

Neighbours Day 2009

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LIFEWISE announces launch of Neighbours Day 2009 TURNING STREETS INTO NEIGHBOURHOODS Saturday 17 October – mark it in your diary!

To build a healthier Auckland, we need to look out for each other more than we do.

LIFEWISE, with the support of lots of organisations across Tamaki Makaurau, is taking the lead and encouraging all Aucklanders to mark a day on their calendar to knock on doors or lean over the fence and get to know their neighbours better. Saturday, 17th of October will be Auckland's first official Neighbours Day, a celebration of neighbourliness and what LIFEWISE hopes will herald the creation of more supportive, healthy and connected neighbourhoods across Auckland.

LIFEWISE Community Services General Manager John McCarthy says "The UK, Europe and Australia have nurtured neighbourliness through initiatives similar to Neighbours Day, so we decided to build on the success of our work in the community and encourage all Aucklanders to start with one action on one day to foster friendships in their street. Strong connections between neighbours create opportunities to make our neighbourhoods healthier, safer and more fun places to live."

John says the philosophy of Neighbours Day is simple: "We believe the creation of a special day to recognise the folks we live next door to will help strengthen and connect neighbourhoods across Auckland. Things like sharing a cuppa or hosting a neighbourhood barbie are easy ways to get the ball rolling. Kiwis are renowned for their hospitality, so we know this day will spark some great neighbourhood connections."

LIFEWISE is not organising a big event for Neighbours Day. Rather, LIFEWISE is promoting the importance of neighbours, inspiring people to take the first steps and working with other groups to encourage people to get involved. LIFEWISE has created a special website offering useful resources to help Aucklanders start the fun.

The website provides fun ideas for people to help people connect with others on their street. At www.neighboursday.org.nz you'll find:

- Why Neighbours Day is important – looking out for each other
- What you can do – great ideas showing how you can take part and tools to help you
- A section about the proven benefits of knowing your neighbours
- Snapshots of fun activities and initiatives that neighbourly Aucklanders are doing
- Our special Neighbours' Quiz
- And check out our celebrity neighbourhood memories!

Working Together

Organisations throughout Auckland are getting behind Neighbours Day, encouraging people to get involved. These include: Community Waitakere Charitable Trust, Inspiring Communities, Ka Mau Te Wero Charitable Trust, Manurewa Pacific Leaders Forum, Otara Health, Raeburn House, Takapuna Community Facilities Trust and Takapuna Methodist Church.

Did you know?

Eighty one per cent of Aucklanders are interested in getting to know their neighbours better*. More and more community leaders and politicians are lauding the value of strong and healthy neighbourhoods where people know one another and give each other support. However according to this year's ASB TopSpots *Quality of Life Report***, the Auckland region is not doing as well as it could. Together we can change this!

Streets into Neighbourhoods

For the last two years, LIFEWISE Community Development Worker Rebecca Harrington has been knocking on North Shore doors, and, street by street, helped residents recognise the benefits and value of knowing their neighbours. Rebecca has helped with numerous street and neighbourhood activities and gatherings with remarkable success, and the connections between neighbours in the areas she has been working in have been greatly strengthened. Rebecca says proudly "The ripple effect is that streets are becoming stronger neighbourhoods – it's exciting!"

* Colmar Brunton, 'State of our Neighbourhoods' Research, for Neighbourhood Support and Nestlé, April 2008

** ASB TopSpots *Quality of Life Report* commissioned by 12 participating city and district Councils from across the country

Some great ideas for you to do on Auckland's first Neighbours Day:

- *Say hi or kia ora to five people today*
- *Bake a batch of cupcakes and invite your neighbours and their children over*
- *Dig up your spring baby potatoes and give them to a neighbour*
- *Mow the grass verge all the way across your neighbour's frontage as well as yours*
- *Take your neighbour's dog for a walk*
- *Host a themed, shared meal for your neighbours*
- *Make special note cards and exchange phone numbers for emergencies – and parties!*
- *Think big and organise a street BBQ or street party!*

Info for Editors:

LIFEWISE believes Neighbours Day should be a national initiative and will be working with various organisations to make this happen from 2010.

LIFEWISE acknowledges the involvement of community groups across Auckland, including Inspiring Communities, Ka Mau Te Wero Charitable Trust, Manurewa Pacific Leaders Forum, Otara Health, Raeburn House and Takapuna Methodist Church.

LIFEWISE was previously known as the Methodist Mission Northern, and is one of Auckland's oldest and largest charities. Established in 1851, LIFEWISE has provided significant social services to Auckland's homeless and marginalised, to families in need, and the elderly for over 150 years.

LIFEWISE has been able to create Auckland's first Neighbours Day thanks to various committed staff and volunteers, and with the valued support of The Warehouse and the New Zealand Herald.

For further information on Neighbours Day and LIFEWISE, or for an interview with John McCarthy, please phone Sue Giddens on 021 650 906 or email suegn@lifewise.org.nz

Be in to win!

Because The Warehouse agrees that strong neighbourhoods are a good thing, they're coming to the party with a super-flash BBQ for one lucky winner to share with their family, friends, and, of course, neighbours.

Show your support for Neighbours Day 2009 – go to our website to register online, tell us your imaginative neighbourly idea, and you'll be instantly entered into our prize draw; as well as the bonza BBQ, we have some very special, limited edition Neighbours Day tee shirts to give away to five runners-up.



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