

doing more
with less!



Amputee Society

Canterbury & Westland Inc

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Contents

Editor's Message
Society News
Article of Interest
Chuckle Corner
Web Sites
Executive and Sponsors

April 2015

Quote of the Month:

Change your thoughts and you
change your world.

Norman Vincent Peale (1898 - 1993)

Editor's Message

Belated Happy Easter and Passover Greetings. I hope you all had a nice Holiday and enjoyed time with Family and Friends.

I thought the last issue would be my swan song, but here I am once again but this WILL be the last issue I do.

We had our AGM and I must say we had a very poor turnout but a big thank you goes out to those of you who did attend. As usual we had a lovely meal and a very interesting guest speaker. It was discussed that perhaps we will eliminate our pre-Christmas function in July as when we don't have enough members attending these functions it cost the Association for nothing. If you have any ideas or thoughts n this matter, please let us know.

Folks, we still haven't heard from ANY of you as to doing a profile. It is always interesting to learn about fellow amputees and perhaps some of your experiences could help someone else. It only entails answering a few questions and telling us some of your experiences and including highs or lows. Please give it a thought.

As you will see in the Presidents Message, we are planning on hosting the National Conference in April of 2016. What an exciting time for all of us to show that we in Canterbury are still going strong and conquering our post earthquake problems.

Our website is doing well and thanks to Jo for setting this up and keeping it up to date and informative. According to the statistics it has been viewed by people all over the world.

So once again I say a heartfelt so long" as the Editor, but as I said before I will continue to contribute where I can.

Please take care of yourselves and remember to check your limb each day and report anything out of the norm to your Dr. or the Limb Centre.

God Bless

Sue



**Amputees
Federation
of New Zealand
Incorporated**

AMPUTEE SOCIETY OF CANTERBURY/WESTLAND INC
ANNUAL REPORT 2014

It is my pleasure to report on the activities of the Society over the previous twelve months.

In March 2014, we were able to send eight members of the Society to attend the Amputee Federation's annual conference held in Nelson. Margaret & Rod represented our Society as delegates at the Annual General Meeting. The 2015 conference is to be held in Wellington and I would like to make mention of the ongoing and the much appreciated financial support from Pub Charity.

Administrative activities continue to be extremely well handled by all office holders as well as others outside of the committee throughout the year & I am very thankful for everyone's combined input to the efficient running of our Society. It must be said that everyone involved has contributed in some positive way and of this, I am sincerely grateful.

I am very humbled by the kindness and generosity shown towards the Society by those people who have made significant contributions of financial assistance and raffle gifts throughout the year. On behalf of all members, I extend a most sincere vote of gratitude to you all.

By actively participating in the Z Energy "Good in the Hood" promotion, we were able to secure \$830 funding and by coming first in New Zealand in the online token hunt, we were granted another \$830. Christchurch City Council also approved a grant to us which has enabled us to reward volunteers with a petrol voucher to remunerate them in some way for their time and travel.

Our finances continue to be stretched due to a limited income and ever increasing expenditure costs but I am sincerely grateful to all who make prompt payment of subscriptions, made financial donations and to our most valued sponsors who are named on our newsletter. Associate membership to the Society is available and I urge family members to take up this offer.

Visiting & advocacy for amputees, prospective amputees and their families remains a focus for the Society and there has been a huge amount of contact throughout the year.

A personal thank you to our auditor Brian Smith, who continues to do a great job for the Society.

We are working hard behind the scenes to plan our hosting of the National conference in April 2016. The venue has yet to be confirmed but we will keep members advised via the newsletter as we make progress throughout the year. I would urge all members to calendar the dates of April 22nd-24th, 2016 and make every effort to attend the first conference to be held in our city for 10years.

Our Society is in great shape and as we move forward, you can rest assured that your elected committee continues to work hard & in a positive manner to serve amputees and their families. I thank you all for attending this AGM and wish you well for the year ahead.

Mark Bruce. President

Just a few things to bring you up to speed. If you use taxis please remember to take the paper vouchers as well as your card, as some companies still do not have the machines to process the ID cards. Better to be safe than sorry.

