



Street Football Aotearoa Annual Report 2008-2009



Introduction

“Sport has the power to unite people in a way little else can. Sport can create hope where there was once only despair. It breaks down barriers. It laughs in the face of discrimination. Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand”- Nelson Mandela¹

Street Football Aotearoa is a Charitable Trust that aims to support homeless and excluded people to train for and participate in the Homeless World Cup (HWC).

In particular Street Football Aotearoa (the Trust) aims to:

1. Provide opportunities for fitness and football training for homeless and excluded people
2. Provide opportunities for selection and to represent Aotearoa/New Zealand at international HWC events
3. Provide financial support to individuals to participate at international HWC events

Background

The trust was started in early 2008 by a group of volunteers who were keen to see a NZ team compete at the Homeless World Cup event in Melbourne in December. This group of trustees brought a broad range of experience and backgrounds to the project – providing expertise in the issues surrounding homelessness, sports and outdoor education and the media.

The Homeless World Cup uses the power of football to raise the profile of the issue of homelessness worldwide and acts as a catalyst for positive change in the lives of those people participating in the tournament. Social integration through sport has become a successful strategy in many countries. The unifying passion for football has a unique ability to shift

social borders. Backed by employment, housing and integration programmes, the sport itself becomes the means to create new opportunities. The main partners of the HWC are the International Network of Streetpapers (INSP), the United Nations Organisation, European football Governing Body (UEFA) and Nike. For more information see: www.homelessworldcup.org

Street Football Aotearoa is the official partner of the Homeless World Cup in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

AIM 1. Provide opportunities for fitness and football training for homeless and excluded people

In early 2008, weekly football training began in Auckland and Wellington, providing a healthy team sport environment. All of the players involved in our programme are currently or have been homeless. They have a range of challenges in their lives including experience of trauma, mental illness, offending, gambling, drug and alcohol issues, family difficulties, poverty and isolation. The model of ‘fun, fitness and friendship’ is a useful tool to engage homeless people who traditionally avoid contact with support agencies and to support those newly housed with a structure to help overcome boredom and isolation.

The Trust is committed to:

- Support participation in sport
- Inspire people to reach their full potential
- Highlight the issues of homelessness and exclusion in New Zealand/Aotearoa
- Work cooperatively with others in the area of homelessness and exclusion

Auckland training kicked off in May on a wet and windy afternoon in Victoria Park in Auckland's CBD. The first outing was not a success. Stephen McLuckie, a client support worker from LIFEWISE (Methodist Mission Northern's support

¹ Cited in Donnelly P. 2008, “Sport and Human Rights”, Sport in Society Vol.11 No4 p 231-394

service for marginalised people) and Trustee of Street Football Aotearoa, together with Steven Fletcher, volunteer coach and enthusiastic supporter of the Trust's work, stood sodden in the rain without a ball being kicked. Over the following weeks however, news of the project began to spread and more and more people took the short journey down to the park and started to train.



Soon a second training session was underway at The Salvation Army's Epsom Lodge, with support worker Samwell Sami. During the course of the seven months leading up to the tournament in Melbourne, 38 people were involved in the project in Auckland; 6 of these were female participants.

Sadly, in August, one of the players who had taken part in training passed away. Selwyn was a great character and is missed by all those involved.

The football training in Auckland is supported by LIFEWISE and the Salvation Army.

The **Wellington** football project had their first training session when a small group turned out at Waitangi Park on a slightly damp April day. After about a month the group gave in to the Wellington weather and moved inside to our current home in the community hall of the Wesley Church on Taranaki Street. As in Auckland, news of the project slowly spread and a core group of regulars are training weekly. Since the beginning, the Wellington project has been supported by Tony

Morrison and his team from Sportzone - supplying equipment and his own brand of coaching and refereeing!

The football in Wellington is supported by a multi-agency group working with homeless people including the Downtown Community Ministry, Desmond and the Sisters of Compassion. We also have a regular group of supporters who join training and always help to keep people having fun. Since April, 23 different people have attended training, including 2 women.



The Wellington football project is funded by Wellington City Council with the support of Sportzone.

