

# Kidney Kids NZ

CHRISTMAS NEWSLETTER 2023



2023 started with weather conditions like never before, and barely a summer and all on the back of covid!! But we have some amazingly resilient kidney kid families out there who got on with the task ahead and supported each other through some very tough times and despite all that we had a good year meeting up and getting out and about again.

It was great to travel to the regional clinics this year and meet new families and reconnect with families we hadn't seen for a few years!.

In March we held our National camps. They were both very successful events.

We are working towards next year's camps to be held April 12<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup> 2024.

We have had some amazing people helping Kidney Kids by fundraising in their own ways to support our kids. It has been lovely to hold Christmas get togethers around the regions and thank you to all the children who dressed up for the occasion.

Look at Napier photos and check out Austin in his very own big parcel. Great idea Austin!.

Our team welcomed 42 new families from around the country this year. And we farewelled 38 young adults who we are immensely proud of and wish them all the very best for their future with the support of the regional adult kidney societies and support networks in the community.

Our Team at Kidney Kids wish you all the very best for this Christmas season and a safe and happy holiday and every best wish and good health for 2024.

Rachel Barrett, National Manager  
Support Services, The Kidney Kids Team.



Kidney kid Selena received the best birthday gift ever this year, a kidney transplant!. Here is Selena wearing her special tee shirt "I have a new kidney"

Selena and her brother were at our Auckland Christmas Event and it was wonderful seeing Selena so happy, running around energetically with all the other children.  
(Kidney transplants save lives).



# Youth Navigator Ben



## Message from Ben Youth Navigator

As we approach the end of another incredible year at Kidney Kids New Zealand, I reflect on the journey we've shared as a community. Serving as your Youth Navigator has been an honour, a role that has allowed me to connect, support, and champion the incredible rangatahi (young adults) and whanau in our network. Our gatherings have been diverse, pizza parties filled with laughter and connection, casual chats at Starbucks that turned into meaningful conversations, and the introduction of our Smartwatch Programme. A step forward in technology empowering our community to monitor health and well-being in innovative ways. The highlight of our year, undoubtedly, was the amazing time spent at camp. The shared experiences, adventures, and friendships formed have created memories that will forever hold a special place in our hearts. The Christmas parties held throughout New Zealand were moments of joy, unity, and celebration. *Ben Fonua (Youth Navigator)*.

Congratulations to Kyla Richardson who is one of our young adults. Kyla was the winner from the Questionnaire sent out by Ben for our young adults to complete. Thanks to all those who returned their questionnaires.

This information is great and helps the support team know what our young people need from us.

## Pre Christmas Event

Our Tauranga/Rotorua/Hauraki pre-Christmas dinner at Lone Star restaurant on October 17th was a heartwarming gathering of our close-knit kidney kids and their whanau. Amidst the festive atmosphere, we savoured a delightful spread of culinary delights, from succulent seafood to mouthwatering ribs, crispy calamari, mussels and classic fish and chips. Laughter and camaraderie filled the air as we shared stories and celebrated the joy of togetherness, creating cherished memories that made this pre-holiday season even more special. (Ben, Youth Navigator)



# Wellington Christmas Party



On the 29th October Rachel, Rachel & Ben flew to Wellington to host our Wellington Region Christmas get together. We had a very successful event at Jumparama Hutt Park. Thanks to the Kidney Kids families who joined us. It was wonderful to catch up with you all and see the children having so much fun jumping on the trampolines, rock-climbing and meeting other kidney kids and their families.



# Auckland Hamilton Christmas Party



Spiderman, Supergirl, Batman and the Counties Manukau Police were the star attractions at this years Christmas Party for our kidney kids and whanau.

Thanks to all those families that joined us at Ambury Farm for a wonderful get together and picnic lunch on Sunday with Dominos pizzas, Subway & Mr Whippy. There were Christmas presents for the children and games. We loved seeing everyone and meeting our new families.



# Auckland Party contd...



Kidney kids Emilia—left, Waylon and sisters Coral and Pearl at our outdoor photo booth



Kidney Kids Team with Dominos serving lunch for our Kidney Kids families.

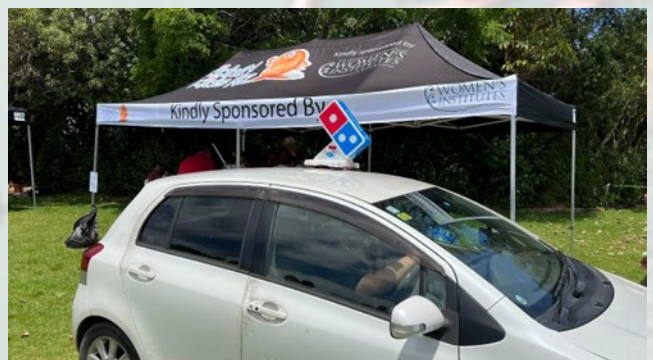


# Auckland Party contd...



Thank you Ambury Farm for your support and giving us the space to use for our party. It was a perfect picnic spot.

