

# HBH Happenings

## Christmas Edition 2023



Reflecting on the past year, it's clear that it has been a time of significant growth and adaptability for everyone here at HBH. With the formation of a new Executive Leadership Team, including the key addition of Hilda Johnson as our Group Manager for Support Services and Development and the appointment of Charles Miller as Board Chair, we have strengthened our determination to provide compassionate and competent care to our elders.

The past year has presented its share of challenges, including financial pressures and a shortage of staff across the healthcare sector. Despite these, we remained resilient, driven by a shared commitment to our vision and mission. We have focused on building strong partnerships and realigning our strategies to sustain our operations and ensure we continue to provide affordable homes, care and community services for older people to enable fuller lives.

We are also proud of our continuous commitment to Te Tiriti, the Treaty of Waitangi, we formed the Maori Advisory Group and they planned and executed the Matariki celebrations successfully. Our residents and staff have joyfully celebrated Matariki with waiata performances and a hangi lunch, alongside other significant Pacific and other cultural celebrations, reflecting our vibrant and diverse community.

In order to maintain clear and open communication, we've introduced new initiatives like our monthly newsletters and speaker series, which have helped to strengthen our connections with families and the wider community. These efforts are complemented by our Remembrance Day Services.

This year also brought moments of celebration and gratitude. Many of our staff members celebrated long service with HBH this year, including Hilary

Payne at 45 years and Anne Kirkbride at 30 years! In this edition, we are honoured to recognise Jenny Moore, our dedicated Social Worker who's been with HBH for 22 years, and Mrs. Deidre Aitken, a respected resident and former Principal Nurse at Howick Baptist, for their exceptional contributions to our community. Their commitment exemplifies the attitude of service and compassion that defines us.

As the holiday season approaches, we are reminded of the timeless message of Christmas – a message of love, hope, and joy. Let us remember this season that the genuine meaning of Christmas is found not in monetary gifts, but in the love and friendship we enjoy with one another. Whether we are surrounded by family or remembering those who are no longer with us, this message remains unchanged.

To our incredible staff, volunteers, families, friends, and board members, your constant dedication is the heart of our care delivery. As we begin the new year, we remain committed in our mission to continue delivering exceptional care, enabling our residents especially those most vulnerable to age well and live fully.

Wishing everyone a peace-filled Christmas and New Year. Let's embrace this season of celebration, reflecting on our achievements and looking forward to the opportunities that lie ahead in 2024.

**Juliette Tuckey**  
CEO







# TABLE OF CONTENTS

STAFF SNAPSHOT ----- PAGE 3

RESIDENT SPOTLIGHT ----- PAGE 4

A YEAR IN REVIEW ----- PAGE 6

GRACIE’S TALE ----- PAGE 13

PRAYER ----- PAGE 13

KINDNESS CLUB ----- PAGE 14

MOIRA’S STORY ----- PAGE 16

JANET’S STORY ----- PAGE 17



We are proud to highlight a vital member of our Howick Views Team, our dedicated Social Worker, **Jenny Moore**, who has been an integral part of our history for 23 years. As the first point of contact for families enquiring about their loved one moving into care, she not only represents the welcoming spirit of our community but also sets a remarkable first impression with her warmth and professionalism. Her commitment and service over the years have greatly contributed to the compassionate environment we cherish at HBH.

I was born near the Norfolk Broads in England, the eldest of three siblings. I completed an honours degree in Economics at Queen Mary College, London, before starting RN Training at the London Hospital in the East End of London. I didn't finish the training, but that's where my journey into social work began.

In 1972, I moved to New Zealand to join my family and accepted a social work position in mental health at Kingseat Hospital. I later completed formal social work training and obtained a master's degree in sociology. I have continued to work as a social worker in various health settings, and I've been at HBH for the past 23 years.

Many families contact me at a time of crisis. They're often dealing with a very difficult situation, and I try to support them so they can make the decisions that are right for their situation. It's really satisfying to be able to assist at a time of stress and help them realize they're doing the right thing for their loved one. I enjoy the continuity of care for families from point of contact right throughout admission and beyond. My role is all about listening, supporting, and providing information to help families make decisions.

