



# SENIORITY

Keep Moving | Friends with the Visitor Service  
Advance Care Planning - What Matters to You?



## From the CEO

Over my summer holiday I went for two hikes. The first was up Rangituhi / Colonial Knob in Porirua. At the top I could see Kapiti Island and Paraparaumu to the north, D’Urville Island to the west and the Kaikoura Ranges to the south. My next walk took me over the Manawatu Gorge track from Ashurst to Balance Bridge near Woodville, and back again. Both hikes tested my fitness, especially my knees!

I really enjoyed being in the native bush, seeing the birds and the sense of achievement at the end of the day. I slept pretty well too!

I was inspired just before Christmas when I met a participant at one of our Steady As You Go classes. He had made such remarkable strides in his fitness since coming to the class that it was changing his life. The weekly exercises had improved not just his physical wellbeing but his outlook as well. I am really pleased to say that his progress is a common theme we often hear from people participating in our programmes.

I know that I won’t always be able to do hikes like that, but I reckon the more mobile I am, the better my physical and mental health will be, just like the Steady As You Go participant I met.

Getting outside for a walk is one of the best forms of exercise. Walking has been shown to have many benefits including improved joint mobility, muscle strength and circulation, reducing stress and improving memory, and yes, better sleep and more energy.

Doing whatever you can to remain mobile is such an important part of ageing well. Maybe it’s a short walk to the letterbox each day, a longer walk with an Age Concern Companion Walker, or a weekly visit to a Steady As You Go class – keep moving! As my staff



sometimes say, “Move it or lose it.”

I hope you enjoy this issue of Seniority magazine and do contact us if you’d like to know more about how we can help you keep moving.

### Stephen Opie

Age Concern Wellington Region CEO

**You can help us reach more lonely and isolated seniors.**

Scan the code to visit our secure donation website.

Or navigate to [acwellington.org.nz](http://acwellington.org.nz) to make a donation.



## Contact Information

**Phone:** 04 499 6646

**Email:** [news@acwellington.org.nz](mailto:news@acwellington.org.nz)

**Address:**  
Level 1, 138 Wakefield Street,  
Wellington

**Postal Address:**  
PO Box 11108,  
Wellington 6142

**Website:**  
[www.acwellington.org.nz](http://www.acwellington.org.nz)

**Facebook:**  
[www.facebook.com/ageconcernwellington](http://www.facebook.com/ageconcernwellington)

## Disclaimer

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Age Concern Wellington Region. The inclusion or exclusion of any product does not mean that Age Concern advocates or rejects its use.

## Can You Help?

You can help us reach more lonely and isolated seniors. Do you have a couple of hours a week you can spare? Or are you able to make a donation? Call 04 499 6646 or scan the QR code on page 2 for more information.

We are in need of a few specific items as well. Maybe you can you help? We’re looking for:

- a projector
- a reliable car
- a plug-in coffee urn
- a large office plant



# Mobility is a Life's Work

MICK CALDER



*Mick Calder supports Age Concern's communications team as a volunteer. He is a 'young' octogenarian who inspires us with his adventures! Mick writes about what it really means for seniors to keep moving...*

**As you get older, you may find it gets easier to convince yourself that you don't need to be as active as you once were...**

You have probably retired and don't need to keep to rushing around going to meetings and complying with the various stresses and strains of the daily rat race.

That is a big mistake. According to all the available advice, it is better to stay as active as you possibly can, for as long as you can. This means maintaining your mobility.

Mobility is the ability to move or walk freely and easily. But as we get older our mobility changes. This can be due to adjustments in

gait (how we walk to compensate for dodgy joints), balance and physical strength. Loss of mobility is partly the cause of an increase in the number of falls and the severity of any injuries sustained. The injuries suffered as a result of falls can be life-changing.

The problem is that those who lose their mobility have a poorer quality of life, are less likely to remain living at home, have higher rates of disease, disability, hospitalisation, and death than those who maintain an active lifestyle.

