROM COMMUNITIES AROUND
THE WORLD.

OUR PROGRAM WILL INCLUDE THE FINALISTS FROM
THE LORD RABBI SACKS NEW ZEALAND SPEECH COMPETITION.

IF YOU ARE CONSIDERING JOINING US **REMOTELY** PLEASE EMAIL
RSVP@AHC.ORG.NZ AND WE WILL THEN FORWARD YOU A LINK UNDER
SEPERATE COVER.

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בית שלום


AUCKLAND HEBREW
CONGREGATION



Education

What am I thankful for?

I think when you come to the end of the year and start a new one in the Jewish tradition you always look back and try to return to your better self “teshuva”. So now I have attempted to have done all that “heshbon nefesh ” (making an accounting of one’s actions).

What about the next year or even better, what about the present? Can I look at today and ask what am I thankful for what can I appreciate in the present moment?

And I can say I am thankful for my community. I am thankful for a community of people who, despite being separated by space and all we know which usually brings us together spiritually, we have done something remarkable. Not only have we come together on Zoom with meaningful tefillot (services and learning), but we have reached out and served Jews from across New Zealand like never before.

I grew up in a small town with very few Jews and I know what it is to live separately from the Jewish world (and be isolated) and it really reaches me in my heart of hearts to know that Jews from Kaitiaki to Dunedin were tuning in via Zoom to our services. We are blessed with the mitzva “to be a light among this nation” or at least the Jewish community of New Zealand and thanks to Covid and Zoom we really fulfilled this blessing this year in a truly special way. It is with great leadership and a lot of work that it all came together. Even though we were separated I also felt an incredible warmth as we all joyously said shanah tova to each other at the end of the service. There was that sense of community despite of all the obstacles that we share something together, so I am thankful for my community wherever you are in New Zealand, you all made it a very special new year.

Experiential Jewish Learning has had two really special online “Gather” sessions where we met up and learned about the holidays through stories, songs, games, quizzes and a really fun charades game. We had one get-together themed Rosh Hashana and another themed Sukkot.

We also had three children’s services with Rabbi Dean, one on Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur and Sukkot. It was tons of fun and Rabbi Dean really mixed it up with songs, drama and games. He got the kids really involved.



Introduction to Judaism has made the conscious decision since most of us are still stuck in lockdown to keep studying every week. These dedicated students are truly an inspiration with their commitment to learning. We want to wish mazel tov to Eli and Hillary on the birth of their daughter, Odessa Grace.

Finally my last mazel tov goes out to our wonderful new Jews who have joined Am Yisrael (the Jewish people) in spite of lockdown and its crazy constraints that Covid put on the whole process. I feel incredibly blessed to have you among us. Hazack Hazack Tehazek Strong Strong You will make us strong. I can't wait to see you all in person.



Debbie Miller, Education Co-ordinator at Beth Shalom

027 765 3677 or 09 579 7715 or 09-524 4139

Your place to make friends and build community

Please see weekly email newsletter for service leader information and Zoom links through October, as they become available.



Prayers for Healing Group

A group of Beth Shalom members has commenced, to think of and pray for individuals in our community, who are in need of healing.

The idea is that this group is not an organised group or minyan. Simply, caring people who, when made aware of the need, help healing with the power of prayer.

And that families in distress might receive comfort from the knowledge that this is taking place.

Caring for the unwell is part of being a community.

For those interested, I can supply articles: "The Jewish Way in Healing", and some scientific research on the positive power of prayer in healing.

- If you wish to be part of this group or if you know of someone who is unwell that would appreciate our prayers.
- Please contact Leon Goldwater or Christine O'Brien at shul office
- Leon: ldgoldwater@gmail.com 020 403 88054
- Christine: office@bethshalom.org.nz 524 4139

Auckland Jewish Burial & Benevolent Society Inc

And so September had been and gone and for those of us in Auckland it's been a month, plus some, of limited company and personal connection beyond our bubbles. Yet over this time we have, through our communal hard work, been able to see and hear each other as we joined in virtual personal and communal reflection and prayer for our high holy day period.

