

# Staff Report 2021

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It has been a privilege to be able to assist the Project over the last few weeks while our manager Tess has been on leave. I continue to be impressed with all that the Project achieves week on week, year on year for the wellbeing of our community. The Community Rooms are a very busy place with a constant stream of individuals and groups using the facilities connecting with one another offering and receiving support. All of the staff have a deep commitment to supporting the community and are doing great things on our behalf. In our report below we have selected a few highlights that I trust will make you proud to be associated with the Valley Project. We are indebted to numerous volunteers and the leadership of our executive who collectively put in 1000s of hours each year. The NEV, Pine Hill ,Opoho area is a great place to live made even better by the way we all work together for the common good. ***Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourouka ora ai te iwi.*** With your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive. *Ngā mihi nui.* Steve O'Connor Interim manager.

## Community hub activities

The Hub is intended to be a space that members of the community can visit, seek information, meet new people, use the computers and free wifi, get assistance or just hang out and have a cup of tea. The space is sometimes used by groups such as knitting or craft groups who are happy for their activity to be joined by anyone or for people to be doing other things in the space at the same time. On occasion we organise events to offer ways for the community to connect or learn about services or resources available in the city.

Some of the activities we have organised or supported the community to hold this year are: movies days, pizza making, quiz night, SPCA dog squad visit, pottery workshops, Korean BBQ, kids crafts, games night, healthy homes information sessions, Presbyterian Support information evening, DIY workshops, Balance Connection classes, JP services, CV writing classes and weekly computer classes.

We have been really happy with the attendance of the hub; it has proven to be of value to our community. Saturdays in particular seem to appeal to families as a cost free place to bring their children and a place to connect with other parents. Especially for those who work through the week and might miss out on bumping spaces with other families. We have also found many people coming along for a warm meal.

Providing food has been a really good way to bring people through the door. It is a natural connector but is also appreciated by those who are in need of something to eat. In the warmer months we had a free BBQ with sausages and vegetarian options and in cooler months we provided vegetarian soup and toast. The soup has been made on a weekly basis by an amazing volunteer, Hinewai, and the food for the soup provided by KaiShare. This has given us more insight into the growing need for food support in

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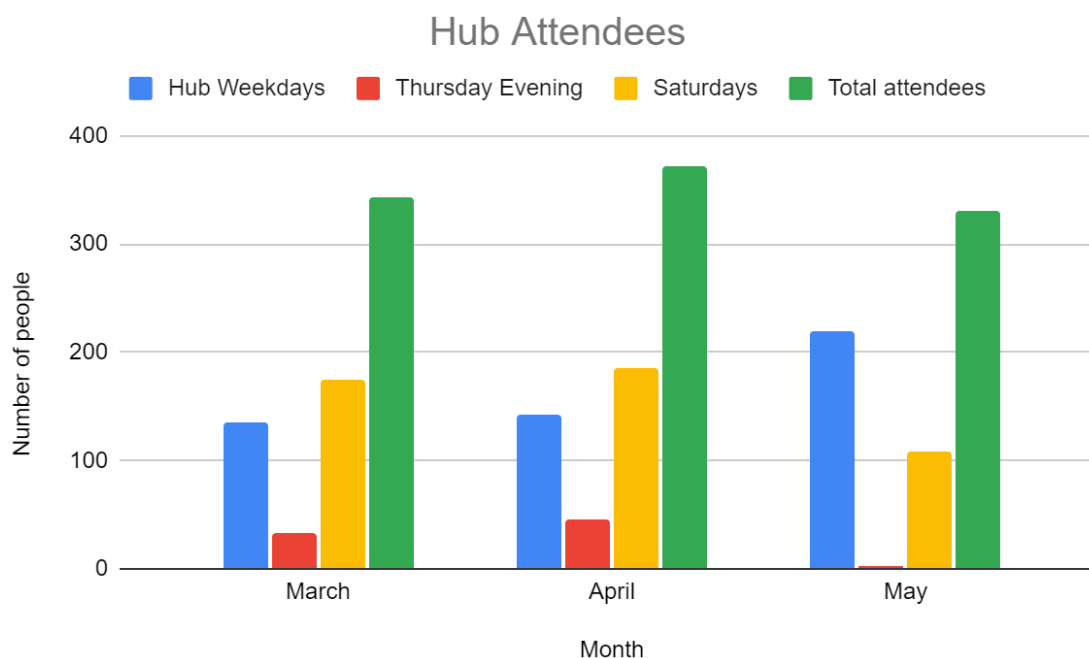
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our community. We have also noticed that our Kai pantry is very well utilised and we are working on ways to keep it stocked.