I live in Mellons Bay with my husband, Kevin, daughter, Melissa, and grandson, Tai. We also have two dogs and three cats, so life is busy! I love to travel and visit family overseas. I recently shared a very large photo album of my travels with the residents from Berwick Community, and I was delighted to hear about the travel experiences of residents who had been to similar parts of the world.

One of the highlights of my life was my graduation ceremony at the Royal Albert Hall in London. It was my grandmother's first visit to London, and one that she treasured for the rest of her life. The Queen Mother was the patron of the University of London at the time, and every graduate curtsied in front of her as we processed across the stage. This ceremony was followed by a service procession in Westminster Abbey.

*I feel very fortunate to be able to work in a job that I love, and to make a difference in the lives of others. I'm proud to be a part of the HBH team, and I look forward to continuing to serve the community for many years to come.*







*This month, we shine a spotlight on Mrs. Deidre Aitken, a beloved member of the Berwick Community, whose incredible life story exemplifies unflinching resolve and endurance.*

*Born in Auckland, Deidre began her journey at Parnell Primary School, advancing through Selwyn College, and into the forefront of nursing and healthcare administration. Despite the challenges she faced, each one only served to strengthen her commitment to nursing care and professional excellence.*

*Deidre's desire of attending university was initially out of reach prompting her to enter the nursing field at just 17 years old. Her determination shone through when she obtained her NZ General and Obstetric Nursing Registration in 1965. Her dedication to continued learning never wavered and she earned a Bachelor of Arts, a diploma in administration from Massey University, and an MBA from Waikato University.*

*Her professional journey at Greenlane Hospital is nothing short of extraordinary, rising through the ranks from student nurse to Assistant Principal Nurse. Her work ethic was recognised with the Auckland Hospital Board's prestigious Silver Medal, a sign of her excellence. However, it was her confrontation with mental health struggles that marked a turning point, teaching her the vital importance of balance and self-care. This period of personal growth filled her with the understanding that life also includes fun and social connections.*

*Returning to her profession with renewed vigor, she transitioned into administration and management, thereby beginning a remarkable new chapter in her career. In 1985, Deidre's path led her to Howick Baptist Home & Hospital, now known as HBH, where she assumed the role of Principal Nurse. Her transformative efforts there included the development of training programs for nurses, enhancement of professional procedures, and elevation of care standards.*



Her pioneering spirit continued at Roskill Masonic Village, where she was instrumental in advocating for hospital accreditation and training surveyors for the accreditation process, leaving a significant mark on New Zealand's healthcare standards.

Throughout her career, Deidre has been a trailblazer and an advocate for private sector aged care, striving for higher standards and improved practices. Her passion for her job did not fade even after she retired at 60; she went into consulting, doing audits for the Nursing Council on Health Standards and assisting numerous rest homes and hospitals in attaining accreditation.

From 1992 to 2003, as the Chief Executive of the Northern Association Masonic Trust Board, she further cemented her legacy in the healthcare sector.

Deidre's personal life is equally as enriching as her professional one. Her romance with her husband, Robert, began through a Christian dating organization, blossoming from a newspaper notice into a deep, harmonious relationship. In six short months, they wed, and Robert's son, Dughall, became an integral part of their family. Together, they created a home filled with warmth and love.

Travel has been one of Deidre's greatest passions, exploring 57 countries with France holding a special place in her heart. Alongside her love for boating, gardening, and cats, these interests paint a picture of a woman with a profound zest for life.

Now, as part of the Berwick Community, Deidre's journey continues. Despite the health challenges for her and Robert, they've found solace in their adjacent rooms within the community, with their cat Bluey signifying the continuation of their home life. Even after Bluey being adopted out and Robert's move to Sale Community, Deidre's resilience remains undimmed. Her survival beyond a grim prognosis of just four months is a living testament to her strong spirit.