Many western governments, including ours, have guidelines for physical activity for older people. They usually aim to help maintain mobility and prevent disability as we age.

They all seem to repeat similar messages – it is better to stay active as you get older, which should improve your health and wellbeing as well as making it easier to perform daily tasks.

The Government provides a list of recommendations. I thought I would see whether I was being as active as I should.

1. Be as physically active as possible and limit sedentary behaviour. I try playing nine holes of golf once a week (weather permitting) and pétanque twice a week, plus occasional walks around the waterfront. But I also enjoy a siesta every now and again. Could do better.
2. Consult an appropriate health practitioner before starting or increasing physical activity. Does a regular annual check-up session with my GP qualify? He signed a release for me when I volunteered for an exercise programme with a student from the Institute of Sport.
3. Start off slowly and build up to the recommended daily physical activity levels. Good advice as you don't want to overdo it and injure yourself. For me, this advice is superfluous as I have been trying to be active for some time. I always do some warm-up stretches etc when playing golf.
4. Aim to do aerobic activity on five days per week for at least 30 minutes if the activity is of moderate intensity; or 15 minutes if it is of vigorous intensity; or a mixture of moderate- and vigorous-intensity aerobic activity. I think this is probably the most difficult instruction to comply with as some days are better than others for such activities. I am not good at sticking to routines, but I do try.
5. Aim to do three sessions of flexibility and balance activities, and two sessions of muscle strengthening activities per week. Here again there is a suggestion of developing a routine which is not really my style, but I have tried. Could do better.


The advice is obviously well meaning but requires a level of dedication that passes me by. However, I do try, and I suspect that it is all that

can be hoped for among my age cohort.


The list of exercises or activities considered suitable for older people includes individual programmes like walking, cycling, swimming, etc, to group pursuits such as dancing, pilates, Steady As You Go, tai chi and kapa haka and more. One aspect of all this is to recognise the value of exercising with others, particularly to introduce a social element.


Our pétanque group, for example, finishes the games with a session in a nearby pub where we thresh out most of the world problems.

*Steady As You Go is an approved strength and balance programme in the Government's Live Stronger for Longer initiative. Age Concern Wellington Region now has 34 classes in the greater Wellington area. Check the back page or call Ann on 04 499 6648 for details.*



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# Advance Care Planning

## What is Advance Care Planning?

Advance care planning is the process of thinking about, talking about and planning for future health care and how you want to be cared for when you can no longer make decisions.

An Advance Care Plan (ACP) is a road map for your health journey. It helps start conversations with your whānau and loved ones about your end of life.

## We can help you with your Advance Care Plan

Our Advance Care Planning Service is free and is tailored to individuals. Our ACP specialist can come and visit you, and help you prepare your plan.

Your ACP is a living document which can be reviewed and changed at any point. When

you have completed your ACP, we can support you in filing it with your GP and the hospital.

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**KAY WEBSTER**

Age Concern Wellington Region's ACP Coordinator

# A message from Prime Minister Chris Hipkins



*When I took on the job of Prime Minister, I made a commitment to focus on the bread and butter issues that matter most to New Zealanders. That's why, in my first few weeks in the role, we put in place extra cost of living support and raised wages.*

The steps we've taken to help smaller budgets stretch further, like extending the fuel tax cut, are already making a difference for many. However, at a time when global factors like inflation are pushing up prices here at home, we need to do more to support New Zealanders.

As part of this work, I recently announced that recipients of Superannuation will receive an inflation increase of 7.22% from 1 April. This will see a couple who are both aged over 65 receive \$102.84 more in total a fortnight and a single person living alone receive an extra \$66.86 each payment. This builds on the increases that we've made to Superannuation since taking office in 2017.

While this boost to Superannuation alone won't solve everything, it will ease some pressure - and right now, I know every bit helps.

On top of this, our Winter Energy Payment will help older New Zealanders heat their homes over winter. This annual support restarts from 1 May, helping with power bills through the colder months so people can stay warm and healthy, with less financial stress. A single person will receive more than \$80 a month and couples will receive more than \$125 per month.

