



**Hōhepa**

every life fully lived

Community  
Life



Therapies for the  
*Body, Mind  
and Spirit*



# From the General Manager

Kia ora,

Our holistic approach at Hōhepa supports the entire person.

Body, soul and spirit must all be nourished for people to thrive, and one of the ways we support our community is by offering a range of therapies.

This issue of Community Life introduces you to our four core therapies - art therapy, music therapy, massage therapy and eurhythmy, or movement therapy. We also work with occupational therapists, nutrition therapists, physiotherapists, and soon a speech and language therapist will be joining our team.

We never take a one-size-fits all approach. Our therapists carefully observe the person they are treating and tailor their approach to their needs.

This requires our therapists to be exceptionally skilled in observation, as many of the people we support are non-verbal or unable to express their needs clearly. Our holistic approach is ideally suited to helping these people, as we're attuned to cues more nuanced than words.

I also want to share with you about our new therapeutic initiative called the Tāmate Program, because it's a perfect example of how we tailor our support to individual needs.

We have an aging group of people living in Hōhepa. Four people are in their seventies and getting up and getting ready for an active day at 9:00am was becoming too much for them. They needed a quieter, slower start. So we set up the Tāmate Program to start the day in a gentler way.

The first stage is a personal greeting where they are welcomed into a warm space with soft music and beautiful aromas, given a drink, so they're hydrated and their shoes removed so they are grounded. Then we awaken them with gentle movement. Finally, there's a cognitive phase getting them ready for the challenges of day. It's a very nourishing ritual.

As well as nurturing our older residents, we also use the Tāmate programme to support people who are struggling with anxiety and sensory overload. It helps set the flow and the rhythm of their days and nurtures them physically, cognitively and spiritually. The daily ritual means people know what to expect and it grounds people who find morning too anxiety inducing.

Therapies are a vital tool in our mission to see every life fully lived. So, I hope you'll enjoy this issue, and the glimpse it shows you of our day-to-day life here at Hōhepa.

Ngā mihi nui

*Arinah*

# From the Board Chair

As Chair of Hōhepa Canterbury, I seem to lead a very busy life. But one in which I know it is important to ensure I am looking after my whole self, so I have three important therapies built into it.

On a Tuesday morning at 7am I'm down at Pioneer Recreation Centre doing my downward dogs. I don't want to see anyone I know there, but it would be good comedy for you all. I've been doing yoga now for around 18 months and genuinely have no difficulty in getting up to be there on time for it, as I know it is benefitting me. However, therapies sometimes are meant to improve your life in a meaningful way, and I'm just not sure yet how that applies to my yoga. I still am nowhere near touching my toes, but I do know it lightens my step during the day.

Secondly, I have a regular therapy session at 5.30pm on a Wednesday, where four 'old men' jog around Hagley Park. It's become a very rare event where all four of us jog in unison right the way round the park, but we've learned that as we age, it is less about the run, and more about togetherness. I, for example, cannot talk when I jog, it's just not possible. But doing something in a group without talking is pure therapy for me; much of my day involves words and speaking, so this time out is very valuable and unmissable in my weekly schedule. And of course, there is usually a beer afterwards – and so that too, is part of the companionship I look forward to.

Thirdly, getting your hands dirty is complete physical and mental therapy in one. Try planting a seed, or doing winter pruning, and then seeing the results. An out-of-control garden is a chore and no therapy at all, but having a plan for it and seeing results after a morning's hard labour is very relaxing – to the point where finding a couch for the afternoon is a necessary part of the overall therapy.

Each to his/her own. My therapies seem to work for me, it's all about finding ones that work for you – and the Therapies Programme at Hōhepa is about just that. This is why we have a range of therapies as we know each person has different needs. Our Therapy Rooms are a place where the people we support come to nurture themselves and nourish their spirits, bodies and souls through the therapies they connect with most.

*Ewan Chapman*

Regional Board Chair

# Nurturing through Massage

Helen Clarke, our massage therapist, is focused on supporting people's mental and physical wellbeing through the individualised range of treatments she offers. "Everyone is different, so I'm always trying to gauge what's going to help them," she says. "That can be tricky if they're non-verbal. So, I use observation, I shake hands, I look at their eyes. Do they look tired? Do they look wired? What are they doing? I always work round them."

For Helen, it is about understanding her clients and giving them experiences she knows will benefit them on multiple levels. "It's about tuning into what each person needs," she says. "For some of my clients, touch can be difficult at first, so I take things slowly and get to know them until they are comfortable – we start with aromatherapy and footbaths and then introduce massage."

"It's not just about the actual therapies themselves," she adds. "It is about building a relationship and trust so that each person gains as much as they can from working with me. It becomes a part of their routine that they look forward to and it gives them a chance to have some space and ease feelings of agitation and overwhelm."