Deidre Aitken's story is not just one of professional achievement but of personal strength and grace under pressure. Her legacy inspires all within our community, embodying the values we hold dear: compassion, excellence and determination. She continues to influence and inspire, proving that her desire to be remembered for her determination is more than a wish, but a reality.



January

After eleven incredible years as CEO of HBH, Bonnie moved on to a new role in PSN. Her leadership and dedication had been vital in shaping our community. As Bonnie embarked on a new journey, we were pleased to welcome Juliette as our new CEO.

Our residents started the year with a flurry of activities. One of the highlights was Hal's victory in the Mini Golf tournament, which served as a testament to the vibrant and captivating atmosphere we strive to create. Furthermore, as part of the festivities for Chinese New Year, our residents enthusiastically created and decorated lanterns showcasing their creativity.

In a show of friendship and support, several of our staff members attended Bonnie's PSN Welcome, a touching gesture to celebrate her new role and the strong bonds she had formed during her time here at HBH.

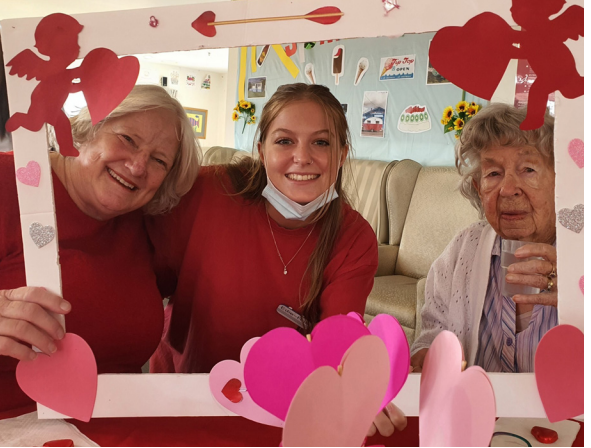


Juliette got things rolling at Howick Views in February with the initiation of Clean Up Day. This initiative saw staff and residents coming together in a collective effort to declutter and tidy up.

Our residents also embraced the spirit of Valentine's Day, celebrating with heartwarming activities and decorations. This added a touch of love and warmth to our community, as the residents' exchanged stories while they made cards for their loved ones.

Furthermore, we celebrated Waitangi Day, paying tribute to this significant day in our country's history.

February



Howick Views was a whirlwind of activity as we prepared for the upcoming audit. Teams across departments all worked together, showcasing hard work and dedication. This collective effort was not just about compliance but also a reflection of our commitment to the highest standards of care and service.

While everyone was busy getting ready for the audit, our residents had a blast celebrating St. Patrick's Day.

The release of Bamboo, an HR software, also marked a major improvement in our operating efficiency. By streamlining our administrative operations, we can enhance Staff's ability to provide outstanding care and services.

The climax of the month was the Audit itself at the end of March. We extended a warm and culturally rich welcome to our auditors with a Powhiri, beautifully performed by students from Howick College.

March

We kicked off the month Easter celebrations in full swing. Our residents and staff engaged in a variety of Easter-themed activities, including egg decorating, a festive Easter egg hunt, and special gatherings. We also honoured Sophie Flavell's 25th anniversary of dedicated service to HBH and Hilary Payne's 45th anniversary. She started in HBH in its early days and staying committed to the organisation.

The month concluded with the solemn observance of ANZAC Day, a time to honour the brave soldiers who served and sacrificed for our country. A commemorative service was conducted by our Chaplain Yvonne reflecting on the courage and resilience of the ANZACs.



April







We were delighted to welcome Hilda as Group Manager of Development and Support Services. Hilda brings a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective that will greatly contribute to the growth and expansion of our services.

We also held a Powhiri for all staff who joined us in the last six months. The ceremony provided a warm welcome to our new staff.

A celebration was held for Anne Kirkbride in Gulf Views, commemorating her 30 years of dedicated service..

In addition, Nurses Day was observed in May, providing an opportunity to commemorate and recognize the hard work, devotion, and care that our nursing team provides every day.

