

MULTIPLES AOTEAROA

The official magazine of Multiples New Zealand

Te Takitini o Aotearoa



Summer • 2020

multiplesnz

Te Takitini o Aotearoa

Relationships

Our Summer Multiples



Maddison, Zoe & Olivia - Whangaparoa



Thomas & Brooklyn - Papamoa



Jaylen & Kylo - Whangarei



Piper & Ruby - Taupo



Mana & Noah - Wellington



Lani & Nia - Auckland



Gray & Eddie - Nelson



Declan & Eli - New Plymouth

Multiples NZ

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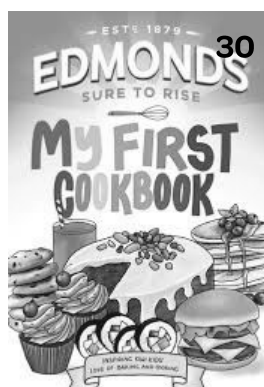
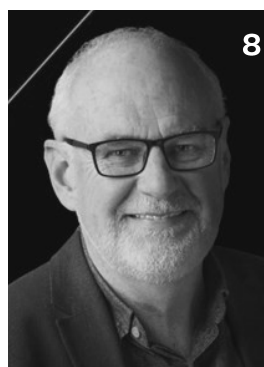
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Philip & Renée Siagia with their identical twin girls Jireh & Israel — Napier, New Zealand.



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DNA Diagnostics

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Editorial

Making Connections

Kirsty Saxon (Multiples NZ Executive & Multiples Canterbury), Mummy to Xavier and Lilian (7), and Ruby (9).

He aha te mea nui o te ao? He tangata! He tangata! He tangata!

What is the most important thing in the world? It is people! It is people! It is people!

This whakatauki talks to the importance of human connection and relationships. This is what creates community and enables people to flourish. It values the human being in all of us and reminds us of what is most important – not money, not success, not a job or a thing – it is people.

This issue is all about relationships, and the ways we are connected to our family and friends around us. Our mental health and personal well being are tied up in the quality of our personal relationships. The more closely we are connected to the people we love, the happier we feel and the more personal satisfaction we have in our lives. Most people rate moments of connection and shared enjoyment with their loved ones as their most important life experiences. These important relationships not only include family and personal friends but also the wider groups and communities we belong to. Forming connections and a sense of community with work colleagues, neighbours and the various groups that make up our identity (such as sports, hobbies, religious and community groups), all contribute to our well-being. Forming a sense of belonging with other people around a shared mission or identity is a major contributor to our sense of personal meaning in life. I know being a member of the Multiples NZ whānau is a rewarding experience for many of us, and we have formed very close relationships through our years navigating this journey.

In October we celebrated our annual Volunteer Awards, and I was thrilled to win the Community Dedication Award. This is awarded to a volunteer who has made an outstanding contribution to their club or the New Zealand multiples community for at least five years. My

twins are now almost seven, so being a part of this community has been a huge part of my journey raising them. I am incredibly thankful for the amazing people I have met along the way, and who I now consider firm friends.

This month I am really excited to share the results of the annual Multiples NZ Volunteer Awards. It must be so difficult for the panel of judges to choose the winners, as we have so many caring and dedicated volunteers in our multiples community. I am pleased we get to share the winners of Volunteer of the Month each issue in the magazine. The winner of each month goes into our Multiples NZ Volunteer of the Year. You can make a nomination for the Volunteer of the Month at:

www.bit.ly/3gp7UyP

As usual, we welcome submissions on any topic related to multiples or anything relevant to our families. Send me an email if you have an idea for a story you would like to write or co-write with a friend. We are also keen to get your pregnancy and birth stories, as I know we love reading about everyone's individual experiences. Next issue's theme is 'Diverse Families' so if you have any thing to contribute, please get in touch!

Kirsty



Xavier & Lilian - Methven

President's Report Summer 2020

Heather Ben (Multiples NZ Executive & Multiples Counties-Manukau) shares her update.

For me the days and weeks seem to be flying past right now. The slow days of Level 4 Lockdown has now led to the frantic pace of squeezing as much in as we can. Just in case we go back up levels again. We are in Auckland so going back to Level 3 Lockdown in August was a real wake up call for our family.

What I have found this year is the re-establishment of connections. During this fast forward time there has also been very deliberate time found to see people, take the time to have coffee, share a moment, laugh, cry and be real with my village. These relationships are so very precious and I feel like 2020 has provided the clarity needed to see this.

For our family we are eagerly awaiting the summer holidays for a much needed holiday break away - the first real "family holiday" for us in many years. I am sure the reality will be very different from the current image in my head, but the opportunity to create memories and spend time with my children is something I am very much looking forward to.



Volunteer Awards

For those who didn't tune in at the time, we held our Volunteer Awards Celebration on the 5th October via Facebook Live on our Public Page. There were a few nerves and it certainly was a learning curve, but a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our hard working volunteers, and so lovely to have such great engagement from those we spoke to on the night, but also reading back the comments on the post later.

Volunteer of the month is a wonderful way to show appreciation to a volunteer who has made a difference for you, your family or your club. <https://multiples.org.nz/volunteer-of-the-month/>

Annual General Meeting

As I write this we are a couple of weeks away from holding the Multiples NZ AGM, this is usually part of our National Training Forum weekend but this year we will be holding this via ZOOM meeting, once again we are in full swing planning and preparing and a big thank you to the Executive Team who spend many long hours on this each year.

40th Birthday

2020 is the 40th AGM for Multiples NZ (formerly New Zealand Multiple Birth Association), there was a wonderful plan for cake, champagne, looking back at the many many volunteers over the 40 years, a bit more champagne, and dancing late into the night. Now instead we as with so many things this year are working on Plan B - a slow burn of looking back, looking forward, appreciating those who have paved

the way for us, sharing and enjoying a journey as we make our way through our 40th year and party at our 41st - to be held in Christchurch November 6th & 7th 2021!

WINZ Home Help Grant - Multiple Birth Criteria

For families who qualify through the Multiple Birth criteria of the WINZ Home Help grant, this benefit is not means tested. You are most likely eligible under this criteria if:

You (or your partner) have given birth to twins or adopted two children from the same pregnancy and have another child in your care under the age of five years-old or you (or your partner) have given birth to or have adopted triplets, or higher order multiples (you do not have to have another child in your care to qualify). You (or your partner) must be a New Zealand citizen or permanent resident, AND you must normally live in New Zealand and intend to stay here.

Parents who have given birth to, or have adopted twins can get 240 hours to be used within 12 months. Those who have given birth to, or adopted triplets or more, are entitled to 1560 hours, to be used within 24 months. Home Help is granted from the date that the babies are born if they are born at home, or from the date that they are discharged from the hospital.

You may use your allotted hours in any way that suits your family needs, i.e. short term full-time help, or longer term part-time help. However, there is no further entitlement once the hours are used up or once the maximum period has ended.

President's Summer Report (continued)

For information on payments and the forms required visit our website - <https://multiples.org.nz/government-assistance/>

If the Home Help is provided by an agency that is GST registered, GST will need to be added to the total payment amount. The home helper is responsible for paying his/her own taxes and ACC levies to IRD. In some circumstances, the home helper may also receive financial assistance towards his/her travel costs.

Member Discounts

The Multiples NZ business discount programme continues to be a valuable benefit of member-

ship and our volunteer Executive work hard to keep details up to date and add more businesses to the list. We do need to protect these discounters because of their value, which is why we maintain the discount codes within the Members Only section of our website. Access details to the Members Only section are available through our Multiples Clubs.

As always, you can contact me
via email at:
president@multiples.org.nz

I would love to hear from you.



Heather is mum to seven year old twins—Cameron and Kaitlyn, as well as ten year old daughter Amelia. The family live in Karaka, Auckland.





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Stress, Love and Multiples

John Cowan (Guest Contributor) shares how stress can impact on our relationships and what we can do about it.

Even if we hadn't just been through the craziest year I can remember, if you're a parent then you automatically have stress in your life – doubly or triply so if you have multiples.

As your emotional and mental output has swollen to cope with new demands (babies and COVID, for example) you have possibly amazed yourself how much you can actually cope with. But too much stress, or stress for too long, results in bits and pieces of your world starting to ache and fail. Stress is like stretch-marks on your brain. Stress hits your mind – anxiety and depression are typical – and your physical health can take a hit too, but I want to talk about how it impacts your relationships.

Straight up, I have to confess my wife and I produced our family in the lazy and unexciting one-child-at-a-time method, but that was quite stressful enough. I can only imagine (probably imperfectly) how much extra strain coping with multiples would be. The smallest connection to the world of multiples that I can claim is that, a long time ago, my mother told me that my oldest brother, sixteen years my senior, had had a stillborn twin brother. Long after my mother passed away, I mentioned this to my brother, assuming he had always known about his twin. He was shocked and very moved – he had never been told. He experienced, I think, quite real grief at the loss of his twin sibling; though he never knew him, nor even knew of his existence until I told him decades later. The twin-bond is a mystery to me, but it is obviously very profound.

During my years at Parenting Place I also had quite a bit to do with parents of multiples and learnt something of their challenges but I could never presume my 'book-learning' compares with their lived experience of parenting multiples. So I have no experience of parenting multiples but I do have some wretched first-hand experience of the impact of stress. Too many events piled up in my life in too short a time and I burnt-out, around the time our first child was born. I became really unwell and anxious. As awful as that time was, it has given me empathy for parents under pressure and a keen desire to learn what helps.

I want to look at how to reduce stress and then suggest a few things that make your relationship more stress-proof.

Planning and patience

Maybe you feel a victim of your own fertility – too much family, too soon – and you feel robbed of some of the things you had hoped for: a career, study goals, financial security, travel, a lovely home etc. Good news: you CAN have it all, but... not straightaway. The arrival of infants in your life is not a cancellation of all your dreams, it's a different dream that is just putting those other dreams on hold for a while. Plan, and be patient. Adjust your time table. You can still reach all your goals. Maybe you will graduate at 30 instead of 25, and have a couple of beautiful children as well as a degree.

