

WELLINGTON SOUTH PARENTS CENTRE, INC.

PRESIDENT'S ANNUAL REPORT for the year ended 31 December 2004

I am pleased to present this report on the activities of Wellington South Parents Centre, Inc. in 2004. This year has been a busy year, consolidating gains made in 2003 and adding further to the organisation of our activities.

Membership

Membership of the Centre stood at 392 as at 31 December 2004. This is the first time we have dipped below 400 members in 4 years. Although we are gaining huge numbers of first-time members, we are still not retaining those members for more than one year. That trend has continued this year. After further problems with the National Database, we reverted to using only our own database, which reduced stress levels greatly. I thank Manisha Patel and Kirsty Bamford, who were relieved by Tali Boardman and Claire O'Connor, for persevering with the task of registering our members and trying to stay in touch with them! In early 2005 we returned to the National fold, but retaining contact with members remains difficult.

Committee

The committee is in generally good health – both in numbers and enthusiasm. We started the year with 29 volunteers, which fluctuated as usual during the year, due to re-locations, work commitments, new babies, etc. We continued to work on creating new efficiencies, and looked closely at why we volunteered in the first place – and whether we were still getting those things – and instituted some changes to address these issues. We ran two recruitment evenings – in May and November. The energy and enthusiasm, talents and new approaches of new committee members during the year have been greatly appreciated. We finished the year with 28 regular volunteers, but still needing more, particularly to assist with our parenting courses.

In 2004, we established policies on advertising and access to members, benefits for members and committee, and refunds.

For a short time after the AGM in 2004, we boasted a Vice President (to this President's great relief), but Kate Hamill moved to the Wairarapa in May and we were bereft. Deanne Daysh was "inducted" as a life member of WSPC at the 2004 AGM, in recognition of her "commitment and contribution to Wellington Parents Centre, Parents Centre New Zealand, and particularly to Wellington South Parents Centre", having served as President and Membership Secretary of WPC and WSPC, and as a Board member of PCNZ.

Congratulations to the committee's new parents in 2004 – Liz Dentice (Sophia), Justine Annand (Henry), Kirsty Bamford (Jack), and Fiona Pullar (Finn), and to our one newly married couple – Tali & Leslie Boardman.

Resignations and appointments have occurred throughout the year, with no specific resignations to record at the AGM today. I sincerely thank all committee members (retired or continuing) and their families for their contribution and dedication to WSPC during their terms in office in 2004.

Social Functions

Social functions were a focus later in 2004 – as well as a joint event with Wellington North Parents Centre at the Johnsonville Fire Station in June, the committee met in October for a very successful social, and at Mary O’Keeffe’s house for a Christmas dinner! A members’ Mums’ Night was attended by a small but enthusiastic group early December. Unfortunately, the plans for a 10th anniversary event, marking the split of Wellington Parents Centre into South and North, did not come to fruition – too much else to do!

Venue

Our venue at the Home of Compassion in Island Bay remains a source of comfort and convenience to the Centre. All CBE classes were consolidated to there in 2004. We settled into the luxury of having everything in one place, and have extended the lease to April 2006. Long may it continue! We are grateful to the Sisters of Compassion for their enthusiasm for our work and their unfailing support for our classes’ needs.

Financial

Unfortunately, our Treasurer for the latter part of 2004, Stewart Haycock, transferred to Christchurch recently, so he is unable to present the accounts in person, but the financial results for the year speak for themselves. I would like to thank Komal Chhiba and Stewart for steering us from a possible deficit to a reasonable balance at the end of the year, and thank Komal for stepping into the breach during March 2005.

Grants

Successful grant applications this year were received from the New Zealand Community Trust for newsletter printing costs, Lion Foundation which enabled us to give Preparing for Birth books to every CBE class attendee, TG McCarthy Trust for newborn dolls (used for learning breastfeeding) and parenting course brochures (jointly produced with Wellington North Parents Centre), Trust House for contributing to website design and build costs, and Wellington High School and Rongotai College for tutor hours for some of our Baby & You and Parenting with Confidence courses. We also acknowledge the generous support of Francis Consulting and Graphic Solutions in seeing the website through to completion.

Fundraising

No additional fundraising events were undertaken in 2004. We did add Kimberley cot blankets to the items we offer for sale and these have been popular. The stroller sheepskins also earned a slow steady income. Demand for the hire nursery equipment was non-existent. Breastpump hire fees remained steady. Our thanks go to Joss Madsen and Komal Chhiba for continuing to provide these services to our members.