The residents celebrated King Charles’ coronation with tea at the end of the month. It was a delightful opportunity for social engagement and sharing stories.



The month began with the inaugural Remembrance Day at Howick Views, a solemn and touching occasion dedicated to remembering the memories of residents who have passed away. This provided comfort and a sense of togetherness, allowing both residents, family members and staff to reflect, remember, and celebrate the lives of those who were part of our HBH family.

Laurie, an apartment resident, turned 100 years old, which was a happy occasion. His centennial celebration was a joyous and inspiring occasion that highlighted the wealth of experiences and wisdom he gives to our community.

Charles Miller stepped into the role of the new Board Chair for HBH Group. Following Stephen Parker’s footsteps in ensuring the continued success and growth of our organisation.



We embraced the Matariki celebrations, marking the Māori New Year. This was a time of joy, reflection, and connection, as our community came together to acknowledge this significant cultural event. Each community wholeheartedly embraced this special event by crafting delightful decorations and impressive Korowai creations. The days were packed with activities and waiata performances, including a hangi lunch that was enjoyed by our residents, as well as a communal lunch for staff.

Additionally, July saw the launch of ‘Relatively Speaking,’ a monthly speaking series aimed at providing families of our residents with insights and information on various topics. The inaugural session featured Janet Mikkelsen from Aroha Funerals, who delivered an insightful talk on ‘Coping with Grief & Loss.’ Her talk resonated deeply with the attendees, sparking stimulating and thoughtful discussions. The cosy and intimate setting of the event created an environment where attendees felt comfortable sharing their experiences and feelings, making it a resounding success. Janet’s expertise and compassionate approach provided valuable perspectives and support, helping attendees navigate the complex emotions associated with the loss of a loved one.



Botany Primary School kids brought a smile to our resident’s faces with their orchestra performance. This intergenerational exchange was a joyous occasion, bringing smiles and a sense of youthful energy to our community.

The ‘Relatively Speaking’ series continued with an informative session by Kathi Peri, focusing on brain health. Kathi’s expertise offered valuable insights and practical advice on maintaining cognitive well-being, an increasingly important topic for our residents and their families. The session was well-received, with attendees appreciating the chance to learn and discuss ways to support brain health.

Over at Gulf Views, the Daffodil Celebrations marked a special moment, bringing a splash of colour and joy to the community. This event was a celebration of spring and a symbol of hope, aligning with the spirit of the Daffodil Day cancer campaign.

Additionally, the results of our organisation wide Well-being Survey were released in August, providing valuable insights into the satisfaction and overall well-being of everyone, most especially our residents. The feedback gathered is instrumental in guiding our continuous efforts to enhance the quality of life for all.





September

We celebrated both Tongan and Maori Language Week here at HBH. Our residents fully embraced the richness of the Tongan culture, which was beautifully showcased through dance and singing performances.

In addition to these cultural celebrations, residents also expanded their linguistic horizons by engaging with Te Reo Maori. Interactive flashcards were used as an educational tool, allowing residents to learn and practice the Maori language in a fun and engaging way.

As the weather began to warm up, residents enthusiastically returned to their garden walks and other outdoor activities.

Furthermore, our 'Relatively Speaking' session this month addressed a significant topic: Loneliness, one of the three plagues affecting older people, facilitated by Juliette, our CEO

We kicked off the month with a fantastic celebration in honour of International Older Persons Day across Howick Views, Gulf Views, and our Apartments.

Fiji Day festivities brought a taste of the Pacific Islands to HBH. Residents and staff enjoyed the colourful and lively celebrations, which provided a wonderful opportunity for cultural exchange and appreciation.

Carol Turner, our Occupational Therapist, led the 'Relatively Speaking' session in October, which focused on Cognitive Stimulation Therapy. This workshop provided important insights into cognitive health maintenance and featured practical advice and exercises.

Refurbishment for 139 on Union has started with a Long Term Maintenance plan for the next 5 years finalised.

Our HBH Annual Report for 2023 can be viewed on our website.