"Settle for less and settle for mess" – is a one of the best pieces of advice I ever got. If you try to maintain the same standard of life-

style you had before children, you are going to stress yourself (and probably your children). Relax. Settle for holidays at a nearby beach rather than Disneyland (who is travelling overseas these days anyway?). Clean your house up when the kids go flatting. When those kids are grown, they will not remember much about how pristine your house was, but they will remember games, laughter and fun times together.

Don't get Pinterest stress

If you want a miserable journey, play "Better Car, Worse Car". As drivers come towards you, compare their car with your car. Unless you are very rich, you won't travel far before you hate your car. Comparisons always seem to drag us down, and social media now provides new opportunities for excruciating comparisons of our parenting. Just look on Pinterest to see things posted by mothers with time, money and postgraduate degrees in design. The thing to remember is that we tend to compare our worst with other people's best. When people post on Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest, we are seeing their triumphs, their best achievements. That beautiful birthday cake, that stunning bedroom design, those wonderful handmade toys, that wonderful picture of a whole crop of happy clean children... those pictures can make us feel excruciatingly jealous and like a crushed failure as a parent. But nobody really lives life like their social media posts. Straight after those pictures were taken (and retouched and enhanced before posting) a toddler knocked that cake over, a kid pooped in that bed, a dog chewed the toy and that family had a screaming fight. These years of parenting are too special to waste worrying about what oth-



er people think about your nursery décor or whether your kids' fashions are on point. And if you are stressed by worrying about what your parents or parents-in-law think about your parenting, here's a tip: ask their advice. About everything. You don't have to follow it, people just love to be asked, and will love you for asking.

Call in all the favours

Apparently, the crowning distinction of the human species is that we can communicate and cooperate. Never in history, in any culture, have families with young children been expected to do it all on their own. We are communal beasts. There is no shame in asking for help and calling in favours, and with multiples, you especially need too. Don't be too proud or shy, and don't assume people will know what you need and automat-

ically offer. Most people need a simple request just to overcome their own shyness and reluctance to step in, in case they are not wanted. In the same way that you would leap to help your mate if you knew she needed a hand – and enjoy doing it – they will leap to help you.

Care for your children's biggest asset – you

You already sense how important you are to your children's welfare. You play a huge role in ensuring their health, safety and happiness. Parenthood has taught you that you have reserves of strength that you never knew you had. Yes, you might even be superhuman. Even so, you do have limits. Because you are so important, you need maintenance. To give your kids (and your partner and your job) more, you need to put

more into yourself. No-one has enough time or money, but you need to take some of that scarce time and limited money and spend it on yourself. "Noooo!" screams your inner martyr. "I'd be such a neglectful parent if I did that!" "NO!" responds your more logical self. "Tired, bored, burnt out parents are neglectful, even if they are on the job twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. My kids deserve better than that." Your logical self is quite right. You need coffee with your mates, time at the gym, an hour with a book, a pet, a play on the piano, a snooze, a yoga session... maybe even a weekend away. Now even your logical self is looking at me funny: "How on earth can a parent of multiples manage those things?" Look further up this list: planning, patience and calling in favours will help, so will tag-teaming with your partner, but the thing that will help you the most to get the maintenance you need is

Stress, Love and Multiples (continued)

John Cowan (Guest Contributor) shares how stress can impact on our relationships and what we can do about it.

to really, really believe you are not being selfish. Your well-being is so important for your kids: they need a switched on, refreshed and energised parent. You are doing it for them, so you will make it a priority and you will find a way!

One more tip about getting breaks: work deals with other parents. "How about I look after all your kids this Saturday so you can have a few hours off? And, maybe, later in the month you could give me a break".

Keep an eye on the upside – and the light at the end of the tunnel.

Right up there with the phrase, "Settle for less and settle for mess" is this most wonderful piece of wisdom: "This, too, shall pass." The mess, chaos, nappies, noise, paracetamol and snot will not last for ever. My experience is that parenting gets easier and easier. Nothing is as hard as that first year of parenthood. Yes, there are always challenges for parents, even when your children have grown to be adults, but you get on and you get stronger and they get easier and the sun comes out and there are wonderful times and and ... really, you will be fine.

Now let's look at stress-proofing your relationship. There can be lots of things that could go wrong in a relationship – bickering, chilly distance, a loss of trust, things failing to spark in the bedroom and so on. As real as each of these problems are, they may actually be symptoms of stress. If things are not going well in your relationship, often a good starting point is to ask, "What is the major stress in

our life at the moment?" It might be debt, sick parents, job stress, children with behavioural challenges – all things that seem completely unrelated to the relationship problem but that is one of the wretched things about stress: the pressure might be coming from one point of your life but the symptoms of stress pop up in another.

By the way, it only takes one person in the relationship to be feeling stress for there to be problems. And their experience of stress might be quite different from yours. You might be perfectly comfortable relocating your home twice in the last twelve months, but it might be pushing your partner to the brink. You might be perfectly comfortable mortgaging your house for a business deal but it might be really stressing your partner.

What sort of relationship weathers stress the best? A *grown-up one*. We fall into love for all sorts of wonderful romantic and sexual reasons. When you are knee deep in babies, romance and sex suddenly lose some of their appeal and lustre. Love needs to grow up. The best definition for workable, practical, durable, satisfying grown-up love is "Desiring the very best for the other person". Love becomes an active, caring, nurturing thing. It survives stress. Emotional attraction ebbs and flows in any relationship – you can't depend on it to be the glue to hold you together in turbulent, stressful times. But the type of love that always seeks the very best for the other person survives even those times when you are a bit sick of each other! The best thing about this type of love is that it creates the ideal envi-

ronment for the romantic, emotional and sexual dimensions of love to grow back again. The early years of parenthood sometimes knock those aspects of relationship right out of the park for a while but be patient. With unselfish, generous, grown-up love, the relationship will still grow, and you can have passion and romance again, without having to restart your Tinder account.

Here's another attitude to stress-proof your relationship: change will happen anyway so why not welcome it. I have had five marriages. I was married to a young sexy bride. Not many years later, I was married to an awesome but tired mother of young children. Over the next few years, I shared married life with a student and then a social worker, and I am currently happily partnered with a wise and mature CEO of a big organisation. Of course, all these marriages have been to the same woman, but Naomi now is not the person I first married. In so many ways she is different, she has grown and matured. If I had tried to cling hold of the beautiful young woman I first met, and resented and rejected her growth and change, I would have missed out on a wonderful journey with an ever-changing and even more beautiful woman. She, in turn, has accepted my changes. Not all changes are wonderful. The man she married had more hair and slimmer jeans, but she understands change. She accepts it. She accepts me. I am so fortunate.

Two final attitudes to stress proof your relationship: grace and gratitude. Being in a long-term relationship gives you lots of opportunities to discover annoying things about each other. Researcher Kira Birdett

asked 800 people who was the most annoying person in their world and the most common answer was, their spouse! Much of the annoyance comes from the simple fact that they are different from you: they are who they are... and it is not their fault you chose them! But here is the mystery: some couples split apart but most do not; as they get older, the annoyance remains but they get used to it, and they get on with it, and they still love each other. Yes, some problems can be solved – there are wonderful problem solving techniques for couples – but, honestly, a lot of stuff never gets sorted.

In the end, most people reckon it does not really matter. “We are different. We disagree on some things. There are some things you do and some things about you that annoy me and always will but... I love you even more than I did at the start”. The real keys are **grace** – which is generous, kind love that does not keep score – and **gratitude**, being thankful that they love you. Grace is knowing our partners are not perfect and loving them anyway; gratitude is recognizing the truly good things about them and acknowledging the amazing privilege we have to share life with

them. So, embrace reality, and then embrace each other. Life is not always perfect, but with some grace and gratitude, you can have many perfect moments.

There is so much more about parenting, relationships and stress that could be said, and needs to be said. You really would be wise to find out about ways to treat and recover from stress. Often the advice involves improving your eating, sleeping, exercise and social contact, which is all wonderful but so hard to get if you are stuck at home with a kids. You will have to be creative!

Lastly, maybe stress has really got to you, like it got me. Too many parents struggle on when they could be recovering so much faster with some help. That help might be from a counsellor, a good friend, a parent, a minister, but I reckon whatever you do, it's good to have your doctor on board.

John Cowan works in a number of roles including as a parenting expert with Parenting Place. He's an accomplished author, media producer and seminar presenter. He's been a hospital scientist in neurophysiology, a youth worker, a social worker and a minister, but his primary passion is communication: mainly as a speaker to live audiences, and as a writer. His wit and humour have been enjoyed by tens of thousands of people in live-audiences around the country.

John hosts 'Real Life', a weekly nationwide chat show featuring a different high-profile guest every week. John talks with them about their life, their upbringing, their passions and their view of the world.

<https://www.reallife.nz/>



This is Where the Magic Happened

Lindsay McGrath (Alumni member Multiples Clubs in the United Kingdom and the United States) tells us about a special relationship that came about from a kind gesture.

My name is Lindsay McGrath, my husband is Matt McGrath. We have a six year old boy called Ollie, and our twins Emma and Paige McGrath, who are now two years old.

In January 2018, after a very difficult pregnancy involving Selective Intrauterine Growth Restriction (SIUGR), myself, my husband and our little boy were blessed to have welcomed our gorgeous little identical girls born at 32 weeks by elective caesarean section.

It was a tough time, juggling two newborns in NICU and a four year old at home. But we were extremely lucky that even though they were born early, they were born perfectly healthy, just on the little side. A little oxygen and violet light needed for one, and then we were transferred to North Shore Hospital Specialist Care Baby Unit (SCBU) four days after birth. Being

closer to home, especially after a caesarean section was a relief. It felt like such a big milestone to have graduated from the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) so quickly.