We have noticed an increase with people coming into the hub to use the computers, free wifi and printing service. Friday also seems to be a particularly busy day at the Hub with the multicultural women's craft group, art classes, health checks and Kaishare programme all bringing large numbers through the doors. Please note that the figures in the attendance chart do not show people who enter into the FredHollows room. On average, there are 20-40 people who come in for the Kaishare food-box collection. We have noticed that as well as food, Kaishare provides a really important social connection and sometimes leads to further connection with the Hub, particularly for some of our former refugee community.

We were providing a late evening at the Hub on Thursdays sometimes with a games night or other activities as the theme. As we moved towards winter less people attended and we decided to just have Saturday as an alternative day to our usual weekday hours.

The weekday attendance at the hub has increased each month. The reduction in the numbers of attendees on Saturdays may be due to the change from free BBQ to soup or the change in weather. We were closed to the public during the school holidays.



The graph shows the number of attendees per month during the weekday, Thursday evenings and on Saturdays, as well as the total number each month.

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## Communications - Valley Voice, social media, etc.

Taking on the Valley Voice has been quite the challenge, but a very rewarding one. As I have started in the job there have been a lot of learnings for me and feedback from the Community has helped me to try and get the balance right between news sharing and revenue gathering. I continue to welcome feedback

Valley Voice has had the capacity to add in new advertisers, all new local businesses who really relish in the support and the custom they get from the VV. With some new advertising it means the publication has had some new direction in regards to content, focusing on the cultural side due to advertisers such as Dunedin Fringe Festival and Dunedin Writers Readers Fest. This gave me the opportunity to connect with community members and their projects, and in turn inform our community about some fantastic creatives and what they're up to. This has led to further connections with other creatives within the community and being able to help them spread the word on their projects as well as supporting them in other ways.

The Valley Voice has had a couple of bumper issues, Christmas and Mothers Day, to try and encourage our community to support our local retailers.

New sections like the Te Reo column were added in because I felt with the frequent use of Te Reo Māori within the publication it made sense to encourage the use and learning of Te Reo Māori within our community. I've also added in a "what's on" section to let our community members know about all the exciting events happening within the community; this has also morphed into a weekly flyer. Other new additions are "Kai time with Joe", a bi-monthly food column featuring a write up and recipe and our latest addition is the spotlight on local businesses.

Steps are being taken to try and further engage with our community via social media platforms by sharing what VP and other community members are up to via events, posts, stories etc. It's an area that needs to be built on but being more active with fresh content is helping. We're also discussing a website re-vamp.

## Environment:

Open Valley Urban Ecosanctuary (VUE) is a collaborative community-led project. We have been encouraging households to take wildlife friendly actions in their backyards as part of the "Backyard Ecosanctuaries" programme, which we developed with Otago Polytechnic marketing students. We have been working with Predator Free Dunedin's City Sanctuary to facilitate backyard trapping and establish a Trap Library.

We have also been working with the DCC, volunteers and UniCrew to weed a patch within Chingford Park that we will plant in the coming months. We also have volunteer-led traplines within Chingford

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Park facilitated by City Sanctuary. We have also collected seeds to grow in our Propagation Nursery, which is currently full of locally sourced seedlings, destined for local backyards.

We have also been involved with community events, including the Weed Bash, Sustainability Circus, Three Peaks Mountain Race (in collaboration with Orokonui Ecosanctuary), Wild Dunedin (in collaboration with Orokonui Ecosanctuary and storyteller Kaitrin McMullan), and Madison Kelly's 'Basking' Community Arts Lizard Hui, and engaged in Citizen Science festivals. We have regular communications in the Valley Voice, Email Newsletter, blog and Facebook. Since the start of 2021, we have had over 600 volunteer hours involved in the project.

We are incredibly grateful and humbled by the drive and support from the community for this project as well as our collaborators - The Valley Project, Orokonui Ecosanctuary and The University of Otago, funders - Dunedin's Environment Strategy: Te Ao Tūroa, ECO Fund and Lotteries Environment and Heritage, Steering Group and our wonderful volunteers and supporters.

Upcoming opportunities and events you could support:

- We have traps and native plants available as part of the Backyard Ecosanctuaries programme - anyone is welcome to join!
- We are planning a planting day in Chingford Park in Spring which will be preceded by a Creek learning activity in winter - volunteers welcome!
- We are planning a succession of Matariki related activities including harakeke weaving workshops, kapa haka performance and a community installation.
- We're supporting Arati Kushwaha with "The Quilt Project", a hands on workshop learning the art of creating quilts as a reference to gender equality and the feminist movement as a form of resistance against gender discrimination in society. A large scale quilt will be created with appliqué panels using basic math symbols to illustrate the inequitable status of women in society and the gender equality message. All ages and genders, and levels of sewing welcome. This project is in collaboration with Stitch Kitchen.