

# Newsletter

## December 2020



Committee President  
*Tessa Kain*

Dear Members and Supporters

After a rather tumultuous 2020 we are now very fortunate to have an exciting new chapter in the Society's development to look forward to in 2021.

The new MSPC team has met and been briefed on our Strategic Plan and how their individual role contributes to its implementation and success. Our new Executive Manager, **Karla Gunby** takes up her role on 11 January 2021, leading our team in the growth and development of the Society. **Tara Martin** joined us in November as our permanent physiotherapist. **Elsbeth McKeon** will be joining **Deb Ballantyne** as the new nursing team, and **Kirsty Boggi** is coming in as our new Office Administrator.

I know you'll join us in welcoming Karla and the team. We're sure they'll be excellent.

**BrainTree**, our new building project, has reached a milestone with the land purchase to be settled by Christmas and the preliminary earthworks to commence in February 2021. What a long way we have come in a short time, especially given the extra challenges brought by Covid. This phenomenal success is thanks to the efforts of CBC in gaining incredible support from their donors - many of you are among these donors and we are very grateful to you, thank you.

Meanwhile, at our current premises, Tara has created a new physiotherapy assessment area which is accessed directly off the gym. Our nurses now have a dedicated consultation room too from which to run their clinics. These small changes, the first of many, should greatly enhance your visits to the Society and we look forward to seeing you there again very soon.

Until then best wishes for Christmas and a very Happy New Year.



The new team! (left to right) Deb, Kirsty, Elspeth, Karla and Tara



# Welcome to the Team!

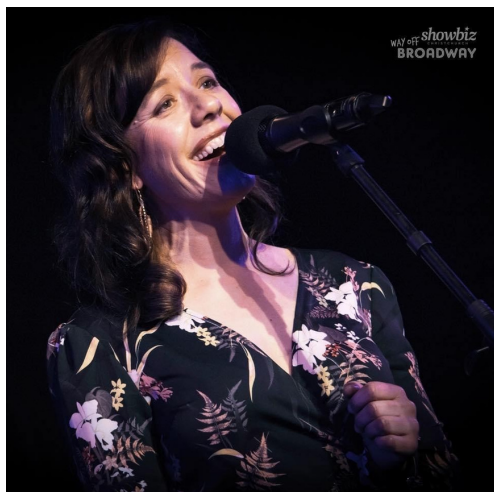
**Physiotherapist Tara Martin**, commenced work with us in November.

Tara is originally from the US, growing up mostly in the state of Texas, where much of her family still lives. Her original ambitions were in music and she trained to be an opera singer, completing her first degree in Music Performance way back in 1995.

After meeting her future husband, she followed him to the UK where they both had dreams of work in the arts, but later realised they both wanted 'proper jobs'. Tara initially found work in the health and fitness industry but discovered physiotherapy, which was the start of her new career. She worked in all areas of physio initially, but settled into a focus on neurology after a few years.

When she and her husband re-located to NZ in 2007, she commenced work at the DHB, first on the acute wards, then the rehab wards and finally in the community. In 2011 she moved to the private sector and joined On the Go Physio, and also completed her Masters.

She also returned to her first love of music. She continues to perform regularly with several groups in Christchurch, and you may have even spotted her in some of the larger productions such as Les Miserables and Phantom of the Opera over the last few years.



**Specialist nurse Deb Ballantyne** joined us in October. Deb will be working with both MS & Parkinson's members.

Deb is a Canterbury native, growing up in the foothills and training as a nurse here in Christchurch. She didn't stick around too long though, as she caught the travel bug and went to work around the world, in Melbourne, London and Auckland.

Eventually, she heard the call of the Garden City and came home. Since then she has been working primarily for Nurse Maude in Community Nursing. After so many years working solo in the community, Deb is looking forward to being part of a team again.

In her spare time, Deb loves art, music and getting her teeth into DIY projects at home.

In January Deb will be joined by nurse Elspeth McKeon. The nurses will work with **both** Multiple Sclerosis and Parkinson's clients and carers. The nurses will be running clinics from Sir William Pickering Drive twice weekly, providing on-line telehealth consultations and home visits if required.





# Robin's Farewell

Hello everyone

As you know, I have now retired from my role after 6 years at the helm of MS and Parkinson's Canterbury. The past years have seen steady positive changes to the delivery of our services as we continually aimed to respond to the needs of members and develop services within the resource constraints faced by a not for profit such as ours.

I have been proud of the achievements of our committed staff and other stakeholders who always valued their connections with the membership and come up with innovative ideas along the way.

I have always appreciated the ways in which members demonstrated their interest in the society, whether the feedback was complimentary or constructive criticism. Thank you to everyone who has shared their perspectives with me.

I have been fortunate to have a great team around me of staff, committee and volunteers – thank you all for the support you have shown me. I assure you that the committee members who represent you all take their responsibilities seriously, especially at this time of significant organizational change.



The BrainTree project, under the guidance of the Canterbury Brain Collective, is achieving significant milestones towards the new building, and I look forward to proudly attending the opening in due course.