Everything was going really well to start with. I was expressing small amounts at all hours of the day. My husband running into the hospital to drop off the small amount I had managed to express, normally at midnight so we could get through the rest of the night before I went back there in the morning. The nurses would shout out and say the milkman is here! The girls were doing well and putting on weight really nicely, which was amazing. However the bigger they got the more milk they needed, and that's when the stress levels started hitting the roof. Everyday was filled with expressing, feeding and spending what felt like hours doing the numbers to see if they would have enough to get them through the night, before I returned the next day.

Across from us in SCBU were a lovely family. They also had twin identical girls who had grown amazingly and they were working their way through rooming in, to get themselves home. Unfortunately we didn't get to spend much time together, but the time we did get was lovely. We normally both sat expressing opposite each other and comparing stories of twin baby growth.

A few days later it came to the point where we were having to talk to the nurses about moving over to give some formula feeds, as I just was not producing enough milk. We have absolutely nothing against formula, my older boy was born with an extreme tongue tie so we moved to formula feeds fairly early with him to help him grow. We believe fed is always best. However there is always a small part of you that feels really disappointed, that you have somehow failed. It's silly really, but it's there nonetheless. We started mixing formula with expressed milk. But the smallest of my girls was really starting to struggle with her tummy because of it. It was getting really distressing watching her wriggle uncomfortably all the time, she was wasting so much energy that she needed to use to grow!

This is when the magic happened ... the lovely family across from us were all done, they had completed their SCBU journey and it was time to take home their gorgeous, beautifully chunky baby girls. The hospital lactation consultant came running over to tell me that this lovely lady was willing to donate her excess milk to anyone that needed it. Let me tell you, there was SOOO much! This super mama had worked religiously on feeding and pumping for her girls. There was so much it, it al-



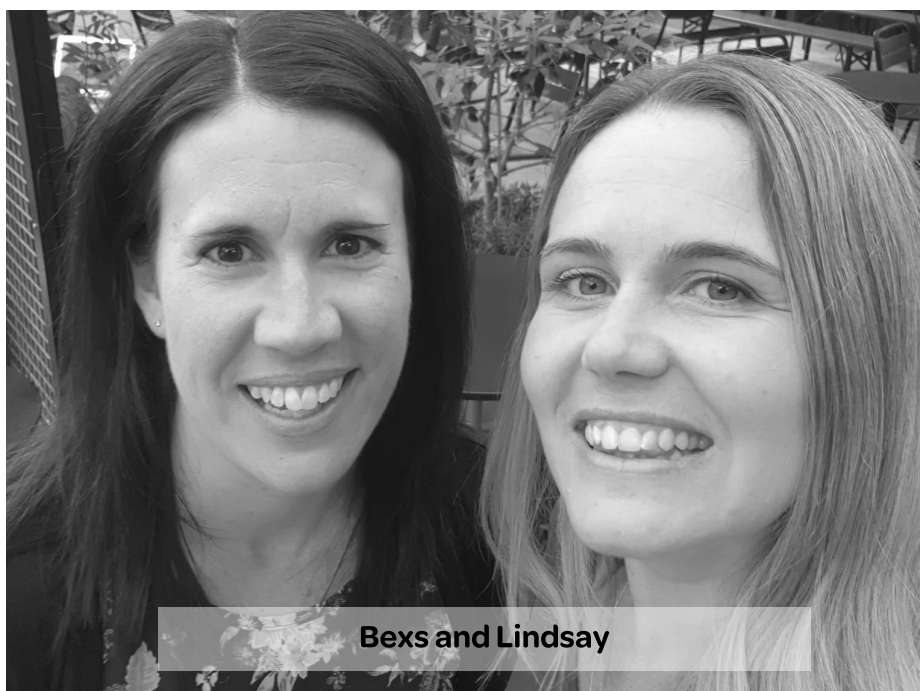


most filled the freezer in the unit! But we needed to be quick if we wanted it as there was paperwork that had to be signed if it was agreed. We went to talk to her before they were all packed up to leave to ask if my babies could be considered to receive her donor milk. Of course the amazing woman she is, she didn't even bat an eyelid. Just said of course you can, have it all! There wasn't a moment's hesitation from this wonderful lady. She had no idea how much those few words meant to me and my family. I burst out crying, then she was crying, and the nurses were nearly all crying. The relief I felt in that moment was huge (and, you know, post pregnancy hormones, so huge is an extreme understatement!). I am so happy to call this lovely lady my friend, she helped me feed and grow my beautiful girls. I am sure we would have been in SCBU a lot longer if it wasn't for her generosity. She is, and will forever be a part of our lives. We don't get to catch up too often because ... twins. But there

is a bond that will never be broken.

She is the person that picked me up when I was so low and desperate. She is an angel and we all love you very much Bexs Hewitt.

Lindsay and Matt live in Beach Haven, Auckland; and are parents to three beautiful children - Ollie, Emma and Paige.



Bexs and Lindsay

Memories With my Twins

Lynette Strawbridge (Gemini Club Alumni–Hutt Valley) shares memories of raising her twin boys.

I read an article in a Kaitiaki magazine which is put out by the New Zealand Nurses Organisation (NZNO). It had an article in it asking for stories about Plunket Nurses. I decided to write about the Plunket Nurse I had when I had with my twins, because she was so lovely. The promotion was sponsored by Huggies and Plunket, and was for an Eyebright Award. I got a call from one of the organisers who said they had received a letter from the mother of a seven year old about the same Plunket nurse. So both she and I wrote in, with my letter about my then 20 year old twins. The nurse was Maureen Noble, and was one of the finalists. I hadn't heard anything more but still had the mobile number of the organiser. When I rang, she was with the finalists at a luncheon with Helen Clarke. The organiser handed her phone to Maureen, and Maureen thanked me for nominating her. She said she remembered me having an older son and the twin boys.

Maureen and two other Plunket nurses won. Maureen was special because she managed to get me a Karitane nurse and home help when I had my twins, even though I probably didn't qualify having an eight year old as well as the twins. I think she realised that I had very little support. She would always write lovely comments in their Plunket Books. When I caught up with Maureen once she showed me a scrapbook of all the news articles about her award and she told me it was the highlight of her career.

The winning Plunket Nurses for 2003 were Anne Griffiths of Blenheim (left); Maureen Nobel of

Upper Hutt (right) and Leeanne Brown of Palmerston North (sitting), and a myriad of hugabears, a consumer fundraiser for Plunket. The three nurses' stand-out tributes were chosen from hundreds of letters written by parents about their Plunket Nurses. The letters described the depth of kindness, knowledge, support, trust, care and understanding of Plunket Nurses who made a big difference to families at times of daily routine, challenge, stress, sickness, crisis, sadness and loss.

Several years later, in November 2009, I received a text message from a nursing colleague of mine. She asked me if I had seen Maureen's death notice. I ended up attending Maureen's funeral. I made myself known to some of the nurses she had worked with, and they mentioned about the award in the service. That day I met Maureen's sister who had attended the luncheon with the award ceremony and met Maureen's children. I love that I had the opportunity to honour this beautiful lady who was such an

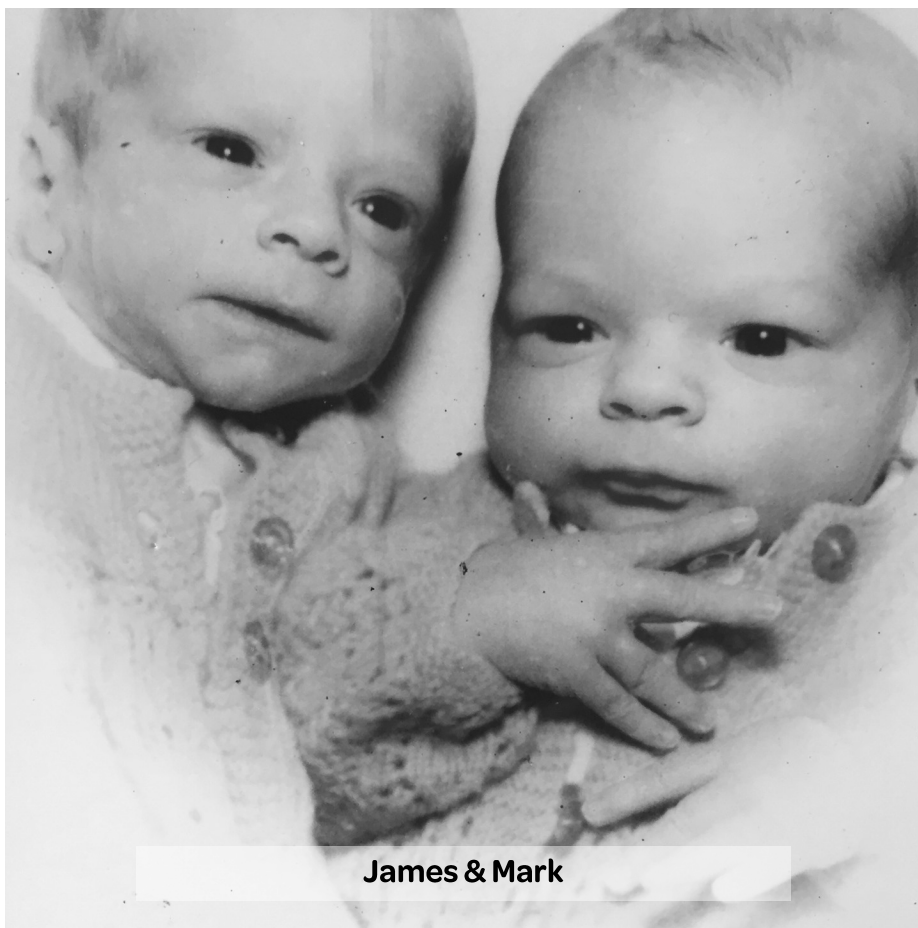


inspiration. I was managing fairly well for the first few weeks with my babies, but then found with breastfeeding and little support more challenging. Maureen made my journey with twins that much easier.