Our goal in 2009 is to expand our football projects through local partnerships in other cities in Aotearoa/New Zealand, providing more opportunities for homeless and marginalised people to benefit from this life-changing initiative. Street Football Aotearoa would welcome approaches from interested individuals or groups and can support local projects with grants for training and equipment.

AIM 2. Provide opportunities for selection and to represent Aotearoa/New Zealand at international Homeless World Cup events

The New Zealand squad for the 2008 Homeless World Cup was chosen by a panel of selectors in September 2008. Selection was made on the basis of more than just a player's individual

Trustees:

Katie Owen: Tom Kelly: Stephen McLuckie: Kate Amore: Jon Lasenby: Anne Caton

ability. Commitment, attitude and the ability to travel were also important factors. After careful deliberation, five players from Auckland and three from Wellington were chosen to form the team. The team were Wayne Riggs, Barry Conlon and Willie Matangi from Wellington, and John Love, Everitt Johnson, Anthony Bradshaw, Marcel Coe, and Hunia Norman Tepu from Auckland. A great deal of effort was required to ensure that the squad were able to travel to the tournament.

Unfortunately, despite considerable agency and personal support, Willie was unable to overcome visa issues and therefore unable to travel. He was replaced at the last minute by Silvano Onek (Ivan), whose suitability for the project was identified by Tayo Agunlejika - from the Upper Hutt Multi Ethnic Council.

The players selected to represent New Zealand in Melbourne met together for the first time at a training camp held over the first weekend of November. The first evening involved a short kick-about before dark and then the opportunity for everyone to share a little bit about themselves and how they had become involved with the football project. Some very personal and moving stories were shared with the others in the group and this quickly forged a real spirit of togetherness within the camp. The strong message was the power of sport in helping to engage people who had little trust in some of the agencies designed to support them.

Highlights from the weekend included former All Black Norm Hewitt spending time with the players - talking about his life as an All Black, his personal battles with alcohol and the honour and pride of playing for his county. This was followed by a training session with Wynton Rufer – FIFA Oceania Player of the Century - where every player gave 100% and learned a great deal from Wynton's playing and coaching experience.



Later in the day the more adventurous took on the confidence ropes course in the rain, showing great skill in hanging upside-down. Meanwhile the rest of the group joined Kim from the Royal New Zealand Police College and dug in the Hāngi - resulting in a magnificent feast for us to share in the evening.



Sunday involved learning and practicing a Haka – bringing the team together as one unit ready for any opposition in Melbourne. Following this another worthwhile football session was led by Steve Fletcher. Steve had been coaching the Auckland players since May 2008 year and really helped to bring the team together as one and get to grips with the HWC rules.

Finally the group was invited by Warren Baillie of Outback Experiences to his woolshed to have a go at clay pigeon shooting. This was great fun and a new experience for all.

The training camp was made possible through support from the Pelorus Trust.

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The Homeless World Cup, Melbourne 2008

Team New Zealand was a debutant at the 2008 tournament. The Homeless World Cup aims to challenge stereotyping about homelessness, exclusion and poverty. It raises the issue of homelessness in a way that captures the imagination. Over 70% of players who take part make significant changes to their lives - repairing relationships, getting off alcohol or drug dependencies or getting a home or job.



The 2008 tournament started with a colourful opening parade that brought central Melbourne to a standstill. The team grew quickly into their new roles as sporting and social ambassadors. In the space of a couple of days they met and befriended players, coaches and other representatives from the 52 competing countries from around the world.



Matches were played daily from morning through to late evening to crowds of over 2500 spectators at the specially constructed pitches in Federation Square and Birrarung Marr in central Melbourne. Over the week

the team played 12 matches and learned a lot about team work, communication and problem solving. Victories brought elation, whilst the disappointment of defeat was tempered by the special team spirit that had been fostered within the squad. The players should be especially proud of their achievement of completing the tournament without a single red or blue card for fouls or poor discipline.



A defeat to India on the final day meant New Zealand finished the Homeless World Cup ranked 40th in the world – higher than the All Whites! Each player was also awarded a medal for participation in the tournament, a souvenir from a week of football that we hope none of the players will ever forget. The Homeless World Cup was won by Afghanistan in a nail biting 5:4 victory over Russia in front of Federation Square packed with approximately 5000 spectators. Earlier in the day, Zambia won the Women's Homeless World Cup with a convincing victory over injury-hit Liberia.

