

Issue 12, Summer 2008

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Big Buddy Community News

What's coming up

The **Big Buddy Day Out** is happening on *Sunday 9th March*.

The next **Induction/Training Evening** for prospective Big Buddies will be *4th March* at Big Buddy, 40 Strid Rd, Te Atatu South.

Next Big Buddy '**Monthly Meet**' dates, *Mon 11 Feb, 3 March, 7pm* at Grey Lynn Community Centre, 510 Richmond Rd Grey Lynn.

Who's new

In this issue we **welcome** the following new Big Buddies to the programme:

Paul Alford
Jason Armstrong
Andre Du Toit
Jason Durey
Adrian Hansen

What's happened in the Media

Feb 08

Titirangi Tatler article re Big Influx of volunteers from West Auckland.

Jan 08

Scoop published Big Buddy Press release re John Key Speech; NZ Listener article about Big Buddy 'making a difference'; NZ Herald Article on Key and Clark speeches; Richard interviewed by Bill Ralston on Radio Live.

Dec 07

The Western Leader ran front page article on Troy's Boys; NZ Listener announced the Cathy Pacific award won by Big Buddy.

Oct 07

Western Leader article re Big Influx of volunteers from West Auckland.

Who do you know

If you know of a good man out there who would make a fitting Big Buddy, now's the time to tap him on the shoulder. Person to person is always the best way to promote what we do.

**If you have somewhere for displaying Big Buddy material please call us for brochures, display stands and promotional material.*

Scott and Robbie's grunty go-cart

12 months ago North Shore Big Buddy Scott and his new Little Buddy Robbie soon realised they had a few things in common, both living by the Waitamata, down the road from each other and sharing a love of making stuff! It seemed Scott had a bit (maybe a lot!) of experience building things, especially things that go fast, so thought he and Robbie could start a project together. They decided to build a motorized go-cart and for the last 6 months or so they've been working pretty hard on it, finding bits here and there, getting on trade-me to bid on vital parts and constructing this finely crafted machine which was recently completed. Scott has a workshop at home with 'all the gear' so they both worked on it when they could mixed with getting out and about to do other activities. "We worked on it very much together. Over the next week it will go for a test run which everyone keenly awaits", says Scott. They both agree it has been a good way to get to know each other. "Making the go-cart with Scott has been really fun and educational. He taught me a lot of things and not just about engines! As we were building the go-cart we were really building our relationship", says Robbie.

Scott and Robbie have recently celebrated their 1 year anniversary marking the completion of their first project together but probably not their last. "It's been an incredible journey with Robbie so far. The changes in him have been a delight to witness, from a young boy at the beginning to an inquiring, considerate and happy teenager", says Scott. Robbie's mum Roz has also seen Robbie develop over the year and appreciates having discovered Big Buddy. "Scott is the perfect match for Robbie, they have similar personalities...he is a great role-model and Robbie values him a lot. Scott's very patient, generous, giving and encouraging and Robbie's a very happy boy".

Good on you guys. Enjoy the go-cart but when do we get a go? **Steve S**



Scott and Robbie with their completed Go-cart

Editorial

Wow, what a summer it has been so far. Not sure what the records say, but it sure feels like the warmest, sunniest summer for years. You can see it the faces of the people coming back to work after Christmas, quite aside from the sun tans, they look happier with that glow that only a restorative break in the sun can give and there is more to come. Bring on summer I say. Big Buddy Day Out is not far away and we are hoping the summer shines down on the day. We have a 78 ft yacht and a 48ft motor launch this year, so getting to Motuihe Island is going to be as much fun as being there.

2008 is also an election year and the politicians have started the election process with speeches so I decided to jump in with some comment (see separate story). While elections are of course a lot about politicking I do believe it's a good opportunity for some real debate on how we would wish our country to be run, a chance for issues to be aired and talked about, hopefully towards doing it differently after the election. Working broadly in the social sphere I am keeping a close watch on who is coming up with useful policy in our area.

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Big Buddy Community News - Issue 12, Summer 2008

Editorial continued....