I was so thrilled when I found out I was having my twins. After they were born, I even got a card from a lady that had been in the waiting room when I went in for the scan. I guess she must have remembered my name.

When I was living in Wainuiomata, which is a valley close to Lower Hutt, I decided to set up a twin group. I realised that it was difficult for some mums to travel over the hill to the Gemini Club (which is what the Hutt Valley club was called then). I had rung Plunket nurses to get twin contacts. We took turns at each of our homes. Once I had 18 children at the meeting at my house. I have just recently connected with Hutt Valley Multiples as a volunteer and have been of some assistance so far.

My twins were the wonderful bonus when I reconciled with my husband after being separated for nearly four years. I had a two



James & Mark

bedroom flat and when the twins came along had to upsize. My older son was nearly eight years old when the twins were born. However, we separated after four years. I know what it's like having been a single mother of three sons. This has been both a challenging and rewarding journey, and I'm so thankful to be able to reconnect with the Hutt Valley Multiples club

after all these years.

My twins turned 38 in October and they are opposites in so many ways. I love the bond they have even though they have completely different lives. Thanks for allowing me to share some of these stories with you.



Lynette lives in Lower Hutt, and was a member of the Gemini Club (now known as Hutt Valley Multiples),

Falling in Love With Your Twins—One at a Time

Joan Friedman PhD, author and psychotherapist (United States), shares some tips on navigating your relationship with your children.



Often mothers who are pregnant with their second child have expectable feelings of trepidation about how the birth of the new baby will impact their attachment with their firstborn. Moms who have already confronted this situation reference a well – known vignette to help expectant moms develop the emotional resonance necessary to understand and manage the new family dynamics. Think about how you would feel if your husband came home with a new wife and told you that she would be living with the two of you from now on. All kidding aside, most family systems adjust to a new sibling in due time.

However, unlike parents of singletons awaiting a second birth, parents expecting two babies at the same time confront uniquely different challenges. Since the physical and emotional demands of caring for two infants are taxing beyond belief, they do not have the *luxury* of feeling attached to each baby right away. I have counseled many parents who express tremendous conflict about having different feelings for each baby. Yet, after these incompatible feelings are articulated and reframed within an empathic perspective, the situation can be ameliorated.

How do you fall in love with each twin simultaneously and equally? YOU DON'T. The goal is to love each twin *individually*. Let me share a story.

From time to time I would run into an acquaintance of mine who is the mother of 2 ½ year old boy/girl fraternal twins. For the most part she would share information and stories about her son, making casual references to her daughter. In our last conversation

she told me how her son had begun to use the potty by himself. Naturally she was thrilled and related how she had shared the exciting news with her friends and relatives. When I inquired about her daughter, her affect switched from one of joy to concern. She spoke about her daughter's refusal to eat dinner and about how this feeding difficulty reminded her of the eating issues that had caused concern since her daughter's birth.

Mom and her infant son were discharged together from the hospital while her daughter remained in the NICU for a week because of low birth weight. When she did come home, mom had to take her to the doctor's office each day to be weighed. Later on, difficulties with swallowing necessitated extensive occupational therapy to teach her daughter how to eat properly. Her daughter's struggles made her feel helpless, inadequate, and anxious. She resented how her daughter's arrival home made her feel as if the loving bond that she had created with her son had been disrupted. She admitted to feeling terrible shame and self – loathing because of these thoughts.

I reassured her that these sentiments are normal and expectable for families raising twins. Studies show that the specific circumstances of twins' birth often perpetuate lasting impressions in respect to parental perspectives and feelings. For example, some parents feel more positive feelings for the child who comes home from the hospital first, the child who weighs more, the child who sleeps more, or the child who is more sociable – the list goes on and on. The important thing to remember is that these initial feelings or perceptions do not have to remain intractable or interminable. They can be articulated, reframed, and re-worked.

Case in point: My acquaintance called to tell me about a transformative moment that she experienced with her daughter a few weeks ago. She described it as follows: The other morning I told my daughter that I had been saving these very special hair ornaments for her. Now that her hair had grown so long, it was the perfect time

to see how they looked. I carried my daughter to my bathroom. We both stared at our reflection together in the mirror. We experienced a "falling in love" moment – I told her how beautiful she looked and how much I loved her. She felt my authenticity, love, and affirmation. Our relationship has been different since that moment. We are going out for coffee by ourselves, and I am making a special effort to make up for lost time by forgiving myself, enjoying what I have recaptured, and creating more alone time with her.

Comparisons with twins are unavoidable and inevitable. Nonetheless, being able to love each child by creating a strong connection to each one is key to successful parenting. Taking the time to be alone with each child will help your twins forge healthy emotional relationships with each other and the outside world.

Dr. Friedman is a prominent and well-respected twin expert who shares her passionate views and insights about twins and their emotional needs with twins and their families throughout the world.



Read more at:

www.joanafriedmanphd.com

National Training Forum Announcement

National Training Forum 2021



National Training Forum
2021

Save The Date!

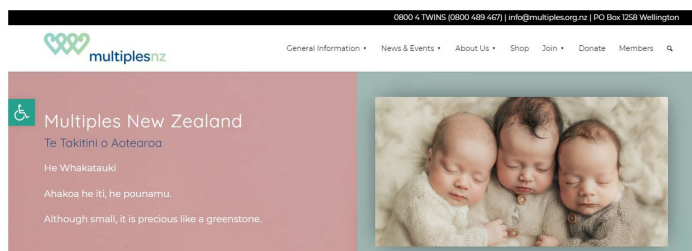
6 & 7 November 2021
Sudima Hotel
Christchurch



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Website Login - Members only area

Did you know that Multiples NZ is specifically designed to help you on your journey to raising multiples? It is bursting with information from the early stages of pregnancy to parenting teenagers and beyond. Through our affiliated membership with Multiples NZ you are able to access and download our quarterly magazine, and browse our wide range of nationwide discounts via this login.



Please ask your
local club for your
login details.

Do Multiples *Really* Threaten Relationships?

Terri-Lynn Mitchell (Multiples Whangarei, Multiples NZ Editor Alumni), shares what can push your relationship buttons with multiples. (*Previously published in Multiple Matters Autumn 2011*).

In 2009 the Gosselin family in America divorced, the question of whether multiple births threaten marriages has featured regularly in the media. With eight children (twins and sextuplets), the Gosselin family is at the very extreme end of the multiples club, but what about Kiwi families where we are mostly looking at mum, dad and twins, with a one or two siblings thrown in (and families with triplets and higher order multiples are even more rare).

One of the hardest things, when looking at any question as to what contributes to making relationships shaky, is that families are so different. A young, inexperienced couple may find one baby very stressful, and twins doubly so—yet some younger parents just seem to take it all in their stride. A couple who have waited years and many failed IVF attempts for any children, may well enjoy the stress of twins or other multiples; or find it all unexpectedly overwhelming. A couple with, say, two older children and the surprise addition of twins (like myself) or three other children and the planned addition of twins (like my sister), will probably find it tough going for a while, until everyone adapts; not just because of the twins, but because of a suddenly very large family. What stresses one relationship may not be a stress to another.

What causes relationship stress after multiples?

So, what kinds of things place stress on a marriage/relationship

when twins or triplets are added to the equation? After looking through a lot of articles that I collected up last year, there are some common themes as to what causes problems.

Financial stress

The financial burden of raising multiples is huge. Often mothers needed to stay home with their babies, as they were unable to afford childcare to enable them to go back to work (or their babies were too sick), and many families used up all their savings. Debt and money worries caused huge emotional strain in the relationships discussed in the various articles. Most families did not anticipate just how much it would cost to equip themselves for, and then look after, twins or triplets. As well, the addition of multiples often necessitates a bigger house and vehicle.

The emotional and physical load

The emotional and physical toll of looking after multiples is high. It is really hard work looking after two or three babies, and especially if they are premature or have ongoing health problems. Parents may well feel exhausted and overwhelmed, and there is a strong possibility of postnatal depression. Add to this, isolation from friends or family (it is sometimes easier to just stay home!) and leaving a job that was enjoyed. There is also a big adjustment to the reality of being at home with babies, if multiples are the first babies. One

mother of triplets commented: "I became a machine, sterilising bottles, feeding and changing nappies. There was no let up. I'd been a happy, bubbly person but I totally lost my personality."

Relationship killers

Aside from the financial, physical and emotional problems identified above, most of the articles highlighted some key mistakes that couples themselves identified, often in hindsight:

- Leaving one parent to do the bulk of the baby rearing, whilst the other worked extra hours to earn more, was a common mistake cited; and more dire if it meant parents spending long periods of time on their own with multiples. Not only did parents in this situation become lonely, but their couple relationship really suffered and the primary child-carer became chronically envious and angry.
- Not recognising that their relationship was drifting into dangerous waters until it was too late, was another problem identified.

So, is all this bad news? No way!! Amongst all the gloomy articles about twins and the divorce rate, there were just as many positive ones, telling how multiples had enhanced relationships because couples learned to really work as a team.



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Save the Date
Multiples Awareness Week

Monday 1st -
Sunday 7th
March 2021



2021
Theme:

**Together
with our
children**

Volunteer of the Month

Each month we celebrate one of the amazing volunteers from our Multiples NZ community.

Volunteers are the backbone of our Clubs and our community. We would like to acknowledge the hard work of our volunteers through our Volunteer of the Month Award. The Volunteer of the Month award is for volunteers who have provided exceptional service for the betterment of families with multiples within their local area or nationally. The winners of this monthly award will go into the running for the Multiples NZ Volunteer of the Year Award, which will be announced with the Multiples NZ Volunteer Awards.

