

Paengawhāwhā / April 2023

Tō koutou makahini hapori: mō Newtown. nā ngā tāngata o Newtown / Your community zine: for Newtown. by Newtowners

Nā te Whare Hapori o Newtown / Brought to you by the Newtown Community Centre



International Moment of Laughter Day

Kia ora Newtown

Kia ora e hoa mā,

I feel a bit emotional as I write this, because it's my LAST Newtown News for a whole year - as I'm jetting off on sabbatical to visit whānau and friends in Australia and Europe in May. While I know it will be a great time of rest and reconnecting, it's also hard as I'm leaving a bunch of things that I love - my wonderful friends (arghhhhhhhhhhhhhh gonna miss 'em so much), the ocean (you can't snorkel in London booooo), hanging in Newtown, the fancy new community centre that we've been working towards for many years, my rad colleagues and this job that I love. It does also come at a tricky time for the community centre team (SORRY ERYN AND LINDA!!!), because they're in the midst of moving and setting up in the new community centre - arghhh!!! (you can read more about this in the 'upgrade update' later on). There even won't be a May edition of the News as we haven't had a chance to finish recruitment for my role yet hahahaha (this is a stress laugh).

So, with some big feels for me and some big stress for the community centre whānau, I feel this a good time for a 'Moment of Laughter', which just so happens to be the theme of this issue. Having a laugh has been SCIENTIFICALLY PROVEN (probably, I'm not googling it for references) to make life a little smidge easier. So I'll share with you a joke that made me crack up when my friend Ash (6 and a half) told me it:

"Knock knock", "Who's there?", "Mr Face!", "Mr Face who?", "THERE'S NO PIG IN THE BARN" (this part needs to be shouted and you should be nowhere near a barn at the time or else you'll ruin the joke.) And well, if that's not funny enough for you, I recommend taking some cues from Rowena or Eryn in this issue and try the playful parenting tips or improv, OR check out the library's comedy review! Whatever you do, I recommend having a laugh. it'll make your day better (again, probably, I'm not a freaking doctor). I've had so many laughs over the last nearly 5 years at the centre (in amongst the stressful bits haha) and I look forward to many more when I return.

Thanks for reading. Big love to you all, Newtown, hopefully catch ya in a year.
Ngā mihi, Ellie - ellie@newtowncommunity.org.nz

Cover art by Ye Liu, aka Smart Hedgehog Art!

Check out more awesome illustrations here: [instagram.com/smart.hedgehog.art](https://www.instagram.com/smart.hedgehog.art)

Thanks for the support of our amazing local businesses! Please support 'em back!



ELYSIUM

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Notorious NewtownER

Ellie had a kōrero and some laughs with Eryn - co-manager of the community centre - in the chaos of the not-quite-complete renovations, surrounded by moving boxes.

This is my last 'Notorious Newtowner' for a year (as I go on a year long overseas break this month), so it feels extra special that this interview is with my no 1 fave Newtowner, my co-kaiwhakahaere and absolutely crackup community queen, Eryn Gribble!

Eryn is a farm gal at heart, having grown up just out of Kirikiriroa, competing in best goat competitions (I've seen the videos), and she's been keen to get back to living with animals ever since! She's been sidetracked here to Te Whanganui-a-Tara because of the "creative spirit" though (lucky for us!), and has always gravitated to Newtown, living about 13 years in the 'burb on and off (but mostly on) "anytime I didn't live here, I had tried to - Newtown's where it's at!" Here in the big city, she has to get her goat-hit by sending goat memes or videos to me when we need a laugh in the office - or by heading out to Staglands with mates. Having done heaps of work in community arts, Eryn eventually landed this job at our very own community centre in 2016 - "I love this job because it connects me with a whole range of different people, from outside of my bubble."



I reckon Eryn should be so proud of her mahi at the community centre - as well as smashing the day to day work, some highlights have been having the idea for and coordinating the creative extravaganza that was Art Jam (an epic community art party for the closure of the community centre pre-renos - if you missed it, I'm sorry for you, but you can check out the vid here! bit.ly/39Fexys); being a key part of giving Newtowners an opportunity to stand together, just a few days after the March 15th terror attack; organising Zoom gigs from her basement for the community during lockdown; and generally just being an awesome, community minded, caring human, connecting with people on a very real level - she loves "getting to know people and seeing their journeys."

Laughter and fun are key values for Eryn - she surrounds herself with community that provides the lols - I'll often hear stories about her hiding increasingly giant marrows in a friend's house to prank them (tho I hear the marrow feud is now over, phew!), or recording faux serious news videos in hectic situations to make her friends laugh. Improv - a fun cooperative theatre style where you riff off of your fellow actors, often resulting in hilarious outcomes - has become a part of her life in the last couple of years. "it's a transformative art-form and learning tool, as well as an opportunity to be silly and laugh a lot." She's such a creative human "always trying my hand at something new" - including zine making and stained glass over the last couple of years. She loves festivals, keeping up with the news, cooking "for fun, not as a chore", and is "actively working on the future that I want for myself which involves a goat and a pig and my deep yearning desire to get my hands back in the mud."

