

Media Statement
For immediate release

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Do you know your neighbours?

That's the question Community Development Worker Rebecca Harrington, Takapuna Community Coordinator Jamie Adkins, and Albany Community Coordinator Robynne Pringle are asking North Shore residents.

The 'Know Your Neighbours Project' is about encouraging people to get to know the people in their local communities. "Knowing the people who live around us is a vital and beneficial part of living in a healthy neighbourhood," says Mrs Harrington (Takapuna Methodist Church and LIFEWISE).

The project is a positive approach to many concerns being voiced on the North Shore lately, such as general support for families, increasing financial hardship, and isolation of people with disabilities; support for older people, and migrants.

"Our neighbourhoods are great sources of social and material resources that we can tap into, if we get to know each other better," Mrs Harrington comments.

"The initiative isn't about solving specific problems – it's about getting back to the basics of supporting the people who live around us, which helps to prevent problems in the first place".

During the first few weeks of the term three, around 2000 homes in the Sunnynook area will receive a brochure, titled "Do you know your neighbours?" - with their Sunnynook Community Centre Newsletter. The brochure is sponsored by local business, Ray White Sunnynook and includes a thought-provoking 'Neighbours Quiz'.

"We wanted a fun way to encourage people to question how well they know their neighbours" says Mr Adkins. Also featured are '10 easy ideas' for how neighbours can get to know each other better.

"We received valuable input about the brochure from a migrants' conversation group held at the Sunnynook Community Centre", says Mrs Harrington.

"Some of the group members said that they didn't know whether it was part of 'Kiwi culture' to talk with their neighbours so we hope this resource will help encourage more neighbourhood interaction".

Other approaches, such as door knocking in particular streets, are being piloted in the Albany area. "The Albany community is rapidly developing yet has little or no neighbourhood connection in some areas," says Ms Pringle.

The project welcomes response from keen residents who want to help their neighbourhoods get connected. Please contact Rebecca Harrington on (09) 489-4584.

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