Jo, our website manager, has posted a survey on the Amputee website. It is not long to answer the questions and we would appreciate you doing it as it lets us know if you are happy with it. Any suggestions as to things you want to see included, or anything you would like to contribute would be happily received.

Don't forget we have a buy and sell section, so if you have anything you want to sell just contact Jo with your details.

FOR SALE 1 set of metal ramps 58"x6" (1.47m x 0.18m)

1 set of metal ramps 111"x7" (2.82m x 0.19m)

Both sets telescope for easier handling and the larger set telescopes and has a handy carrying handle built in. These sets consist of two ramps that go side by side and are not all one piece. The larger set is great for wheelchairs.

For more information call Sue 385-7727

Older Adults Can Thrive as Prosthesis Users

by Kevin Carroll, MS, CP, FAAOP

Have you heard the one about the 95-year-old lady who wears a prosthetic leg? She can walk, drive a car, and leads a totally independent lifestyle. So, why does her son keeps pressuring her to move into a nursing home? He's getting lonely living there by himself!

It might sound like a joke, but it's a true story. And just one example of how older prosthesis users can do much more than survive – they can thrive. Clearly, those who are thriving have a number of important qualities in common.

Look Beyond Age

The saying, "Age is a state of mind," is important to people who lose a limb. They must try not to focus on age as the only measure of their ability to recover. Age provides a way to count years, but it doesn't measure a person's heart, mind or motivation. Some people in their 80s adapt to a prosthesis better than others who are 30 years younger. The difference is one of expectation. People who expect to do well are generally people who have a strong sense of purpose in their life – something beyond themselves that they feel is important.

I met a 97-year-old lady in Ohio who is responsible for three great-grandchildren, ages 9, 10 and 11. She gets them off to school every day, has dinner for them every evening, and also looks after her 80-year-old son. Her expectation is that she is going to live to be 115, and she probably will.

What do you expect for yourself? To be able to garden, to care for your family, to be independent? Do your rehabilitation team and family also expect a good outcome? Whether expectations are positive or negative, people tend to live up to them. Amputees and clinicians must look past stereotypes related to aging. You must expect that a positive outcome is possible whether you are 70, 80 or even 90 years old. The simple fact is that Americans – including prosthesis users – are living longer, healthier lives than ever before.

Often when people begin wearing a prosthesis, their families and friends rally around them in a show of support. This plays an important part in the recovery process. It is also important for new amputees to assert their independence. Well-meaning loved ones can actually "kill with kindness" by doing too much for the new prosthesis use

One thing I've observed is families who want to get older adults a powered wheelchair to help them out. A wheelchair can be depressing to new amputees. Using a wheelchair can discourage them from making the effort to walk and try other basic activities. I encourage people who are beginning the rehabilitation process in a wheelchair to make getting out of the chair and up on their feet their No. 1 goal. And if they have to use a wheelchair they shouldn't use one that's electrically powered. The upper-body movement

that's required to move a manual wheelchair is actually great exercise.

Functional Levels

A person's functional level is determined by the rehabilitation team, which includes the physician, prosthetist and therapists. Older adults are typically assigned a functional level of 1 or 2. As the functional level increases, so does the variety and sophistication of the prosthetic components that are available.

All prosthesis users should know their current functional level and ask their prosthetist what they can do to reach the next level. Older adults who start out at a functional level 1 may be able to work their way up to a functional level of 2 or 3. The higher functional level will give them the opportunity to acquire advanced, lightweight components that can help increase their mobility.

Get Physical

Physical therapy is hard work that is well worth the effort. I recommend that older adults have physical therapy both before and after they get their prosthesis and schedule a return visit to their therapist each year. Therapy loosens up the residual limb and increases muscle tone and coordination.

People who only go once or twice and then stop are missing out on the real benefits of physical therapy. It is important to find a physical therapist who has experience with prosthesis users.

I encourage new prosthesis users to attend up to 10 sessions of therapy to

- Become familiar with putting their prosthesis on
- Learn to bath and dress themselves
- Practice other specific skills

Keep Things Light

Many important considerations go into the design of a prosthesis for an older adult. One of the most critical is its weight.