CBE Classes

The Childbirth Education subcommittee was very busy, yet again. We provided 25 childbirth education classes, and still needed up to 13 couples in some classes later in the year. We also provided 7 practical parenting sessions and 2 Pregnant Again classes. Early Pregnancy has been difficult to market to the target audience. Practical parenting sessions became uncomfortably crowded, being so popular. We are indebted to Lisa Pomare of BabyStar and generous support from Baby Factory, for the equipment and clothing we used for these sessions, and Lisa’s practical presentation style.

29 childbirth classes and 12 practical parenting sessions are planned for 2005, with 4 possible Pregnant Again and/or Early Pregnancy classes being offered.

Turnover in subcommittee members has again been relatively low this year, reflecting the spirit and support within the subcommittee. For the number of courses and attendees, the subcommittee is still under-strength, but very efficient. Our sincerest appreciation for the huge amount of work that Mary O’Keeffe puts in, as Childbirth Education Coordinator and in other areas.

Bronwyn Sweeney, Debbie Brown, Ann O’Leary and Fiona Pullar took classes for us, and Fiona produced Finn as well! Helen Pulford finished most of her CBE training and is teaching full-time

now. Mark Nelson and Michelle Stratford both unfortunately had to pull out of CBE training. New candidates are being sought.

Parent Education

The Parent Education team has again offered an incredible selection of parenting courses during the year – new successes were the Pharmacist talk, Baby Massage and Coping with Eczema.

Attendance at Moving & Munching classes was sporadic, but picked up later in the year. Parenting with Confidence became established in the schedule, with 3 courses in 2004. Plans to offer 3 Tinies to Tots courses in 2005 are well advanced but rely on sufficient volunteers to coordinate classes. First Aid/CPR was re-packaged as a 3-session Child Health course, and this, together with one Toilet Training class a year, remains popular. Four themed Development of Art sessions were run, although attendance was variable.

Music has continued to be very successful, with the additional babies session in the early afternoon not fully relieving the pressure for space in the earlier classes. We are indebted to Anne Neal for her continued passion and commitment in running these sessions.

National & Regional

The Centre was represented at the PCNZ Conference in New Plymouth by Kate Hamill, Jeanette Watson and Tali Milburn, as well as Miranda Welch (our past President) attending as Wellington Regional Coordinator, and was elected as a Board Member.

A regional planning meeting in March led to the launch of a regional newsletter, the “Sandbox”, in late 2004, and some great sharing of resources and ideas. A joint Parenting Courses brochure was published by Wellington North and South Parents Centres. Retail discounts and advertising are now offered region-wide. These are all a direct result of that region meeting. Further region meetings have been focussed well on sharing information and resources. Our thanks to Miranda Welch and Mary Clare Tracey for their great juggling of competing interests as Regional Coordinators.

Community Profile

With Gerry Germanoff contributing her considerable energy and expertise, we provided some new services to members (Library tour, Pharmacist talk, email communication) and did some profile-raising during the year.

Jeanette Watson spoke at the Pacific region conference of the Sisters of Compassion in March. Mary O’Keeffe and Jeanette Watson represented WSPC at the Mana Wahine Week launch at Parliament in April, and WSPC members attended the launch of the Family Friendly Pharmacies initiative in May. WSPC had a stall at the NZ Midwives Conference in September, and provided input to the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative training at Capital & Coast DHB. We had a display at the Wellington City Library in December.

We assisted in providing a venue and resources for the childbirth education scenes in the television series “An Insider’s Guide to Happiness” which screened in March and April 2004.

We lobbied Wellington City Council for parent-friendly parking at an inner-city playground, and to the PCNZ Conference for more information on midwifery evaluation processes.

We supported research by a Massey University student nurse, the VUW Family Centre, and an allergy prevention study, and provided access to CBE classes for medical students to gain community experience.

Newsletter

The newsletter hit new highs in 2004 with Kate Hamill taking control for the first edition and giving it a bit of a shake-up. Lara Strongman then producing 4 very impressive newsletters, in often trying circumstances, before the regional “Sandbox” launched in November. Our thanks to Jemma Robb for taking over in 2005.

Gerry Germanoff pulled in new advertising and worked with Lara to make the newsletter useful and relevant to our members. Launch of the regional newsletter now means there is regional coordination of advertising and discount offers – which has been appreciated by advertisers, discounters and members.

Thank you to our honorary auditor Simon Thompson and our honorary solicitor Scott Galloway for offering their services during the year and Simon for auditing our financial statements in February.

And finally I wish to recognise and thank all the hard-working committee members and antenatal class coordinators – volunteers all – and their families for their dedication, commitment and (sometimes) sheer grit in getting everything done in 2004 and into 2005. I enjoy working with you all and look forward to a successful 2005!

Jeanette Watson
President

March 2005