



Muscular Dystrophy SOUTHERN NEWS

Well done Jack!

Taking part in the New York Marathon is a once-in-a-lifetime experience that many people have on their bucket list. Jack Lovett-Hurst can cross it off his list after triumphing in the Big Apple this year.



He did it! What started as conversation over a couple of beers in the pub nearly two years ago, became an amazing reality when Invercargill's Jack Lovett-Hurst completed the New York Marathon on his hand-cycle in November.

Jack and his stepfather Greg Houkamau completed the 42-kilometre race in a time of five hours, 51 minutes and three seconds. Jack's mum Debbie was on hand to cheer the pair over the finishing line. They have been training together

for months, but nothing quite prepared them for the excitement and challenge of competing in the world-famous event.

Jack was one of several athletes from New Zealand supported by Achilles International New Zealand, an organisation that provides New Zealanders with disabilities the opportunity to participate alongside able-bodied athletes in mainstream events.

Jack told the Southland Times that he found the whole experience surreal, and it was often very emotional.

He said the crowds were amazing and the atmosphere was very supportive with lots of people playing music and cheering the athletes on.

Although they were on the other side of the world, Jack and Greg said they were aware of all their supporters back home in Southland sending good wishes.

That's what kept them going during the most challenging moments, which for Jack was at the 30km mark when he was exhausted. Both Jack and Greg got a burst of energy when they saw the finishing line, and crossed it with the help of friends they made on the course. After the race, the family enjoyed spending time in Las Vegas and Los Angeles on the way home.

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What's been happening in our area

Fieldworker Jo Smith shares highlights from a busy year.

It's hard to believe we are approaching the end of another year. I have been the Southern Branch Fieldworker for 15 months now and can honestly say I have loved every minute of working with our members and external health care providers. Networking and building relationships in the community is one of my passions. Our Month of Freedom campaign in September was very successful and we were able to raise awareness of our organisation in the Otago and Southland community, while also raising some funds. A big thank you

to the committee and our members who supported our events, and held a few of their own in their communities. We couldn't have done it without you!

The branch is growing with 20 new members on board this year. We have a great group of people and many of our members are achieving amazing things. You can view some of these stories on our Facebook page www.facebook.com/MDASouthernBranch. It's also a great way to find out what's going on in our area.



A high tea was held to fundraise and celebrate the end of our Appeal Month.

Join our workshops

Strategies for learning to cope with change

We will continue to provide our Seasons for Growth grief and loss workshops next year. We all experience grief, loss and change in our lives – it's part of life. The Seasons for Growth programme looks at how we respond and helps participants find ways to manage during challenging times and build resilience.

Fieldworker Jo Smith plans to provide two groups, one for parents and another for individuals with a neuromuscular condition. Feel free to contact her for more information via email joanne@mda.org.nz or phone 027 509 8775

If you're ever in in South Dunedin, Jo would love you to pop in and see our new offices in Cargill Enterprises, 199 Hillside Road. It's a lovely, sunny spot, and the team at Cargills have been exceptionally welcoming.

From the Branch chairperson

Member input makes us strong and unique



When I was voted in as Chairperson I wasn't exactly sure what it entailed and as my first year draws to a close, I must say it has been a steep learning curve.

This year we have moved the branch office to better premises, and introduced Xero accounting software so Gemma Foulds, of Canterbury Branch, can provide administration support.

However, what I have enjoyed most in the role has been getting to know those who are active in MDANZ, and meeting folk who share their time and energy to ensure our services continue and expand. I encourage more of our

members to get involved when you can. It is your input that makes our region strong and unique.

Highlights of the year have been when members got together. The High Tea was a very positive event. Jo Smith's initiative with the Seasons of Growth programme, offered free to members, has enormous potential helping participants process the grief associated with the life-changing aspects of neuromuscular conditions.

At this time, I wish to thank to branch committee, in particular Secretary Raewyn Hodgson and Treasurer Rebecca Croxen for their hard work this year. Thanks also to Fieldworker Jo Smith for the amazing work she

does in the community. It is also important to acknowledge the funders, businesses, supporters and volunteers who have helped our branch this year.

I wish you and your families and friends a safe and happy Christmas holiday break.

Robbie

Save the date:

BRONZ Toy Run 10
December 2017

BRONZ will present a donation to the Southern Region Branch in the Octagon, Dunedin, at 2.45pm after the motorbike parade for the Toy Run. Members are most welcome to attend.

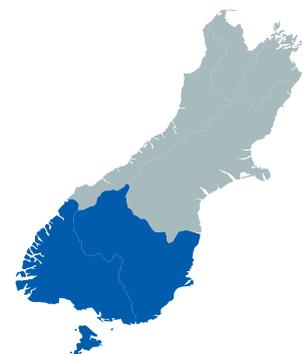
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 [facebook.com/MdaCanty](https://www.facebook.com/MdaCanty)

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Our supporters

A big thank you to the following:

- Central Lakes Trust
- The Southern Trust
- Dunedin City Council
- Lottery Grants Board
- Bendigo Valley Sports and Charity Foundation.



Ways to help

Volunteers are needed for the Vincent Motorcycle Rally organised by BRONZ

BRONZ raise funds at this rally and each year give the Southern Branch a very generous donation from the proceeds of this rally. The rally is on Saturday 3 February 2018, over Waitangi weekend.

A team of six or seven is required. We will be helping on the gate from 12 midday until 6 pm. As the motorbikes come through the entrance, we will take the entrance fee, give out badges, and put a wrist band on people attending. The people

attending also write down their names and contact details on the clipboard. Some people will have prepaid, and we will check their names off the list.

BRONZ members are always present to help, give advice and are in charge of all money taken. You get breaks and plenty of cold water is provided. The venue is at the first Galloway Bridge near Alexandra, down Fisher Lane. This is a great way for us to support BRONZ, and support the Southern Branch.