Advertorial



Measures like these sit alongside a range of programmes that support older New Zealanders. For example, we've made doctors' visits cheaper for hundreds of thousands of people, and we've taken steps to improve the health system and cancer care, including through record investments in Pharmac's medicines budget.

Right now, we also need to make sure people feel safe and supported as we continue to respond to some of the most significant weather events in our history.

My back to basics approach means a greater focus on the issues that matter most to New Zealanders, here and now. As I've signalled, the cost of living and cyclone recovery will continue to be our top priorities, and you will see this reflected in our upcoming Budget.

*Authorised by Rt Hon Chris Hipkins MP, Parliament Buildings, Wellington*

# Volunteers Going Above and Beyond

Age Concern Wellington Region has introduced the 'Outstanding Volunteer Award', designed to recognise and appreciate our volunteers who go the extra mile for seniors.

Three amazing recipients were presented with awards in December 2022 – Joan Robertshawe, Carol Bradnock and Allan Johnson.

"All three recipients of our Outstanding Volunteer Award are incredible examples of the personal commitment all our volunteers make to help us reach isolated and lonely seniors," CEO Stephen Opie said. "But Joan, Allan and Carol also go above and beyond the call of duty every week – they give so much of their time that we wanted to recognise this publicly. They are a shining example of kindness."

Age Concern is very thankful for all service volunteers and their work. Each one deserves an award!



CEO Stephen Opie and volunteer Joan Robertshawe



Age Concern Wellington Region Patron, Lady Susan Satyanand and volunteer Allan Johnson



Lady Susan Satyanand and volunteer Allan Johnson

Do you find it difficult to leave home for an eye exam?

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Yvonne Shepherd



[www.seeyouathome.co.nz](http://www.seeyouathome.co.nz)

# Event Dates

## Vogelmorn Pop-Up Hub for Seniors

23 May & 27 June, 2pm  
Call 04 499 6645 or drop-in

## Seatoun Pop-Up Hub for Seniors

4 April, 2 May & 6 June, 12pm  
Call 04 499 6645 or drop-in

## Manners Street Coffee Group

13 April 10 am  
– special intergenerational morning  
11 May & 8 June, 10.30am  
Call 04 499 6645 or drop-in

## Linden Pop-Up Hub for Seniors

11 April, 9 May & 13 June, 1pm  
Call 04 499 6645 or drop-in

## Staying Safe course for older drivers

24 May, 28 June & 30 August, 10am  
Call 04 499 6646 to register

## City Gallery Tour

18 May & 15 June, 1.30pm  
Call 04 499 6645 to register

## Stokes Valley Pop-Up Hub for Seniors

20 April, 18 May & 15 June, 2pm  
Call 04 499 6646 or drop-in

## Upper Hutt Pop-Up Hub For Seniors

April 12 2023, 12pm  
Call 04 499 6646 for details

## More Information:

Phone: 04 499 6646

Email: [info@acwellington.org.nz](mailto:info@acwellington.org.nz)

Website: [www.acwellington.org.nz](http://www.acwellington.org.nz)

