

Nutrition and Physical Activity Update

The work of the Nutrition and Physical Activity Team focuses on reducing the prevalence of obesity and chronic diseases, especially in our most vulnerable children and whānau. We utilise the principles of the Ottawa Charter to improve access to healthy and affordable food and increase and promote physical activity in our community.

The NPA Team

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Purchasing cheap, fresh fruit and vegetables at wholesale prices has been made easier for residents of Porirua, Titahi Bay, Naenae and Taita with the introduction of a new fresh fruit and vegetable co-operative. This initiative is a partnership between Wesley Community Action and Regional Public Health.

A Fruit and Vegetable Co-operative is Born

In August 2013 Wesley Community Action's community garden coordinator, Tim Borrer travelled to Christchurch to learn more about the successful food co-operative and as a result arranged to test the idea in Porirua. This initiative followed a very successful Christchurch model developed as a response to food access issues following the 2011 earthquakes.

From May to December last year Wesley Community Action, (with the support of Regional Public Health, Salvation Army and Corinna School) piloted the fruit and vegetable co-operative in Eastern Porirua.

An evaluation of the Eastern Porirua fruit and vege co-op pilot in December 2014 showed the combined value of the two bags of fruit and vegetables to be equivalent to a supermarket value of between \$18-\$40 (season dependent).

The evaluation also found a significant improvement in the total intake of fruit and vegetables for members. Improved accessibility was addressed by having the co-operative and distribution hubs scattered throughout the local community.

The results were so positive that Wesley decided to establish the co-operative as a new, separate initiative and in April 2015 Sallie Calvert was appointed as the fruit and vegetable co-operative's new coordinator.

Results of the trial Porirua Fruit and Vege Co-operative

- **Before** the fruit and vege co-op pilot 33% of survey respondents reported eating at least the recommended 'five + a day' servings of fruit and vegetables (2 or more servings of fruit and 3 or more servings of vegetables per day).
- **After** the fruit and vege co-op pilot 62% of survey respondents reported eating at least the recommended 'five + a day' servings of fruit and vegetables.



Tim unloading the truck.



Emmeline unloading the carrots.



The Need

National studies have identified clear links between low income and poor access to healthy food, with 47% of low-income households reporting that they, *"sometimes or often run out of food in their households because of lack of money."*

A lack of healthy food in lower socioeconomic areas has been linked to problems of obesity and chronic disease such as diabetes.

Expansion

Post-pilot the fruit and vege co-op in East Porirua is gaining a regular weekly order of over 150 with an overall membership of around 300.

In February this year, St David's Anglican Church and Regional Public Health launched the Naenae fruit and vegetable co-op, with the intention of setting up more distribution hubs in the community. The Naenae co-op is also rapidly growing with close to 150 orders each week. We are now in week fifteen of the co-op in the valley with orders coming from Naenae, Taita and Stokes Valley and new interest from Upper Hutt and Wainuiomata. Orders for the Titahi Bay community have become so large (and there is a waiting list) that we are opening a new Packing Hub in Titahi Bay within the next few weeks.

How it works

Co-op members place their order before 4pm Thursday for next weeks fresh fruit and vegetables, paying \$10 per order in advance. Families can purchase more than one pack per week, and don't have to order every week. Each pack contains two bags - one of fruit and one of vegetables, weighing approximately 8kg and is sufficient for a whānau of four. There is no criteria to become a co-op member.

Each Tuesday, based on the orders placed the previous Thursday, the fruit and vegetable coordinator purchases bulk supplies of healthy seasonal fruit and vegetables. The produce is delivered to the packing hubs (Salvation Army, Cannons Creek and St David's Church Naenae) and volunteers pack the orders ready for pick-up by individuals and distribution hubs coordinators (see below). The members that placed their orders the previous week pick up their produce packs, including handy hints on cooking and storing the vegetables and relevant health messages. The recipes are for vegetable based (though not vegetarian) meals and are designed to encourage co-op members to try new fruit and vegetables and learn to cook with ones they may not have tried before. The following week the cycle starts again!

Feedback

Feedback from members has been very positive. People love the freshness of the fruit and veges and being able to rely on getting them regularly where they live.

- *"The best value ever!"*
- *"I am excited to come and pick up my pack (my vege bags) each week."*
- *"...means we can cook healthy much more cheaply and when we get more than we need, we can share with others."*

Who do I contact?

Orders can be placed at one of the sites below:

Porirua

- Wesley Community Action's fruit and vege co-op coordinator, Sallie Calvert. Phone 237 7923 or 027 599 7000.
- Salvation Army Cannons Creek – 89 Warspite Ave. Phone 235 6266.
- Corinna School – Phone 235 9570.
- Holy Family School – Phone 237 7664.
- Big Uppz Elsdon – Phone 022 020 9692.
- Titahi Bay – 021 704 974.

Naenae

- Jill Kirkland, Naenae fruit and vege co-op coordinator. Phone 027 467 4000.
naenaefruitvegcoop@gmail.com. St Davids Church, 3 Seddon Street, Naenae.



Oranges ready to pack.



Bananas ready to pack.



Packing the fruit.



Packing the veges.



Bags packed and ready to be picked up.