Finding our way into sacred space can be challenging. Entering into the physical building of our sanctuary at Beth Shalom can help with the shifting of our space into prayer away from the mundane or busy environments of the everyday. Our challenge has been to create for ourselves this kind of space in our own homes. Personally I love hearing the voices, and seeing the faces of our community in my living room, around my dining room table bringing our spaces together for moments of prayer, discussion, laughter, remembrance and story.

Thank you to Rabbi Dean for your leadership and skill in helping us to create community at this time and to everyone for your participation. The B&B thank those of you also who have offered your generosity by way of tzadakeh to support the work of the B&B in providing a donation. The B&B support the work of Community Care [like the Rosh Hashanah care packages sent to our elders in the community] and kiddush lunch when we are able to be together; we support the Senior Outreach Services and individuals in our community who need additional support in times of hardship. The work of benevolence provision and support is as core to the work of the Society as is our support to families at time of death and mourning. Please consider the B&B if you are able to provide tzadakeh. We are not formally running an annual appeal but do value your donations and membership fees as contributing to our operating budget each year.

I sit to write this article on the day we start Torah anew - may this year ahead bring healing and wellness - insight and wisdom - meaning and purpose to all our lives and may our lives be enriched in all the spaces we find connection.

Sue Berman, President of the B&B

We can be contacted on: 022 051 3589 or email: ajbbs@bethshalom.org.nz

Community Care ...

Hello Everyone, we hope you all had an enjoyable Yomtovim. Let us all hope that this coming year will see the end of this dratted virus, and we can get back to our 'new normal' lives.

Good so often comes out of bad, so although the lockdown has affected us all in different ways, one of the **good** things that came out of it was the HHD services were held using Zoom (so much better than OneRoom that was used last year).

To those of you who attend the shule regularly, you may be thinking "Whaaat??" But, to quite a lot of us, it meant we could attend the services, enjoy them, see what page we were on, see Rabbi Dean again, join in the songs, and feel we were part of it. To a lot of members, it meant they could also attend services they didn't usually manage to get to. We didn't have to worry about parking, petrol costs, or whether we were going to fall asleep!! (joking?) Thank you to everyone who was involved in organising them, you did a great job.

Hopefully the beginning of October will see Auckland go back to Level 2 and then level 1 shortly after. Get vaccinated, get tested if you need to, follow the guidelines, and help us get Auckland and this country back on track.

HOW CAN THE COMMUNITY CARE TEAM HELP?

As usual, we are here to help and support you. Please feel comfortable to ask us

- After a fall or feeling unwell
- Finding it a challenge to do things for yourself,
- Need a helping hand short term,
- Perhaps need to just talk to someone,
- Need help with filling forms,
- Need someone to be with you when visiting a doctor,
- Or need support getting X-rays done.

We know some of these suggestions may not be possible at the moment, but we can still help you put things into place, for when they are. Like always though, we need to know if you want help of some kind before we can give it.

Do **you** know of someone who is unwell, that would benefit from

- **a phone call?** MOST important at this time. People on their own, even if they are well, can feel very isolated during lockdown and a friendly voice can be very comforting, OR
- a get well card,
- some flowers to cheer,
- receive a frozen meal.

Get a family member to call us if you cannot.

INDEPENDENCE IS WONDERFUL

Consider how a helping hand can support you in achieving this.

Especially, when it is offered willingly by members of our team.

LET US KNOW

We also want to know and share your good things, so tell us if there is a special Anniversary, or a new baby, or any other happy event on the horizon.

Please, continue to take care and stay safe.

Cheers

Lita (Chairperson) and the Community Care Team.

Contact:

Chris Shiller 021 177 4934 shiller@iorcon.net.nz

Lita Summerfield 021 297 9462 (TEXT ONLY) or email: serendipitylins40@gmail.com

Lorna Orbell 022 026 2897 chaim@slingshot.co.nz

Left to right,
Ora Lefebvre.
Chris Shiller,
Barbara
Sandler, Lita
Summerfield,
Sandra van
Eden, Bill
Merrill, Lorna
Orbell and
Sandra
Brickman.

