

NCHENZ Executive Committee

Quarterly Update - December 2014

In this newsletter:

Committee Retirements
Recruitment
Government Liaison
Member Services
Student ID Cards
Class Dismissed - documentary film

Committee Retirements

The NCHENZ committee would like to take the opportunity to say a special thank you to Sue Pace who left the committee a few months ago for health reasons. We wish you all the best Sue. Karen Grant will be leaving in the new year, she has handled the individual membership co-ordinator role with ease and we thank her for all of her hard work. We are going to miss you Karen.

Recruitment

by Lynn Peake

On the above note, the NCHENZ committee is looking for volunteers to start in the New Year. We are specifically looking for people who are willing to take on membership co-ordination roles.

Group Membership

- Updating membership databases with new member details
- Promoting home education notices, updates and news to group members
- Managing renewals
- Creating a monthly report
- Less than 1 hour per month required, more if you want to build up the role.

Individual Membership

- Updating membership databases with new member details
- Printing and maintaining a hard copy file containing membership forms
- Sending welcome emails and invitations to the Yahoo and Facebook groups
- Periodically (once a year) checking that the membership database is current by contacting members
- Creating a monthly report
- Average about 1 hour a per week required.

Member Services Help Desk

With almost 1000 home educated students registered in NCHENZ Member Services programs, the Committee would love to have a person join Nadia (Member Services Co-ordinator) in a Help Desk support role.

This role will involve:

- Assisting users via email (approximately one request a fortnight)
- Guiding users through any issues they encounter, and/or
- Collecting required information from users in order to escalate it to the supplier for a solution

Good computer knowledge would be required to enable assistance with common technical issues (supplier back-up is available for anything beyond this). About 1 hour per week would be required.

In addition, all committee members are required to attend the monthly committee meetings. These are held as an internet video meeting, currently on Google Hangouts, starting at 7:30pm and lasting about an hour. A reliable internet connection would be needed. We also connect regularly through email and on Facebook. If you are the sort of person who is organised, friendly, flexible and team-oriented, with a great sense of humour and a love of promoting home education, then you will be a great fit for our team.

To indicate interest, please email info@nchenz.org.nz with the subject line, "Recruitment".

Government Liaison

by Meredith Connolly

Liaising with the National office of MOE has been a positive experience throughout 2014. Under the direction of Peter Hughes, the staff are being very strongly encouraged to build good relationships with all sectors of the educational community, including home educators! While this attitude is still having to filter down to a few staff at regional level, those in Wellington are trying really hard to hear the concerns that we have, and to work with us to rectify any glitches that occasionally show up. Please keep letting us know if you have any issues with exemption applications, complaints that lead to ERO reviews etc. We can't help if we don't know.

With regards to a complaint being made about you, if you find yourself in this situation it is our advice to not make any dates or appointments with the ERO until you have full details of the educational concerns that have been expressed. MOE are not a welfare agency and must not be used as one, so please ensure that they are investigating educational concerns only, before allowing an ERO review. This also should allow time to address the complaint with MOE first and provide any information to them BEFORE it is escalated to a review. I've discussed this with MOE and have advised them that this is the advice that we are giving to our members. So once again, if you face pressure into doing otherwise, then please contact us if you would like help or support.

Have a wonderful Christmas and New Years.

Member Services

by Nadia Sole

Reduced bulk subscriptions for NCHENZ members started in 2013 when we negotiated savings for home educators wanting to access Reading Eggs. Over the course of 2014 we've added in Mathletics, Spellodrome, Artventure, and most recently Maths-Whizz. We're very happy that we can help home educators access these programs for a fraction of the public price.

Mathletics and Spellodrome were developed by a NZ team and they are keen to receive feedback on how to improve the programs (email to me at mathletics@nchenz.org.nz and I will forward on).

In 2015 we plan to continue to offer all of the current programs and hopefully a science-oriented one too. We're always on the look out for new programs to add into the mix though there is natural limits as I am the only person in the Member Services Department. :)

There will be a change to how we administer Reading Eggs which will make my job a bit more streamlined and allow students to join at any time rather than at three specific points during the year - from next year all Reading Eggs subscriptions will have the expiry date of 28th February 2015 and the subscription price will be pro-rated each term. Those who currently have a Reading Eggs subscription will be notified of the changes when they get their renewal notice from me - you don't have to do anything until that point. This change will also make signing-up more flexible as you'll be able to join at any time during the year.

Even if NCHENZ has not negotiated a discount to any particular program you are interested in, it's always worthwhile asking whether or not the supplier offers a discount to home educators. Some do offer a discount but don't widely advertise the fact. Please make sure you are a member of the NCHENZ Facebook page or Yahoo Group as this is where notices about programs are posted. Only NCHENZ members can join either of these groups - membership is free, go to the website and join up via the Individual Membership form.

Student ID Cards

by Debbie Thomas

Home educated students can get a bona fide photo ID card. Use it for public transport discounts, cinema concessions, truancy officer approaches, etc. An intangible benefit is the sense of belonging to a wider group that a child can feel, when owning or carrying a card. NCHENZ offers this service only for children who have a current Exemption Certificate from the Ministry of Education.

Orders are processed on the 20th of each month. Please note that your card will not be processed until you have verified the information correctly – the ID Cards Administrator will email you a copy of the information on the card and your card may miss that month's print-run if you do not reply promptly. If you do not put your name as a reference on your payment then the administrator will not be able to match it to your order. If you require your card within a specific time frame please discuss this with the ID Cards Administrator.

Cards are only valid until the end of the current year, they expire on 31 December of the year in which they are ordered.

The fee for an ID card is:

\$10 per child for NCHENZ members

\$15 per child for non members

Membership to NCHENZ is free for individuals and families, go to our membership page to join.

Class Dismissed - documentary film

Mark Your Diary!

NCHENZ got in touch with a US film director last month about his documentary on home education which is receiving wonderful reviews. Jeremy Stuart's film "Class Dismissed" explores the fast growing movement in the US toward home education and learning outside of the traditional confines of a classroom. The movie follows a homeschooling family from LA who decide to take their two children out of school to pursue learning in a completely different way. You can see the trailer for the film here:www.classdismissedmovie.com

Jeremy and his family happen to have planned a holiday in NZ for February/March, so it was fortuitous that we got in touch with him. A team in Christchurch and a team in Wellington are planning screenings in each of these two cities while Jeremy is here. The date for the Wellington one is likely to be 22nd February, and the Christchurch one is likely to be in the two or three days following. Jeremy can do an Auckland screening on 10th or 11th March but there is currently no team willing to organise things at this end in order to make it happen. Keep an eye on NCHENZ Facebook and Yahoo groups for developments on this. Once the screening dates and other details are confirmed we will also post information for attendees.