

~ NEWTOWN NEWS ~

Your free community zine, for Newtown, by Newtowners



Brought to you by the Newtown Community & Cultural Centre

FRIENDSHIP *ed.*

~ Kia ora Newtown ~

This edition of the Newtown News is about friendship, celebrating **International Friendship Day** on 30th Hōngongoi / July. This might not be a day you've heard of before - to be honest, I hadn't - but I love the idea!

My friends have been super important for me recently - it's been a bit hard to readjust to 'real life' since lockdown, and I'm finding myself a little more anxious than usual in big social situations. So because of that I've been making more of an effort to hang out with friends one-on-one and check in with them. I've also been contacting my friends overseas who are still struggling with the huge effects of Covid on their communities and lives.

Coming up this month is Matariki, the real new year of Aotearoa. I'm hoping with the rising stars, we will also see some rising change - like the societal changes called for by the Black Lives Matter movement or the Tino Rangatiratanga (Māori sovereignty) movement. As Claudia says on our ātaahua / beautiful cover image, "the future is us". To me this could mean the future is friendship, and the changes that we can make together with mutual love, respect and support.

So heaps love to you, my friend. Pass it on!

Ngā mihi,

Ellie - ellie@newtowncommunity.org.nz

Cover art: by the VERY talented Claudia Palmer, who was inspired by the power that we have to make change and the friendship that supports us to do it.

Thanks for the support of our amazing local businesses! Please support them back if you can!



The views and opinions expressed in this publication are solely those of the original authors and other contributors. They do not necessarily reflect those of the Newtown Community & Cultural Centre.

Notorious NEWTowner

Ellie and Merio met at the Berhampore Centennial Community Centre (BCCC) where Merio works in the heart of the community.

*~ He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata, he tangata, he tangata ~
What is the most important thing in the world? It is the people, it is the people, it is the people*

If I didn't have space for anything else on this page, this whakataukī / proverb is how I would sum up Merio Marsters, and her approach to life. She is a community queen, with people and community at the heart of everything she does.



Merio is New Zealand born Cook Island Māori Tahitian with British heritage. She's a Newtowner, initially by accident 'I was heading for Christchurch from Auckland 26 years ago, but the ocean was in the way!' but now by choice 'I've never strayed from Newtown long enough to not be a south-sider. I love it here.' Her life and experiences have shaped her into the loving and giving person she is. She's experienced homelessness, twice with children; discrimination; brought herself out of debt and is a single mum of 7 children, plus 5 whāngai/foster children - personal experiences which have clearly contributed to her empathy and also levelled-up her skills in advocacy when supporting others.

Her love for the people and the community spans from high-level, serving two terms on WCC Pacific Advisory group; her mahi managing the community centre has connected and supported many communities within Berhampore; helping families in need or picking up strangers she sees waiting in the rain for the bus or walking; to buying a rough sleeper new to Newtown streets a hot pie and a conversation with support agencies in mind. She believes that people hold the power to make changes and to make a difference in someone else's life: All of our actions and behaviour impacts this. So she doesn't hesitate to support someone doing it tough, or to get behind a worthy cause. When we meet she's wearing a 'Protect Ihumātao' hoodie and when we talk about the recent correction to the naming of Te Wharepouri Street in Berhampore, she tells me 'NZ has a history of its indigenous people and its land, it needs to be acknowledged and respected...I say, 'bring on the decolonisation!' It will be interesting.'

Her fave spots in Newtown are any park benches where she can sit in the sunshine and watch the world - the community - go by. When she's not working (which she is a LOT), Merio loves to listen to music 'it brings me back to reality!', be with my kids and for self-care, a weekend trip out of Wellington helps to normalise. Merio's message to Newtown is: 'Stay happy, smiles are contagious, hugs are free and be kind - I've been saying that much longer than the PM!'

A circular embroidery hoop containing a portrait of a Black woman with short, dark, curly hair, wearing large gold hoop earrings and a red, textured scarf. She is holding a white sign that reads '#BLACK LIVES MATTER'. The background of the embroidery is white fabric. The entire image is set against a black background with the words 'BLACK LIVES MATTER' repeated in white capital letters.

Embroidery by Mirella Moschello: [instagram.com/mira_a_mire](https://www.instagram.com/mira_a_mire)

~ Serious Happiness ~

~ By Stu Morris ~



Stuzy

Artist and musician Stu Morris recently moved to Newtown from Taranaki. Welcome to Newtown, Stu! Stu plays music in rock band Serious Happiness with three friends & does art and t-shirt design independently. "It's a great balance to work on my art from home and to collaborate with my band mates to create music." Check out Stu's art on Instagram @stuzy__ & Serious Happiness choonz on Youtube/Spotify.

~ Friendship in the Bad Lands ~

~ By Anna Persson ~

A couple of evenings on from waking up in a gas station in South Dakota, I found myself clinging to my best friend as a storm passed over us and our stealthy camp in the Badlands National Park. Our tent was \$20 from someone on the internet and almost as old as we were. Rumour had it, it had seen dozens of National Parks in a handful of continents. That night, we had no choice but to wait out the storm. The tent shook violently in the wind as the thunderclaps grew louder than our voices and every three seconds the nylon blue fabric keeping us warm and dry from the storm would flash, vibrantly illuminated by lightning strikes above. At that moment, there wasn't much to do but read Kerouac's, 'On the Road' on my kindle and take solace in having someone to read it aloud to.