I know she can live that dream! Until then, make sure to head along to the renovated community centre (when it opens!!!!) and say kia ora - or jut send her a cute goat video immediately (eryn@newtowncommunity.org.nz - go on, do it.)

Playful, silly, irreverent Parenting



By Rowena Tun

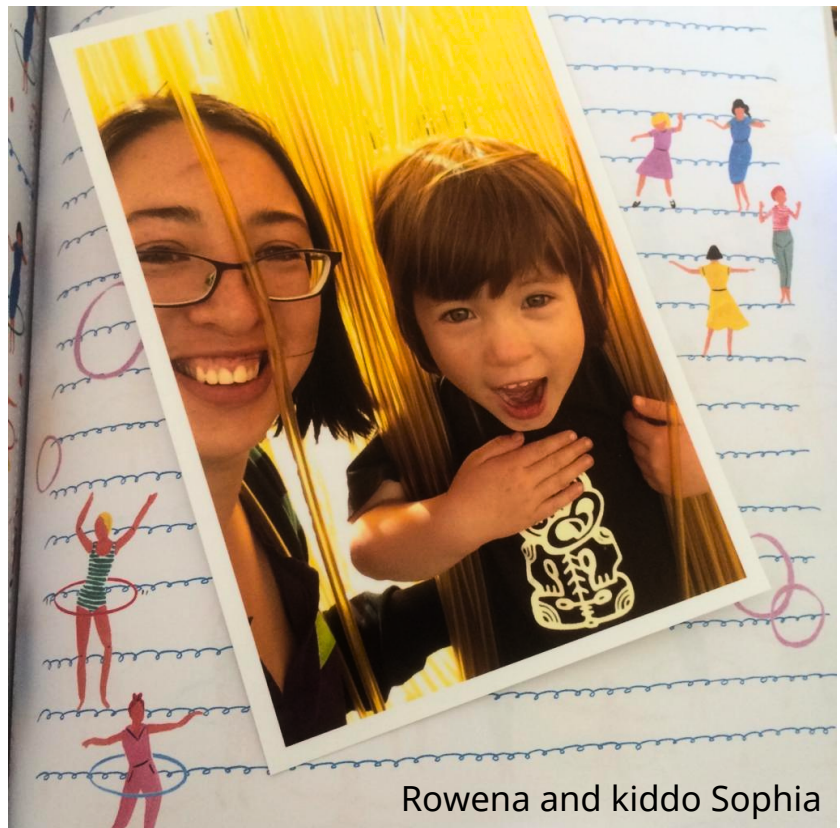
Local Rowena Tun - who also coordinates our very own Wellington Timebank (check it out at wellingtontimebank.org.nz) - tells us about the power of play!

Parenting is a tough gig. The punters aren't easily pleased. Not only are you expected to provide the entertainment but you are also the catering, the cleaner, the management and the maintenance crew. Plus you get stuck with ALL the shifts all the time, it's a 24hr/7 day a week contract and the pay... well let's just say it's peanuts and you work with monkeys...

I had zero experience with kids. I had never been a babysitter. My siblings live overseas so I had never held a baby or changed a nappy... it was....um...a learning curve...

When my kid was little I got accepted into a 'secret' facebook group 'Mummies for Life'. It was a lifeline in a sleep deprived, humourless situation. A source of reassurance and information. A local mum recommended the book 'Playful Parenting', and there I discovered the art of silliness. A powerful way to gain the cooperation of your very small and very authoritarian boss.

Psychologist authors of 'The Neurobiology of Attachment-Focused Therapy', explain that play helps the prefrontal cortex develop. This bit of your brain is the home of executive functioning, social skills, impulse control, creativity and joy... I don't know about you, but I think we could all use more of all those things!



Rowena and kiddo Sophia

(continued on next page)

Parenting is hard work. Play is a way to be close, play is love, play is stress relief, play is a way to reconnect after the closeness has been severed. While it may take more energy at first, playful parenting is more effective, and rewarding, in the long run. Some ideas:

- Use silly voices. "What sound does your socks make?" could be a 'leaving the house battle' diffuser
- Sing songs; Anika Moa, Fun & Funner, They Might Be Giants and Parry Grip are all great
- Start off with playful rumbles (we have kitten cuddlepuddles most days)
- Brush your kids teeth to a silly song
- At bedtime bunny hop or caterpillar crawl to bed
- Use your imagination, have fun
- Don't take yourself too seriously!

In summary, the sillier, more playful and irreverent your parenting, the more likely you will survive and even thrive doing time with small people and their big feelings. Play is a powerful healer. Play is really good for your (and your kid's) wellbeing and health. And in the words of Lawrence Cohen: 'children don't say "I had a hard day, can we talk?" They say "Will you play with me?"'