October

At Howick Views, the residents expressed their artistic talents in a hat decorating event as part of the Melbourne Cup celebrations, while the spirit of teamwork and dedication shone brightly in a mini-golf tournament, with the Berwick Community Residents emerging victorious over our staff. The intriguing Garden Experiment in Minerva brought unexpected results, especially with Plant C's growth, leading to light-hearted debates on plant communication. The Men's Group engaged in meaningful discussions about travel.

Gulf Views enjoyed the Pet Vibes visit, with an array of animals for our residents to interact with. This, coupled with the Pink Ribbon Lunch, highlights our dedication to fostering a supportive community.

The residents eagerly took part in the decoration of Christmas trees. A newfound favorite activity, painting each other's nails, has become more than a beauty routine—it's a gesture of care, friendship, and the embodiment of the vibrant, supportive environment we value in our communities.







December was a season of giving and festivity at HBH. We expressed our gratitude to the Salvation Army Church, which has consistently welcomed our residents, by organizing a Food Drive. This heartfelt gesture reflected our appreciation and community spirit.

Stevenson Village residents enjoyed a festive Christmas lunch, a delightful event filled with good cheer and companionship. Meanwhile, Seymour's Christmas decorations, donated by a past resident's family, garnered attention by featuring in the newspaper, showcasing our community's holiday spirit and the meaningful connections we cherish.



Hello, fellow tail-waggers and human friends! I'm the petite yet adventurous Chihuahua from Union Road, eager to recount my latest tales of mischief and exploration.

My afternoons are typically spent on the sofa, lulled to sleep by my mom and Auntie Jeanne's endless chats. It's a peaceful routine, but a thrill-seeking girl like me craves more. Hence, my escapades on Union Road! Dodging those zooming giants and being rescued by kind humans has become my signature adventure, much to the worry of my mom.

But, all adventures have their pauses. With my secret escape route now barricaded, I've had to find other ways to spice up my days. My new favorite pastime? Fearlessly barking at visiting dogs that are larger than me – it's quite the adrenaline rush! And let's not forget the joy of cuddling with Auntie Ersie, who lovingly calls me a 'good boy', even though I'm proudly a girl.

In a surprising turn of events, my adventures and escapades have led to an unexpected outcome. My vet has prescribed natural remedies to help me manage my daring spirit and perhaps keep me a bit more grounded. It seems even us small pups can have big emotions to manage!

Looking forward to finding an escape route in 2024! Merry Christmas everyone!



As we come to the end of another year we can give thanks for all the people who have passed through our doors.

Some for only a few days and others have been here for a few years. As we have cared for them in any way, we can know we helped them in their final days. We can be proud of all we have achieved for each person.

Each little task has helped our Residents and families to know we care for their family member.

As we reach the end of the year may we give thanks for this Christian organisation that care so highly for the people who live here and work here.

May we all be Blessed this special time of the year and remember:

**JESUS IS THE REASON FOR THE SEASON.**

When He was born as Gods gift to mankind let us give thanks.

Lots of love and Blessings to you all

Rev Yvonne Fisk Chaplain



Introducing the Kindness Club -

Meet Chanelle Wansbury, a primary school teacher from Shelly Park school who founded the Kindness Club, this unique club, composed of enthusiastic Year 5 and 6 students, has made a remarkable impact through their visits to our Howick Views community. For the past two years, these young visitors have brought joy and vibrant energy, engaging in playful activities, colouring sessions, and meaningful interactions with our residents. This interview explores her journey, the club’s impact, and its future, providing insights for educators and volunteers eager to foster kindness in their communities.

1. Can you tell us a bit more about yourself, your background as a primary school teacher, and what inspired you to start the Kindness Club?