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# Walking and Talking

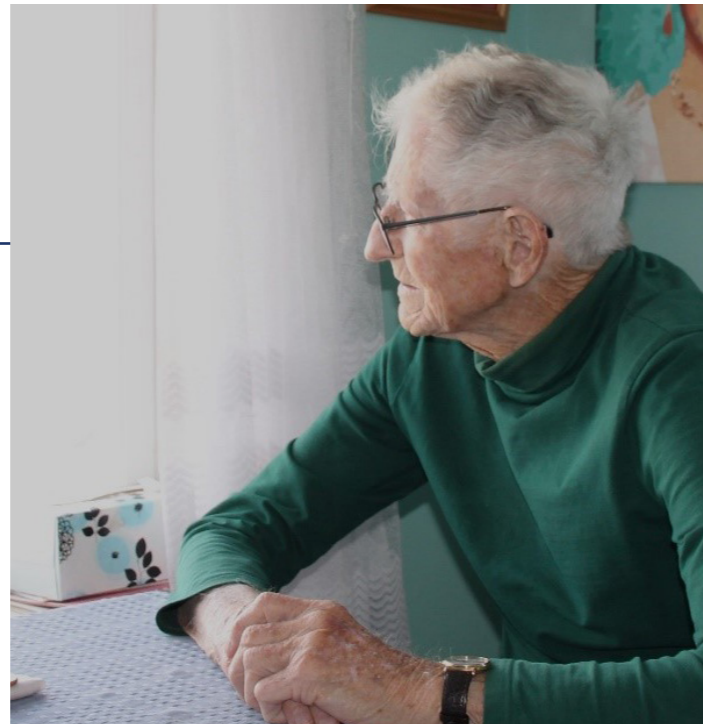
*Wellington is full of interesting people with extraordinary stories; you just have to meet them, take your time, ask a few questions, and the stories will come out. Ross and Gabrielle have completely different stories to tell, but they have a common link through the Companion Walking Service. This means they still get out and about for a walk and a talk, with occasional stops to get their breath, chat with friends they meet or just smell the roses.*

Ross Dunn retired from his travel agency business about eleven years ago and looked forward to keeping active in retirement. He planned on regular meetings with mates, walking in the local area, working in his garden and maintaining his watch over the ships entering the harbour from his conveniently placed desk with a view over Lyall Bay and the harbour entrance.

After a shaky start (at the age of three months he was lucky to survive the 1931 Napier earthquake) Ross spent his childhood in Napier. His interest in ships started during his schooldays as he watched them coming and going from the port of Napier. This led to a move to Wellington for a job as an office boy with the Union Steam Ship Company beginning with the task of delivering documents to the ships by bicycle in all weathers – wind, rain, or shine – the mail had to get through.

After six years of training in the shipping business he moved to a travel agency and, having learned intricacies, he took the bold step to set up his own business.

In addition to the usual personal and business travel arrangements, he maintained his



shipping interests by specialising in organising shore trips for cruise line passengers, initially in Wellington but later extending to the other major ports around the New Zealand coast. The cruise lines' management haggled for the best prices but once the contract was signed, they were fine to deal with according to Ross.

However, the business could get financially tricky if bad weather or other circumstances cancelled the port visit. At short notice, except in unusual circumstances, no payment was made to coach or other local operators for that day. Passengers were not charged for a "no show", so the port operator (Ross in this case) would be saddled with the costs of guiding-staff pay, some tour lunches, and travel to and from the port, with no money coming in.

Ross reckons that the ideal number of passengers was around 750 per ship, but getting them organised was like herding cats. Ross imagines the modern cruise ships with over 4,000 passengers must be a logistical nightmare.

The business had its perks with familiarisation trips throughout New Zealand and to many

overseas destinations. So, when he retired Ross considered he had seen most of New Zealand and the best bits of other countries.

Although he kept active working in the garden, he began to have leg problems and his GP advised more exercise, so he went back to playing table tennis. Unfortunately, when playing a doubles match his partner lunged for a return and pushed Ross out of the way. Ross fell and broke his hip, which slowed him down and significantly changed his retirement plans.

He could get around the house and still work in the garden with some help, but he needed a stick for walking outside and was concerned about venturing too far on his own.

A friend gave him a copy of the Age Concern Companion Walking Service brochure; he signed up and was matched with Michael Knight, who just happens to be the Chair of the Age Concern board. They walk around the Lyall Bay area with plenty of routes to choose from, and the conversation can range over topics as diverse as the share market to sport – particularly golf.

Ross enjoys the walks and the conversations but if the discussion gets too deep and meaningful, there is the risk of not seeing potholes or other hazards. Sometimes it is better to stop walking and keep talking.

In addition to the weekly walks, Ross maintains a full schedule of activities. He drives to do the shopping and to keep in practice, meets friends for a chat on Fridays, works in the garden (with some help), attends Probus meetings, and monitors the shipping



## Enjoy life with Enliven

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arrivals and departures to ensure they are on time. It's in his blood.

