Kōrero – 29 April 2021

**Meet Judy Small, Board Chair**

**You have been Chair of the RNZFB Board since November 2020 but been on the Board since 2013. How different is being Chair of the Board from being a director?**

Being a board director, you are contributing towards decisions and when you are a Chair you are leading others so that they can contribute to decisions. I am quite a collaborative person so I spend a bit of time making sure I talk to directors of the board between meetings. So the first six months have been really good I have met lots of new people and built a lot of relationships which will be really useful.

**What have been the highlights and what do you think will be the challenges ahead?**

The highlights have been building relationships with various people and working closely with the Chief Executive and the Leadership Team to hear what they’ve got to say and work out what’s good for the organisation from a slightly distant approach. It is really important to get the governance right so the operational part becomes accountable.

**What would you like our clients to know about you?**

I’m pretty laid back. I’m a mum of three and a grandma of four. If I think about my own personal values are transparency and communication. I am happy for people to make contact via email and happy to talk to people if they need to have a conversation about something that’s bothering them.

**What would you say is one major issue for people who are blind, deafblind or have low vision?**

I would say that access to information is really important and that information is accessible for them in any format that they need.  I also think their needs to be more communication and greater awareness about what is happening in our organisation and in the disability sector as a whole.

**How would you describe your leadership style?**

Pretty collaborative and open. I try not to be judgemental and I try to ensure that the leadership style is done with people around me and not just on my own. I think good leaders have lots of good people who work with them and that’s my way of working. I like to listen to what people have to say and that helps me make my decisions.

**What do you do outside work?**

I like reading books and knitting and I don’t mind a spot of cooking because I like food. My reward at the end of a long day is to sit down for an hour read my talking books or listen to a podcast and do some knitting that’s my idea of relaxation.

**To get in touch with Judy, email Board Secretary Jane Moore** [JAMoore@blindlowvision.org.nz](mailto:JAMoore@blindlowvision.org.nz)

**People**

## **Introducing Podcast Presenter Sam Smith**

The client magazine Outlook has changed mediums and will now be a podcast – meet presenter and producer Sam Smith.

**Tell us a bit about yourself.**

I’m a married father of two boys, originally from Christchurch, but have lived in London, Nelson, Auckland, Dunedin, and Wellington. I originally worked as a dentist until I was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in 2015. In 2017 I woke up one morning with severe optic neuritis meaning I have 75% vision in my right eye, and 25% in my left. Despite that I work as a comedian and TV writer, and I do the audience warm-up for lots of shows, including 7 Days, Dancing With The Stars, The Project, and Taskmaster NZ.

**Why do you want to be the presenter of the Outlook podcast?**

I’m pretty new to the vision loss game, and I’m so keen to learn more about the community. It’s so nice to get to talk to others about it – it’s healing. I love meeting and talking to new people, and this is a great way to meet others who have gone through or are going through exactly what I’ve been through.

**What do you hope to achieve with the podcast?**

I want to take the great work that the Outlook magazine was doing and build on it. I want to create a database of episodes with topics and discussions that will be a great, comforting, and easily accessible source of information for people who have been diagnosed with vision loss. I want to show them, their support people, and everyone else that you can still do amazing things when living with vision loss.

**What would you like your listeners to know about you?**

I love music! I dabble in pretty much anything. I love to sing and play guitar, bass, keys, and drums. I want to showcase blind musicians on the podcast – so if you know anyone – of any age – please email me and we’ll get them on the show.

**What experience do you have in podcasting?**

I’ve worked in radio, produced podcasts for Radio NZ, and I co-host a rugby podcast on Rova called Currently Untitled Rugby Podcast. I love the format – it’s so free and open and it’s ideal for people with vision loss to listen to on the bus.

**Why do you think it’s important to share experiences of what it is like to be blind, deafblind or have low vision?**

It’s so important for everyone to have someone to confide in. And when that person is someone who has been through it too, they can empathize. It just makes the world a better place.

