



### An inspirational recovery

Susan Rickard is an artist who is not afraid to try new things, from using stones as her canvases to painting on discarded roller blinds. Susan was renowned in her community for not only her artistic vision but her talent for transforming worthless objects into valued works of art. But all this nearly changed for Susan when in 2010, she developed an intracerebral hematoma following surgery for meningioma & excision of the tumor. Sadly, it seemed her days as an artist may have been over.

A cranioplasty was performed to control swelling, leaving Susan with a small piece of her skull frozen in storage for a few months while her brain recovered. Following the surgery, the independent free-spirited artist found herself in a very different world. She was now required to wear a helmet to protect her head and she was highly dependent. She could not perform the simplest daily tasks anymore without support and had trouble expressing herself as she could no longer talk. These first weeks were dark days for Susan and her family as she struggled through disorientation, memory difficulties and physical limitations.

However, things began to look up when there was a noticeable improvement following surgery to restore her missing piece of skull safely back in place.

With a renewed determination, Susan focused on her goals. When she reflects on these first years of recovery, she is bewildered at the missing years and often relies on photos or family members to fill in some of the gaps. But one memory she has not lost is of her first unassisted walk to dinner. Many of us take for granted the simple task of walking, but for Susan it was a huge achievement to walk from her room to the dining room for meals, "no matter how long it takes". Walking unassisted was an important milestone for Susan, displaying her determination to take back control of her life.

Susan made progress and was eager to be discharged and begin living independently back in the community. However, during her first attempt to live independently her family observed that she was struggling. After consultation and advice she knew she wasn't yet at a place where she was ready for this independence, so she was re-admitted to LFR.



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Community Partner with LFR

### Upcoming Events for 2014

2014 Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron Charity Regatta - afternoon sailing followed by evening dining - Thursday 6 November

Women's Committee of LFR Coffee morning with Hedgerow of Remuera at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron at 10.30am - Tuesday 11 November

Laura Fergusson Rehabilitation AGM at the Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron at 10.30am - Monday 24 November

Returning to LFR gave Susan an opportunity to refocus on strengthening her communication tools and regain more motor skills. The true artist within her had never left; it had become the driving force motivating her to claim back the independence she once had.

To help increase eye-hand co-ordination, dexterity, and improve cognitive issues with memory and attention span, Susan began to reacquaint herself with her creative side, creating unique pieces using discarded materials. She began breathing new life into objects that were once destined for the rubbish bin, creating witty and delightful objects proving that one person's trash is another's treasure. She could happily lose herself in her art, and although she now expresses herself differently, she is regaining her talent and desire as an artist.

Susan's art is always filled with mirth and joy, proving that art is a universal language that transcends barriers, and her work was often a springboard to begin conversations at LFR.

Susan made great progress, and it was soon time to graduate LFR to return once again to independent living. When her family came to help her move from LFR they found their vehicle filled first with her recycling art materials rather than her everyday possessions. Once again the artist within was taking priority, and Susan was putting her art first.

With renewed energy and confidence Susan has returned to live in the countryside with her strongly supportive family. She is continuing to be involved in the things that hold meaning to her, attending art classes and expressing herself through her paintings. Looking at Susan now, we see she is taking control back over the things that matter to her the most.

While her rehabilitation journey is not over, for now Susan is happy to smile through her struggles as she keeps moving towards where she wants to be as a person and an artist.

### Rehabilitation in a modern world



Kathryn McPherson PhD,  
Professor of Rehabilitation  
(Laura Fergusson Chair).

The client stories in this issue of the LFR newsletter highlight some core concepts that to me are at the heart of rehabilitation in a modern world. A world that has moved on from where the 'gold standard' was, to consider a good outcome to be when people became independent in their self-care. The focus was (and in many areas still is) on things like being able to wash, dress, and feed oneself, amongst other tasks. Whilst these things are important (particularly so to some people), the stories show that what matters to people in recovering and adapting to a life after their injury or illness, goes far beyond such activities.

So should modern rehabilitation be focused on what matters to people? What does it mean for health and social care staff if this is the case? What does it mean for funding? These are important questions that sometimes we are just too busy or too distracted to consider. A character in Ian Rankin's new book *The Children's Act* reflects on what true well-being for human beings is:

'Welfare, happiness, well-being must embrace the philosophical concept of a good life. She listed relevant ingredients, goals towards which one might grow. Economic and moral freedom, virtue, compassion and altruism, satisfying work through engagement with demanding tasks, a flourishing network of personal relationships, earning the esteem of others, pursuing large meaning to one's existence, and having at the centre of one's life one of a small number of significant relations defined above all by love.'

It is these things (and more perhaps) that make life worth living for me. I suspect that the same is true for most of us.

So, why would it be any different if we are necessarily living life after injury or illness? Our job is arguably to help people find a new path to these things when the old paths have been disrupted. What a privilege. What a responsibility.

### Celebrations in the Waikato

A longtime client of LFR recently celebrated his 50th in style with his family and friends at our Waikato facility. The main recreation area was decorated and full of people creating a happy atmosphere which was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Simon was instrumental in the planning and preparation of his big day. The invitation list was selected by Simon and included family members, friends, clients, and others who have spent time at the unit also.