Early on Friday mornings Age Concern's volunteer Kate Belianskaia rings Gabrielle McLeavey to discuss the weather outlook for later in the day, and the prospects for a walk that afternoon. If the weather prospects are acceptable, Kate turns up later in the afternoon to walk with Gabrielle around the streets of Thorndon. The walk is also a history lesson as Gabrielle has had a long association with the area.

Gabrielle's family have lived in Thorndon since her grandfather, James Harriss bought the house in Goring Street in 1905 just five years after it was built. Gabrielle was only 20 months old when her father died, and the family moved to Goring Street so that grandma could look after Gabrielle while her mother went to work.

## Walking and Talking

*Continued from pg11*

In those days the milkman delivered using a horse and cart, trams ran up and down Tinakori Road, and food shopping involved separate visits to the greengrocer, butcher, and grocery. Gabrielle went to St Mary's College and had an after-school job at the Adult Education Centre. She eventually became a shorthand typist and was offered a job at Adult Education, but she wanted to be in the centre of town. Joining AMP insurance, she worked for four accountants before moving up to be Personal Assistant and Secretary. She still walked to work from Goring Street.

As a result, Gabrielle has a good knowledge of Thorndon and its developments over the years. The Goring Street Cabaret\* has been converted to flats, New World supermarket has replaced the Lion brewery, the motorway arrived, and Certified Concrete departed. Five generations of the Harriss Family in Goring Street witnessed these changes over the years.

Gabrielle learned of the Companion Walking Service after a long stay in hospital four years ago. She was being fitted with a heart pacemaker and unfortunately suffered from an infection related to the wiring which involved further surgery and three months in hospital where she 'celebrated' her husband Michael's 80th birthday. Regrettably Michael died a year later.

She suffers from occasional dizziness and some breathlessness, so uses the medical alert system. She was apprehensive about going out walking on her own and the hospital service put her in touch with Age Concern Wellington Region to organise a companion to accompany her for walks in her local area.

Having a companion has helped her enormously on her weekly outings. Kate, her second companion, is from Russia and speaks

perfect English so they generally get along well during their walks around the Tinakori Road area.

Gabrielle appreciates the time taken by the volunteers and looks forward to the weekly phone call to set up the next walking (and history) session. Having a companion makes the time pass quickly and occasionally they walk further than planned.

At the age of 81 Gabrielle still drives her car and takes herself off to the Steady As You Go class in Karori each Monday. The weekly classes give her another outing to look forward to, assists with her mobility and balance, and she enjoys the social side of meeting and talking to others before and after the exercise sessions.

The Companion Walking Service aims to improve the lives of older people, especially those living alone who may seldom get out of their homes. This may be because they have a medical condition that makes them feel unstable walking alone, they may simply have lost confidence in their walking ability, they may want to go further afield but are afraid it will be too much for them, or they may just enjoy having someone to talk to. Contact Age Concern Wellington Region for more information, either as a volunteer or a client of the walking service, or about Steady As You Go falls prevention exercise classes.

*\*A dance school by day, a jazz cabaret by night. Wellington's Goring Street Club bothered the neighbours. Cars tooting, club-goers laughing and shouting, the drinking (or not) of alcohol, how many nights the club was open each week and how late, and an evening spent there by the Prince of Wales all provoked controversy in 1920. Te Ara. Encyclopaedia of New Zealand.*

# The Importance of Balance

ANN DALZIEL



*Are you unsteady on your feet? Do you have balance problems, especially as you get older?*

Recently, an article published in the Guardian Weekly (UK) drew attention to the subject of balance. Many of us take it for granted - until we don't have it anymore!

So, what is balance, and why do you lose it with age? Well, it is incredibly complex, involving joints, muscles, nerves, eyesight and the inner ear. As we age, decreased motor skills can lead to unsteadiness. This, combined with serious health issues can make it hard to balance. A decade-long study concluded that an inability to balance was associated with an almost twofold increase in risk of death.