Team New Zealand returned from the tournament with their heads held high, having been awarded the Best Newcomers trophy. There were eight other debut teams and the award was presented not just for the team's performances on the pitch but for their spirit of fair play and the all-round positive impact they made at the tournament. The trophy was accepted by the team on stage at the Athlete's Village at Melbourne

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University to rapturous applause from the many friends made over the week.



For the players who made up New Zealand's first ever HWC team it was a once-in-a-lifetime experience that we hope they will treasure in the months and years to come. Many of the team have set new goals for the future. After witnessing their success in Melbourne as proud ambassadors for their country, we are sure they will work hard to achieve them.

Participation at the Homeless World Cup in Melbourne was made possible through the sponsorship of Air New Zealand, Felix Cafe, Canterbury Teamwear Apparel and Adidas.

Our goal in 2009 is to explore the possibility of team New Zealand participating at the HWC in Milan in September 2009. If this proves impossible due to the current financial climate we are hoping to offer an alternative tournament experience.

AIM 3. Provide financial support to individuals chosen to represent New Zealand at the international HWC events

None of the work of Street Football Aotearoa could have been possible without the generous support of individuals, companies and charitable trusts. It is impossible to thank every individual who has helped us through the year but special mention must be given to Norm Hewitt who became personally involved with the charity, understanding the power of sport to change lives. Special thanks also to

Sam Ahkit from Felix café in Wellington, whose enthusiasm and support raised the profile of the project and initiated significant fundraising to get the team to Melbourne.

The training, team selection and the tournament itself were covered by current affairs programme Close-Up. Our thanks go to Mark Sainsbury and Sofia Wenborn at TVNZ for enthusiastically getting behind the Trust, for the support and belief they showed the players, and for raising the profile of our fundraising effort.



Highlights of our fundraising include:

- In early October, Wynton Rufer took Mark Sainsbury and some of the Auckland players through a training session in Victoria Park to help raise the profile of the project in Auckland.
- Later in the month, LIFEWISE joined the Academy Cinema to host the New Zealand premiere screening of *Kicking It* - the internationally acclaimed film about homelessness and the power of sports to change lives. *Kicking It* is a feature documentary film that follows six players drawn from different corners of the world as they prepare for the 2006 Homeless World Cup tournament in Cape Town. Around 100 people attended the film showing, helping to support the ongoing development of the project in Auckland.
- Not to be outdone, Wellington City Council's Festival of Football for the

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FIFA Under-17 Women's World Cup hosted a celebrity street football competition and film screening. Unfortunately, just before the scheduled kick-off for the Street Football competition, a thunder storm saw the crowds disappear and had us all running for cover. With no sign of the rain abating, we had a quick change of venue, heading across to Shed One on the wharf for an indoor tournament. Players from Wellington's Street Football Project took on Craig Ireson's City Council team, Wellington Phoenix Yellow Fever Supporters Club, and a Celebrity team that included former All Black's Norm Hewitt and Christian Cullen, comedian and TV personality Cori Gonzalez-Macuer, and All White and local Wellington player Raffaele De Gregorio. The afternoon of football was followed by another showing of *Kicking It* in the Town Hall, with over 50 people helping to support the work of the trust. Our thanks to Craig Ireson and Wellington City Council whose continued support and enthusiasm for football has made great things happen.



Our goal for 2009 is to ensure the trust has the financial base to support the development of grassroots football projects through out Aotearoa/New Zealand. Further significant fundraising and sponsorship will be necessary to support team NZ to participate in Milan.

Financial Report 01/01/2008- 31/03/2009

Total Income = \$32,602

Donations and fundraising = \$13,179
Wellington City Council = \$11,923 (incl. 2009 grant)
Pelorus Trust = \$4,500
NZ Lottery grant = \$3,000

Total Expenditure = \$22,283

Running costs = \$1641
Programme costs = \$7,402
Melbourne (Flights/Accommodation/Insurance etc) = \$5964
Passports = \$1130
Training camp = \$3645
Uniforms = \$2501

Balance = \$10,318.83.