I have been a primary school teacher for 17 years and have taught in schools in South Africa, Tanzania, England and New Zealand. I have always had a heart for service and for helping humans and animals in need. In South Africa, there are a lot of people who are living in impoverished conditions. There are many people who are homeless and do not have food to eat or safe places to shelter. Things are dire in some communities. I saw a need for the private school children I taught in South Africa, to connect with and learn from the underprivileged children and adults in our community. I wanted them to experience the joy that can come from giving your time and assets to people who desperately need it. From these thoughts, the Outreach Club was born and we served the community in various ways, including making sandwiches every few weeks for children at a local school, making waterproof blankets out of newspaper and plastic for the homeless, visiting the elderly in retirement villages and making toys for the animals in the animal shelters. When I arrived in New Zealand 6 years ago, I realised that although there is far less poverty here than in South Africa, there is still the need for children to learn how to serve others and become connected, caring citizens and community members. I decided to start the Kindness Club which is an optional club for Year 5 and 6 students. We meet every Friday at lunchtime and learn about kindness and practice our skills at home, school and within our community.

2a. What are the main objectives of the Kindness Club?

We aim to spread joy to our peers, teachers and the larger community through small acts of kindness on a regular basis. We aim to be people who can be counted on to include others and bring a smile to everyone’s faces. My other aim as the coordinator, is to prove that kindness is something that is not only about

making others feel good, but about making ourselves feel good too. Our motto is “No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted.” (Aesop)

2b. Last year, you made a visit to HBH with the Kindness Club. Could you share some of the standout activities or experiences from that visit that motivated you to return again this year?

We loved our visit last year! The children spoke about the visit for weeks before and after. They loved talking to the residents and hearing about their school days. There was a gentleman there who showed us his 3D puzzles which we were in awe of. I think the main reason we wanted to return this year is that we truly enjoyed the conversations and the way we felt after having spent time with the residents.

2c. Could you share with us what specifically drew you to HBH and the aged care sector in general? What factors influenced your decision to focus your efforts in these areas.

We strive to have an impact on our local community first and so we saw HBH as our closest aged care centre. I also have a friend who works at the centre and so it was lovely to be able to liaise initially through this connection. I remember going on a class group visit to a retirement village when I was a child, and how much I enjoyed it. I also remember the cards and thank you messages we received from those elderly residents and knowing how much it meant to them to have us come and see them. A lot of our students are immigrants and don’t have their own grandparents here. At the same time, there are a lot of elderly folk who don’t have their grandchildren nearby. It seemed like a good way to meet the emotional needs of both groups. It is also a good learning experience, in terms of children learning how to communicate with people from older generations and develop empathy for others.

3. How has participating in the Kindness Club impacted the students in terms of empathy, social skills, and understanding of the elderly? Are there any particular stories of student growth or realisation that stand out to you?

The Kindness Club students are able to practice their social skills and empathy on a weekly basis through the activities we do on Fridays at lunchtime. Having a visit to the elderly in our calendar, creates conversations around respectful communication, empathy for others who are possibly experiencing pain and being grateful for our families and all that we have. The growth I get to see in some students is beautiful! One thing the children have spoken at length about is how much fun it can be to be around the elderly and how many interesting stories they have to share. Many of the children ask to go back on a weekly basis but unfortunately our timetable just doesn’t allow for that.

4. What future activities or projects are planned for the Kindness Club?

I will be moving on to be a Specialist Outreach teacher, working with ORS funded children with high or very high needs, next year and so the Kindness Club will be under the coordination of a lovely young teacher who is sure to bring fresh ideas. I am sure she will want to continue to keep the connection with HBH though.



5. What advice would you give to other educators or volunteers looking to start a similar initiative?

I’d really encourage them to go for it! Our world will always need more kindness. Our children are a resource of this - they are amazing at noticing where the needs are and empathising with others. If we have a chance to create some smiles and lighten others’ loads, we should see this as an honour and do it. This club has brought the children and I so much happiness.

6. What has been the most rewarding part of leading the Kindness Club?

I think the best part is just seeing the excitement and happiness on the children’s faces when they are about to do something special for someone else. I love the ideas they come up with in their free time and then approach me to ask if we can carry their ideas out. I love it that they think about kindness wherever they are, not only when they are with me during the club time.