**What will you bring to your style of presenting?**

It’s going to be light-hearted and fun. We will deal with some serious topics, but in a playful way. I never want people to come away from an episode feeling like it’s been a drag – we are what we are so let’s celebrate that.

**If you have a story about vision loss, or anything related to it, email**[**podcast@blindlowvision.org.nz**](mailto:podcast@blindlowvision.org.nz)**and get in touch with Sam.**

## **Raising a glass to Puppy Raisers this International Guide Dog Day**

This International Guide Dog Day, 28 April, Blind Low Vision NZ is celebrating the essential role that Puppy Raisers play in getting guide dogs up to scratch.

Puppy Raisers are volunteers and help to develop confidence and resilience in young dogs through early socialisation and exposure to the everyday situations and environments the dog will encounter as a guide.

Sara Leavy, from Stanley Point, Auckland has been a Puppy Raiser for three years and is raising her third pup Emma. Her first two dogs Ivy and Aztec both qualified for the guide dogs programme, which is no small feat as only the best of the best dogs make it through.

She says getting the call to hear your pup has been matched is one of the best moments.

“It makes you so unbelievably happy and weepy. There were lots of smiles and celebrations in our house that day.

“To know that after all the work that’s gone into the pup – from the breeding centre, trainers, vets, boarders, as well as our patience and time – has all been worth it. That the dog will now meet their new handler and together they will be a team, exploring the world together, is an amazing feeling.”

Saying goodbye to a pup as they go off into formal training is a mixture of sadness and excitement.

Puppy raiser Sara Leavy says goodbye to Aztec as she goes off to formal training.

“I have three kids and I see the pups like my kids. I want to make them well socialised, well-mannered and then I want them to go out into the big wide world as a working adult making a difference.”

Her youngest son, who was particularly smitten with their first puppy started to research the amazing difference guide dogs have made in people’s lives.

“He would talk about a girl who had become blind at 13 years old and hadn’t left the house until she got her first guide dog at 17. Her world just opened up.

“It made him realise the positive impact a guide dog has on someone’s life and the importance of Puppy Raisers, so we are excited to hand over the pups to the training team, with crossed fingers, hoping they make it.”

Rochelle Corrigan, Blind Low Vision NZ Guide Dogs Puppy Placement and Development Manager says Puppy Raisers are essential.

“Our puppies need to have as many experiences and social outings as possible in the first year of their lives to best prepare them for life as a guide dog and this could simply not be achieved without the dedication of our fantastic volunteers.”

Blind Low Vision NZ Guide Dogs are looking for puppy raisers in Auckland, Waikato and Bay of Plenty. [**Find out more here and apply on Blind Low Vision NZ Guide Dog website.**](https://blindlowvision.org.nz/guide-dogs/volunteer/)

## **Another Amazing Puppy Appeal**

[Photograph caption: Collectors supporting Blind Low Vision NZ Guide Dogs]

Inspite of Covid-19 and lockdowns, our Fundraising team did an amazing job of pulling together this year’s Puppy Appeal. We raised more than $260,000 and counting. [Visit Blind Low Vision NZ’s website to see a regional breakdown.](https://bit.ly/3vt6Yk3)

## **Insider’s Tips:**

## **Skinny Jump - $5 per month low cost internet option**

Internet services can be expensive so we want to let you know about a low cost option that might work for you. If you your internet needs are basic i.e. you don’t stream movies or music, Skinny Jump might work for you. Skinny Jump costs just $5 a month.

