

Annual Newsletter

25 January 2023

Western Hills Toy Library
Westernhillstoylibrary@gmail.com
www.westernhills.mibase.co.nz



Welcome Back!

Kia Ora to our WHTL community!

A very Happy New Year to you all! I hope your summer break has gone or continues to go really well, I look forward to seeing all of your smiling faces next time you visit the library!

The last couple of years have been somewhat difficult for the toy library. Covid lockdowns and restrictions had meant our operations were halted for a period. We weren't able to get any new toys and unfortunately missed out on a few grant applications. Our librarian Chantelle left us at the beginning of 2022 and I took over. Things became a bit rocky halfway through the year with the remainder of the committee members leaving for various reasons – leaving just Caleb (our treasurer) and I scratching our heads on what to do, the library was very close to shutting down and we somewhat couldn't see the light at the end of the tunnel!

A plea for help had 2 members and 1 non-member volunteer their time to join the committee and from there our precious library has once again blossomed! We've been successful in applying for several grants, to go towards hall hire and new toys. Our membership has increased 30 new members in 6 months and we have had several successful fundraising events!

I'm optimistic that 2023 will be our best year yet! We have a great committee team who are passionate and dedicated to keeping the wheels oiled and turning and I can't wait to see what this New Year holds for us. As always, look forward to seeing you at the library!

Megan

Join the Committee

We are a non-profit organisation run by a voluntary committee, with support from our members and their families. We are always in need of new committee members to provide new ideas and fresh views of what can be improved. We meet on the 1st Monday of every month during the library's opening hours (7:30pm-8:30pm)

The committee plans fundraising events, discusses grant applications, purchases toys for the library and keeps the library running smoothly. If this sounds like something you can do we'd love to hear from you!



L-R: Megan, Pearl, Naomi, Caleb, Joel (Theo absent)

Megan (librarian)

I've been the toy librarian for about 1 year now, but my family have been members for about 6-7 years! I joined after having my first kid and we mainly used the library to hire big toys and party toys that we didn't want to store in our little house! Most of you know me and my Friday helper Abel, who turned 2 years old in November but I also have Roman (nearly 8 years), Ezra (6 years) and Poppy (4 years). My husband is Caleb, who is the library's treasurer - has been since before we had kids! I love seeing all the kids that come into the library and hearing about all their adventures in the Hutt and beyond! I also secretly love playing with all the toys!

Naomi (social media)

Hi, I'm Naomi - I joined the committee as the committee was low on numbers and I really value the Toy Library and didn't want it to have to close down. Since joining I've enjoyed volunteering and seeing the toys available (often the really popular ones are out - but when you volunteer you get to see them come in and know they exist to book them). I've also enjoyed being behind the scenes and helping make decisions. Bonus is my kids get something out of my volunteering as well.

Joel (chairperson)

I'm Joel, my wife and I joined the Toy Library about a year ago to get access to toys that my daughter was only going to be interested in for a couple of weeks. I joined the committee in the middle of last year to help make sure that it's able to keep running because it's such a great resource for the community. I like that all of the other committee members are also dedicated to making sure the library remains viable and has enough people to share the load.

Caleb (treasurer)

Hi my name is Caleb and I am the WHTL treasurer. I joined the committee about 7-8 years ago just before I had my own children as my older sister was in the committee and they were in need of a treasurer.

What I like about being on the committee is engaging with a diverse committee to ensure the library is providing the best it can to the members, and provides high quality educational and recreational toys.

What I hope to see this coming year is a library that continues to recover from a tough few years with Covid, and putting some investment into some new toys.

Theo (grant's officer)

Kia Ora, I'm Theo, I joined the committee last year after hearing the struggles it was facing due to Covid from a work colleague, which I have come on board to help with grant funding.

I've really enjoyed my time so far, seeing the efforts put in by the other committee members and value the Toy Library provides to the community, being able to contribute in some form has been very rewarding. I'm currently not a member of the toy library, but my wife and I are expecting our first child this year, and we look forward to experiencing the library from a family perspective.