August 2020 Winner Desiree Morgan Multiples Counties Manukau

Desiree is that hidden gem we all dream of finding! Far from an easy road to joining our community, she works tirelessly to help others even when her personal load is huge. Desiree is happy to share her knowledge and story, she has four kids with different diagnosis all technically "special needs" although I am loath to use that term because they are amazing kids and that is a testament to the patience, resilience, advocacy and love that their Mum (and Dad) provide them. This lady is constantly fighting – for her children, her club members, the wider community to get the support they deserve.



September 2020 Winner Liz Campbell Multiples Otago

Liz has been the backbone of this club through our toughest years, her motivation and vision kept the club afloat when we weren't sure how we would keep going. With only 3 members on our committee for a long time, we were lucky that Liz was one of them. Her drive was one of the major factors that got us to where we are currently. (A strong committee of dedicated members and lots of new members).

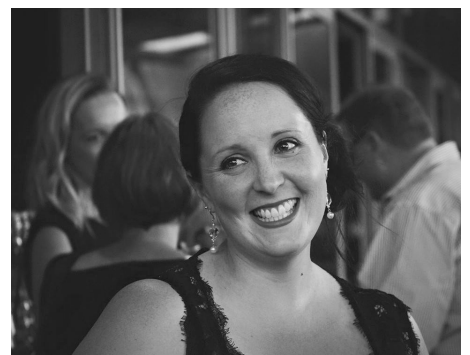
She stepped down as President when we desperately needed a Treasurer but continued to give direction and leadership within her role as Treasurer. Liz is one of the hardest working people I know and does it all while being an awesome Mum to her beautiful twin girls. Liz always has the best interests of our members at heart and we are all so lucky to have her. This nomination has been a long time coming and we want to acknowledge everything she has done for this club.

To list everything she has done would take forever, she's been the real MVP (Most Valuable Player) of Multiples Otago for the last few years!



October 2020 Winner Alisha Peter Multiples Canterbury

Alisha only joined our committee in July when we put the call out for a new magazine editor. She has hit the ground running and done an incredible job transforming our club magazine. The magazine was 'tired' and needed a good overhaul. Alisha with support from Caroline, another of our new volunteers, has given it a whole new lease of life. As a result the content has been strengthened and members have responded very positively. A whole new design upgrade was rolled out for the October/November issue. Alisha is also extremely organised, always delivers on time and sets clear goals for the magazine which ensures that a range of interesting content is included in the magazine. Alisha has succeeded in increasing member engagement and making the magazine more relevant for them. Her friendly manner makes people want to be involved in both magazine contributions and the wider club community.



Nominate a volunteer at:

multiples.org.nz/volunteer-of-the-month/



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Facebook Support Groups

Along with our Multiples NZ Facebook page we also support the following specific needs groups:

- Multiples NZ
- Triplets Plus NZ
- School Aged Multiples NZ
- Special Needs Multiples NZ
- Multiples NZ Bereaved Whānau Group
- Multiples NZ Public Page
- Multiples NZ National Training Forum Event Page

We support these externally administrated groups:

- Single Parents of Multiples
- Dads of Multiples
- Twins NZ Buy & Sell
- Multiple Birth PND Support NZ
- NZ NICU, SCBU and NNU Parents Support Group

We support our committees through these specific groups:

- Multiples NZ for Committees
- Multiples NZ Presidents Only
- Multiples NZ Newsletter Editors
- Multiples NZ Discount Coordinators
- Multiples NZ Treasurers Only



Multiples NZ



@multiplesnz



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Let's Talk About Burnout

Desiree Morgan (Multiples Counties-Manukau) shares her burnout story, and remind us all to practice selfcare.

Hey everyone, this magazine issue I thought I'd touch on the mental load of looking after children with high needs, and balancing their needs with everyone else in the family's needs as well.

Since the last issue, Auckland and the rest of New Zealand had lockdown 2.0. Our second lockdown did not go as well as the first lockdown. The boys literally went to bed expecting school photos the next day and woke up to being told there was no kindy for a few weeks. To say this one hit them harder, and ramped up their anxiety, would be a bit of an understatement. They spent the lockdown tearful, frustrated, and didn't understand why it was happening. Don't get me wrong - they knew about COVID-19, they just didn't see why COVID-19 had to mess with the normalcy that they had enjoyed for a few months. It was also challenging dealing with the complacency of others who saw COVID as less of a big deal than we did, and it definitely made for a more testing time this time around.

The only one who's mental state did improve was the teens. Cheyenne has had a really rough year, so being able to be at home with the people she loves was healing for her. Even when three of those people she loves were in a semi constant state of anxiety, and regular meltdowns were a fairly common occurrence. And this is where the mental load comes in. We all love our children, and we all worry about our children. And usually I tick along pretty nicely. I look after the kids, stay really positive about life in general, and do my volunteer roles with no issue. But at the time of writing this, I've finally hit burnout. Can I

just say burnout is the weirdest feeling. You know what you need to do, and want to do everything, but even the things you usually love to do feel like the biggest chores.

Burnout is such a quiet and sneaky little thing. The day to day life that you and the family lead is routine, and everything is fine, until one day it's not. Now I will preface this by saying that on top of the children readjusting after another lockdown, and us having to find new ways to make them feel secure and deal with behaviours. We have now just found out our youngest may have a genetic disorder, so that very well could have been the tipping point for burnout. In fact, I am writing part of this while at the hospital while he has yet another test to see what is going on.

You definitely don't just need to be a parent of a child or children to be hit with burnout. This year has been a huge test on everyone! Especially if you, like me, are one of those people who feels the need to do everything themselves. So many multiple parents I know are fiercely independent and have the can do, will do attitude. I admit, I am probably my own worst enemy, and I don't allow anyone to help. I'm a huge advocate of selfcare for anyone that isn't me! But statistically burnout is higher for parents of children with complex needs, as often they are juggling everyday life stressors with medical appointments, conditions where they need to be always 'on', and how to afford all the extras their children require above and beyond what funding helps with.

So burnout snuck up on me quietly

to start with. I was finding having the motivation to do over and above what I'd generally do a little harder than usual. My to do list wasn't getting everything ticked off by the end of the week. I had a meeting with the speech therapist and early intervention teacher, and didn't even remember what we'd talked about until I got the follow up email with the plan. I started getting snappy and finding it hard to find nicer ways of saying things. I was still able to push through, so didn't realise I was getting close to being utterly done. And then we had to take our youngest to hospital. We thought he had a concussion and haha, turns out we were wrong.

I was in hospital with him when Multiples NZ had their volunteer awards. Normally I'm super invested in this event, and I just wasn't. I think that's when I knew that I had burnt out. I wasn't on the way to burn out. I was right there. It was a pretty confronting moment for me, as I pride myself on nothing in my personal life getting in the way of me doing my volunteering roles or helping other people when they need it. To realise I was just done was scary, there really is no other word for it.

There was lots that lead to this point, guilt because I was always so focused on the duo and their needs, that I had completely missed that my youngest had something going on above and beyond his very obvious autism. Guilt that I was so busy helping others that I didn't notice that I had a little boy at home who needed my help. And anger that no one else who was involved with him had noticed either. So those contributed, plus for the last six years I have run off getting things

done with energy. I have moved from one thing I wanted to achieve to another, and there is a lot of pride in achieving them. However I wasn't seeing that no one can run like that forever. In my case I volunteer, in others cases it'll be working, studying, trying to juggle their child with disabilities or additional needs, along with the needs over every other child in the house, and even fighting for services. Because one thing I've learnt in the last nearly six years, is that no services come easily in New Zealand unless you are extremely lucky or have a decent disposable income that you can pull from. There's the medical appointments, the unknowns that usually don't sit there and make themselves known, but it all builds up. Add in trying to maintain relationships and friendships, and staying positive, and you have a

prime scenario to make burnout more likely.

In summation, don't be like me. Make time for self-care, even if it's just a bath with candles and shaving your legs. Do something that makes you feel like you again. Find a friend/family member/partner who will give you an hour to just breathe. Sometimes even allowing yourself that moment to breathe can seem like taking too much time, but you need to. Walk away from things that no longer bring you joy, we can't be everything to everyone.

Our most important job is to honour ourselves, so that we can then take care of the people we love, and be passionate about the causes that ignite our inner fires. I will be trying VERY hard to take my own advice!

If there's anything specific you'd like me to write about in future articles or any questions you'd like me to answer, feel free to email me.

Until the next issue.

Desiree

Contact Desiree at:

specialneeds@multiples.org.nz

Desiree lives in Golflands (East Auckland), and is current President of Multiples Counties Manukau and the Special Needs Coordinator for Multiples NZ.



Editor's Note:

Desiree has now taken steps to improve her mental health and reduce her workload. We are so grateful to have Desiree in our Multiples NZ whānau and wish her and her family a happy and healthy summer holiday. You all deserve it!

Aroha mai, aroha atu

Ideas to Support Te Ao Māori

Kirsty Saxon (Editor, Multiples Canterbury) shares some ideas to incorporate Te Ao Māori into your multiples club.

Mā whero mā pango ka oti ai te mahi

With red and black the
work will be complete

Whakataukī - Proverbs

Tikanga Māori

Māori proverbs called 'whakataukī', 'whakatauākī' or 'pepeha' are sayings that reflect the thoughts, values and advice of past generations. They are usually very succinct and often use metaphor to convey key messages. A short whakataukī will often be so accurate in capturing a thought or moment, there will be little need for any other words to explain it further. Proverbs are important to the revival of Māori language – they carry flair, imagery and metaphor embodying the uniqueness of the language.

Māori proverbs comment on many aspects of Māori culture including history, religious life, conduct, ethics, land, warfare, love, marriage, and death. Some sayings refer to cultural practices or attributes that have since changed or no longer exist. However, most can be adapted and applied to present-day situations.

Māori proverbs are featured in the formal speeches heard on the ma-

rae even today. To be considered a good orator, it is important for a speaker to be able to use these sayings appropriately. For the speaker's point to be appreciated, it is essential for the audience to know the saying and to understand its meaning.

