

Big Buddy Community News

What's coming up

The upcoming **Induction/Training Evening** for prospective Big Buddies will be *Tuesday 10th February* at Big Buddy, 40 Strid Rd, Te Atatu South and *Thursday 26th February* at the Mercure Hotel, Willis Street, Wellington.

Next Big Buddy **Monthly Meet** dates, Mondays, *2 March, 6 April, 7.15pm* at Grey Lynn Community Centre, 510 Richmond Rd Grey Lynn.

The **Big Buddy Day Out** is happening *Saturday 7th March* at Long Bay Reserve, North Shore.

Who's new

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

Colin Meo
Mike Sprague
Glenn Starr
Peter Cropper
Scott Attwood
Darrin Brown
Damien Georgiou
Sean Parrey
Nathan Trousdell
Jason Darwin
Karim Soliman
Malcolm Stratton
Don Soloman

Funding Update

AMP Foundation has almost doubled its very generous grant of last year. Our grateful thanks go to them for their continued and extended support as foundation partners.

Other organisations who have given us considerable grants in the last quarter are the **McKenzie Foundation, ASB Community Trust, The Trusts** (West Auckland) and **Pacific Sports Community Trust** and continued support of the government's **COGS** programme. We are also grateful for a 3 year guarantee of on-going help towards rent of our Wellington office from the **Betty Campbell Fund** (Wellington City Council). Finally, a big thank you to the individuals who donate to us via the Big Buddy website.

Building Big Buddy biceps

Just before Christmas I was talking to Big Buddy Brian who said he and his Little Buddy Liam (9) were becoming regulars at Club Physical Te Atatu where Brian is a member. He took Liam along one day for a look around and Liam was allowed to try



out the equipment. He liked it so much Brian asked if he could bring Liam again. The guys at Club Physical were so taken by these guys being involved with the Big Buddy programme, and although you normally have to be over 14 to use the gym they say Brian can bring Liam along whenever he likes for free! They even get the odd training tip now and then (see picture left). I decided to go along for one of their training sessions and took these photo's as Liam was pushing some big weight around...or maybe that was just for the camera? Good effort guys!

This is what Liam has got to say about his Big Buddy experience...

Best times I've had with my Big Buddy: Going to the movies.

Most challenging time with my Big Buddy: Going (biking) at Wood Hill forest.

Recommended places to go/activities I have enjoyed doing: Going to the gym.

Things I still want to do: Going on a big bush walk.

Places I still want to go: Go to the beach.

The best thing I like about my Big Buddy: We have lots of fun.
Steve S



NZ Breakers Basketball - Free tickets for Buddies

In September 2008 Big Buddy were the grateful recipients of free tickets to the NZ Breakers Basketball games at the North Shore Events Centre. These came courtesy of Brandish Ltd the communications company that promotes the NZ Breakers. We received 20 free tickets for each home game between Sept 08 through to Feb 09.

There was a great take up on this tickets and many buddies enjoyed a great nights entertainment.

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"As a Breakers fan I was grateful when I heard that Brandish Ltd had provided free tickets. Both my Little Buddies & I have enjoyed our experiences at games. The whole atmosphere is fantastic with a special effort made by the organisers & the players to make all ages feel comfortable. My Buddies loved the crowd participation but also seemed interested in observing the other family groups. Its been great to have this "special treat" without either I or the Buddy's parent having to confront the issue of cost". BB Andrew

"The Breakers game was great, action the whole way through. My Big Buddy Robin had never seen a basketball game before so it was awesome for him. We especially liked the all-i-ooop that the Breakers preformed. I really enjoyed the game, thanks". LB Graham

"Jarrod and I have thoroughly enjoyed supporting the Breakers through the season and seeing them do so well. Many thanks to Brandish!" BB Mark

Again, big thanks to the great people at Brandish for their generosity and big ups to the Breakers. Lastly lets not forget one of our tireless supporters who made Brandish aware of Big Buddy and our work, Travis Field. Trav is a good man, endlessly looking for ways to support Big Buddy and he has enough energy to power a small city!

