

NCHENZ activities 2006-2007

We lowered affiliated group fees at the last AGM and had 10 groups with affiliated membership this year, plus AHE which being an incorporated society is a full member.

Being able to reach a wide number of people is very important to our functioning so we very much value this membership.

NCHENZ poster

We produced an A3 sized poster for home education week in October, using photos sent in by our members. The poster shows home educated kids from all over NZ, engaged in a wide range of activities.

The poster can be updated with new photos in the future. It is available free to member groups to copy as many as they wish, and can be used by non-member groups, but at a cost price of \$10.50 (printing \$2 postage \$8.50)

We also have the use of a short documentary about a homeschooling family, produced by Auckland filmmaker Nicola Jones.

Fundraising

A lot of work went into collecting the necessary paperwork to apply for various grants, but unfortunately there is little we are eligible for.

Michelle is currently running a fundraising raffle.

Our income from membership fees is about \$300 a year, to cover website, post office box and stationery. The PO Box takes 2/3 of the budget and this year postage for the posters took the other 1/3. We very much appreciate Telecom points, which are our only other source of income, so please consider signing us as your "school".

NZ draft curriculum

The MoE is designing a new national curriculum and at the end of last year posted a draft copy for comment by the public. This extremely long document was summarised by Lennie, and sent to member groups for discussion. We decided there was nothing we wanted to challenge or comment on.

Website

In the new year homeschooled student Rouan redesigned our website for us. We were thrilled with the new design which looks fabulous. There is still a bit of updating to go.

Advocacy

International homeschool lists often have reports from European countries where home educating is banned. In particular there have been a number of cases in Germany recently where children have been taken from their homes and placed into foster care because their parents wanted to homeschool them. We wrote a letter to the German embassy inviting them to consider how well homeschooling works in NZ. Although we did not get a reply, we heard later that Germany is changing its laws to allow families to home educate.

In NZ MoE staff are increasingly well informed about home education, although we still hear reports of families having difficulties with their applications being processed. We urge support groups to liaise with their own local MoE office to meet staff who process applications, and discuss expectations.

Our website is designed to provide supporting information, on the pages articles and research, govt liaison, homeschool methods, links and resources.

Networking

A project which I started a year ago for the website, but didn't complete, was to compile a list of contacts for all home-ed groups throughout NZ. This

is quite a big job, complicated by privacy concerns, and is really only feasible by a network of regional groups.

Late last year a Korean language school approached us about arranging homestays with homeschooling families, for Korean students. There is already such a scheme in Canada which has been very successful. We met with the directors and forwarded relevant information.

LEOTC access

In Auckland, Margi from AHE negotiated with the War Memorial Museum for access to LEOTC programmes for home-ed students Auckland wide. This was a massive organisational challenge but has been accessed by a large number of families.

Liaison

Secondary Futures have sent us regular updates. This is a project which advocates student-centred learning and a wider variety of options for students in the future. Anyone can comment via their website www.secondaryfutures.co.nz

Projects for this year

A meeting is planned with the new ERO chief review officer Dr Graham Stoop. There is another ERO project about interaction between schools and parents, they want homeschoolers' and correspondence schoolers' point of view - reply directly to their website ero.govt.nz. The committee has already had quite a bit of discussion and information gathering on this issue over the years, so is in the process of formulating a reply.