We were barely three days in when we survived that storm, with more to follow. Less than a week later we were at a gas station, two hours out of Yellowstone, reeling in the ick of an almost laughably sketchy hitch we'd just had. Furthermore, it turned out that our plan to wild camp in the National Park would be thwarted by the thriving bear population. We had nowhere to stay that night and were done with hitchhiking for the day.



We rested on our packs in the shade, eating pickles, gazing in contented wonderment at the mountain range, and wide skies ahead. All whilst listening to terrifically bad country music that the gas station was blaring about tractors, no joke. We were there for several hours. Just waiting, resting, and enjoying being there. We laughed, singing ridiculous covers on the ukulele. And when a kind stranger offered us a place to stay in the end, we said yes, although we'd already made peace with sleeping at another gas station.

For me, friendship is finding those gems of humans with whom you can shine authentically. Who are overjoyed when you suggest a cross-country, hitchhiking road trip and drop everything to make it a reality. Who help bring out your best, but are chill with you at your worst. Who you can sit with (or cower in a tent with) when things haven't gone entirely to plan and still be having the time of your life. It's one of the best feelings I know.

Anna has an exhibition of her photography from this trip coming up at Black Coffee during July! Go check it out!

~ To Tali, my first Aotearoa friend ~

~ From Srishti Moudgil ~

When I moved to Aotearoa
With fantasies of living in an island
Of *long white cloud*, *Tūi*, and *Pōhutukawa*
I drifted away from my
Lingual comfort zone
Born afresh leaving all impressions, concepts
In this heaven where people
Blossom with trees and cows

As I set my curiosity
On the streets of Auckland
A stranger smiling at my
Frenzy walk,
Sensing my naivety
She politely captured me into her ecstasy
Through conversations of kai, local slangs
Of Auckland and Wellington

With crazy stories of weather
Yet walking me through
The wind and rain

Inspiring me to embrace the
Discomfort of unfamiliar
Places, streets, cultures, and names
By taking me to her favorite spots
Around the city and long drives

Opening my mind
To the real beauty of Aotearoa
Beyond bars and Friday nights
She connected me to
The wairua of this whenua
While we breathe in different cities now,
Our friendship continues to
Uplift my mana

Sending her Aroha
from Wellington to Auckland
For making Aotearoa my home,
just like hers!

Arohanui e hoa

Be in to win
a
\$50 New World
Voucher!



smart•newtown

We want to know what you think!

bit.ly/smart-newtown-survey

Smart Newtown is our free computer hub in the heart of Newtown.
Whether you're a regular user or you've never been before, please help us
out by filling in this survey!

~ What's the Happs? ~

~ At Newtown Community & Cultural Centre ~

~ Corner of Rintoul & Colombo Streets ~

Join our team! We're hiring a new Kaimahi Taiohi / Youth Worker to support Newtown tamariki and rangatahi (aged 5-24). Young Newtowners and Māori, Pasifika and refugee-background candidates are particularly encouraged to apply. Could this be you? Check out the job description here: bit.ly/2BC6PEC

Snow White and the Curse of the Mirror - Saturday 11th July, 4pm

The Garden of the Shadows presents a shadow puppet adaptation of this classic tale! The adventures of Snow White and the Dwarfs escaping the evil queen are brought to life in this unique style of theatre. Come with the family! Koha entry. More on Facebook here: bit.ly/3eAtBeA

Pōneke Grief Support fortnightly Mondays 7-8.30pm 13th and 27th July

A fortnightly grief support group for sharing experiences of grief & death — search 'Pōneke Grief Support' Facebook group for more details

Wash Against Waste kit upgrade - tell us what you want!

Our Wash Against Waste Kit is a resource of cutlery, crockery & cloth napkins that can be borrowed by the public, aiming to decrease throwaway plastic at events, reducing waste to landfill. If you've hired the kit before, or would be interested to - please fill out this 3 minute survey to help us upgrade it to be lighter, faster, safer, and easier to use: bit.ly/surveywaw

Newtown Tool Library: call for tool donations

We're excited to be moving into our new purpose built space soon (Thanks Council!). We need a few items to make the space safe and cosy & we'd love to increase our tool collection. PLEASE check out our wish list: bit.ly/NTLwishlist To join the library, go to: bit.ly/31jvDfs

~ At SMART Newtown ~

~ 9 Constable Street ~

Free IT Help Desk: Need one-on-one support with computer or internet issues!? Having trouble transferring files from a USB stick? Can't figure out how to log into Facebook!? Want to make sure your computer has no viruses? Or need a bit of support installing some new software – come and see the friendly and knowledgeable team anytime during general opening hours! They're happy to help you. www.smartnewtown.org.nz

Free Cyber Security Workshop Monday 13th July & Monday 20th July, 6-8pm Two workshops to help you to be safe online, understand computer threats e.g. malware, viruses, bots and Trojans, help you identify online scams, shop safely online and know how to safely transfer information. All you need is basic computer & internet skills. Register by calling 04 3800 143 or filling out the registration form bit.ly/2Vuwl4V

~ Get in touch ~

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