You could try and use whakataukī in your online communications, newsletters and emails. It can seem daunting trying something new, but every little bit counts towards a more inclusive community which acknowledges our cultural heritage within Aotearoa New Zealand.

Website link:

Whakataukī ideas with their meanings

<https://bit.ly/34VSj6G>

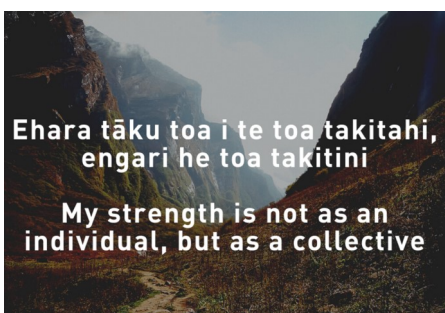
The Māori whakataukī above, "mā whero mā pango ka oti te mahi" usually refers to different peoples or groups cooperating and combining efforts to achieve their goals.

This is particularly relevant to our work within Multiples NZ and our regional committees. Cooperation suggests that people work in an atmosphere of mutual support and trust, working together cohesively, with good inter-group relations. Each other's strengths are valued. It should also foster an increasing maturity of relationship, where people are free to disagree constructively, and where both support and challenge are a part of helping teams work.

Mahi tahi

Mahi tahi or mahi ngātahi is a term used to describe the unity of people working towards a specific goal or the implementation of a task. It is the act of carrying out the task or activity for which you have come together in a common purpose. With mahi tahi we tend to see positive attitudes and behaviours such as:

- Working collaboratively
- Trust in members to deliver what they promise
- Willingness to help when needed
- Sharing of a common vision of the future
- Co-operation and blending of each others' strengths
- Positive attitudes, providing support and encouragement
- Active listening
- All members pulling their weight and in the same direction
- Consensus building
- Effective conflict resolution
- Open communication





*Your hugs
inspire ours*



We understand how important it is to start your baby's journey with the best care. That is why we've developed Huggies Newborn Nappies. Designed to gently protect baby's delicate skin, it's our way of sending a Hug to welcome your little one to the world.



Professional Development for Non-Profit Trustees

Kerri Tilby-Price (Exult NZ) shares how to stay motivated. *(Previously published Tonic Club E-Letter #354 September 28, 2020).*

Providing effective governance requires your trustees to engage with ongoing learning and professional development. However, for many trustees, taking time-out to attend a workshop or seminar can be a big ask. Check out these seven ways trustees can upskill in ten minutes or less.

Invite an Expert—Allow ten minutes at every Board meeting for an expert to talk with your trustees. They may be an expert in topics as wide as Health and Safety, Strategy, Marketing, Policy Writing, Social Media, Recruitment or Fundraising. Whatever the topics, regularly inviting an expert to your meetings is a great way to fill knowledge gaps on your Board and give outside perspectives.

Depending on the topic, you may ask the expert to give a short presentation or you could keep it as an informal question and answer session. If you let the

expert know what you are trying to achieve, they will be able to suggest the best format and if necessary, provide resources for further learning.

Watch a TED Talk or You Tube Clip—There are hundreds of fantastic online videos that can both inspire and inform your Board. Either play a clip at every Board meeting, or send a link to trustees each month so they can watch the clip in their own time. One I would highly recommend is Dan Pallotta's TED Talk: The Way We Think About Charity is Dead Wrong. It is slightly longer than 10 minutes, but definitely worth the watch.

You could also put trustees on a roster, whereby they take turns recommending a video for the following month. This way they are not only watching the video suggested, they are also watching other videos in their search to recommend.

Read an Article—There are plenty of places you can find articles about Non-Profit Governance online. This website has loads to browse, as does www.betterboards.net. Choose one to read out loud at each Board meeting or send it out ahead of time and allow ten minutes to discuss it together when you meet.

As you regularly hunt out articles, you can build up a collection of resources that trustees can refer back to as required. If your trustees actively use technology to communicate, create a shareable document with relevant links. If they do not yet maximise the cloud, simply print out the articles and keep them in a central folder.

Listen to a Podcast—If you're not a podcast listener yet, I encourage you to try it out. In a nutshell, a podcast is an online audio presentation or interview with an expert on a specific topic. You can download individual podcasts to your phone or device, and even subscribe to a podcast series so that new episodes are downloaded automatically. Then you can listen anytime, anywhere.

A quick online search for Non-Profit Podcasts will give you a list of thousands, but because podcasts range in length from 5 minutes to an hour (or more), you'll need to check out the length of the episode before you ask your trustees to tune in. The podcast series 'Conquering Non-Profit Chaos' has some 10-15 minute episodes, as does the Non-Profit Hub 'Hubcast'. However, if you can stretch your learning time a little longer, I recommend you check out 'Non-Profits are Messy' with Joan Gary.



Be the Teacher—One of the best ways to learn is to teach. On a rotating basis, ask each trustee to research best practice on a specific governance topic and report their findings at the next meeting. By asking every trustee to take a turn you will share the responsibility and ensure that different perspectives are heard. Allowing trustees to research an area they are interested in will have a better outcome than giving them a prescribed topic, so be prepared to cover a range of issues.

Invite Other Organisations—

Invite trustees from other non-profits to speak at your Board meeting about how they carry out specific governance activities. You can return the favour by speaking at their Board meeting the following month. Not only is this a good way to engage in peer learning, you may well end up collaborating in other ways if you give it a chance.

Work Through a Governance

Guide—There are hundreds of books available on Non-Profit Governance, but working through them on your own can be a bit of a struggle, especially if you're a new trustee. Consider working through the book together as a Board. Each month trustees could read a chapter in their own time, and then allow ten minutes at the Board meeting to discuss and reflect.

Be Creative and Approach Tasks in New Ways—

Think outside the box! Find ways to complete a task a little differently. Whether it's the task itself or finding a new space to tackle it in, it's up to you.

Exult has a great snackable e-book called 'Introduction to Governance'. You can purchase a PDF copy for \$15 and then distribute it to your whole Board. You should be able to work through this guide in 3-4 meetings. Order online here or email rosie@exult.co.nz to arrange your copy.



Read more at:

exult.co.nz

20 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Enrol in formal degree programs, courses or workshops.

Learn new skills relevant to your role.

Observe and be involved in the day to day responsibilities of your supervisor.

Attend all in house training provided by your organisation.

Head to the library and read, read, read.

Keep up to date with new developments and research in your field.

Get out in the community and gather feedback. Work through it and consider what you and/or your organisation could improve on.

Engage in scenario planning to expand your knowledge of your organisation's capabilities.

Increase your duties and responsibilities.

Engage in a mentoring, both as a mentor and a mentee.

Work one-on-one with a specialist in your field.

Take the time to develop your interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

Actively participate in group discussions on particular topics. (there are several of these sorts of groups on Facebook)

Regularly complete performance reviews.

Take on leadership roles.

Broaden your understanding of what your organisation does by observing other staff members (and volunteers) throughout their day to day tasks.

Visit and observe other organisations engaging in similar work.

Conduct research and present your findings to others.

Seek out relevant home study courses.

Take initiative and ask your manager what opportunities they have available.

2020 Multiples NZ Volunteer Awards

Congratulations to everyone who was nominated and thank you to all those who submitted nominations this year.

The purpose of the 7th Multiples NZ Volunteer Awards is to highlight the volunteer effort required to support families with multiples in New Zealand. The Awards recognise individual achievement, while publicly acknowledging all voluntary effort. These awards are an opportunity for members, clubs and Multiples NZ to publicly express thanks to our hard working and committed volunteers!

Emerging Volunteer of the Year

Awarded to a volunteer who has stepped up and made a difference in their club or the New Zealand multiples community in their **first 18 months** as a volunteer (either on a committee or in a specific volunteer role e.g. starting a sub-branch, running a playgroup, being a contact person). The award highlights not only their contribution thus far, but their potential/intention to contribute to the multiple's community in the future.



Support Person of the Year

Awarded to a volunteer who has provided exceptional service by supporting a family or families with multiples in the past year.



Volunteer of the Year

This year the nominees of the Volunteer of the Year award will be made up of the award winners of the Volunteer of the Month Award. All monthly winners from September of the previous year through to the month of August will be considered as nominees for the Volunteer of the Year award. For 2020 winners of the Volunteer of the Month Award from March 2020 to August 2020 will be eligible for this award. The Volunteer of the Year is awarded to a volunteer who has provided exceptional service for the betterment of families with multiples within their local area or nationally.



Community Dedication Award

Awarded to a volunteer who has made an outstanding contribution to their club or the New Zealand multiples community for **at least five years** regardless of their role – from committee members to those people helping behind the scenes.



Club of the Year

Awarded to a Multiples NZ affiliated club that encompasses all or some of the following attributes:

- Has built and/or maintains a strong sense of belonging in its members
- There has been significant membership growth and retention of members
- Develops and implements innovative projects that support the needs of multiple families
- Is governed by a committee that acts in the best interests of its member families, understands its responsibilities and has systems in place to exercise them properly

- Shows a willingness to share ideas and experiences at a national level
- Grows and maintains positive relationships with the wider community, support agencies and national sponsors
- Recovered after facing significant challenges such as dwindling membership, lack of committee or finances



Future Nominations

Volunteers are the backbone of our Clubs and our community. We like to acknowledge the hard work of our volunteers through our Volunteer of the Month Award. The Volunteer of the Month award is for volunteers who have provided exceptional service for the betterment of families with multiples within their local area or nationally. The winners of this monthly award will go into the running for the Multiples NZ Volunteer of the Year Award, which will be announced at the Multiples NZ Volunteer Awards. Remember, you can nominate someone for this award at any time:

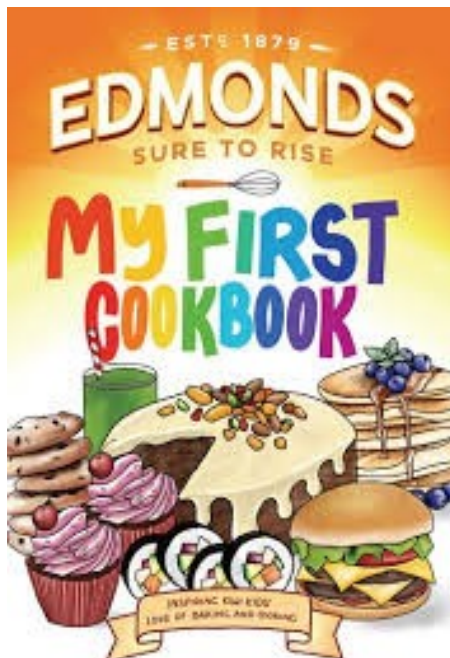
<https://multiples.org.nz/>

[volunteer-of-the-month/](https://multiples.org.nz/volunteer-of-the-month/)



My First Cookbook

Edmonds (New Zealand) have created a book to inspire Kiwi Kids in their love of baking and cooking.