Volunteers were asked to stand on one leg with the other pressed against it, arms by their side and eyes fixed straight ahead. After accounting for age, sex, and other underlying health conditions, an inability to hold the position for 10 seconds was associated with an 84% heightened risk of death from any cause.

Significant loss of balance is a medical problem without a medical solution. Prevention is better than a cure, so a

programme designed to help improve balance may help stop the downward spiral.

This is where Age Concern's Steady As You Go falls prevention exercise classes come into their own. The programme has been operating since 2003. Age Concern Otago, in association with the University of Otago Physiotherapy Department, devised a programme that would scientifically improve strength and balance.

Fortunately, we are lucky in Wellington to be able to access a number of these classes. They are very effective, only need to be done once weekly, and are proven to improve balance and reduce the chance of falling.

To make matters even more attractive, they are available for a mere \$2 donation per session. If you are in any way concerned about your balance and the possibility of falling, why not try one of our 30 classes around the Region? They are fun and you will be made very welcome.

*Visit the Age Concern Wellington Region website or call 04 499 6648 to find more information about our Steady As You Go classes.*

# Stroke & Mobility

## From the Stroke Foundation

*Like many long-term health conditions, stroke can turn your world upside down. Simple actions like speech, movement, and clear-thinking can suddenly become a challenge.*

Stroke can affect how you sit, stand, feel, think, and behave. It can throw you off balance and make it extremely difficult to leave the house or even move around your home.

Today, we're facing a stroke tsunami. There are currently 350,000 people in Aotearoa living with the aftereffects of stroke. By 2028, this figure will rise by 40 per cent.

With more New Zealanders living with stroke than ever before, it's crucial to improve our understanding of the condition and how it can change our lives – and the lives of our whānau – in an instant.

While most people understand that stroke can limit your mobility, many don't know how and why, or what stroke survivors can do to regain their independence.

Here, we break down a few of the specifics to help you understand the effect this complex and often overlooked long-term health condition has on mobility.

### What causes stroke?

A stroke is a brain attack. It happens when a blockage, such as a clot, prevents blood flow to the brain, or when a burst blood vessel leads to a brain bleed.

During a stroke, the cells in the affected part of the brain start to die and cannot work properly. This can affect a person's ability to

walk, talk, read, or socialise – many of the things that gave their life meaning before their stroke.

### How can a stroke affect mobility?

Different parts of the brain control a person's movements, senses, emotions, and intellectual functions. The effects of stroke depend on which part of the brain is damaged and how severe the damage is.

This can affect a person's mobility in a number of ways. It can lead to anything from weakness in your hands, feet, and side, to partial paralysis, which is called hemiplegia.

Hemiplegia can occur on your right or left side. It often requires people to relearn how to roll over in bed, move from sitting to standing, or from a bed to a chair or a toilet. They may even have to relearn how to walk.

Stroke can affect your mobility in more subtle ways as well. Many people have difficulty keeping their balance or feel dizzy and unsteady when they stand up. Some experience stiffness or tightness in their muscles. This is called hypertonia. When your muscles are floppy, it's called low hypertonia.

Others may experience changes in sensation, such as pins and needles or increased sensitivity – known as hypersensitivity. Many stroke survivors experience fatigue, localised pain, and swelling in their legs or feet.

### What support is available?

Stroke affects everyone differently and the picture is extremely varied. Some people will experience one or more of these symptoms after a stroke, while other people's symptoms will manifest differently.

There is plenty of support out there to build your mobility back after a stroke. However, it can be difficult to know where to turn. Physiotherapists can assess your mobility and work with you to set goals and develop a rehabilitation program to meet your needs.

They can prescribe exercises to improve your strength, coordination, balance, and fitness. This often starts with simple task-specific actions like standing or walking, helping you take gradual steps toward greater mobility.

Recovery from stroke is difficult to predict. The progress someone will make and the amount of time it takes varies – from several weeks or months – up to multiple years.

