

Press release

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Making Cerebral Palsy visible this October

The Cerebral Palsy Society is calling on New Zealanders to help make sure people who live with Cerebral Palsy – Hōkai Nukurangi* are seen and heard.

“World Cerebral Palsy Day is on October 6 and this October we want Cerebral Palsy to be visible across Aotearoa,” says Cerebral Palsy Society General Manager Clare Williams.

“We want to get people talking about how common Cerebral Palsy is and what it means to live with it – the good and the challenging.”

Cerebral Palsy is a physical disability that affects movement and posture. It is a lifelong condition and refers to a group of permanent conditions caused by a disturbance or injury to the brain during its development.

The disturbance or interference to the development of the infant brain mainly occurs during pregnancy, birth or very soon after birth. Cerebral Palsy can also occur between one month and two years of age.

“Cerebral Palsy is more common than a lot of people realise,” Clare says. “More than 10,000 New Zealanders are believed to live with Cerebral Palsy.

“A baby is born with Cerebral Palsy every three days. Which means it occurs in approximately 1 in every 500-600 births. It is the most common childhood-onset disability in New Zealand.”

The way Cerebral Palsy impacts each person’s movement and posture is different and can depend on when the brain disturbance occurred, and which parts of the brain are affected.

Clare says raising awareness of the realities of living life with Cerebral Palsy is the Society’s goal during October.

People living with Cerebral Palsy can have difficulty with everyday movements, such as sitting, standing, walking or using their hands for everyday tasks.

They may have other medical conditions, including epilepsy, and/or difficulties with seeing, hearing, learning, or talking.

“Amongst the daily challenges, which can include juggling pain and fatigue, there is plenty to smile about.

“People who live with Cerebral Palsy live full and happy lives. They push themselves, they achieve great things, they make their parents proud, they fall in love, they have families, they hold down awesome jobs.

“People who live with Cerebral Palsy are comedians, actors, business executives, researchers, advocates, teachers, athletes, artists, musicians, personal trainers, public speakers – the list goes on.”

This World Cerebral Palsy Day, and throughout October, the Society is encouraging people across Aotearoa New Zealand to talk about what it means to live with Cerebral Palsy, how common it is and how to support people who live with it.

“We’d love your help to make Cerebral Palsy visible,” Clare says.

“We want to see as many people as possible embracing the colour green, which is the international colour for Cerebral Palsy, and getting behind Be Green & Be Seen – the Cerebral Palsy Society’s annual campaign.

“We’re asking our members, schools, workplaces, friends and whānau across Aotearoa New Zealand to get involved at some point during October.

“The more people are talking about Cerebral Palsy the better. The more green that’s out there to be seen the better.

“By taking part in Be Green & Be Seen you’ll be raising awareness about Cerebral Palsy, and making sure that people who live with it are seen.”

For more information about Be Green & Be Seen and how you can get involved go to: www.cerebralpalsy.org.nz/be-green-be-seen

To make a donation go to: www.givealittle.co.nz/cause/be-green-and-be-seen-2025



Funds raised by Be Green & Be Seen will ensure that the Cerebral Palsy Society will:

- **Improve social outcomes** for people living with Cerebral Palsy, as they use getProgramme funding to engage with their community and reduce isolation
- **Improve health outcomes** as our members access the information and practical and emotional guidance they need to live their lives to the fullest, and use getProgramme funding to improve their physical wellbeing
- **Empower people** with Cerebral Palsy of all ages to cope with their day-to-day reality with confidence, dignity, and the support they need to thrive independently and meaningfully.

“Every donation, no matter the size, will make a difference to the work the Cerebral Palsy Society does to support New Zealanders living with Cerebral Palsy,” says Clare.

“Every conversation about Cerebral Palsy will be a step towards making sure that New Zealanders who live with the condition are seen and heard. Let’s work together this October to get people talking. Let’s make Cerebral Palsy visible!”

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* **Cerebral Palsy – Hōkai Nukurangi** – to achieve what is important to you.

www.cerebralpalsy.org.nz/te-reo-word-for-cerebral-palsy-developed

What is Cerebral Palsy

Cerebral Palsy is a physical disability that affects movement and posture. It is an umbrella term that refers to a group of disorders affecting a person's ability to move.

It is a permanent life-long condition but generally does not worsen over time.

Cerebral Palsy is due to damage to the developing brain, either during pregnancy or shortly after birth.

Cerebral Palsy affects people in different ways and can impact body movement, muscle control, muscle coordination, muscle tone, reflex, posture, and balance.

Although it is a permanent life-long condition, some of the signs of Cerebral Palsy can improve or worsen over time.

People who have Cerebral Palsy may also sometimes have visual, learning, hearing, speech, and intellectual impairments, and epilepsy. There is no known cure and the rates of Cerebral Palsy have remained unchanged despite recent advances in medicine.

www.cerebralpalsy.org.nz/cerebral-palsy

About the Cerebral Palsy Society

The Cerebral Palsy Society is a member-based organisation that strives to enhance the lives of people living with Cerebral Palsy in New Zealand by providing programmes, support and advice.

Our members are at the heart of everything we do, and we are proud to support New Zealanders living with Cerebral Palsy at all ages and stages.

We run a variety of programmes and services for our members – from funding to subsidise taxi travel and physical activities, to grants, member events and support networks.

www.cerebralpalsy.org.nz/about-us

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