A couple came into the community centre with two plastic containers of delish looking cake one Friday a few months ago. One of them offered us the cake and said "It was my birthday yesterday and my partner made me a cake. It's delicious but we're only two people - we can't finish all of it, so we wanted to share with the community!"

We put the cake out for everyone during our Free Soup Friday and it was all eaten up, with great enjoyment! It's nice to share and this made us smile.



Upgrade update...it's chaos!

The building work at the main community centre (on the corner of Colombo & Rintoul Streets!) is oh so neaaaaaaaaaaaaaaarly done! We can almost taste the end of this project! That being said, we're not quite ready to open yet - we're hoping to be open sometime in May. We're currently camped out in a building site as we no longer have our lease at the temporary centre on Green Street (bye Green Street neighbours, thanks for being awesome!)

Before we can open up at the new centre, we need to have a whakatau / blessing from mana whenua to start off right in our new space. Then - as the building has been almost completely gutted and designed new from scratch - all our old health and safety plans all need updating (yes, I know, yawn, but we're keen for you all to be healthy and safe when you come and visit us!), new alarm systems need installing, we need to get our new furniture delivered & find places for it, we need to develop new booking systems for the new spaces (including our new high-tech theatre!!), the theatre is still being installed, plus a few last touch-ups are happening to the build.

So basically we don't know yet when we'll be open for you to come and have a nosy yet, but keep an eye on our Facebook for updates!



L - chaos!
the
entrance
way full of
new
furniture &
so many
plants!

R - more chaos! The team still working on the theatre.



History Files

By Chris Rabey - sourced from the Minutes Books of the Wellington City Council, held at City Archives

Up an alley in Riddiford Street by where the Medical Centre was, there was cast iron kerbing studded with diamonds. When horses and carts turned corners and touched the kerbing, it prevented them from slipping. This type of kerbing was also used on Hall Street.

Laughs from the library!

Branching out from their usual book reviews, Newtown Librarian Riah Tahana-Dawson reviewed crackup local comedian Courtney Dawson (who just so happens to be Riah's sister). Perfect for this 'moment of laughter' Newtown News!

Courtney Dawson is my favorite Māori comedian making content right now. Full disclosure: she is my older sister. But, that should mean even more. I have every right to slander her performance, cut her jokes down with a fast, biting criticism I have to give her. All because she IS my sister. I have the right to do that, but I can't. As much as I want to, I find myself streaming her content over and over trying to find fault in delivery and in her jokes like some kind of critical detective.

She is funny, witty, her laughter, her humor is warm and inviting - familiar, like an old friend at a party telling a story. She knows the bits. The parts to pause. Where to let the audience laugh even when uncomfortable - she hits uncomfortable topics like racism in New Zealand, being a Maori woman, being a single mother - but she does it with comfort and warmth, letting the audience to her life. It's okay to laugh, you're among friends here she promises.

Get your moment of laughter by watching Courtney's stand up / content here:

- The Spinoff's FIRST segment: bit.ly/3JViP3w
- Courtney's episode of "Laughs Unleashed" - bit.ly/3G35Vzn





What's the Happs?

Newtown Hall
(71 Daniell Street)

Dances of Mexico - introductory workshop - every Fridays in April & May (except April 14th), 6-7.30pm

Want to get into dance? Learn some moves and get dancing with Olin Yolitzli (who you might have spotted on the Community Stage at Newtown Festival!). Entry by donation! More info: bit.ly/40KHsGQ

Elsewhere in Newtown

Pet zines - school holidays at Newtown Library! 21st April, 2-3pm

Tamariki - bring along some pics of your pet (or just draw some!!) to make a zine about how paw-fect they are bit.ly/3TU3SDr

Crop Swap - 22nd April, 10.30-12

Bring along your excess feijoa to swap for someone else's silverbeet! or just bring yourself to share kai & kōrero with this friendly community bit.ly/3nIcLUk

Smart Newtown
(9-11 Constable Street)

Justice of the Peace (JP) services are at Smart Newtown while the community centre is not yet open! 10.30 - 12.30 Monday - Thursday only.

Smart Newtown
(9-11 Constable Street)

Need some help with technology? Check out these **FREE** computer and smart phone classes over April and May! There are two time-slots per workshop, so for each topic you have the option of either a Monday evening class from 5.15-7.45pm or a Friday morning, 10am to 12.30pm.

- COMPUTER BASICS, April 3rd & 7th - for total computer beginners!
- INTRO TO SMARTPHONES, April 10th and 14th - bring your smart phone for an intro for beginners!
- SMARTPHONES - INTRO TO APPS, April 17th and 21st - Smartphones have heaps of different apps - get some help on how to use them.
- INTRO TO SPREADSHEETS - April 24th and 28th - learn how to use Excel spreadsheets for beginners.

There are a whole load of courses in May as well - contact Smart Newtown on 04 380 0143 to register for any of the above or to find out more. Or check them out online at bit.ly/40PY6ES

Get in touch