This year also marks steps toward expanding Big Buddy. Our plans for North Auckland - Rodney are going well and Martin Hosking is almost ready to open up our branch office there and he is keen as. Steve Sobota and I are well into the recruitment of our man in Wellington. Our advertising is bringing in some great candidates and we are very optimistic on progress. We did a lot of foundation building last year getting our systems in place, working on North Auckland - Rodney first, freeing up Steve Sobota, enabling him to put focus and time into our national expansion plans. Lots of planning, detailing and holding back from just "ripping into it". I'm glad we did it that way, we are ready now and I am very optimistic 2008 will see the start of a significant expansion of Big Buddy across New Zealand.

Funding the expansion is a challenge I am getting into and we have already raised enough to kick things off and work is well under way on getting solid income to maintain the increased size of Big Buddy. I am in the negotiating process with CYFs to gain a longer term funding commitment. Last year we gained our accreditation with CYFs (no easy task) with flying colours and are well regarded by CYFs for our work and our professionalism, so again I am optimistic.

I just noticed I have used the word optimistic three times now, I tell you, a good summer brings many blessings and optimism is one of them. *Go well friend, Richard.*

Election year speeches on youth - our view

Election year kicked off with youth focused speeches from Helen Clarke and John Key.

Key's speech, made much of mentoring, so I responded with a press release some of which was picked up by the media. I thought a shortened version of this may be of interest for our newsletter readers, to give you an idea of my thinking when mentoring is tossed around as a solution to social problems. I think Key is on the right track in looking for ways to engage on a deeper level with youth on the edge, but I think using the army is ill thought out; it's not what they are set up for. I also think regardless of what they have done, young people need to be engaged with as individuals, we need to have faith in them and while we need to be realistic in what they are doing now, we need to hold a picture of what they could be. Young people have great capacity for change and growth.

Excerpt from my press release...

"Simply throwing money at high-risk youth mentoring programmes won't work," says award-winning Big Buddy mentoring programme CEO Richard Aston. "It's about getting quality mentors and giving them enough time and support to turn high-risk kids around."

Richard Aston says National Party leader John Key is on the right track when he advocates mentoring as a salve to youth offending but he warns against quick-fix solutions.

"Twelve months won't cut it. These kids have taken years to get to the Youth Court and our experience shows us that it will take time and commitment from a professional mentor to turn them around. They'll need to be well trained and well supported mentors; people with solid mana who can engage with young people regardless of what is thrown at them. That takes great patience, a gentle persistence and an unswerving faith in the young person."

"Too many 'youth' programmes promise quick fix results or think a weekend boot camp and a cool web site will do the job. I think many young people are looking for identity and meaning and are struggling to find it in a world where Paris Hilton makes the front page. They need to be met person to person by strong adults who are willing to honestly face into the young person's burning questions, namely: 'Who am I? Where is my place in this world?' If we don't work with the fire of individuality that burns in each youth, helping to add it to the hearth of community then some young people will burn down the structures of society, just to feel the warmth. They are not problems to be fixed; they are individuals demanding to be engaged with, individuals desperately needing rhythm and boundaries, individuals needing some sense of hope. They are our future."

I hope the debate continues and is more than election rhetoric; I will be looking forward to what contributions the other parties will make to this area and will especially be looking closely at those with mentoring as an integral part of their social policy. Mentoring is high on the agenda of governments overseas especially UK, US and Australia. I think it's time mentoring is recognised here in New Zealand and given the policy priority it deserves. *Richard Aston*

Little Buddy Great Story Competition 2008

Yes, we're giving away "All Blacks - The Authorised Portrait" edited by Ron Palenski, 400+ pages and the most comprehensive collection of photographs of the world famous All Blacks valued at \$75. This prize has been kindly donated by Little Buddy mum Samantha whose son Connor is matched to Big Buddy John. What Little Buddies need to do is write a story up to 200 words about the best outing/activity/experience you've had with your Big Buddy and what it's meant to you. The winning story will receive the grand prize and your story and photo will be published in the Autumn issue of Big Buddy Community News. So get your pens going or your computers tapping and send in your story by *Friday 29th February*. Send email copies to steve@bigbuddy.org.nz. Go for it!