A Big shout out too to Dominos!. Thank you very much for supplying free pizzas for our families and supporting us at Kidney Kids NZ and thanks to the Police for joining us as well.



# Napier Christmas Party



Rachel Barrett and Kellie held the Napier Christmas Party at St Paul's Church lounge. It was a great day. The kids made straw towers, not quite as tall as the Sky Tower, but pretty close. They had lots of fun with musical chairs, and the children who dressed up were



amazing. But the prize for the best dressed went to the best Christmas present we've ever seen (Austin), bottom right photo. Fantastic effort Austin.

Thank you to Bridget at St Paul's for helping us with the venue, it was great.



# South Island Christmas Parties



Carmel organised the Christchurch Christmas Party which was held on 2nd December.

“Dave the music man was a great hit. It was really cute watching the little ones slowly warm up and then get right in to it. The children enjoyed opening their gifts and the food. The big kids made wee Christmas puddings using mallow puffs, melted white choc chips, jaffa’s and green lollies for the leaves. Quite a few parents are going to try these at home.”



Carmel would like to say “A big shout out to her sister Caroline Nicol and her son William who were an incredible help and support. And special thanks to Vicki Farrant and Zoe Frame who went above and beyond to help out. To Dave the Backyard Music Man who shared his remarkable talent and love of music with the families.”

Carmel and your helpers, a very big thank you for doing such a fantastic job running the South Island Christmas parties. Wonderful seeing the photos of the children having such a great time.



# Dunedin Christmas Party

We had a fun Christmas Party in Dunedin, with some lovely feedback from those who attended.

The Christmas bear, alongside the Christmas Elf made an appearance at the Otago Kidney Kids' Christmas Party!. A great day, lots of fun, with an amazing face painter and balloon twister, pizza, games and treats. Pass the parcel was a big hit. Families had travelled as far afield as Invercargill to attend and one little boy told us it was the "best day of his life", we certainly can't do better than that.

A special shout out to **Tara Harrex and Harrex Electrical** for their sponsorship!!. An amazing gesture for a special community of tamariki and their whanau.

Carmel Gregan-Ford  
South Island Family Support



# Korucare America Trip

Kidney kids Jayda Larsen, Marley Clayton, Imeleina Ale & Seth Templeman were selected for this years Koru care trip to the US, including a visit to Disneyland amongst other wonderful experiences. Marley has shared her Koru care trip story with us. Thank you Marley!. And Thank you Koru care for making this happen!.

“Three years ago I got a letter in the mail that changed my life. I was invited to be a part of a group that a very generous organisation called Korucare take to LA each year. I couldn’t believe it, I was so excited, and grateful to be chosen! Unfortunately Covid had other plans and the trip was postponed, but 3 years later, on October 21st 2023, me and a group of other children living with chronic illnesses flew out of Auckland to LA!. The rides were insane. I loved all the drops and loops. The incredicoaster at California adventure park was one of the best roller coasters I’ve ever been on. At Disneyland I loved Space



Mountain because it wasn't scary but it still gave me an adrenaline rush. I loved Disneyland and how you could feel how magical it was no matter your age. I really liked going on rides which were inspired by movies that I loved when I was younger. At night I loved watching the Fireworks with all of my new friends. Disney California Adventure was definitely one of my favourite places we went to because of all the amazing rides and the fun vibes. My top favourite ride was Guardians Of The Galaxy Mission Breakout. I loved the big drops and how the doors open so can see the nice view from so high up. I also loved Goofy's Sky School because it threw you around and had fun drops that weren't too big so everyone enjoyed it. I met some really nice people, like my roommate Lucia who I loved hanging out with alone and with our other friends. All the kids and Caregivers were so nice, funny and really easy to get along with. It was really interesting to learn about why other people were there and what they have been through. We all made so many new friends from different places in New Zealand. I am so grateful for all the caregivers that made this trip possible for all us kids, we will never forget it.

# Korucare & Limb-it-less Shaz Dagg

We went to so many places that I would never even imagine I would go to, The Anaheim Ducks game was my number 1 favourite thing we did especially since they won. I really enjoyed the San Diego Zoo, there were so many animals that I've never seen before. I loved seeing the monkeys and polar bears because they are some of my favourite animals. It was very interesting to see how different Americans and New Zealanders act and how differently they use words even though we both speak the same language.