Outcomes

A total of 61 people attended at least one football training session in the period April to December 2008. Together with the obvious physiological benefits, engagement in physical activity has been shown to improve emotional and cognitive skills including self-esteem, problem-solving and the self efficacy essential to support long term changes in lifestyle.

For some of our players, simply committing to and attending football practice is a significant step and represents the beginning of a lifestyle change. It is also an opportunity to engage with support workers and make new friends and relationships.

Focusing on the individuals selected to represent New Zealand in Melbourne: all of the players show increased confidence and have an increased sense of purpose. They have made considerable changes to their lives with the support of the agencies around them.

- Three players have re-established relationships with family/ whanau.
- One player has spent time at a detox service and moved on to a Salvation Army rehabilitation programme. Another two have reduced their alcohol use considerably.

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- One player has moved from rough sleeping into a hostel. Another has moved from a night shelter to longer-term accommodation.
- Three players have moved from hostels or insecure accommodation into their own homes.
- Two players have moved into employment and two more have maintained supported jobs.
- Three players have addressed offending and are staying out of trouble.
- Three players are exploring a return to education.
- One player has committed to an ambassadorial role - promoting the work of Street Football Aotearoa and speaking about the personal benefits to him of participation in the 2008 tournament.
- and to fundraise and attract sponsorship to support team NZ to participate in Milan.

Plans for 2009

Our thanks to all of the individuals, trusts and companies whose support, enthusiasm and belief made the first year of the trust such a success. We are now working to build on these achievements and develop support for homeless and excluded people to train for and participate in the Homeless World Cup. Our goals in 2009 are:

- to expand our football projects through local partnerships in other cities in Aotearoa/New Zealand
- to explore the possibility of team New Zealand participating at the HWC in Milan in September 2009 or if this proves impossible offer an alternative tournament experience
- to ensure the trust has the financial base to support the development of grassroots football projects throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand

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Our thanks to...

Grant Funders

Wellington City Council
NZ Lottery Grants
Pelorus Trust

Sponsors

Hutt City New World
LIFEWISE
Air New Zealand
Canterbury Teamwear Apparel
Soccer Direct
Adidas Auckland
Cancer Society, Wellington
Felix Café, Wellington

Individuals

Samwell Sami and Epsom Lodge,
Auckland
Corie Haddock and Lesley Mynett-
Johnson from LIFEWISE, Auckland
Steve Fletcher
Stephanie, Alan, Kate and DJ from
Downtown Community Ministry,
Wellington
Desmond from Sisters of Compassion,
Wellington
Josh from Evolve, Wellington
Tony Morrison, Drew and Terry from
Sportzone
Norm Hewitt
Wynton Rufer & Norman Buchholz at
Wynrs
Sam Ahkit and Felix Café, Wellington
Tosh Ahkit
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Jesse Hinchey
Rea and Pete
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Mark Sainsbury and Sofia Wenborn at
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Marion Ingram
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Craig Ireson, Eleanor Doig and Jenny
Rains, Wellington City Council
Clare Aspinall – NZ Coalition to End
Homelessness
Rosalie Bridge at Splash Event
Management
Cathy Casey, Auckland City Councillor
Betty MacLaren at Auckland City
Council
Ian Leader, Jenni Mace and the OT
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Andrea Dempsey from Waitakere DHB
Steve Kilgallon at Sunday Star Times
Warren Bailie from Outback
Experiences
The Academy Cinema, Auckland
Andrew Scott-Howman
Rachel Bolton at Australian
Immigration Department
Ashleigh and Anne at Department of
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Tracey Brady – NZ Football
Community Housing Aotearoa
Mel Young, Bernhard Wolf and Fred
Guillemont from the HWC
Raewyn Sutton
Colin McDonald
Brazen
Mark Albiston and Sticky Pictures
Tayo Agunlejika and the Upper Hutt
Multi Ethnic Council
The guys from Yellow Fever
Christian Cullen
Cori Gonzalez-Macuer
Raffaele De Gregorio

...and to everyone involved with the
2008 Melbourne Homeless World Cup.

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