- Older adults usually have less strength and stamina and will function much better with a lighter limb.
- Legs that are too heavy cause users to feel a dragging sensation in every step, and, although they may get used to it, the weight is burdensome and tiring.
- The weight can discourage them from being active or from doing even simple things like going to the grocery store or to church.
 - Some people may stop wearing their prosthesis altogether if it feels too heavy and uncomfortable.
 - A heavy prosthesis also pulls on the skin of the residual limb. This is a special concern for older adults since the elasticity of their skin has decreased, making it more fragile and susceptible to breakdown.

Each component of the older adult's prosthesis needs to be as lightweight as possible. Ask about the materials in the component and how they affect the weight. For example, carbon composites, titanium and aluminum are much lighter materials than wood and stainless steel.

Although there are many new and exciting knees, pylons, feet and ankles available, some of these components may increase the weight of the prosthesis. Therefore, consumers should carefully consider the benefits of the more specialized components they are interested in versus the weight they are adding. An adjustable foot that lets you wear different heel heights may sound great, but how often will you need that feature? If it's once or twice a year, is it worth carrying around a heavier foot the rest of the time?

People With Diabetes Be Aware

Older adults with Diabetes have to be especially careful of the fit of their prosthesis.

People with Diabetes often have a loss of sensation in their residual limb due to nerve damage of neuropathy. They may not know if their prosthesis is causing sore spots or pressure damage because they are unable to feel it/

It is important for Diabetics to examine the skin of the residual limb everyday for potential signs of trouble. If they cant see the bottom of their limb, they should use a mirror or ask someone to help them.

People with Diabetes must be diligent in their efforts to protect and monitor their residual limb as well as their sound limb.

Putting the Pieces Together

Older adults who are successful prosthesis users have several important qualities in common.

- They are able to look beyond age and expect to have a full and active life.
- In many cases, older adults with a good understanding of functional levels are able to push themselves to a higher level of rehabilitation. This increases their choices of prosthetic components.
- Physical and occupational therapy are a key part of their recovery process.
- These prosthesis users understand why it's important to have a lightweight prosthesis.
- They strive to be smart consumers in regard to prosthetic components and new technology.
- Finally, because many older adult prosthesis users also have diabetes, they dedicate themselves to carefully monitoring their residual limb and sound foot for any early signs of trouble.

With a positive outlook and a willingness to work at their recovery, older adult prosthesis users can truly thrive!

(Reproduced with permission from First Step Magazine-updated 23/7/2012)

Chuckle Corner

When a little girl said her bedtime prayers, she would bless every family member, every friend, and every pet (current and past). For several weeks after saying the bedtime prayer, she would say and all girls". This soon became part of her nightly routine, to include this closing.

Her Mother's curiosity got the better of her and she asked her daughter why she always added the part about the girls.

The child replied, Because everyone always finishes their prayers by saying " All Men ".

Web Sites

Amputee Society of Canterbury & Westland Inc.

www.amputeeinfo.co.nz

The Amputee Federation of NZ

www.af.org

Amputee Information

www.mossresourcenet.org

International Diabetes Federation

www.idf.org

Parafed Canterbury

www.parafedcanterbury.co.nz

Disability Awareness in Action

www.daa.org.uk

Amputee News

www.amputeenews.com

Disability Rights Commission

www.drc-qb.org

UN Programme on Disability

www.un.org/issues/m-disabl.asp

WEKA-NZ Disability Info

www.weka.govt.nz

Disabilities Information Service

314 Worcester Street, Christchurch

PO Box 32-074, Christchurch

(03) 366-6189

(03) 379-5939

9.00am - 4.30pm

Email: admin@aspirecanterbury.org.nz

Website: www.aspirecanterbury.org.nz

Amputee Coalition (USA)

www.amputee-coalition.org

NZ Limb Service <http://nzals.govt.nz/>

Kipp's Patch www.kipps-patch.com

Nation Wide H&D Advocacy Service – 0800 55505

Motivation Design www.motivationdesign.co.nz

Jobees Art www.jobeesart.co.nz

Amputee Golf NZ Inc www.amputeegolfnzinc.co.nz

newsletter@oandp.com (Edge Magazine)

www.ottobockus.com/StayingInTouch

Dialogue Magazine

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