

Welcome to the corps!

From the NZRT

The North Wellington Community Resilience Corps is now up and running, with 17 volunteer members signed on.

With it comes a new publication that eventually will carry news and events to all citizens living in the Greater Newlands area.

The newsletter's name – Esprit de Corps – is significant as it represents not only the Community Resilience Corps, but also a critical attribute of community resilience.

Esprit de Corps, when discussing the morale of a group, is an intangible term used for the capacity of people to maintain belief in an institution or a goal, or even in oneself and others.

The term applies to any other organisational context, particularly in times of stress or controversy.

According to Alexander H. Leighton, it is the "capacity of a

group of people to pull together persistently and consistently in pursuit of a common purpose".

This really sums up what the North Wellington Resilience Trust is aiming to achieve. The Trust was formed from collaboration between the Newlands Paparangi Residents' Association, the Grenada Village Residents' Association, and the New Zealand Resilience Trust.

Trust Chairperson, Reg McLean, says the organisation aims to build on an already strong community, by better using local resources, helping improve communication between groups, and giving communities a reminder that they can take charge of their own destinies.

Activity has already started for the year with a course on Disaster Preparedness just completed at the Newlands College Community Learning Centre. More advanced courses are planned for the second half of 2008. If you are interested in more information, visit the Trust's website: www.nzrt.org.nz/nwrt or contact via email: nwrt@nzrt.org.nz.



The combined Trustees of the North Wellington- and New Zealand Resilience Trusts. From left to right: Jim Candiliotis, Jarrod Coburn, Heather Cotton, Dave Mason, Bruce Patterson, and Vryn Evans. Absent: Reg McLean.

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New tricks learned

A very pleased tutor wants to pay homage to 15 wonderful adult learners who recently completed the Introduction to Disasters and Emergencies course.

The course, held at and supported by Newlands College Community Learning Centre, originally attracted 20 participants, although five dropped off due to unexpected events – ironic considering the course subject.

This course is the first of three parts of the Certificate in Resilience, offered by the NZ Resilience Trust. There has already been a high level of interest for more advanced courses to be run, and the Trust is looking at delivering level two courses in the second half of 2008.

Adult learners from this course and the one being held in May will be presented their certificates at a graduation ceremony, by a special guest.

All courses are free, and further information is available from calling Newlands College on (04) 474 1330.

Certificate in Resiliency

- Part One: Introduction to Disasters and Emergencies
- Part Two: Preparedness (Individual, Community, or Organisation)
- Part Three: Resilience (Individual, Community, or Organisation)

- Learn, meet new friends, get better prepared, with these great adult learning options
- **Courses are free**
- Visit www.nzrt.org.nz for course information and timetables



Hot Topic

Housing

The media is reporting that the housing market might slump. Consider the added value of owning a house in a geologically safe place such as Newlands, Paparangi, Woodridge, Horokiwi, or Grenada Village.

OPINION

JARROD COBURN

Some people are just Busting to help, and it makes a difference too.

Something happened last month that brought smile to my face and set me up for a great day.

It happened on the bus to work. We have a bus service to be proud of. The buses are green because that is the colour of envy, the envy of people who have to use the other bus services in this city!

At the bottom of Newlands Road there is a bus stop used frequently by people staying at the motor lodge. An older couple got on board. The lady sat down at the front, but there was only one seat and an Indian lady quickly stood up to offer the gentleman her seat, so he could sit opposite his wife. How kind!

The offer was refused, and the man walked toward the end of the bus. Quick as a flash a young lady stood and insisted the older man take her seat.

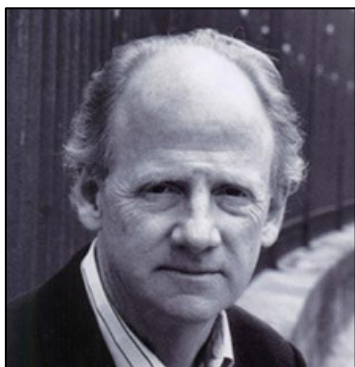
I think the man was flabbergasted. Where else in New Zealand would you find people who care enough to give a complete stranger their seat on a busy bus?