I am looking forward to developing my home-based business and having time and energy to follow my own interests. I send my best wishes for the festive season and a relaxing summer, and I encourage you all to welcome the new MSPC team in the new year.

Warmest  
blessings,  
Robin



Robin at the 2019 Street Appeal



Robin with the Nordic Walkers

# From the Fundraising Office

## Street Appeal 2020

During Level Four, in the run up to the Street Appeal this year, we were wondering whether our Appeal would be able to go ahead at all. When we went back into Level Two in August, we were worried that many of the sites that had allowed us to collect at their stores might withdraw permission.

However, this was not the case and we are grateful to the Supermarkets, Malls, Mitre 10s etc. who allowed us to collect despite still being in Level Two - their support is much appreciated.

A huge thank you to all our amazing volunteers, site coordinators, service groups, and secondary schools. You all continually exceed our expectations. You are superstars!

It was a beautiful weekend, which was such a relief after last year, and the public were incredibly generous.



Members of Papanui Rotary at Northwood New World

It is because of all of you that we vastly exceeded our expectations, raising just over \$53,000!

This really has been a rollercoaster of a year and we want to take this opportunity to thank our volunteers, supporters and our donors. Your commitment to us is much appreciated.

## How to Support Us

Going into 2021, we will bring you some great events. In the meantime, if you would like to keep supporting us, we have a few ideas...

- If you have already donated to us this year, you need to make sure you claim back the tax on your donation. Maybe you didn't even know you could do that. Just go to MyIR and fill out a form online (search for Submit a Donation Receipt on [ird.govt.nz](http://ird.govt.nz)). If you're still feeling generous, and maybe weren't expecting that money in the first place, you could always donate it back to us.
- When you go back to work in January, you could start the year off as you mean to go on by asking to start Payroll Giving to MSPC. It is something that most employers offer, and it comes out before tax, so you don't even know it's gone. Even \$5, the equivalent of a cup of coffee, a month really makes a difference to our small organisation.
- You could always purchase an Entertainment Pass through us, here. The discounts you can get through the Entertainment app will help offset the cost of Christmas socialising, support local businesses and support us too.
- Maybe you have some extra plants grown from seed this year, crowding up your garden. Why not sell them and donate the profits? Or you could have a garage sale, get rid of some unwanted things and donate part of the proceeds to MSPC.
- What about having a board-game night with friends and family? We're talking Monopoly, Ludo, Cluedo and Snakes and Ladders. Put together a board game fundraising event that's friendly for all ages, complete with an assortment of options. Or maybe go adults only and add some drinks into the mix. Charge for entry and host mini tournaments among different sets of players, maybe even with prizes. Have fun with it!



# Golf Tournament 2020



On Friday 6th November we held our Annual Golf Tournament, at the beautiful, world-class, **Clearwater Golf Club** for the third year running. Thank you to Clearwater for their continued support which has allowed us to keep running the event at such a high standard. We had a great turn-out with 16 teams, some returning for another year and some joining us for the first time.

Although the clouds were grey, everyone was in good spirits and there was a great atmosphere. We started with a barbeque, faithfully manned by Rob and Lesley, with extra help from Neil and Sandy who also helped us throughout the day. Our wonderful Event Organiser, Mike Godinet, addressed the teams and then we were off!

On the 9th hole, we had the Chip in the Bucket competition, looked after by volunteer Alix and Fundraising Assistant Charlotte. The final prize for this particular game of skill went to Ram Thapa, who was the only one who managed to get the ball in the bucket! Well done, Ram!

During the tournament, delicious sandwiches were circulated, made by volunteers Alison, Allison and Alix.

The tournament followed the Ambrose format, where the team works together, each taking a turn to hit the ball. The best shot is then used as the point from which to play. This continues until the ball is holed.

Normally this is a net tournament only, with prizes awarded down to 4th place. This year it was decided to include 1st and 2nd prizes for the gross team results as well, to give more opportunity across all skill levels.

**Well done to all the winners!**

The results were:

## Net

1st Craigs Investment Partners Team #2 captained by Ross Hutton

2nd Global Office Consignly captained by Chris Tacon

3rd Isaac Team #2 captained by Ram Thapa

4th Thinking People Team #2 "The Bar Studs" captained by Phil Ward

## Gross

1st Cowdy & Co captained by Tom Rennie

2nd Craigs Investment Partners Team #1 captained by Richard Bain

Winners of the Closest to the Pin contest on our two par-3 holes were:

Hole 9 – Milan Smolar

Hole 11 – Alton Fletcher

Thanks to our sponsors we were able to give out some amazing prizes to all winners, from top quality accommodation in Queenstown provided by THC, platinum passes to a Crusaders game, top of the range wines and great golf accessories. Our raffle proved to be very popular, with nine draws for the lucky winners. Our mini auction always attracts some hearty bidding, with some sort after items available including a luxury accommodation package at Eichardt's private hotel in Queenstown and the sort after Isaac's hosted corporate box experience proving to be a favourite again this year. A great time was had by all, with everyone reporting they had an enjoyable day and hope to attend again in 2021.

