

Issue 17, Autumn 2009

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Big Buddy Community News

What's coming up

The upcoming **Induction/Training Evenings** for prospective Big Buddies will be *Tuesday 16th June* at Big Buddy, 40 Strid Rd, Te Atatu South and *Wednesday 3rd June*, Barnados House, 85 Ghuznee St, Wellington.

Next Big Buddy **Mentor Meeting** dates are *Tuesday 2 June* and *Monday 6 July*, 7.15pm at Grey Lynn Community Centre, 510 Richmond Rd Grey Lynn and *Wednesday 27 May* 7pm at Barnados House, 85 Ghuznee St, Wellington.

Who's new

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

Matthew Buckley ~ Ian Head
Tony Jackson ~ Andrew Mayne
Conal McMahon ~ John Dow
Adam Keith ~ James Paris
Ben Subritzky ~ Graham Harvey
Alan Moss ~ Todd Warner
Roger Grant ~ Ian Cameron
Matt Harding ~ Martin Harris
Steve O'Sullivan ~ Gareth Powell
David Lee ~ Radon Mailau
Grant Montgomerie ~ Don Cotter

Funding Update

Like everyone else, our funders have been affected by the recession with the result that many of them are granting less than last year - some are unable to give us anything. We have therefore taken the necessary step of employing a part time contractor to help us out.

We welcome Jude Gillies to the Big Buddy team. Jude, among other things, has been CEO at the Waitakere Abuse & Trauma Services (WATS) and has considerable experience in fundraising activities. She is busy approaching a broad spread of funding organisations and trusts, many of which we have not approached before, while Tony is continuing to make our case to Lotteries, COGS and other major funders who have long term relationships with us.

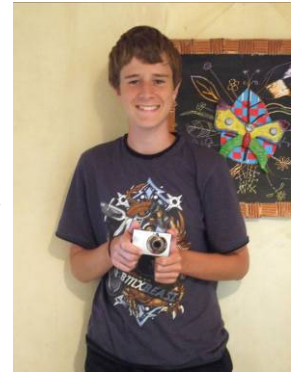
In recent months we have received grants from the Lion Foundation for our Wellington branch, Lotteries for our North Shore/Rodney branch and a generous grant from Pacific Sports & Community Trust for the Auckland office.

To these organisations and to all you guys out there who donate to us via the Big Buddy website etc. a great Big Buddy thank you – you're awesome. Tony

High adventure and a snappy recovery!

Here's an inspiring story we'd like to share - never give up! A summit to conquer, a road to climb, a competition entered, then it was mine!

Harley (Big Buddy) and Blake (Little Buddy) wanted to test themselves against the mighty Rangitoto summit. To prove they'd reached the pinnacle Blake took his beloved camera, the camera for which he'd worked so hard. Having achieved their goal of 'knocking the b!\$#@#d off', as Sir Ed would have aptly phrased it and with the happy and satisfying snaps they took, Harley and Blake set off on their way to explore the Lava Caves. Alas, here calamity struck! A slip of foot and Blake was down, his camera smashed on the unforgiving rocks! Devastated and crestfallen, their tails between their legs, the intrepid pair returned home.



Blake with his new camera

That week, as chance would have it, the Herald newspaper came to the rescue in the form of a competition, for guess what, a digital camera! A sharper, more superior model. Blake, with a modicum of hope, entered. Within a week a phone call from the Herald and a new camera was delivered. He'd WON!!! I guess, as the old saying goes 'Where there's a will, there's a way'.

From Blake, Harley and Anita (Blake's mum)

Watch out Scott Dixon, here comes... Corin Revell

It was easy to see Corin Revell's interest when we first met him. He had his nose in the latest V8 car mag as often as he could and he reluctantly took off his well worn HRT cap (Holden Racing Team) for a photo. He does lots of other things too, but his passion is cars and racing. This friendly smiling bundle of energy had only one request of a potential Big Buddy – that he was a Holden man.

Enter Martin Lucas. He has been into cars for ages, and has finally finished building a Van Deimen in his spare time, not a V8 but a single seater. Martin's friend has a similar car and they race for the prize of a chocolate fish, "highly coveted" he says. They are regulars at the Pukekohe race track, Corin is well known to the pit crews there, and he has been around the track in the safety car (as a passenger). He has certain jobs on race day including plugging the car into the battery starting system and keeping the car clean. They have become a good team in their 9 months together. Bushwalking, tramping, movies, visiting places and



Corin in the drivers seat with Martin behind in the cream driving gear

friends keep them occupied on non-race days. So far the fact that Martin is a Ford fan hasn't made any difference!!