[Find out more about Skinny Jump on their website.](https://www.skinny.co.nz/jump/about/)

## **In Brief**

* **Blind Low Vision NZ are finalists in the Primary Healthcare Awards**, and were chosen for their innovation during Covid-19 level 4 lockdown switching to remote working and contacting 14,000 clients to check in on their wellbeing. The award ceremony will be held on 15 May.
* Because banks will stop accepting cheques, Blind Low Vision NZ too must stop**. From the 1 May, Blind Low Vision NZ will no longer accept cheques as payment.** Contact [info@blindlowvision.org.nz](mailto:info@blindlowvision.org.nz) if you need an alternative way to pay. Some banks are offering education and training about different ways to pay. Get in touch with your provider to see if they offer this service.
* **Get eye health on the political agenda** – [sign a petition calling for a national eye health survey.](https://bit.ly/3sdfDWQ)
* **Ability Summit May 5 -6 May.** This two-day free digital event brings people with disabilities, allies, and accessibility professionals to Imagine, Build, Include, and Empower the future of disability inclusion and accessibility. [Register for ability summit.](https://bit.ly/3rdj9yY)
* One of our colleagues Josh Davies will feature in the Comedy Festival. **Check out his show *Look! I’m Blind* where he turns his experience of seeing the world into comedy.** May 11 – 15, Wellington and May 18-22, Auckland. [Buy tickets here on the Comedy Festival website.](https://bit.ly/3dV5KbB)
* Those based in Rotorua can enjoy a free concert with Jim Joll and Debbie Dorday on 10 May, 1pm – 3.30pm. RSVP by phoning Andrew Crisp on 07 345 3491 by Friday 30 April 2021.
* **Tim Bray Theatre company have audio described shows coming up in Auckland. *A Lion in the Meadow and Other Stories* is on at the Pumphouse Theatre, 13 April, 1pm and 1 May, 1pm. Call 09 489 8360 to book at the Pumphouse. It’s also on at Mangere Arts Centre, 12 May 10.30am and 15 May 1pm. Call 0800 289 849 to book at Mangere Arts Centre. Once booked, please contact Gail at Tim Bray Theatre Company to book your headset and Touch Tour 09 486 2261 or** [gail@timbray.org.nz](mailto:gail@timbray.org.nz)
* **For a list of audio described events,** [please find the attached booklet.](https://image.cloud.blindlowvision.org.nz/lib/fe4415707564057d751174/m/2/37b0fb6b-7bae-4e50-8aa3-4b0b9c229c53.docx) **This is also narrated on Blind Low Vision NZ’s Telephone Information Service, menu 668. If you would like a braille copy contact Mary Schnackenberg mary@aicomms.co.nz**

## **Noticeboard**

* Did you know that you can request Kōrero in braille? Call our contact centre on 0800 24 33 33 if you would like to receive Kōrero in this format.

**News from the RNZFB Board**

* **The next RNZFB Board meeting is scheduled for Saturday 1 May 2021.** If you would like to attend this meeting as an observer in person or by phone, please contact the Board Secretary, Jane Moore, on 09 355 6894 or email [jamoore@blindlowvision.org.nz](mailto:jamoore@blindlowvision.org.nz)

**[Job Opportunities at Blind Low Vision NZ](https://sforce.co/3gOTU4z)**

* [**Fundraising Event Coordinator,**](https://sforce.co/3tYiPXj)Permanent/Full-time, Auckland – closing 06 May.
* [**Programme Manager,**](https://sforce.co/32V4Dm4) Permanent/Full-time, Auckland – closing 06 May.
* [**Legacy Development Manager,**](https://sforce.co/32TYCG7) Permanent/Full-time, Auckland – closing 21 May.
* [**Community and Events Campaign Coordinator,**](https://sforce.co/3nua0BP) Permanent/Full-time, Auckland – closing 06 May.

## **Ka kite ano**

I have very much enjoyed working closely with RNZFB Board Chair Judy Small and hope the lead story of this edition of Kōrero will give you a bit more insight into her leadership. I am also very proud that Blind Low Vision NZ are finalists in the Primary Healthcare Awards and wish to acknowledge the team for their innovation during the pandemic - **John Mulka, Blind Low Vision NZ Chief Executive.**

Please let us know what you think of Kōrero. We welcome suggestions for what you would like us to include, and of course any tips or stories you would like to share with the community. Get in touch on 0800 24 33 33 or via [communications@blindlowvision.org.nz](mailto:communications@blindlowvision.org.nz).