7. How has this experience influenced your approach to teaching and community service?

I will always see this type of work as part of who I am and the legacy I would like to leave behind. I try my best to model kindness and empathy in every situation at school. To be honest, I would be far more fulfilled knowing that my students are kind, empathetic and caring humans than highly academic ones who don’t have those skills.





**MOIRA’S STORY – ‘I’M VERY LUCKY TO BE LIVING HERE.’**

**AFTER LIVING IN A BOARDING HOUSE FOR YEARS, MOIRA WAS DELIGHTED TO HAVE A SAFE, WARM, AND COMFORTABLE HOME OF HER OWN AT STEVENSON VILLAGE.**



Moira moved to Stevenson Village 13 years ago. Before that, she had been living in a boarding house in Howick, where she had to share a bathroom with three other people. “I had put my name down on every WINZ list as I was really hoping to have my own place,” she says. When she was contacted by Stevenson Village to say a unit was available for her, Moira was thrilled. She loves her warm, cosy one-bedroom unit and, just as importantly, the friendly community.

Moira worked at the University of Auckland Medical School as a receptionist, which she continued to do until she retired at 76 years of age. “I would get up at 4am in the morning to get into town from Stevenson Village. I’d open everything up and be ready to welcome the other staff and students in the morning.” She says that although she decided it was time to retire, she really misses being around young people.

As a person who likes to be busy, Moira fills her days productively. She has initiated movie afternoons for other residents at Stevenson Village which have proven to be very popular. She says sometimes one of the residents will do a bit of baking which they enjoy during their afternoon tea break. Just as Moira helped the visitors, students, and staff at the Medical School, she does the same at Stevenson Village. “If I haven’t seen anyone for a while, I’ll knock on their door and make sure they are okay,” she says. She still drives and is more than happy to take other residents on errands or to doctor’s appointments.

Moira says that Stevenson Village is a “real neighbourhood” where everyone supports each other and it’s wonderful to be part of a community. “It’s my home, it’s safe and we look out for one another. I am very lucky to be living here.”

**FINDING A LIKE-MINDED COMMUNITY TO BELONG TO.**

Janet moved to East Auckland 13 years ago and worked until she retired. With a full-time job and a long commute she had little time to establish a friend network outside of her family. “I really missed my old group of friends when I first moved to Auckland,” she says. “My job was so busy that social opportunities were limited. My spare time was devoted to family and the usual weekend chores.”

Like many people, when Janet retired, she had “a big empty space to fill”. She knew it was time to introduce new activities into her life and make new friends or she would be very lonely. She started with the Howick Information Centre. “The lovely lady there said she belonged to the local Probus Club, and she would meet me there the following week if I was interested.”

I joined Probus and not long after started to follow Virtual Village East on Facebook. “As it happens one of the Probus members attends VVE and said he was enjoying the cooking lessons, which piqued my interest,” she says. “It took me a while to summon up the courage to attend an event, but when I saw the advert for the physical wellbeing seminar, I thought now’s the time as I have been dealing with some health issues.”

Janet said she couldn’t have been made to feel more welcome. “I had such a warm welcome and was immediately introduced to some members who took me under their wing.” Janet thoroughly enjoyed the seminar and learnt several new things to try to enhance her physical health. However, what she discovered and loves the most about the Virtual Village, is the focus on total wellbeing. “I have found nobody else offering such diverse activities. We all have different needs at different times, so the fact that you can pick and choose the activities that best meet your needs – or go to everything if you wish – is a real bonus.”

As well as meeting some lovely new people at the seminar, Janet has enjoyed receiving the weekly newsletter sent to members on a Sunday. “I love the self-care tips and have added these to my calendar. The other articles are very interesting and thought-provoking.”

Since attending the seminar, Janet has signed up for Virtual Village East’s Safe & Strong exercise programme. She says she’s delighted to have found such a wonderful community of seniors with whom she can enjoy companionship, friendship, fitness, and fun.





# Meri Kirihimete!

from HBH Group

MERRY  
Christmas