Congratulations to all our winners and thank you to everyone who took part. It was great to have you with us! A huge thank you, also, to our magnificent sponsors and supporters!

In particular, we want to acknowledge **Isaac Construction** who have been our major golf sponsor for the last three years. Their support has ensured that this event continues to be a great success, raising significant funds for our organisation.

**Thank you to all our sponsors and donors for their continued support. You are greatly appreciated, we look forward to seeing you next year.**



Winning team, from Craig's Investment Partners



Lesley and Rob on the barbeque!

# Golf Day Sponsors



Northwood New World  
Little India

Suburban Estates  
Christchurch Eye Surgery



# Women and MS Prevalence

By Charlotte Ackroyd



A recent study investigated some possible reasons why there are more women diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis than men. Currently in Australia and New Zealand, 75% of MS diagnoses are women. Over the last 50 years, the incidence of women diagnosed with MS has risen by 10%. A group of women neurologists and researchers, collectively known as International Women in Multiple Sclerosis (iWiMS) undertook a study to investigate the potential environmental and cultural links that could have led to this increase, using the MSBase database and other studies from previous years.

Genetics was one factor found to influence the risk of developing MS. A defect was discovered that could relate to MS which can occur twice in women, one on each X chromosome, but only ever once in males, as it does not occur on the Y chromosome. It is possible that environmental factors may have changed over the last 100 years, interacting with these genes to increase the risk in women alone.

Most environmental risk factors are related to hormones and more specifically, pregnancy. It has long been known that changes in oestrogen levels during pregnancy seem to reduce the rate of relapses. It's also known that changes in hormone responses after birth can lead to increased risk of relapse. The key factor to relapse risk at this time seems to be related to relapse activity and disease progression prior to conception.

However, the study notes that the risk of sudden and severe relapse in the majority of individuals after giving birth is slim. In fact, some recent studies have demonstrated a slower rate of disability progression in people who have been pregnant after the apparent onset of their MS.

This is good news for those who are planning a family, or those who already have children. However, the cultural trend towards having children later in life, or perhaps not having children at all, may not be so beneficial for women with MS. The researchers also acknowledge that there is a certain amount of stigma when it comes to family planning for those with MS and disability in general, but it is important that people aren't put off having children by the supposed risks of pregnancy, and that they make their decisions using all the facts available.

The paper also looks at whether or not menopause increases risks of relapse or worsening symptoms. While symptoms may be exacerbated by menopause, the standard effects of menopause can be similar. Also, aspects of menopause can increase the effects of MS. For example, the hot flashes common in menopause can make fatigue and other MS symptoms feel worse, simply because of the well-known effects of heat on those with MS. Therefore, the researchers say that any MS treatment may require review in order to better fit the changes associated with menopause.

While the study is very detailed, the researchers acknowledge that there is still much more investigation needed on the effect of oestrogen and, more specifically, oral contraception on both the incidence and the progression of Multiple Sclerosis.

We hope that this study is just the beginning of what can be found, and that these findings can go on to really change things for everyone with Multiple Sclerosis.

## Resources

SAGE Journals, Sex effects across the lifespan in women with multiple sclerosis, Kristen M. Krysko et. al, <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1756286420936166>

MSRA, Major Study Into MS and Pregnancy, <https://msra.org.au/news/major-study-into-ms-and-pregnancy/>

MSRA, MS Risk is Increasingly Affecting Women. Why?, <https://msra.org.au/news/ms-risk-increasing-for-women/>



## **Important Dates**

Classes finish and the office closes Friday 18th December, 2020.

The office reopens and regular classes restart Monday 11th January, 2021.

Yoga classes will restart on Tuesday 9th February, 2021, at St Martins.

## **COMMITTEE AND STAFF 2021**

**President:** Tessa Kain  
*president@ms-pd.org.nz*

**Vice President:** Danielle Kennedy

**Treasurer:** Ann Morrison

**Committee:** Malcolm Rickerby, Dawn Baker,  
Ingrid Robertson, Anne-Marie Kite

**Executive Manager:** Karla Gunby, ext 8  
*manager@ms-pd.org.nz*

**Administrator:** Kirsty Boggi, ext 6  
*support@ms-pd.org.nz*

**Nurses:** Deb Ballantyne, ext, 4  
*Deb.Ballantyne@ms-pd.org.nz*  
Elspeth McKeon, ext, 3  
*Elspeth.McKeon@ms-pd.org.nz*

**Physiotherapist:** Tara Martin ext, 1  
*physio@ms-pd.org.nz*

**Exercise Coordinator:** Kim Veenings  
*exercise.class@ms-pd.org.nz*

**Social Activities Coordinator:** Lesley  
Williams, ext 9



Robin Gideon won 1st prize in our Christmas Cake raffle. Thank you to all who brought tickets, helping us to raise over \$700.

## **MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS AND PARKINSON'S CANTERBURY (INC)**

Unit 3, 49 Sir William Pickering Drive,  
Burnside, Christchurch  
P O Box 20567, Christchurch 8543  
Phone (03) 366 2857  
[www.ps-pd.org.nz](http://www.ps-pd.org.nz)