Richard

Editorial

Yea-ha the summer is here in its full on sunny splendour and what a grand summer it's been so far. The 2009 year has kicked off with a bang for us, Wellington especially has been busy (see article from Scott). It warms the cockles of my heart to see the generous spirit of Wellingtonian men coming through so strongly. We are currently working hard to establish an office in Christchurch to meet demand. In a tight recessionary year it will depend entirely on funders in that area coming through with enough to get us going. We'll see, but fingers crossed I hope to be announcing our Christchurch branch is up and running in our next newsletter.

Since our last newsletter we have a new government and all the hoopla of election campaigning has died down. Its good to see the new government acting so swiftly to be inclusive of different parties and not only act on their election promises but back date some of them to the election date. We are encouraged! And though it's early days yet we hold hope that this new government will tackle the current financial issues with intelligence while not losing sight of the social issues we all face. Money and finance is of course important but it is - in the end - all about people. Ordinary people like you and me, people in need, people with something to give and people connecting to each other.

Connectedness, that's what we at Big Buddy are about, and the more I am involved in this work, the more I see how simple it really is. Its people engaging with each other, caring for each other or just hanging in with each other in a myriad of ways.

We are making steady progress in moving toward substantial government funding and the future for 2010 looks good. My guess is mentoring in general will likely see increased support from government - within the constraints of recessionary policies. John Key and Paula Bennett are solid supporters of mentoring in general and indeed of Big Buddy in particular. The world wide stock market melt-down has hit some of our loyal funders very hard so government support will be crucial.

Here's a story that came to Martin on the North Shore recently and shows how little it takes sometimes to make a difference. A mother had seen our ads and an article about Big Buddy in the paper. She contacted us about finding a mentor for her son saying her ex-husband wasn't doing a great job. We of course couldn't help her as the father was very much still on the scene. He was moving to Australia, and a few days before he left she gave him the article on Big Buddy. He rang back after reading it to say he had decided against leaving. He would stay here in NZ and be making more of an effort to see his children and to be a better father to them, and apparently that is happening. Not only that, but she showed it to a friend who had children needing more from their father and that man has also come to the party. Good results behind the scenes and a heart warming story for us to hear.

I hope the summer warms you all - through and through.

Go well friend, Richard

Summer breeze from Wellington

Greetings and Happy New Year to all. It's been a great summer here in the capital so far but it's time to let the tan fade and get stuck in to the job at hand.

It's a very exciting time for Big Buddy here in Wellington. After the logistics of setting up the office and getting word out during the second half of '08', we are now full steam ahead. We have a great bunch of boys waiting to be matched and a steady stream of good men putting their hands up to become Big Buddy's.

Helping to keep the momentum going was a great article in The Dominion Post early this year about Big Buddy Alan Johnson and Little Buddy Nathan O'Regan. Here's the online link to the story:

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/dominionpost/4810125a6000.html>
Well done Alan and Nathan!

On a personal note, I want to send a massive thanks to the team in Auckland who have supported me so wonderfully over the last year. So to Richard, the two Steve's, Martin and Tony, and all those who support them in the great work they do my deepest gratitude for bringing me into the Big Buddy family. You guys rock! Here's to a fantastic 2009 to you and your loved ones.

Cheers, Scott



Alan and Nathan doing guy stuff!

Raising the flag in Rodney

Times FM 89.9 is the local radio station in Orewa, servicing all of Rodney district (and able to be heard in Auckland as well, tune in some time round town or on the road North). They approached Big Buddy to be part of their Christmas promotion, and we happily agreed. It was great timing for us as we push further North with the service. The afternoon drive show host, with the smooth voice, is Simon Franks, a supporter, and father of 2 daughters. He made time each Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoon in December for a Big Buddy and a Little Buddy to join him in his studio, he asked each of them a few questions on air, and some managed a shout-out as well. They got to take a tape home



Simon Franks at work!

of their contributions and Simon gave them a good look at how a radio station works. Altogether 12 groups took part as well as a Little Buddy mum, Vicky Kyan. Thanks everyone for coming along. Most of those I spoke to enjoyed the experience, found

that the time on air went really quickly, and were a bit surprised to hear what their voice sounded like - as I did when I introduced Big Buddy at the start and did a wrap up at the end. Hopefully there will be more men and boys coming into the programme from the area. We really appreciate your efforts Simon and the Times FM team.

Martin