Many thanks to Bill Ritchie of the Classic Car Racing Club for his support with tickets to the events at Pukekohe, allowing the sights and sounds of the high octane scene to be enjoyed by many Big and Little Buddies. Martin

Editorial

Is it cold enough for you? Rain, hail, snow - seems its all happening at once. Time to hunker down, keep warm and of course, stay connected to each other. Since the dawn of time we humans have always got through the hard times by keeping closer and hard times are certainly upon us with a recession washing over the world.

There is a fair amount of hunkering going down at Big Buddy at present. The recession has hit us hard. Some of our major funders have been hit so hard it is unlikely we will receive anything from them this year. I have had to put a halt to our expansion plans for now – our Christchurch office is postponed and we have softened our planned expansion in South Auckland. We are working hard to spread our funding needs out wider and I've employed a part time funding person to help with this (see funding update).

While I admit to losing sleep over it, I remain optimistic we will at least survive but the most disappointing thing is we cannot meet the ever-increasing demand for our work coming from many parts of New Zealand. Our discussions with government is ongoing and we have seen a small improvement with a promise of increased funding but it will only lift the government's contribution from 5% to 10%. Still it's a move in the right direction! I met with Paula Bennett recently and she told me she and John Key personally support the work of Big Buddy, which was reassuring but we now need turn this support into practical reality - i.e. funding. The discussions continue! On another note, Paula Bennett has asked us to get involved in the design of the government's Fresh Start programme for youth offenders. Mentoring will be a key component of this approach and so we will join with others in the mentoring field to hopefully create something worthwhile and real that can help address the growing issue of youth offending.

Counter-balancing these tough tight times, we are seeing record numbers of men volunteering to step up as mentors. Scott in Wellington has been rushed of his feet with potential mentors and our recent advertising in South Auckland has seen the same for Stephen Bell who is working hard to keep up with inquiries. Whenever I get down with funding concerns I look to see the many men coming through as mentors, the many caregivers approaching us and of course the heart warming stories from over 120 mentoring relationships within the Big Buddy community.

Editorial cont....

It reminds me of why we do this work and that nothing this good will decline. As a recent inquirer said "You guys rock!"

Carrying on the good news front our Central Auckland Coordinator, Steve Sobota became a first-time Dad. Here's a picture of Steve with his precious bundle of joy, Benjamin, now 8 weeks old. Steve and partner Joanne are embracing the new parents experience; sleep deprivation, growing out of clothes just bought and of course the sheer joy of the first smile ... and the second and the whole wonderful turn-your-world-upside-down journey of parenthood. We always thought he'd be a great dad, and he is.



Steve and 8 week old Benjamin

I hope you keep warm this coming winter and occasionally get a chance to venture out into the wild weather just for the hell of it.

Go well friend, Richard

1 year anniversary for Big Buddy Wellington!

Aloha! The biting southerlies of late remind me how far we are from the palm trees and warm seas of Hawaii, where I use to frolic many moons ago – but they're also a reminder of just how much warmth we can generate by simply giving a little of ourselves. So as Big Buddy's first anniversary in Wellington passes, it feels mighty toasty down here.

Plenty of new matches since the last newsletter so congrats go to the 9 new pairs, and recently three month anniversaries were celebrated by Nathan and Jordan and Simon and James – keep at it guys, lots of fun to be had yet!



Scott speaking about Big Buddy at a recent Rotary/Lions Club evening

One of our first matches, Allan and Nathan, were in the news again when they joined me with Nathan's Mum for an interview on National Radio over Easter. Great job everyone. Allan and Nathan also joined me at a Lion's Club/Rotary evening where we talked about Big Buddy and the work we do. Cheers for being an inspiration to so many you two!

Also in the news, Steve and Hamish and Ian and Callum have featured in the Hutt News and CityLife News Wainuiomata respectively. Seems the capital can't get enough of Big Buddy happenings!

In new developments, we'll be having our first Big Buddy Quarterly Meeting in a couple of weeks (check the calendar), giving all the Wgtn BB's a chance to catch up and share stories and experiences of their time as Big Buddies so far. I'm really looking forward to seeing the guys get together and recognise they are part of a growing community of good and giving men. I also have to say a big thanks to Barnardos here in Welly who have provided free meeting space for us. Thanks Lindy!

So, plenty happening in the capital and plenty more on the horizon. And with winter approaching, it's good to know that the wild weather can't match the warmth that the people of Wellington generate in their hearts.

Kia kaha, Scott