Pearl (secretary)

Hello, my name is Pearl and I'm a Mum of two boys. I first heard about the Maungaraki Toy Library through a friend when my first son turned 1. After seeing so many baby items and toys clogging up our living space (and the whole house), my husband and I were overwhelmed! I was determined to find a resolution, and the Toy Library did just that. The repetition of the below process improved our home environment greatly;

Donate - what you don't need.

Hire - what your child(ren) need.

Return - after having loads of fun!

Our boys have thoroughly enjoyed both the indoor and outdoor toys, and we have benefitted greatly by the bouncy castle and the birthday package hire.

Large ride-ons and climbing items have always been a big hit in our household.

When I heard about the library being on the verge of closing down due to low community support and a lack of committee members, I knew I needed to join the team and do whatever I could to keep it going.

The Toy Library is a very special non-profit organisation that exists to support families in the Western Hills and wider communities around us.

Please come and check us out to see what we have to offer! We look forward to seeing you soon!

Up-Coming

Holidays 2023 – Please find below all the dates of library closures for 2023.

23 January	Wellington Anniversary (Mon night)
06 February	Waitangi Day (Mon night)
07-10 April	Easter Weekend (Fri/Sat morning + Mon night)
05 June	King's Birthday (Mon night)
14 July	Matariki (Fri morning)
23 October	Labour Day (Mon night)
09 December	Last open day for 2023
16 December	Last day for summer hire pick up 2023
20 January	Opening day 2024

Fundraising (Christmas/Toy Sale/Open Day)

The committee are planning several fundraising events spread through the year. This includes raffles, toy sales of withdrawn toys from the library, our open day and Christmas party. If you can help with any of these events please let our librarian know!

AGM

The library has an AGM that is scheduled to be held in April/May, this meeting is where committee members are reappointed and governance matters are discussed. It is open to all members who wish to come along and see how the library is operated. An email invitation will follow once dates for our AGM are confirmed. We would love to see you there!

Volunteers

First of all, a huge thanks to all the volunteers the toy library has, it certainly makes a difference having volunteers to ensure the smooth running of the library.

Volunteers pay a cheaper annual membership of \$30 in return to volunteering 3 hours of their time every 6 weeks. The past year I have relied on volunteers scheduling (either through me or the member portal) their hours but have noticed that there have been more volunteer members than hours scheduled.

After discussing with ex-committee members and long-time volunteers, the committee has decided to change how this is run.

Every 6 weeks, volunteers will automatically be scheduled onto Friday/Saturday shifts. If the date does not work for you it will be your responsibility to get in contact with the librarian to reschedule another date. The roster will be emailed through to each volunteer so please keep an eye out; this is just to ensure that volunteers are fulfilling their duties on the volunteer membership.

If 3 hours every 6 weeks sounds like something you can do, please get in touch, we are always looking out for more volunteers to help our library out! Volunteers are credited \$3 every hour they volunteer to go towards their toy hire so it's a win-win situation!

We also have a list of members who cannot volunteer regularly but would like to be contacted for once-off volunteering work, this includes; end of year stocktake, fundraising events and working bees. If this sounds like something you can do, please get in touch so we can put your name on our list. We are a non for profit organisation so every little bit helps keep our library running!

Reminders and Announcements

Toy Due Dates

Just a friendly reminder to please bring your toys back on time, hire period is for 2 weeks unless renewed. We don't want other members to miss out on hiring toys because they haven't been brought back. As always, a grace period of 1-2 days is given because we understand life with children is sometimes hectic but please be considerate of others, if there is a reason why toys can't be brought back on time, either renew them online through your membership portal or flick me an email or message. We have somewhat demolished the late fee rules but they may be brought back if toys continue to be very late.

Donations

The toy library is always open to donations, if you have toys that your little one doesn't play with anymore but can see other children playing with it then please drop an email or message to Megan. We don't take any form of soft toys (for hygiene reasons, they're hard to clean) or toys covered in stickers but if you're looking for a place where your pre-loved toy will get some excellent use then get in contact.

Email

We have had a few members inform us that our emails go straight to their junk folder – if you could please add our email to your contacts list westernhillstoylibrary@gmail.com to ensure you don't miss out on important notices and information.

As always, we look forward to seeing you at the library!

