

WSPC AGM 2009 Centre report AGM Sunday 21 June 2009

Wellington South Parents Centre celebrates the end of another successful year. Despite the economic downturn and the current climate of swine flu and financial doom, we continue to support the parents of the Wellington South area.

Our successes this year include:

- Continued uptake of our childbirth education classes. In the year of 2008-2009 we ran 17 classes. Despite a steep price hike, our classes continue to be full, or in some cases over full. Anecdotal evidence from class participants suggests that our best marketing tool continues to be word of mouth, with people recommending our classes to others, and praising them for both their quality and for the supportive environment they create. CBE classes continue to be our core business, and so the majority of our effort and attention goes to them.
- A revival of our parent education programme. This fell into abeyance for some time, as we were without a co-ordinator. However concerted effort on the committee's part saw us offering a number of classes, some of which were a victim of their own success and had to be repeated.
- Our magazine, The Sandbox, which is the Wellington region insert into the national magazine, Kiwi Parent, continues to be well received.
- We have instigated a Wednesday morning drop in session for parents with new babies who have just come out of our classes, and are still in that new parent train wreck phase. This is proving enormously popular for support and companionship

A major issue we have dealt with this year is a complete reorganisation of the CBE contract process, where childbirth educators are now contracted to National Office rather than to each centre. This has been a complex process, with both financial and procedural implications. A major outcome is a significant jump in our CBE class fee, in order to not lose money on classes. However, as noted, we have not seen a reduction in people wanting our CBE classes despite the price increase. This new process has seen a lot of work on the part of the treasurer and the CBE convenor, in recognising the budget implications, and in transitioning both the CBEs and the centre into the new processes. There have been a few speed wobbles along the way, but we're pretty much there.

Like any volunteer organisation, WSPC is feeling the continued national trend of a downturn in volunteer capacity. People have busier lives, have bigger mortgages to service and thus do not have the same capacity or free time as in previous times.

With this in mind, I offer heartfelt and sincere thanks to all the people who undertake volunteer work for WSPC. Some people have jobs right on the coalface, where their work is seen and valued. Other people have more invisible roles in the background, where their efforts may not be as visible. However, visible or not, every single person contributes something to the running of the centre, and makes a difference.

Looking first at the committee, past and present:

- Thanks to Ed Letifov, our current Treasurer, and Katie McDowell our previous treasurer, for keeping our accounts in good order
- Kathryn Hunt, who continues to do a tremendous job taking CBE class bookings, often needing a considerable store of compassion
- Karen Kraul, our current grant person and Russel Garlick, our previous grants person, as those all important community grants purchase our “extras”
- Toni Curtis, our secretary, a less visible, but vital role
- Nina Russell, our fantastic and creative editor
- Catherine Taylor and Maria Cassidy, our CBE briefers, who brief the volunteer co-ordinators who help at CBE classes. The quality of their briefing in turn helps the CBEs enormously, where their co-ordinators are well prepared and supportive
- Mika Zivanovic, our previous Parent Ed convenor
- Jane Gray, our membership secretary. Again another somewhat invisible role, but key to us being able to communicate with our members
- Megan Lloyd Evans, who manages our sales of blankets and sheepskins – her work enables us to be able to offer this “extra” to our members
- Kathryn Wright, our milk and biscuits guru. Once again, a seemingly invisible role, but one that makes a huge difference to how CBE classes progress – the ability to refuel in the middle of a class gives that burst of energy for better learning, and also facilitates those class friendships
- Ed also does a tremendous job communicating with our members and taking enrolments for parent education classes

There are other people who contribute to the work of WSPC

- I thank all the volunteer co-ordinators who assist with Childbirth Education classes. As a CBE I can personally attest to what a contribution these women make, with their time and energy.
- I thank the CBEs who teach our classes, and who very much are our main marketing tool. The tremendous feedback on the quality and popularity of our classes, when there are cheaper options available, is testimony to the skill and commitment of these fine women.
- I thank the nuns and community at Home of Compassion, Island Bay, who provide us not just with a facility and a base, but with a nurturing and supportive environment for our work.
- I thank the providers who have given us grants to assist with our work this year: Lotteries Grants Board, Tim and Kaye Whitehead, the Mother Aubert Home of Compassion, and the Lion Foundation
- I thank Ann and Rebecca who continue to run our ever popular Friday music and moving sessions
- I thank our Parent Education tutors, especially Alana Wilson who continues to teach for us on an unpaid basis
- Thanks to Simon Thompson, our honorary auditor

Finally, to thank everyone who supports WSPC, because in turn you are recognising the importance of babies and the value of parenting.

After six years involvement with the committee I am stepping down from my various volunteer roles , whilst continuing my teaching roles and Wednesday drop in work. I wish the committee well in 2009-10.

Mary O'Keeffe
Antenatal Convenor