There were decorations, photos, food and birthday cake, all chosen by Simon. For the music he picked a favorite of his, Bobby Ray, who played music for Simon and with him. Simon and his friends took up their instruments and began following the beat with Bobby Ray. Simon's two sisters were in attendance, with many people travelling from out of town, helping to make it a roaring success. Simon had so much fun he had to spend the majority of the next day in bed, recovering from his birthday celebrations.



Coffee morning

Laura Fergusson Rehabilitation Women's Committee would like to extend an invitation to join us for coffee and experience the gorgeous range of world-renowned brands available from Hedgerow of Remuera.

With Christmas just around the corner Sarah, from Hedgerow, will preview what is new in store and help you find that perfect gift from their inspirational selection

When - Tuesday 11th November

Where - The Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron

Time - 10:30am start

Cost - \$25

Pay by cash, cheque or Bank deposit into account 02 0192 0086231 005 with first initial and surname and the name of the event e.g. A Smith Coffee

Please either RSVP to Jo Clark Ph:524 7211 or Carmen Lewis Ph:524 0537 or email: carmen@lft.co.nz



Bird & Knoll cashmere and silk scarf available at Hedgerow, Remuera



## YES I'm very pleased to support Laura Fergusson Rehabilitation

I would like to donate a gift of -  \$1,000  \$500  \$100  \$75  \$50  Other \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My cheque is enclosed (made payable to Laura Fergusson Rehabilitation)

I have made a donation via internet banking direct in the Laura Fergusson Rehabilitation account and have given my full name as a reference so my receipt can be sent. The account number is - 12 3030 0497154 00

I wish to pay by  Visa  M/Card Card No.             Expiry date     Security Code

Name on Card ..... Signature .....

Name .....

Address .....

Phone ..... E Mail .....

Please complete and return to Laura Fergusson Rehabilitation in the freepost envelope provided or mail to PO Box 17045 Greenlane, Auckland 1546

Donations of \$5 or more are receipted and eligible for tax deduction

Tick here if you do NOT wish to receive mailings from Laura Fergusson Rehabilitation **THANK YOU**

**Meet our quiz team**

A group of intellectuals from our Auckland rehabilitation facility has been cleaning up on Quiz Night at Doolan Brothers in Ellerslie. In true Pub Quiz style they have named themselves the Crip-tics.

The Crip-tics have been consistently achieving a win or a place in the weekly 8-round quizzes. Each round contains geography, history, music, art, sport and general knowledge questions, with some wild card questions thrown into the mix. Many of the Crip-tics have tertiary qualifications, all are seasoned travellers, and the group contains a wide range of ages. This diversity is their team's winning strategy, giving them an edge when it comes to getting the right answers.

While they train diligently throughout the week by watching every game show or quiz they can at LFR, the Crip-tics are always highly motivated to get back down to the pub to socialise and win a few more of the prizes too.

The Crip-tics Team is Blair Dixon, Christine Reti, Tony Bergervot and Colin Power.

**Annual Charity Race Night**

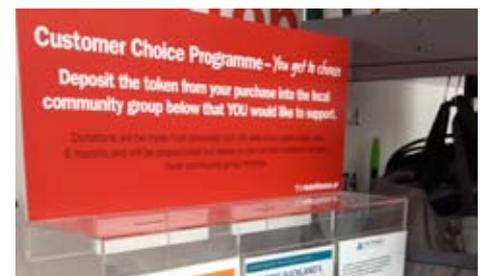
Another successful Race Night Dinner was run by the Women's Committee for Laura Fergusson at Alexandra Park.

We raised \$20,000, an excellent result. This could not have been achieved without the tireless work of members of the Women's Committee, particularly Jo Clark, Jean Peel and Edna Dangerfield, who once again supplied show-stopping floral centrepieces. Thank you to John Bowring from Colliers International, who was our superb auctioneer for the night. Our sincere thanks also to our sponsors, corporate supporters, the Board and management staff of LFR, who all contributed to this successful occasion.

**Our thanks to The Warehouse**

Every Warehouse location supports local community organisations through their

Customer Choice programme. We are delighted that LFR was chosen as one of the three charities by The Warehouse in Newmarket. Please remember to support LFR when you shop at The Warehouse in Newmarket. With every purchase, they will give you a disc that you can place in the voting container to say which of the local community organisations you are supporting. At the end of each six-month period funds raised are given to each of the store community partners according to their percentage of total votes. We also receive a portion of the money raised from purchases of the 10 cent plastic shopping bags.



**Laura Fergusson Trust Incorporated**

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Whanganui 4501.

**THE  
2014  
RNZYS  
CHARITY  
REGATTA**



**The Royal New Zealand Yacht Squadron's Charity Regatta  
Thursday 6th November**

- Corporate Tickets are \$250 per person or \$2,400 per boat of Ten.
- Includes welcome drinks, nibbles and race briefing
- Afternoon Yacht Race
- Post-Race Tickets also available for \$150 per person
- Post-race drinks and gourmet BBQ dinner
- LIVE band & entertainment
- LIVE auction, silent auction and giveaways

To donate an auction item, offer your boat, or to secure your tickets today, contact Mikalina Bird - Phone: (09) 360-6834 or Email: [mbird@rnzys.org.nz](mailto:mbird@rnzys.org.nz)

