

## Something's in the water for Stroke Club volunteer

It's often said volunteers are the unsung heroes of the community.

For 16 years, that's been the case for Janice Sherbourne. But now the South Canterbury stroke club volunteer has got recognition and reward.

Janice, who leads the weekly swimming and water exercise group, has been announced as runner-up of the Community or NGO Health Service Award at the Ministry of Health's national volunteer awards.

"I feel very humbled," Janice told the *Timaru Herald*.

Club co-ordinator Lesley Grieve says Janice began volunteering in 2002 after her husband died.

"Her commitment to our stroke people goes far beyond a regular volunteer helper," Lesley says.

"Janice hardly ever takes a day off; winter or summer. It is a priority for Janice to be there every Friday to lead the program of exercises and swimming.

"She looks after the participants very well, before and during the sessions, checking their



Janice Sherbourne (c) holding her weekly swimming class. *Stuff/Timaru Herald*

entry into the water via a ramp and making sure they have a helper or two in the pool. She closely monitors how well each person is coping and provides extra support when it's needed," Lesley said.

"Stroke people benefit in various ways from their participation. This is shown by the change of attitude, confidence and progress of stroke people as well as the number of stroke people who turn up each week to learn to swim and exercise and enjoy the extra mobility they are able to have being in the water."

Janie told the *Timaru Herald* she will keep up the sessions as long as she can.

"As long as I'm healthy and as long as they want me, I'll be there."

- *Is a member of your stroke club doing something amazing? Email [simon.bradwell@stroke.org.nz](mailto:simon.bradwell@stroke.org.nz)*



## FAST work by 'angels' helps mum recover from stroke

Auckland mum Angela Hood was recently reunited with the "angels" in blue who helped save her life after she had a severe stroke while driving.

"It's a miracle," Angela says. "Without them getting there so quickly I definitely would have severe disability or may not even been alive."

Angela told her story to *Newshub* to launch the 2018 FAST campaign.

As well as the familiar Face drooping, Arm weakness, Speech difficulty message, the T in FAST now stands for Take Action instead of Time.

And Angela says that's certainly what police did that day.

Angela had just left the gym and was driving home alone.

"The next thing I remember is sitting in my car which was straddled across a lane of traffic,

grabbing across my body to close the front door which had flung open while car horns were being beeped at me," she says.

When police arrived at the scene of the crash, Sergeant Chris Painter realized the urgency immediately.

"The first thing I thought of was stroke," Chris says. "I got her to squeeze my hands and I could tell one side was weaker than the other."

Chris radioed in the location of the crash to get an ambulance – minutes that made a crucial difference.

Thanks to Chris' quick-thinking an ambulance rushed Angela to hospital for a clot retrieval operation.

"It took 15 minutes and saved my life."

Incredibly, Angela was released from hospital 48 hours later. She's been able to return to work and caring for her kids, one of whom has special needs.

"The speed I received medical attention and the operation saved my life and its quality," she says.

The stroke was caused by a hole



Angela Hood and husband Adrian.

in Angela's heart she didn't know about, and has since had closed.

"I knew about the FAST campaign, and I know a couple of people who'd had strokes. My Mum had a few TIAs but I didn't think a stroke would happen to me.

Now Angela wants everyone to learn the FAST message, and especially to take action immediately.

"My message is around speed. The key thing is to ring the ambulance as soon as possible."

### Simon Bradwell

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## Take Action! FAST is back

The FAST campaign is back – and this year there’s a new look and message to the life-saving stroke awareness campaign.

For the last two years, FAST has stood for **F**ace drooping, **A**rm weakness, **S**peech difficulty, **T**ime to call 111.

This year, **T**ime has been replaced with **T**ake action – call 111.

“While people have taken on board the main signs of stroke, we want to really underline that a stroke is a medical emergency – a brain attack – and to get help immediately,” says Stroke Foundation CEO Mark Vivian.

“We don’t want people calling their doctor, or waiting for symptoms to pass. Anywhere in the country, young or old, please call 111 immediately and get help. You’re not being a bother – the ambulance staff want to get that call!”

