



Helen Mason

Healthy, thriving communities, Kia Momoho Te Hāpori Ōranga.



The Northern Knights cricket team attended an event at Te Whare Maiangi to help us celebrate Mental Health Awareness Week.

Celebrating great mental health

Last week was Mental Health Awareness Week and we were reminded that taking care of our mental health is as important as looking after our physical health. This year's theme was: Let nature in, strengthen your wellbeing – Mā te taiao, kia whakapakari tōu oranga!

Why nature? The evidence is that connecting with nature can uplift your wairua/spirit and promote mental health and wellbeing. From learning about native birds and picking herbs from the garden to seeing the sunset from the kitchen window.

The MHSOP (Mental Health Services for Older People) team invited us to: "Put yourself at the top of your priority list and take a moment to let nature in."

I was very happy to have the opportunity to do just that by popping into the Community Outreach Service Garden and enjoying the sausage sizzle, home baking and seedlings sale. The funds raised, \$327, will be donated to Family Link.

The theme of the garden party was mindfulness, and the team had cards to give out with five simple tips for mindfulness, highlighting things you can do to connect with nature for a moment within your busy day. These encouraged us to pause momentarily and experience:

- 5 things you can see
- 4 things you can touch
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

I was interested to hear some of the team's reflections on mindfulness:

"It's about finding time to relax, doing what you enjoy and making sure you relax."

"It's not a new concept. It's been around for a long time. It's about being in the moment. Being focused on that moment, and not being distracted by other things, especially cellphones."

"It's about being in the moment, being in the bubble. Sometimes people are too focused on the emotion of a moment, and don't recognise that it will pass. It's about recognising that emotions will change. It's about taking the time to admire the cherry blossoms."

It was great to see so many people taking the opportunity to pop in and enjoy the garden party, even for a brief time. The garden is looking beautiful, with lots of the plants in full flower. It was lovely to have the chance to stop and catch up, with the sounds of the birds around us. A moment of tranquillity and reflection in our busy days.

"If you want to conquer the anxiety of life, live in the moment, live in the breath."

Dr Amit Ray (born 1960) Indian author and spiritualist known for his teachings on meditation, yoga, peace and compassion.

Many thanks to the MHSOP team for arranging this, and reminding us of the importance of connecting with nature, and of the value of mindfulness. And a special thanks to the person who made the biscuits I bought, which tasted exactly like the biscuits my mum used to make when I was little. So delicious. Savouring them gave me a mindful moment, and a flood of happy memories. Thank you!

It seems that with each year we get busier and busier. More people ask for more and more from us. I encourage you to think about how we keep ourselves mentally and physically fit, and to reflect on the simple tips on mindfulness from the MHSOP team. I hope they are as useful to you as they have been to me.

Simply apply the Five Ways to Wellbeing to your everyday life. Regardless of how much or little you interact with nature, you can make them work for you!



Your time,
your words,
your presence



DO WHAT YOU CAN,
ENJOY WHAT YOU DO,
MOVE YOUR MOOD



EMBRACE NEW
EXPERIENCES,
SEE OPPORTUNITIES,
SURPRISE YOURSELF



TALK & LISTEN,
BE THERE,
FEEL CONNECTED



REMEMBER
THE SIMPLE
THINGS THAT
GIVE YOU JOY

FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING

INTRODUCE THESE FIVE SIMPLE STRATEGIES INTO YOUR LIFE AND YOU WILL FEEL THE BENEFITS.