Edmonds My First Cookbook is a brilliant fully illustrated cookbook aimed at children taking their first steps at independent cooking. A must-have for every child in New Zealand.

Become the champion-pikelet-maker, an expert-afghan-baker or an award-winning-pizza-creator. With the iconic illustrated step-by-step layout of the original Edmonds Junior Cookbook, you'll find it super easy to learn to cook these classic New Zealand recipes. From breakfast through to dessert and all the meals and snacks in be-



tween, this collection of over 90 recipes will be the beginning of a life long love of baking and cooking.

As a lifelong lover of the good old Edmonds book, this children's edition is a firm favourite for kids. It has easy step by step instructions with illustrations, with preparation time and serving sizes. There are old favourites like Anzac biscuits and omelettes, and newer recipes like Pad Thai and Bliss Balls.

In 1879 Thomas John Edmonds, then 20 years old, stepped off the sailing ship Waitangi at Lyttelton. Thomas was born in London in 1858 and had worked for Allen and sons, one of London's largest confectionery firms. Thomas and his wife Jane soon opened a small grocery store in Linwood, Christchurch where Thomas learned from his customers of their dissatisfaction with the unreliable baking powder products they were able to purchase at the time. In response to their comments he began making his own baking powder out the back of his shop.

Edmonds Baking Powder went from strength to strength and by 1912 one million tins had been sold. Thomas Edmonds was not only a successful businessman but a pioneer in industrial policies, during the Depression the company was the first to introduce a five day, 40 hour week which enabled redundancies to be avoided.

When the Edmonds company turned 50 in 1929 Thomas Edmonds generously gifted the city of Christchurch with a clock tower and band rotunda. The Edmonds Cookery Book has been providing the recipes of New Zealand since 1908.

Today the Edmonds range of

products has grown to include not only baking ingredients but flour, cake mixes, pastry, mayonnaises and salad dressings and the Edmonds brand still stands for Kiwi home-style cooking and baking.

We are going to do a giveaway of this book in the Multiples NZ Facebook group in December. Keep an eye out.



Read more at:

<https://edmondscooking.co.nz/>



multiplesnz

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www.multiples.org.nz

Declaration of Rights

Carolyn Lister (ICOMBO & Multiples Canterbury) shares the Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples

Introduction

The mission of the International Council of Multiple Birth Organizations (ICOMBO) of the International Society for Twin Studies is to promote awareness of the unique needs of multiple-birth infants, children, and adults. The multi-national membership of ICOMBO has developed this Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples as benchmarks by which to evaluate and stimulate the development of resources to meet their unique needs.

Declaration of Rights

WHEREAS myths and superstitions about the origins of multiples have resulted in the culturally sanctioned banishment and/or infanticide of multiples in some countries:

- Multiples and their families, as any other individuals, have a right to full protection, under the law, and freedom from discrimination of any kind.

WHEREAS the conception and care of multiples increase the health and psychosocial risks of their families, and whereas genetic factors, fertility drugs, and in vitro fertilization techniques are known to promote multifetal pregnancies:

- Individuals or couples planning their families and/or seeking infertility treatment have a right to be fully informed about:
 1. factors which influence the conception of multiples;
 2. the associated pregnancy risks and treatments;

3. the associated risks to one, more or all of the fetuses/infants;

4. facts regarding parenting multiples; and

5. the option of multifetal pregnancy reduction along with its associated risks and profound emotional consequences.

- Infertility treatment should intend to prevent multiple pregnancies, in particular higher order multiples.
- Fertility services should disclose their number of multiple pregnancies, both intentional and unintentional.

WHEREAS the zygosity of same sex multiples cannot be reliably determined by their appearances; and whereas 1) the heritability of dizygotic (two-egg) twinning increases the rate of conception of multiples; 2) the similar biology and inheritance of monozygotic (one-egg) multiples profoundly affect similarities in their development; 3) monozygotic multiples are blood, organ and umbilical blood stem cells donors of choice for their co-multiples; and 4) the availability of the placenta and optimal conditions for determining zygosity are present at birth:

- Parents have a right to expect accurate recording of placentation, determination of chorionicity and amnionity via ultrasound, and the diagnosis of zygosity of same sex multiples at birth.
- Older, same sex multiples of undetermined zygosity have a right to testing to ascertain their zygosity. Furthermore, involvement in registries of multiple-birth individuals should be absolutely voluntary on the part of the multiples.

- Zygosity should be respected as any other human trait and deserves the same privacy rules.

WHEREAS during World War II twins were incarcerated in Nazi concentration camps and submitted by force to experiments which caused disease and/or death:

- Any research incorporating multiples must be subordinated to the informed consent of the multiples and/or their parents and must comply with international codes of ethics governing human experimentation and other types of research.

WHEREAS ignorance, misconceptions and inadequate documentation regarding multiples and multiple births increase the risk of misdiagnosis and/or inappropriate treatment of multiples:

- Pregnant women, parents and their multiples have a right to care by professionals who are knowledgeable regarding the management of multiple gestation and/or the lifelong unique needs of multiples; and
- Multiple births, perinatal and infant deaths, and singleton births that started out as a multiple gestation, must be accurately recorded.

WHEREAS the bond between co-multiples is a vital aspect of their normal development:

- Co-multiples have the right to be placed together in foster care, adoptive families, custody agreements, and educational settings.

WHEREAS multiple-birth individuals are sometimes treated as a unit by parents, professionals, and the general public:

- Multiples, as any other human being, have the right to be respected and treated as individuals with their own needs, preferences and dislikes.

Statement of Needs Summary:

Twins and higher order multiples have unique conception, gestation and birth processes; health risks; impacts on the family system; developmental environments; and individuation processes. Therefore, in order to insure their optimal development, multiples and their families need access to health care, social services, and education which respect and address their differences from single born children.

WHEREAS the needs of multiple birth individuals and families during pregnancy, after the births and beyond are complex and diverse:

- Individuals and families require information about, and need access to, a wide variety of disciplines and services such as health professionals, social services, employment services, education, and the multiple birth community;
- Individuals and families require care from health and other professionals who are informed about multiple birth issues and possess the necessary skills;
- Coordination and continuity of care among disciplines and services are essential for care effectiveness.

- Training and professional development to support the learning needs of health, social services and education professionals are necessary to ensure they can provide the multiple-birth community with the best possible health care and educational experience.

WHEREAS mothers are at high risk of maternal stress and pre and postnatal complications, and twins and higher order multiple births are at high risk of low birth weight (< 1500 grams), disability, and infant death:

II. Parents who are expecting multiples have a need for:

- Education about evidence-based self-care strategies that foster maternal health and optimal fetal development;
- Education regarding the prevention and recognition of pre-term labour;
- Prenatal resources and care designed to avert the pre-term birth of multiples, and foster maternal health and optimal fetal development including:
 1. diagnosis of a multiple pregnancy, ideally by the fourth month, which is communicated tactfully, with respect for the privacy of the parents;
 2. chorionicity and amnionity established by ultrasound as accurately and early as possible as this information is critical for antenatal care.
 3. nutrition counselling and dietary resources to support a

weight gain of 18-27 kilos (40-60 pounds)

4. prenatal care which follows protocols of best practice for multiple birth; and when the health of the mother or family circumstances warrant: a. extended work leave; b. bed rest support; and c. child care for siblings.

5. heightened diligence toward diagnosis and treatment (when needed) for the conditions to which multiples are uniquely at risk, including but not limited to twin-to-twin transfusion syndrome (TTTS).

6. attention to the timing and mode of delivery of multiples.

WHEREAS breastfeeding provides optimal nutrition, nurture and brain development for pre-term and full-term multiples; and whereas the process of breastfeeding and/or bottle feeding of multiples is complex and demanding:

Families expecting and rearing multiples need the following:

- Education regarding the nutritional, immunological, psychological, and financial benefits of breastfeeding for pre-term and full-term infants;
- Encouragement and coaching in breastfeeding techniques;
- Education and coached practice in simultaneous feeding of co-multiples;





ICOMBO
INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL OF
Multiple Birth Organisations

Building a Global Community

INTERNATIONAL MULTIPLE BIRTH AWARENESS WEEK
9TH-15TH NOVEMBER 2020

Declaration of Rights (continued)

Carolyn Lister (ICOMBO & Multiples Canterbury) shares the Declaration of Rights and Statement of Needs of Twins and Higher Order Multiples

- Adequate resources, support systems, and family work leave to facilitate the breastfeeding and/or bottle feeding process.

WHEREAS 60% of multiples are born before 37 weeks gestation and/or at low birth weight and experience a high rate of hospitalization both which endangers the attachment process and breastfeeding; and whereas newborn multiples are comforted by their fetal position together:

Families with multiples need specialized education and assistance to promote and encourage bonding and breastfeeding. Hospital placement of multiples and hospital protocols should facilitate family access, including co-multiples' access to each other.

