

**ST. CHADS**  
CHARITABLE TRUST

## St Chads Communication Centre

Charities across Aotearoa provide their communities with a vital sense of connection. When lockdown began, many charities worried their communities would feel less united. However, this wasn't the case. Charities came up with unique and creative ways to keep up the sense of connection for the people they work with.

For St Chads Communication Centre (CC30233), a registered charity in Rotorua, continuing to provide meaning and connection for their clients was vital. St Chads gives valuable support to adults with disabilities. They aim to help their clients gain greater independence, learn valuable life skills, improve their health and well-being, and interact meaningfully with the community. They run a range of classes for adults with disabilities including choir, kapa haka, computer skills, and volunteering for community organisations.

St Chads was aware that the services they offer became more important than ever for their clients at Alert Level 4. They worked quickly and creatively to adapt their services, moving many of their sessions online so clients could continue to practice their cooking, Te Reo Māori, Tikanga Māori, music skills and art. St Chads also put together art packs filled with craft supplies, and delivered these to each client so they had supplies to use during Zoom art sessions.

During Alert Levels 3 and 4 St Chads ran four different Zoom sessions a day, allowing their clients to choose the sessions that best aligned with their needs and goals. Now, at Alert Level 2, some clients are back onsite. But St Chads are still offering 2 different Zoom sessions a day for those who are at home.

The Zoom sessions in Alert Levels 3 and 4 focussed mainly on keeping St Chads connected with their clients. They were very well attended and for many St Chads clients, they were an important way of maintaining social contact. St Chads also created a private Facebook group for their clients, and their families and caregivers. This provided a fun and safe place to socialise and share the joys and trials that come with this new situation.

Despite the many challenges that have come with the lockdown, many positive stories have emerged. One St Chads' client was used to doing her grocery shop with the help of her support worker. However, the restrictions on supermarket entry meant two people couldn't shop together. With some encouragement, she decided she would try to do the grocery shop on her own. Walking into the supermarket alone was daunting. But she gained enough confidence through the experience that she continues to shop independently, despite the loosening up of restrictions.



St Chads ensured that physical distancing didn't stop them from providing quality support to adults with disabilities. They quickly came up with creative ways of working, so the more vulnerable members of their community continued to receive the support they needed to thrive.

Find out more about **St Chads** on their website and on their **Facebook page**.