



GARRY'S STORY

WINTER 2022

NEWS

In mid-2020, Hayley Moody experienced first-hand what stroke does to families in Aotearoa, when her beloved dad, Garry Moody, suffered what would turn out to be the first of many strokes.

A healthy schoolteacher all his life, Garry's stroke at the age of 64 was a tremendous shock for his family. Unknown to doctors at the time, Garry was silently suffering from early-stage stomach cancer, which was only discovered a few months later.

Dad had to learn to walk again after his brain bleed and regain coordination on one side of his body.

Hayley

Cancer in Garry's stomach was thickening his blood and causing clots to form, while an undiagnosed hole in his heart caused one of these clots to travel to his brain and induce an ischaemic stroke.

After his first stroke, Garry encountered vision problems and had trouble judging distance and spaces. "Dad would look down on a step and could not make out how close or far it was, which made him dependent on others when walking," recalls Hayley.

Four days after his initial stroke, Garry experienced bleeding in his brain and was flown from Kew Hospital in Invercargill to Christchurch Hospital.



Garry Moody and his daughter, Hayley.

"Dad had to learn to walk again after his brain bleed and regain coordination on one side of his body," says Hayley about his rehab at Wakari Hospital in Dunedin for four weeks.

Garry, who loved reading and listening to records, found himself feeling down from his inability to engage in his favourite hobbies.

As a former teacher at the Blue Mountain College in Central Otago for 27 years, Garry was determined to get back to teaching and regaining as much of his pre-stroke life as he could.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



July 1st heralded a new health and disability system, where we look forward to improvements in health outcomes for all people living in Aotearoa, particularly those living with stroke.

In May, we published a Policy Statement that calls for action from the government and health sector to help us brace for the coming stroke tsunami.

The document discusses some uncomfortable truths about the burden of stroke in New Zealand:

- Too many people from Māori and Pacific communities suffer from stroke, at too young an age.
- Too much salt in our processed food increases stroke risk.
- Where you live, your economic situation and access to services significantly affect your stroke outcome.
- Government funding for the services we provide is too low.

Bracing for the Stroke Tsunami makes five key "asks", including:

- Support to roll out the NZ-designed *Take Charge After Stroke* programme, currently being piloted by the Stroke Foundation.
- Support to increase community blood pressure and atrial fibrillation testing.
- Establishing government-led salt reduction targets for processed foods.
- Incorporating our Community Stroke Advisor service in a nationally consistent stroke pathway.
- Assistance to ensure the sustainability of the Stroke Foundation's service through improved funding.

You can read the policy document here - www.stroke.org.nz/policy-statements

As I move into my second year at the Foundation, it is my honour to work with the team at the Stroke Foundation, and on behalf of all of us, I would like to thank you for supporting our mission to prevent strokes, improve outcomes, and save lives.

Ngā mihi nui,

Jo

From front page



However, there were more challenges ahead. After making remarkable progress at home, Garry suffered another stroke in October 2020, causing him to lose his speech and experience severe bouts of fatigue.

It was only at this point that Garry's doctors discovered the stomach cancer and hole in his heart. After a further three weeks in hospital, Garry slowly started getting back his speech.

He had only been back home for one night when he suffered, for the final time, multiple devastating strokes. These strokes incapacitated Garry, removing his ability to talk, feed himself, see, know who he was, or recognise anyone around him.

Hayley drove non-stop for 12 hours from Blenheim to spend a week with Garry at the hospital, making sure to cherish every moment with him.

"I cuddled up to dad and calmed him when he was confused and restless, holding his hand, playing his favourite music, talking to him, reassuring him that he wasn't alone," she says of those emotional days.

"On his last day, I could sense he was struggling and told him that it was okay to let go. I feel like he needed to hear that, that he needed permission to leave," says Hayley tearfully.



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On December 18, 2020, Garry Moody passed away, with his partner, Susie, and Hayley by his side.

Hayley is currently working towards attaining a real estate license and is a mum to five-year-old Charlotte.

"My little girl was close to my dad, and she struggles with not having him around anymore. When dad was in the rest home, Charlotte was holding his hand and rubbing his face to reassure him," says Hayley about Charlotte's love for her 'Pops'.

"Charlotte reminds me that stroke doesn't just affect the person, it runs deep. Watching dad go through what he went through was soul-destroying. I haven't healed, and I never will, but I know that what my dad would have wanted is to see me focused on living," concludes Hayley with a smile.

After everything Hayley and her family have been through, she's now supporting the Stroke Foundation so that we can help more people affected by stroke and is looking to run a marathon this year to raise funds for us.

The Stroke Foundation is humbled by the support of people like Hayley, who go out of their way to ensure that people affected by stroke get through one of the most challenging times in their lives.

INTRODUCING He taonga A treasure

He taonga is the Stroke Foundation's free six-week online programme for managing high blood pressure. The programme provides support for people to develop healthy habits to reduce and manage their blood pressure.



In the Māori language, 'He taonga' means 'a treasure'. We believe that 'He taonga' captures the true meaning of how we at the Stroke Foundation see all New Zealanders - 'he taonga koe, he taonga te whanau, he taonga te whakapapa' (you are important, your family is important, and your genealogy is precious).

He taonga can be accessed on a computer or any mobile device, and the programme contains:

- Videos and testimonials to inspire and support whānau to make healthy lifestyle changes to manage their blood pressure.
- Resources and information about blood pressure.
- Tools to create S.M.A.R.T. (Specific-Measurable-Achievable-Relevant-Time-bound) goals to help people to achieve their lifestyle changes.

If you would like to sign up for this free programme, please visit – www.stroke.org.nz/he-taonga



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BEANIE UP 2022

For the fourth year running, the Stroke Foundation has asked New Zealanders to "Beanie Up" this winter to raise funds for our critical services for people living with the effects of stroke.

Thousands of kind-hearted Kiwis have supported our campaign this year by purchasing a beanie or getting involved to sell beanies in their communities.

Did you know that you can still purchase a beanie for yourself or a friend/loved one? Head to www.beanieup.co.nz to get yours now!



BIG BLOOD PRESSURE CHECK ROAD TRIP 2022

The Stroke Foundation's annual Big Blood Pressure Check Road Trip was launched from the NZ Parliament and Foodstuffs North Island's Headquarters on World Hypertension Day.

The vans were on the road for 8 weeks and, in partnership with Foodstuffs NZ, visited 40 PAK'nSAVE and New World supermarkets across the North Island.

Over 4% or 78 of the 1,864 people checked during the road trip were unaware they were in hypertensive crisis, meaning their blood pressure was so high they were in critical danger of experiencing a stroke.



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ART THERAPY FOR STROKE

An amazing initiative by our Community Stroke Advisor in the Coromandel region, Lily Beardsell, is helping people affected by stroke find a new creative outlet and forge meaningful connections. Lily, who is an artist herself, has teamed up with another artist and occupational therapist, Maree Parkin, to run a series of creative workshops.

"It's about moving past being defined by the stroke, having fun and creating positive momentum in your stroke journey," says Lily.

These community art sessions in Greerton, which commenced on July 1, are funded by the Creative Communities NZ Scheme.



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