### Can I drive after a stroke?

Getting back behind the wheel is usually a priority for people who have experienced a stroke – particularly when they need to attend follow-up medical appointments. Unfortunately, you cannot drive for one month after a stroke occurs.

This stand down period isn't a result of your symptoms – it's to prevent you having another stroke, seizure, or other neurological problems while behind the wheel of a car.

There are plenty of transport services for stroke patients out there. In some areas,

there are volunteer drivers who will take you to and from appointments or outings and most District Health Boards (DHBs) provide a shuttle service which is helpful for getting to hospital appointments. *More information is available at [www.stroke.org.nz](http://www.stroke.org.nz) or phone 0800 78 76 53*

### Stroke Foundation of New Zealand

The Stroke Foundation of New Zealand works with stroke survivors, their whānau, and carers to achieve the best possible outcomes for people in their lives after stroke.

We know everyone has a different journey to recovery. Factors such as age, health, and family support can dramatically change a person's experience of life after stroke. That's why our Community Stroke Advisors work with clients to create recovery plans that are right for them.

*To find out how our Community Stroke Advisors could help you or someone your love, call 0800 78 76 53, email [strokenz@stroke.org.nz](mailto:strokenz@stroke.org.nz) or visit [www.stroke.org.nz](http://www.stroke.org.nz)*




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 04 499 6646

# Dear John

Dear John,  
Over the Christmas holidays we visited friends and relatives, as we normally do at that time of year. I was upset seeing my oldest cousin who was definitely not her usual self. She lives alone, but is normally a fiercely independent widow who is involved with church committees, walking groups, and her garden.

Apparently just before the holidays she slipped and badly sprained her ankle. The results have been catastrophic for her – she cannot get out to do her shopping, meet friends, go to church etc. From one small incident, her life has changed dramatically!

Do you have any suggestions?  
Susan, Belmont.



Hello Susan,  
Yes, one small incident can often have a number of unforeseen consequences. Due to lack of mobility her social connectedness has declined and along with it, her confidence. She may even be a little depressed. I suspect she hasn't shared this with her friends as she probably doesn't want to appear 'needy'. However, this is only my impression, and she should really use professional medical advice.

If she has not already done so, I suggest that she contact her GP or the practice nurse, first of all, to assess the damage and advise treatment. They may even organise some physiotherapy if appropriate.

Once she has permission to resume very gentle activity, she could contact Age Concern Wellington Region. They have a wonderful service called the Companion Walking Service. This places a trained volunteer with a client to take them for gentle walks, but also there is the added confidence of not walking alone. This may be a good way of getting her started on her journey to recovery.

Later, she could think about attending one of the Steady As You Go classes, which are designed to avoid falling (and only cost a couple of dollars!). Both would be good for her - both physically and mentally, and are a great way of meeting people.

I hope this helps.  
John

# Spotted Out & About

Staying Safe course for older drivers in Khandallah, March 2023



Volunteer Allan helping with one of our Census support events in March



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## Grace & Meera – Happy Connections

ASHLEIGH WEYERMAYR

*Walking up to Grace's house in a quiet neighbourhood of Lower Hutt, you are immediately struck by the colourful garden bordering the drive and surrounding the house in style of traditional gardens. It is immaculate, colourful, and perfumed with the beautiful scent of all the roses. The abundance of colours in the front garden is a great introduction to the lovely lady who lives inside.*

As you step into the house, the walls are covered with stunning artworks. From landscapes to floral pieces, every work was lovingly painted by Grace.

With some gentle persuasion and input from the Age Concern visitor, Meera, Grace told us a little of her early days in Petone where a good grounding in a commercial course led to office work – a career she stayed in until her retirement.

Married in 1951, Grace and her late husband raised three children, all of whom are successful in their own careers. Their home was built by her husband and is now her haven.

At 35, Grace began to paint. She attended a local art society and found her love of watercolour. All the art in her house is her work. When complimented, she humbly waves it off. She insists that her painting skills are just a 'knack', rather than a true talent.

