



SUMMER 2023

# NEWS

# DOING MORE FOR MORE PEOPLE TOGETHER



Kia ora koutou,

It's time for us to turn the page on another year.

As I look back on 2022, I'm proud to have had the chance to meet with many of our clients and hear their powerful stories of stroke survival.

Every stroke is different and everyone's journey is unique. I want to acknowledge these experiences including those faced by many of you who understand the challenges of living with stroke, and the important support that comes from carers and whānau.

A stroke is a life-changing event. It can turn our worlds upside-down. After the immediate period spent in hospital, people begin their long journey working with health professionals, carers, whānau, and our incredible Community Stroke Advisors to work towards a "new normal". The stories I've heard are filled with emotion, ups and downs, and wins both big and small. These stories inspire us to continue our mission to prevent strokes, improve outcomes, and save lives.

Looking ahead to 2023, we will continue to introduce new programmes, identify how we can do more for our clients, and continue to support the carers and whānau who are so important to their recovery outcomes.

We have a mammoth task ahead of us next year. With rising costs and increasing demand, and yet government funding remaining static, our funding gap is bigger than ever before. We must raise more

than \$6 million this year to make an impact on the \$1.1 billion cost of stroke to our society, just to maintain our services at current levels. Every donation helps get us closer to achieving our goal of reducing the impact of strokes on our clients and whānau across New Zealand. Please Support our work, and help us make a lasting impact on the lives of thousands of New Zealanders in 2023.

Ngā mihi nui,  
Jo

## A special acknowledgement

I would like to acknowledge the sad passing of Alison (Ali) Gallant, a charge nurse, educator, and an integral part of the Acute Stroke Ward at Christchurch Hospital, who played a significant role in the fight against strokes over the course of her career.

Ali retired from nursing in 2016 but continued to serve as a passionate advocate for the Stroke Foundation. Ali loved being part of the Stroke Foundation whānau; volunteering for us, and supporting our initiatives and campaigns.

Ali was warm, approachable, non-judgemental, and understanding. Ali embodied the Māori whakatauki (proverb):

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata.

*What is the most important thing? It is people, it is people, it is people.*

Ali taught us to embrace challenges and support others to reach their full potential. The Stroke Foundation sends its deepest condolences to Ali's family.

THIS ISSUE: IT'S ALL THANKS TO YOU; PHOENIX RUKA, AYESHA QURESHI, MARK NOBILO, ERICA WALSH | AUCKLAND MARATHON | LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL



## THINKING F.A.S.T MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE

When Phoenix Ruka began experiencing dizziness and numbness on his left side while out for a run with colleagues, his first instinct was to 'tough it out'. Thankfully, his colleagues insisted on calling an ambulance instead. It turned out that Phoenix had

*"The doctors told me that if it wasn't for my colleagues' fast actions it would've been a lot worse."*  
Phoenix Ruka

experienced an ischaemic stroke which was caused by a tiny hole in his heart sending a blood clot up to his brain. Ischaemic strokes (blood clots) are the most common cause of stroke, responsible for 70% of strokes every year in New Zealand. "Those first few days were rough," Phoenix explains. "I was in a dark place, thinking that this was going to be my life now. The unrelenting support from my whānau helped me come out the other side."

Two years on, Phoenix's left side remains weak and he is partially blind in his left eye. While he was able to walk five days after the stroke took place, he still depends on friends and family to get around. "The doctors told me that if it wasn't for my colleagues' fast actions it would've been a lot worse," Phoenix says. "Knowing the signs of stroke, and being able to react quickly were big learnings for me."

He shared his story on video as part of our F.A.S.T campaign, and is spreading the message in Northland. You can watch it here <https://bit.ly/3ilpmo3> Thank you, Phoenix, for your amazing mahi on behalf of the stroke affected community of Aotearoa!

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## WAYS YOUR DONATIONS ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE



## 2. CARERS NEED SUPPORT TOO

*"Family carers are the backbone of our health and social care systems, and without their vital service, these systems would crumble."*  
Ayesha Qureshi



Carers and whānau play a critical role providing physical and emotional support to those affected by stroke. While caring for a loved one can be rewarding, it can be difficult to maintain one's own health and wellbeing in the process.

Carers face a range of challenges; from grieving the 'loss' of a loved one, worrying about an uncertain future, and often they suffer in silence. In our efforts to boost carers' resilience, we have been running self-care programmes in support groups across the motu.

Ayesha Qureshi, PhD candidate at University of Otago, who created these programmes, says: "I realised that family carers are the backbone of our health and social care systems. Without their service, these systems would crumble. I was shocked to find there was little information available for the wellbeing of carers."

The programme teaches problem-solving and relationship management strategies that help carers identify their strengths and find meaning in their roles.

Our Community Stroke Advisor, Kathy says: "Ayesha's self-care programme is focused on personal strengths, and delivering it in a group setting was tremendously helpful to everyone."