Massage minimises sensory overload, helps people relax, and eases aches and pains. But it's also about creating a pause from the pace of life. It calms the nervous system which encourages relaxation and soothes the fight or flight response. "Massage and treatments using essential oils soothe or stimulate, depending on the client's mood, state of mind, or constitution," says Helen. "I use rosemary to uplift, lavender for relaxation, citrus to revitalise. I also do herbal teas and compresses, camomile, yarrow, ginger and mustard. And I use a bath for oil dispersion therapies."

Helen couples massage with physical treatments and she sees health outcomes that support her clients' overall wellbeing. "A woman who has eucalyptus compresses twice a week used to get pneumonia all the time and doesn't get it now,"

she says. I used mustard compresses to clear a man's lungs. A client who suffered a lot from bowel problems had relief from camomile compresses. We're talking age old healing."

Helen has been supporting the Hōhepa family for three-and-a-half years and it was a chance meeting with a staff member that started her journey. "My son has autism and I met Rachel, one of the social workers, through a Facebook autism support group," she says. "We met for a coffee at Hōhepa and I knew I right away it was a place where I could be of help. My own experiences mean I have a high level of empathy and I am trained in anthroposophical treatments, so being a part of the therapies team was a perfect fit."

**// It is about building  
a relationship and  
trust so that each  
person gains as much  
as they can from  
working with me //**

This life experience is what sets Helen's therapies apart; her understanding of the different things people might struggle with is how she creates pathways that support overall wellbeing. "Everyone needs to be nurtured, but not everyone will respond to things in the same way," she says. "It is a joy and very special to be able to work in a person-focused way to create physical, mental, spiritual and emotional outcomes that support people to live their lives in the best way they can."



# Expression and learning through art

The art room at Hōhepa is a light, airy space which encourages creativity and self-expression. Art therapist, Sarah Moore, keeps it filled with a variety of materials including paints, pastels, pens, beads, different textured papers and natural materials – ready for any project someone might want to make.

Sarah works either on a one-to-one basis, or in small groups, and the sessions are client-led. "Our sessions are driven by need," she says. "Some people want to spend their time creating something and others work solely based on how they feel on the day. We don't do projects based on ideas from me, we always look to what each person connects with and work at a pace that suits them."

Art therapy doesn't rely on artistic ability or knowledge, it is based on the creative process and not the finished product. It enables people to express themselves creatively, communicate in a non-verbal way, become aware of their feelings, self-soothe, promote mindset growth, release tension and improve focus and attention. "We create an environment that is a safe and special place for people where things can happen as they like," says Sarah. "It is about more than artwork; it is about people having the chance to ground and come back to themselves."

Like all the therapies at Hōhepa, art therapy is tailored to support each person holistically. "Some people have trouble using certain materials, they might be struggling with their feelings when they arrive or they are physically not able to do some things," says Sarah. "We don't have set plans, we make sure we can adapt in the moment; sometimes we are working through self-expression, hard emotions, learning new ways to communicate or exploring social connection."

"I definitely see the calming affect it has on people," she adds. "It is very process-based and people are able to work through many things while they are creating. Then, when they see the finished pieces, it often sparks memories and meaning, which we work through as well."

Art therapy works by accessing a person's imagination and originality, which contributes to the development of a more integrated sense of self. And it is more than using standard art mediums – it also incorporates play therapy with toys, different kinds of music and movement. "It allows people to open parts of their mind they wouldn't usually in day-to-day life," explains Sarah. "That way we can look at things like understanding and dealing with emotions, exploring different senses and sharpening cognitive and perceptual skills."

After just a few months at Hōhepa, Sarah has a strong connection to the community. She is recovering from a spinal injury and being part of the therapies team has helped her personal journey by reinforcing how effective art therapy is. "Its wellbeing benefits are many, and I am reminded constantly how important it is to look after the whole-person," she says. "After working with people over a period of time in a way that suits them, you can really see a difference in their personal growth. One of the greatest outcomes from therapy is giving people a strong sense of purpose and pride; I look forward to that happening for many more who pass through the art room door."



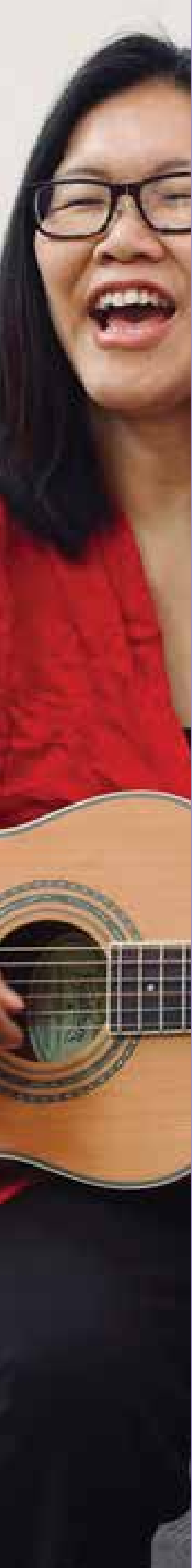


Jane looks forward to spending time with Art therapist, Sarah Moore, every week. Together, they create art for Jane's friend, Hamish, which gives her a sense of pride.