WHEREAS multiple birth infants suffer elevated rates of birth defects and infant death:

III. Families experiencing the disability and/or death of co-multiples need:

- Care and counselling by professionals who are sensitive to the dynamics of grief associated with disability and/or death in co-multiples, and

emotional attachment to surviving co-multiples;

- Access to therapies, counselling and resources when one or more multiples is affected by a disability or disorder in order to help them manage the discordance of needs and abilities among co-multiples.
- Policies which facilitate appropriate mourning of a deceased multiple or multiples

WHEREAS the unassisted care of newborn, infant, toddler and preschool multiples elevates their families' potential for illness, postpartum depression/anxiety, substance abuse, child abuse, spouse abuse, and relationship discord:

Families caring for multiples need timely access to adequate services and resources in order to:

- Ensure access to necessary quantities of infant and child clothing and equipment;
- Enable adequate parental rest and sleep;

- Facilitate healthy nutrition;
- Facilitate the care of siblings;
- Facilitate child safety;
- Facilitate transportation;
- Facilitate paediatric care;
- Protect parental mental health.

WHEREAS families with multiples have the unique challenge of promoting the healthy individuation process of each co-multiple and of encouraging and supporting a healthy relationship between the co-multiples; and, whereas the circumstance of multiple birth affects developmental patterns:

IV. Families expecting and rearing multiples need:

- Access to information and guidance in optimal parenting practices regarding the unique developmental aspects of multiple birth children, including the processes of: socialization, individuation, and language acquisition;
- Access to appropriate testing, evaluation, and schooling for co-multiples with developmental delays and/or behaviour problems.

WHEREAS twins and higher order multiples are the subjects of myths and legends and media exploitation which depict multiples as depersonalized stereotypes:

- Public education, with emphasis upon the training of professional health and family service providers, and educators, is needed to dispel mythology and disseminate the facts of multiple birth and the developmental processes in twins and higher order multiples.

WHEREAS twins and higher order multiples suffer discrimination from public ignorance about their biological makeup and inflexible policies which fail to accommodate their unique needs:

Twins and higher order multiples need:

- Information and education about the biology of twinning;
- Health care, education, counselling, and flexible public policies which address their unique developmental norms, individuation processes, and relationship. For example by permitting and/or fostering: 1. the treatment of medically fragile co-multiples in the same hospital; 2. the neonatal placement together of co-multiples in isolates and cribs to extend the benefits of their fetal position together;
- Medical, developmental, and educational assessment and treatment which is respectful of the relationship between co-multiples;
- Avoidance of staggered hospital discharge of the co-multiples whenever possible
- The annual review of the classroom placement of co-multiples, and facilitation of their co-placement or separate placement according to the particular needs of multiple birth children and their families;
- To pursue their own and unique interests including simultaneously participating on sports teams and in other group activities and/or to pursue individual sports, group or hobby interests.
- Specialised grief counselling for multiples at the death of a co-multiple;
- Counselling services addressing the unique needs of adult multiples.

WHEREAS the participation by multiple birth infants, children, and adults as research subjects has made important contributions to scientific understanding of the heritability of disease, personality variables, and the relative influence of nature and nurture on human development; and,

WHEREAS relatively little is known about optimal management of plural pregnancy and the unique developmental patterns of multiples:

Scientists must be encouraged to investigate:

- The optimal management of plural pregnancies;
- Norms for developmental processes which are affected by multiple birth such as: individuation, socialization, and language acquisition;
- Benchmarks of healthy psychological development, and relevant therapeutic interventions for multiples of all ages and at the death of a co-multiple;
- Strategies and interventions that are effective in promoting the health of multiple birth families during the parenting period such as: breastfeeding, employment policies, prevention of postpartum mood disorders;
- Management of ethical issues by health professionals and multiple birth families such as: assisted reproduction, multifetal and selective pregnancy reduction;
- Medical, developmental and educational assessment/treatment respectful of the relationships between co-multiples.

View the full file with references at:

<https://bit.ly/3neAAh7>



Contact Carolyn at:

carolyn@icombo.org

Carolyn is mum to Rose and Finn (14), a past president of Multiples NZ, current Membership Secretary for Multiples Canterbury, and current Research Director for ICOMBO. She works at Plant & Food Research, and lives in Christchurch.

KIDS' CORNER

10 Summer challenges!

How many can you tick off?

- 1 The Māori word for summer is: ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐
- 2 How does your family celebrate Christmas? Do you have special family traditions?
- 3 Make & enjoy a frozen summer treat.
- 4 Plant a delicious summer crop (maybe strawberries or watermelon?)
- 5 Where is your favourite place to be on a hot day? Set up a hammock or deck chair in a shady spot and chill out!
- 6 Spot a Pōhutukawa tree in full bloom.
- 7 Talk with your family about possible milestones that are yet to come... (maybe as a tween, teen or young adult)
- 8 What do older family members remember about their own important milestones growing up?
- 9 What does slip, slop, slap & wrap mean? Why is it important in summer?
- 10 Choose some food (or time) to donate to charity this Christmas season.

What are you hoping to unwrap this Christmas?

What would you like to gift to others?

Draw your gift ideas in the boxes below.

THIS IS ME!

*Add a photo or draw a picture of yourself here:

Our bodies & brains pass through so many different stages as we grow! Ask your family to share the stories & photos behind YOUR special milestones below...



When I grew (or lost) my first tooth.



When I took my first steps.

Dadda, Mumma!



My first words.

The first time away from my siblings.

My birth story.



First day at daycare or school.



My first haircut.

How are you different to your siblings?

How are you the same?

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SUMMER

Affiliated Clubs

NORTHLAND

Northland & Whangarei

Contact: Rosie Ponifasio-Hughes
021 165 3885 •

northland@multiplesaucklandnorth.org.nz

Multiples Whangarei is a satellite club of Multiples Auckland North.

AUCKLAND

Multiples Auckland Central*

President: Anna Winn
president@multiples-ac.org.nz
www.multiples-ac.org.nz

Multiples Counties Manukau*

President: Desiree Morgan
021 077 8062
president.multiplescm@gmail.com
www.multiplescm.org

Multiples Auckland North*

Co-President: Kim Metahysa
Co-President: Thérèse Ellitts
021 046 2398
president@multiplesaucklandnorth.org.nz
www.multiplesaucklandnorth.org.nz

Waitakere

Refer to Auckland Central & North Shore Clubs

WAIKATO

Hamilton Multiple Birth Club*

Co-President: Michelle Ericksen
(07) 855 0373
michelleericksen@extra.co.nz
Co-President: Fiona Stokes-Rouse
(07) 856 3330 • www.hamiltonmbc.co.nz
hamiltonmultiplebirthclub@gmail.com •

Matamata, Piako (Hamilton Club)

BAY OF PLENTY

Multiples Bay of Plenty*

Jo Carswell
president@multiplesbop.org
www.multiplesbop.org.nz

Rotorua Part of Multiples BOP

Taupo Part of Multiples BOP

HAWKES BAY

Multiples Hawkes Bay *

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www.multipleshb.org.nz
Gisborne Part of Multiples Hawkes Bay

TARANAKI

Multiples Taranaki *

President: Sarah Cash
multiplestaranaki@gmail.com

MANAWATU-WANGANUI

Manawatu Multiples*

Zelia Boyd
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Wanganui Part of the Manawatu Club

WELLINGTON

Multiples Hutt Valley*

Claire Sumner Lawry
hvmbcpresident@gmail.com

Kapi-Mana Multiples*

President: Stacey Petkov
president@kapimanamultiples.org.nz
www.kapimanamultiples.org.nz

Wellington Multiples*

President: Georgie Manning
president@wellingtonmultiples.org.nz
www.wmbc.org.nz

NELSON

Part of Multiples Canterbury

MARLBOROUGH

Part of Multiples Canterbury

WEST COAST

Part of Multiples Canterbury

CANTERBURY

Multiples Canterbury*

(also covers Nelson, Marlborough & Canterbury)

President: Sophie McInnes
president@multiplescanterbury.org.nz

Ashburton Part of Multiples Canterbury

Kaikoura Part of Multiples Canterbury

South Canterbury Region (Timaru)

Part of Multiples Canterbury
Local contact: Kelly Stockwell
southcanterbury@
multiplescanterbury.org.nz

OTAGO

Multiples Otago*

Liz Campbell
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North Otago/Oamaru Region

Part of Multiples Otago
Contact person: Anna Jameson

OTAGO contd.

Central Otago/Wanaka Region

Part of Multiples Otago
Contact person: Gwen Hendry
021 147 7380
gwendoloon@hotmail.com

South Otago/Balclutha Region

Part of Multiples Otago
Contact person: Shelly Smith
(03) 418 2285 • soss@slingshot.co.nz

SOUTHLAND

Southland Multiples

Co-President: Lizzie Stephenson
Co-President: Sarah Miller
southlandmbc@gmail.com
www.southlandmultiples.org.nz

Triplets Plus

Contact: tripletsplus@multiples.org.nz
Contact: Heather Ben
027 484 1526

0800 Regional Contact People

North Island

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0277275523
cjacobson@gmail.com

South Island

(All of South Island—all 03 numbers)

Jacqui Newell
021 154 3141
0800Sthls@multiples.org.nz



Supporting parents of multiples
0800 4 TWINS etc

Our free phone number 0800 4 TWINS ETC (0800 489 467) is provided by Multiples NZ to assist people to contact their local multiples club. Manned by volunteers throughout the country, this number prevents clubs needing to reissue all their flyers when committee members move on. It is your number for your clubs, so please use it as often as you like!



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Multiples NZ Mission Statement

To address the diverse needs of families with multiples through networking, education, support and advocacy. Working in partnership with local Multiple Clubs, community groups, health care providers and educators to ensure our values are upheld.

Our Summer Multiples



Jireh & Israel - Napier



Makenna & Quinn - New Plymouth



Dhyani & Dhwani - Auckland



Harlyn & Karliana - Nelson



Jacob & Charlie - Wellington



Sebastian, Julian, Dominik & Izabella - Tauranga