Ladies, your kindness meant a lot to those visitors I'm sure, but it also made a lot of fellow passengers very proud. Well done!

Quote

"The passivity that runs through our society today, the furious passivity that one feels in our society today, is, in effect, the result of a division into structures which make it very difficult for this highly sophisticated and educated society – for the citizen – to be active without being punished."

John Ralston Saul



What is resilience?

Let's take an imaginary journey, and on the way find out what resilience really means.

Imagine six people who have met for the first time. If it was important that these six people get to know, trust, and respect, each other we might send them on a journey together. Let's say they start at one side of an imaginary woodland and travel through to the other side.

We could send them off with the hope that on the way they'll form a bond through overcoming adversity and celebrating achievements. But there's a danger that they will fight, form cliques, or simply refuse to cooperate.

To make absolutely sure they have the best chance possible to succeed we send a Guide along with them: a background entity that gives encouragement and advice from time to time.

The Guide anticipates the problems ahead and clears the path, or at least highlights any hazards. It talks to the other woodland inhabitants and paves

Attributes of Resilience

Strong and clear communication amongst many groups.



A feeling of safety and security.

Respect for one-another, and for one's environment.

Self-awareness, self-reliance, and confidence.

Active participation in democracy.



The ability to react calmly and rationally.

Pride and a sense of place.

No tolerance of petty crime.

A well-understood common vision.



Neighbours trusting neighbours.

the way for the six to achieve their goal safely. The result is a group of people who achieve their goal and are confident working with each other in future – come what may.

This, metaphorically, is the approach the NWRT takes to building resilience among communities.

Community resilience is the ability of that group of people to 'bounce-back' from an adverse experience. An adverse experience could be anything that causes harm to the community, or a part of the community: A group of young children killed on a pedestrian crossing, a large local employer closing down, a spate of teen suicides, or a major earthquake or other disaster.

Communities that exhibit **attributes of resilience** are more likely to be supportive, considerate, and generous toward its members. In that environment even when things turn bad there is light at the end of the tunnel, with the knowledge that the community can and will 'bounce back'.

Report: Big plans for 2008

This is a big year for the North Wellington Resilience Trust, as they forge ahead with an ambitious strategic plan. Community Education and Research are two of the main focuses, but the Trustees are well aware that it is the little things that often matter to communities, as this article explains.

Jim, Vryn, Bruce, Reg, and Jarrod all live in your community, and they want to find out more about you.

These are the Trustees of the North Wellington Resilience Trust. Their mission this year is "to meet as many people as we can."

Building up community resilience is not a small task... actually it's lots and lots of small tasks. Says Trust Secretary Bruce Patterson "every time I meet a person in my community I am building resilience".

"Some of the most important things seem trivial to people who don't live in the community," says Trustee Jim Candiliotis, "But what you've got to remember is that people anchor their way of life to things that are familiar to them. You have to have respect for what people are used to."

This is a big year for the Trust as they grow their community support based – the North

Wellington Resilience Corps – from scratch. Treasurer Vryn Evans was one of the first to join up and is confident the target of 500 members can be met by the end of the year.

The Trust's approach is unique: instead of focusing on a particular area or problem, they look at building community resilience in a holistic sense. This is achieved through good networking and utilising resources that already exist within the area.

This is why the Corps is such an important part of the Trust's strategic plan. Having a loosely-defined pool of enthusiastic people on hand is much more flexible than multiple 'silos' of dedicated volunteers.

A great example is Civil Defence. Volunteers tirelessly turn up to meetings, undertake training, and eventually become disillusioned and stop

participating. Why? Because there is **nothing to do!**

The Trust's approach is to encourage people to volunteer when and how they want. It might be teaching first aid one month, then on a community patrol the next.

It's a little thing – but it's the little things that matter most.

Love is...



...having each other to hold onto if a real crisis strikes.