We are also delighted to let you know that Ayesha has joined the Stroke Foundation as one of our Community Stroke Advisors in Dunedin, welcome Ayesha to our whanau.



## LIFE CHANGED AFTER A BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK



When our Big Blood Pressure Check Van visited the Mens Shed in Auckland East, Mark Nobile discovered he was at high risk of stroke. "I assumed it would be fine," Mark says. "I was regularly walking long distances and had a healthy diet," "It took me by surprise when my blood pressure was elevated. Margot from the van recommended an appointment with my GP immediately."

Mark's doctor prescribed medication and regular checks. He saw a cardiologist who discovered that he needed major surgery. "Just three months after visiting the van, I was in hospital having double bypass surgery," Mark explains.

*"I'm incredibly grateful that a resource like that is available to everyone for free"*

*Mark Nobile*

Would he recommend others have their blood pressure checked? "Don't give it a second thought," Mark says. "Just do it."

Mark's story is just one example of how a simple blood pressure check can change the course of your life. As donors, your support ensures we reach people like Mark before it's too late. "It's remarkable that the van was there that day" Mark concludes "The outcome would have been much more serious otherwise. "I'm incredibly grateful that a resource like that is available to everyone for free."



*"We were just trying to wrap our heads around it all, and the effects of my stroke made that harder."*

*Erica Walsh*

## WE JUST NEEDED A BIT OF HELP TO GET THROUGH

Erica Walsh was busy planning for her wedding when her health took a turn for the worse. "I was losing blood, but no one could figure out why. I began having migraines and losing vision. I thought it was because I was super stressed."

Erica saw a specialist who noticed the signs of stroke. They referred her to a stroke ward where she was told she had experienced multiple strokes. Erica was admitted to the hospital for testing, and sadly, those tests revealed that she had cancer.

*"We were just trying to wrap our heads around it all," Erica says. "The effects of my stroke made that harder, but we also felt like we were left in the dark about my stroke."*

Danielle, a Community Stroke Advisor with the Stroke Foundation in the Waikato, began working with her whānau. "Danielle was really helpful. She explained my hospital notes and introduced us to people who could help. You really need referrals to get anywhere."

Erica is continuing her cancer treatment and adapting to her partial blindness and short-term memory loss. With the loving support of her whānau she is determined to keep doing as much as she can. It's the Stroke Foundation's privilege to care for Erica and those like her as they rebuild lives of dignity and independence after recovering from stroke.



**Your amazing support is what  
makes our work possible.**



## TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE END OF THE TAX YEAR

31st March 2023 is not far away, and with it comes the end of the tax year. This means that for any donations you make now, you'll be able to claim back your tax immediately, rather than wait a whole year! So, if you have donated:

**\$50** you'll get back **\$16.60**

**\$100** you'll get back **\$33**

**\$300** you'll get back **\$100**

All donations over \$5 are eligible for a tax refund. Thank you for your ongoing support!



## ANNUAL REPORT AVAILABLE

Our latest annual report for the financial year 2021/22 is now available: [stroke.org.nz/annual-report](https://stroke.org.nz/annual-report)

A big THANK YOU to our major funders and partners:

### MAJOR PARTNERS:



Estate of Ernest Hyam Davis & The Ted and Mollie Carr Endowment Trust

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Raymond Forbes Wilson Estate



### MAJOR FUNDERS:

The AH Somerville Foundation



## LEAVING A GIFT IN YOUR WILL TO THE STROKE FOUNDATION



With stroke numbers rising year on year, we are bracing ourselves for the coming stroke tsunami and planning for the future.

If you support our work and would like to learn more about how you can leave a lasting legacy through a gift in your will, please get in touch. Or, if you have already included the stroke foundation in your will, please let us know so we can acknowledge your wonderful gift.

Please contact Mark Vivian, our bequests Ambassador, to discuss your wishes at [mark.vivian@stroke.org.nz](mailto:mark.vivian@stroke.org.nz) or on 027 666 1603.

## Events

Thank you to our Auckland Marathon Stroke Champions who raised over \$7,300 to support our critical services. It was great to support the team walking the 5km distance together despite the torrential rain. A special shout out to Sophia who completed the 2.2km kids marathon and single-handedly raised over \$1,400 after losing her nana to a stroke. What a Stroke Champion!



Over 80 per cent of our funding comes from our generous donors, corporates, grants, bequests and stroke champions, so why not sign up to complete one of the following challenges today:

- Wellington Round the Bays 19 February
- Auckland Round the Bays 5 March
- Christchurch Marathon 16 April
- Hawke's Bay Marathon 20 May

You can complete the challenges alone or in a group or choose your own challenge and do it when it suits!

Go to [stroke.org.nz/fundraising-events](https://stroke.org.nz/fundraising-events) to sign up.

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