I can't even put into words all the exciting things we did on this trip. We saw so many cool things and met so many generous people. This really was a trip of a lifetime and one that I will never forget. I am so grateful to Tracey and Ann for organising such an amazing trip and taking me on it." *(Marley Clayton)*



## Limb-it-less Shaz Dagg

On 18th November the amazing Shaz Dagg set a record and she is now officially the first solo amputee to kayak the length of Lake Taupo. Well done Shaz, you are incredible!.

Some of you might have even been lucky enough to Shaz on the TVNZ news that night.



Kidney Kid Taane & the Tamehana whanau were all at the Taupo Yacht Club to cheer Shaz on when she reached the finish line and share pizza and celebrate her success. Thanks again Ana for bringing your whanau along to support Shaz.

All money raised by Shaz is being donated to Kidney Kids NZ and we are extremely grateful.

# Current Fundraisers

## Thank You Shaz!

Heartfelt thanks Shaz from the Kidney Kids Team & all the kidney kids that you are working so hard for.

We encourage our kidney kid families and supporters to all keep a look out for more in the New Year on Shaz, who is also doing the **Coast to Coast** and please everyone get behind her!, spread the word as all money donated to Shaz's Givealittle page is going to Kidney Kids NZ.

Here is the Givealittle link to donate

<https://givealittle.co.nz/fundraiser/limb-it-less-shaz-dagg>

*(photo - kidney kid Taane with Shaz)*



## Over the Edge—Sky Jump for Kidney Kids

Siobhan Richards, Board member and kidney kid Mum is raising money for Kidney Kids and is doing the Sky Jump.

“Kidney kids NZ is a charity close to my heart. Next year my son will be going on his first kidney kids camp and he is beyond excited to meet other children who have not had the easiest experiences in their young lives. I want to raise awareness for Kidney Kids NZ and step out of my comfort zone.

“The thought of dangling off the sky tower is terrifying.. So why not raise funds for the bravest children and families I know at the same time”

Facebook [Kidney Kids NZ](#)

Website [click here](#)

If you would like to support Siobhan and donate to Kidney Kids, please click [HERE](#) to open the link



# Golf Event & Thank You



## Golf Day

Our annual Golf day held on the 7th of December at Akarana Golf Club was a huge success. Thank you very much ALSCO for all your support and for organising this wonderful event. And to all of the talented golfers who teed off to raise money for our kidney kids & their whanau, we hope that you enjoyed the day. A big thank you to Shaz Dagg for coming to speak to the participants. Your story is truly inspirational. And thank you Siobhan Richards, (Board Member, kidney kid Mum and helper), who at the Golf Day delivered ice cold water from her buggy.



## Southern Stars Charitable Trust

Another big thank you to **Southern Stars** who are running their annual telemarketing campaign raising money for Kidney Kids. (30th October—19th December). Thank you Fred and your team for your continued support on an annual basis, we are very grateful.

## Good in the Hood 2023

Thank you Z Energy & especially **Z Triangle, Ellerslie** who selected Kidney Kids as one of your chosen charities and included us in your Good in the Hood campaign this year. If you filled your car up, thanks for supporting your kidney kids. We are extremely grateful for the money raised.



# Thank You



## IT Support

Thank you to Dave at Seopro, (website), Mark at ACIT for IT Support, and Merkle for supporting us with Salesforce.

## Goode PR

Thank you to the Goode PR team for working with us and supporting us throughout the year.

## Thank you Alan & Theresa for your beautiful Christmas Lights Display

Alan and Theresa are opening up their home in Mosgiel, Dunedin for everyone to enjoy. They have created an incredible Christmas Lights display.

This is a wonderful opportunity for the community and local people to share some festivity.

They have also chosen our charity Kidney Kids NZ as the recipient for the donations given for the Christmas light display and we feel incredibly grateful to be selected.

Kidney Kids NZ would like to say a huge thank you Alan and Theresa for your very generous offer to give the donations from this Christmas Light Display to Kidney Kids NZ.

Wishing you a very Merry Christmas and all the very best for 2024 from all the Kidney Kids whanau.



# More thanks & Kidney Donors

## Thanks Walter & Katherine

Thank you Walter & Katherine our amazing Kidney Kids Ambassadors. Both attended our fantastic Camps earlier this year. Walter is putting up a Christmas video message for our kidney kids on the Facebook page, so keep a look out for this!

Walter & Katherine, happy holidays and we look forward to working with you both in the New Year.