She still paints, 56 years later. She is currently working on painting her sister-in-law's bach – but can't get the fence right. It's her twentieth go at it, but as she says, "I do not give up on anything I like to do, ever."

Grace's other current project is to paint all the houses that have been significant to her throughout her life – whether this includes her

childhood home, her family's houses or her husband's old house in Berhampore.

Despite her keen interest in her painting hobby, Grace still gets lonely sometimes. There are plenty of very welcome visitors, but the quietness of the evenings, with no spontaneous chat is a challenge. Though she says she had great friendships throughout her life, she misses many of the people she used to have in her life.

She struggles with mobility now and doesn't go outside of her house for fear of falling. Even though she affectionately calls her walker her 'Rolls Royce', it does not allow her to move at any significant speed. Thankfully, Meera is there to help her, even if Grace is stubborn and wants to get things for herself.



Grace & Meera

Grace met Meera about a year ago through a friend of a friend, and the weekly meetings are always welcome with lots of talk and plenty of laughs and reminiscing. Meera is a volunteer with Age Concern Wellington Region's Visitor Service. She's been working with Age Concern for five years and absolutely loves it. She says it "gives an extra dimension to her life" and she gets a lot out of it.

Meera describes Grace as a people person who loves meeting others. They get along well. After they joke around, Grace chuckles and



questions, "Where would I be without Meera?"

They keep in touch outside of their once-a-week catch ups. When Meera goes on holiday, she sends Grace lots of pictures. Their connection makes them both feel more fulfilled and thankful for the other.

With a cheeky grin, Grace quotes: "As long as you can keep laughing, you can stay alive for ever."



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## Steady As You Go Falls Prevention Exercise Classes

DAY	TIME	LOCATION
Monday	10am	Seatoun Village Hall, 22 Forres Street, Seatoun
Monday	10.30am	Karori Community Centre, 7 Beauchamp St, Karori
Monday	11am	Knox Church Lower Hutt, 574 High Street, Boulcott
Monday	12pm	St Peters Church, Garden Room, 170 Victoria Street, Te Aro
Monday	1.30pm	Walter Nash Centre, 20/22 Taine Street, Taita
Tuesday	11am	Koraunui Stokes Valley Hub, 184 Stokes Valley Rd, Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt
Tuesday	11am	Holy Trinity Anglican Church, 40 Wainuiomata Rd, Wainuiomata
Tuesday	1pm	Vogelmorn Hall, Mornington Rd, Brooklyn
Tuesday	1pm	Johnsonville Uniting Church, 16 Dr Taylor Terrace, Johnsonville
Wednesday	9.30am	Live Online Class, Zoom
Wednesday	12pm	All Saints Church, Hataitai, 90 Hamilton Road, Hataitai
Wednesday	12pm	Eastbourne Community Hall, Tuatoru St, Eastbourne, Lower Hutt
Wednesday	1pm	Whirinaki Whare Taonga Arts & Entertainment Centre (Expressions), 836 Fergusson Drive, Upper Hutt
Wednesday	1.30pm	Walter Nash Centre, 20/22 Taine Street, Taita
Wednesday	12pm	Karori Community Centre, 7 Beauchamp St, Karori
Thursday	10.30am	Brooklyn Rec Room, Central Park, 21 Brooklyn Road, Wellington
Thursday	11am	Newlands Community Centre, 9 Batchelor St, Newlands *from 6 April
Thursday	12pm	Tawa Community Centre, 5 Cambridge Street, Tawa
Thursday	1pm	Koraunui Stokes Valley, 184 Stokes Valley Rd, Stokes Valley, Lower Hutt
Friday	10am	Johnsonville Community Centre, 3 Frankmoore Avenue, Johnsonville
Friday	11am	St Mary's Church Hall, 69 Discovery Drive, Whitby *from 3 March
Friday	1.00pm	Loaves & Fishes, Wellington Cathedral of St Paul, 2 Hill Street, Thorndon