The campaign was launched with media coverage on *Newshub*, the *New Zealand Herald*, the *Sunday Star-Times* and other media outlets around the country.

Taking action immediately gives a stroke patient the best chance of making a strong recovery.

That’s because clot-dissolving drugs (thrombolysis) and clot retrieval technology (thrombectomy) can halt and reverse the damage caused by stroke. But they must be administered as soon as possible.

Before last year’s FAST campaign, St John was attending approximately 160 suspected stroke incidents every week. During the campaign the average rose to 196 incidents per week – an increase of 22% – peaking at 231 incidents in one week.

“We’ve heard from people who saw the FAST message, never expecting to use it – then found it helped them save someone after a stroke,” Mr Vivian says.

“That’s why everyone needs to learn FAST.”

To reinforce the “Take action” message, the T of FAST now appearing in a green circle.

“Green for go – get to the phone as soon as possible,” Mr Vivian says.

## New look, same great content

The Stroke Foundation website has had a much-needed and overdue make-over.

The previous website – while a goldmine of good information around stroke – was showing its age after serving the stroke community for several years.

Stroke Foundation Communications Manager Simon Bradwell says the new website ([www.stroke.org.nz](http://www.stroke.org.nz)) will make it easier for all visitors to find information they need.

“We know that people mostly come to our site for two reasons,” Simon Bradwell says.

“Either they want help because they, or someone they know, has had a stroke, or they want to lower their risk and prevent stroke.

“In either case, the new design should make it easier and quicker for them to find what they need.”

The site also makes it easier for people to donate to the Stroke Foundation and support our life-saving work, including the free Community Stroke Advisor service.

Your feedback on the new website is welcome – please email Simon at [simon.bradwell@stroke.org.nz](mailto:simon.bradwell@stroke.org.nz).

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

### 10 out of 10 for Big Blood Pressure Check

The Big Blood Pressure Check is nearly with us again – and this year will be celebrating a major milestone.

It’s been 10 years since the campaign was launched, helping more than 100,000 Kiwis get a free blood pressure check that could have helped save their life.

In the last five years alone, 89,200 people received a free blood pressure check at one of the sites around the country.

More than 9,300 of those tested were referred to their doctor with a high reading. That intervention could have helped them make changes to their lifestyle, or given medication that brought their blood pressure down.

“We know high blood pressure is a leading cause of stroke,” says Stroke Foundation CEO Mark Vivian.

“Getting a regular blood pressure check is one of the best things you can do to lower your stroke risk. It’s quick, it’s painless, and for one day a year – it’s totally free!”

It is now estimated that over one-third of adult males and over one-quarter of adult females have very high blood pressure, or hypertension.

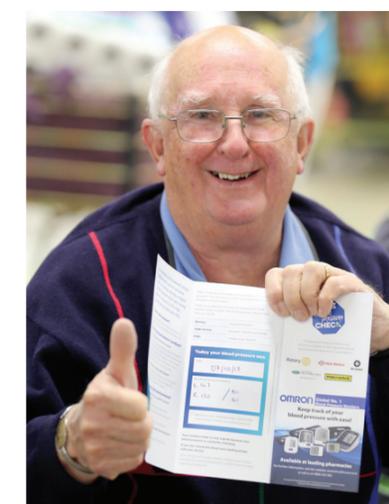
## BE IN THE KNOW, KEEP IT LOW!

Free blood pressure checks

Saturday 6 October 2018 at a supermarket near you.



STROKE FOUNDATION NZ



The event will be held on October 6 between 10am and 2pm.

Co-ordinator Campbell Clark says it would be great to have even more hands on deck.

“Retired nurses or anyone with specialist knowledge would be fantastic,” he says. “Especially if they can bring a blood pressure monitor, so we can give even more people that all-important free test.”

If you can help out, please email Campbell on [Campbell.clark@stroke.org.nz](mailto:Campbell.clark@stroke.org.nz).