



## Hi all!

Another year has flown by, and I think a lot of us are glad to send the end of it! I definitely didn't expect another year "like this" after 2020! However, we have to be grateful that we can celebrate Christmas with our families (hopefully) and travel for the holidays. My thoughts are with all of you having family overseas (including myself) who we are not able to have around us.

Given the constantly changing landscape this year, I feel our toy library has survived quite well. I was glad that so many of you had our toys at home during lockdown to keep boredom at bay and we were able to cover the cost of our members subscriptions for that time. I also really appreciate the work that our committee has done over this tricky time in order to help me making decisions on operations once we were able to open up again.

Talking about toys, we have added 136 toys to our collection this year, worth almost 6k! A big project is our "sensory toy project", we are waiting for delivery of stage 2 toys and hope to complete our wish list next year! I have to say having Patti as a second coordinator is awesome; it is so nice to share the load and take the odd day off!

Due to the unpredictability this year, we ran only couple of fundraisers: a quiz night and our mud kitchen sale, combined with the Taranaki Men's shed. Unfortunately, the Book Sale got postponed twice and then still didn't go ahead. Keep your eyes peeled early 2022; we hope to make it a pop-up sale in summer.

One way how we "spread the love further" has been with our pay-it-forward- programm. Every time we receive a new grant, we donate a 3-month membership to either a family in need or to another charitable organisation who can then use it as they wish. We passed on vouchers to Parents Centre and Bellyful this year. Let us know if you think of any other groups or people that we could help. This way, grant providers can be sure that we make the most of their help to create a flourishing community.

Speaking about flourishing: as you may know, we are part of a collaboration called "Flourish Taranaki" who has also made great progress this year. They aim to establish a community facility, including our toy library and other child centered community groups here in New Plymouth. Imagine indoor and outdoor playground, café, parent education rooms, party hire rooms, cooking demo kitchen, all wheelchair and buggy accessible etc.! It is a long road to get there but we have a dedicated team working on it step by step. We have moved into the upstairs area of the Racecourse and started to deliver awesome parenting courses. We have received the "Good stuff grant" from TSB bank and hope to be even more visible in 2022. But if you are keen on some parent education, visit us at [www.flourishtaranaki.org](http://www.flourishtaranaki.org). and sign up there for their mailing list. Feedback from the first courses has been awesome!

And alongside all this, we kept on doing everyday business, lending 11.5k toys! We have again hit our capacity limit for member families and are looking at extending our hours next year if it keeps going like this. We had 142 new families this year who have tried out the toy library. (The family with the most toys had 153 toys this year- the total value of the toys they borrowed is almost 10k, and they have only joined in January! You can see this value at the bottom of your receipt.)

All this work would not have been done without a huge amount of support!

A THANK-You to all our **REGULAR HELPERS** and **ROSTERED MEMBERS**! You are helping immensely and are very much appreciated! We love that you find a couple of hours in your week now and then to lend us a hand and could not do without you!

Also, a big THANK-You to our **AMAZING COMMITTEE and TRUSTEES**. They do this because of their love and passion for the toy library and their belief that it is invaluable for our community. Often done at the expense of family time or late at night when their children sleep.

Another big Thank-You goes out to all our **FINANCIAL AND BUSINESS SPONSORS!** Without your input the toy library would not be what it is now, and we would have to spend a lot more volunteer hours to make sure that our toy library will be around for lots more children in the future! Grants came from TOI Foundation, NZ Lotteries, Taranaki Foundation, Lion Foundation, and the Aotearoa Gaming Trust. We had 15 local businesses donating prizes for our quiz night. Your donations, grants and sponsorship are very much appreciated and make our toy library an attractive competitor to toy shops!

My last Thank-You goes out to **OUR MEMBERS!** You have been very supportive by being responsible with our toys and time, patient when needed, offering help on lots of occasions, thankful to our volunteers and telling others to come and join! Keep up the good work and let us know if you are ever interested in joining our team "behind the scenes"! We are sure that everybody has a talent they can use to make the Toy Library tick over nicely or even better! Our AGM (end of February) would be a perfect opportunity to check us out!

To everybody out there, I wish you a very Merry Christmas (if that's what you celebrate), a great summer and a prosperous New Year! Go out and spend as much time with your loved ones as you can as this time and the memories you make are what keeps you going through tough times! Have fun playing, spend some time to reflect and focus on the important things!

I will hopefully see you back, refreshed and happy, in 2021!

Kind regards from Jana Dunnet (and on behalf of Patti Sako-Holmes).