## Farewell to the Wilkins Family & Thank You Karyn

Kidney kid Evie & her family are moving home to Perth. Evie and family, it has been wonderful having you as part of our Kidney Kids whanau and we would like to wish you all the very best for your move back to Australia. We would also like to say a very big Thank You to Karyn for all the work you have done for us at Kidney Kids. Take care & please keep in touch.

## Kidney Donors

Kidney Kids thank our incredible donors who have given new life to our kidney kids. You are selfless, loving and super human beings. Four of our kidney kids received transplants this year. 3 deceased and 1 living transplant. This has changed these children's lives. Donors, we think you are amazing. Heartfelt thanks. For the kidney kids who received a transplant this Christmas it will be an extra special celebration.

## Thinking of Donating?

If you are thinking about donating a kidney, the NZ governments Ministry of Health Website has useful information [Click on this link](#)

## Camps

An email was sent out asking for expressions of interest for camp 2024. Camp KeeWee and YAK Camp (Young Adults Camp), will both be run in April. Thank you to those who sent their child's name through within the time frame specified. Keep a look out for important camp emails early 2024. Camp is being held 12-14 April, the first weekend of the April school holidays.



# Easy Christmas Recipe



## Christmas Fruit platter tree

Here is an easy, fun and healthy Christmas recipe which you and your whanau can have fun making together at home this Christmas.

Get creative and use your favourite fruit and nibbles.

## Fruit Christmas Tree idea ingredients :

- Grapes
- Watermelon
- Strawberries
- Pears
- Cherries
- Cheese cubed
- Pretzels
- Rosemary sprigs
- Kiwifruit
- Blueberries
- Nuts



*Please send us a photo of your fruit Christmas tree.*

*We would love to see what you create!*

*Email: [RSherman@kidneykids.org.nz](mailto:RSherman@kidneykids.org.nz)*





# Seasons Greetings



## Message from the Chief Executive

After three years of living with Covid restrictions it has been great that we could bring back some normality into our lives in 2023. The year started off well with Camp KeeWee and YAK Camp at Ngaruawahia in March. It was good to see some new faces while others were catching up with friends that they haven't seen for three years.

I commend the work of the family support team of Rachel Barrett, Rachel Sherman, Ben Fonua, and Carmel Gregan-Ford ably supported by Kellie Gaudin, who have been keeping up regular contact with our kidney kids, their families and whanau. We are expanding our Smart Watch Programme, The John Velvin Education Programme, our new Technology Support Programme, and look forward to applications from our families where these programmes could assist our "kids" to live better lives.

I would also like to thank all our donors, our corporate sponsors, and grant providers, without whom we wouldn't be able to provide the level of support, run camps, and provide the support programmes.

After 11 years at the helm, I am retiring at the end of March and welcome our new CEO, Ian Potter, to Kidney Kids. I would like to thank our staff and the Board and wish Kidney Kids, our kids and their families all the very best for the future.

A very merry Christmas to you all.

Keith Mackenzie  
Chief Executive



## We all need a little support

Supporting Kidney Kids NZ in whatever way you can is always appreciated. Your support helps us to support our families nationwide. If you would like to donate to Kidney Kids you can go to our website and click on the 'Donate' button...

<http://www.kidneykids.org.nz/>

# Administration



## Tickets to events

Kidney Kids NZ takes no responsibility for events that are not organised by us. If unsure if an event is going ahead or postponed, please check directly with the event organiser. Wear a mask in indoor settings and remember to use hand sanitiser.

## Medication Reminder

Do you have enough medication to last you through the holidays for your children?. Most surgeries will be closed over the Christmas and New Year season. If you require urgent medical assistance go to your nearest hospital or **call 111**.

## Contact Details & Emails

All of our kidney kids should be receiving their birthday messages—did your kidney kid receive theirs?, if not then please update your email address. If your email address is correct you should be hearing from us on a regular basis. Any changes to your contact details please email Rachel Sherman [rsherman@kidneykids.org.nz](mailto:rsherman@kidneykids.org.nz) or **freephone 0800 215 437**.

## Christmas Office Hours

Please note that our Kidney Kids office is closed over Christmas and New Year. Our team will be on leave.

Office closes at midday Wednesday 20th December 2023.

Office reopens at 8:30am Monday 8th January 2024.

Remember we are a support service and staff hours are 8:30am - 5:00pm Mon - Fri.

We wish all of our kidney kid families and supporters a safe and Happy Christmas and every good wish for the New Year. Look forward to catching up again in 2024.



# Acknowledgements



Kidney Kids NZ has many companies, charities, trusts and other organisations who support us throughout the year. This support enables us to continue to provide the much-needed support services to our Kidney Kids families nation-wide. We would like to take this opportunity to give thanks, to the following:



Centuria