**// The sessions have become a celebration of community and multigenerational friendship //**





# In the Music Room

Music Therapy is a strengths-based practice which is focused on creating opportunities to celebrate who people are and develop what they bring to the world. Music has a unique way of reaching and connecting with people, as well as having a significant and profound impact on the brain. It helps with communication, emotional exploration and expression, social interactions and relationship building. Music Therapist, May Clulee, says it is an integral part of the Hōhepa offering. "Regardless of ability, everyone can appreciate and respond to music and sound," she explains. "We use the expressive elements of music as the primary means of interaction between us and our clients."

One of our Hōhepa family members, Bob, started having individual music therapy to maintain his overall health and wellbeing and it helped him to stay active and engaged. "He flourished in an interactive, creative space," says May. "When the Covid lockdown hit last year, he had to have sessions online with his flatmates. This turned out to be a blessing because the group sessions continued after lockdown to deepen their connections with each other."

These sessions meant that staff had the opportunity to relate to the flatmates on the same plain - there was no difference between anyone in the group as they were all players. A younger member of the Hōhepa community later joined them, and it has become an important highlight of the week for them all. "The group share their favourite songs with each other, learn new ones, improvise on instruments and share feelings and events important to them through song writing," says May. "They also do some active music and movement activities; after that, everyone has

morning tea together. The sessions have become a celebration of community and multigenerational friendship."

Music therapy also played a huge role in the life of the late Jane. She was a long-term member of Hōhepa who developed dementia, which meant she was eventually unable to participate in the wider community. "Jane started individual and group music therapy and these sessions supported her through her dementia journey," says May. "They gave her opportunities to still experience meaningful connections with her peers through a variety of music-led activities. These were tailored to how she was feeling on any particular day, thanks to the flexibility of the therapy approach."

"These experiences also told a different story about living with dementia to the one we often hear, and reframed notions of what personhood is at the end of life," adds May. When Jane passed away, a playlist was put together of her favourite music and played during her funeral, wake and service. It was a fitting way for the wider community to honour her legacy and the significance of her musical journey."

There is a large body of music and neuroscience evidence which outlines the effect of music on the brain and its ability to optimize, re-route and repair neural connections. This makes it an excellent tool for supporting people to develop, maintain, or regain function. "It helps to achieve health and wellbeing, along with a therapeutic relationship to address the identified communicative, physical, psychological, cognitive, and social needs of an individual," says May. "This is why using this holistic therapy is an important part of our anthropological approach and it leads to positive outcomes for all those who take part."



**// Each sound has a movement and you learn these gestures. I call it visible speech and music through movement //**

# Eurhythmy - Uniting Moving, Feeling and Knowing

Eurhythmy is a movement therapy that was developed in 1921 as a series of flowing exercises intended to unify spirit, body and soul. Our Eurhythmy teacher, Anna Warner, first came to work at Hōhepa in the 1970s, aged 18. "I lived here in a bedroom upstairs. One night I was sitting on the stairs and there was a eurhythmy group practising in this room. They invited me to join them," says Anna. "Back then I was very shy, but I did it, and I knew straight away that's what I wanted to do."

Her epiphany led her to Europe where she studied eurhythmy, first in Germany, then in Switzerland, followed by further therapeutic study in the UK. "Eurhythmy works with archetypal movements in the body relating to sound," says Anna. "Each sound has a movement and you learn these gestures. I call it visible speech and music through movement."

Benefits of eurhythmy are manifold. It corrects imbalances in the body. It helps with breathing, as there are lots of contracting and expanding movements. It helps with circulation and flexibility and it enhances general wellbeing. "You can work very specifically with emotions," says Anna. "If someone is angry and compressed, you can do gestures that are opening. If someone is scattered, you can draw them into their body. It's very much based on the individual and what their needs are."

Anna has been teaching eurhythmy at Hōhepa for 35 years, and there are people who live here, whom she has been supporting for a long time. "Eurhythmy calms them. It's a place to be who they are," she says. "They become very focused, grow to love the practise and know the gestures very well. The practise lives in their body and works in a healing sense."

Anna has a long-term student Joanne, who with her friend Mary, speak highly of their eurhythmy practise.

"I like the arm movements in eurhythmy," says Joanne. "It makes me feel good and I enjoy doing it because me and Mary do it with Anna, three friends together and I help teach Mary."

Mary says: "I practice my legs and arms every day with Jo."

People like Joanne who have a long-term engagement with eurhythmy become more open and relaxed over time. "You're breathing deeper. Your mind and body connections are stronger," says Anna. "You've more awareness of space and more comfortable self and body awareness. It's harmonising, balancing, nurturing and uplifting for all who take part."



**Hōhepa**

every life fully lived

23 Barrington Street, Christchurch  
PO Box 28101, Christchurch 8242

[info@hohepacanterbury.com](mailto:info@hohepacanterbury.com)

Phone: 03 332 3179

[www.hohepacanterbury.com](http://www.hohepacanterbury.com)