



'THE PAPER WITH THE MOST FOR THE COAST'

## Right good laugh for parents and staff



Parents and staff at Best Start Sunkist Bay Kindergarten deal to their festive season stress with a session of laughter yoga, run by Karen Phillipson Brown (pictured). Full story page 4. Photo / Mariska Steyn

## Auckland Transport explains crash stats discrepancy

When is a crash not a crash? When it is not notified to police, according to statistics gathered by Auckland Transport.

Simon Wilson's *NZ Herald* article 'Slower speeds tipped by August for Auckland' raised a few local eyebrows when it was published online last Wednesday.

In the article, Simon reported: "On Whitford Rd, between East Tamaki and Clevedon, the 80km/h limit was temporarily reduced to 60km/h in June. There used to be close to 10 crashes a year on that road, several of them fatal. Since June there have been none."

What Simon should have clarified was that since June there have been *no fatal or serious injury crashes* on Whitford Road.

"The statement provided to the media was for Whitford Road and it is correct that no death or serious injuries have occurred since the temporary speed limit was introduced [on 27 May]," says AT spokesperson Mark Hannan.

There have, however, been a number of less serious crashes since June on Whitford Road, as evidenced by the statistics gathered by the Whitford Road Safety Accident Register (WRSAR).

Whitford resident Sarah Blong set up the WRSAR on Facebook. "We know there have been accidents occurring on the stretch of road in the 60km/h zone after June, as we see them as well as they are reported into our Facebook register. We

are also advised of the near misses that are occurring. Residents who live close to the Mangemangeroa Gorge have since advised us of two more accidents that weren't on the register that occurred after June in the 60km/h zone, one involving a car that went down a bank. The resident messaged AT notifying them of both incidents," says Sarah.

Sarah says the resident also advised AT one of the cars was in need of being removed from the road and AT organised salvage.

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# Yoga provides right good laugh for parents and staff at pre-school centre

Best Start Sunkist Bay Kindergarten usually looks after pre-school children, but recently it showed it can take care of staff and parents too. The kindergarten on Third View Avenue in Beachlands (previously known as Coastal Kids Pre School) helped its staff and parents to prepare for the silly season by giving them a right good 30 minute belly laugh, courtesy of the skills of local natural therapist, Karen Philipson Brown from Healing Ways.

Karen, who believes in child's play no matter what your age, ran a Laughter Yoga session for kindergarten staff and parents of children who attend the centre.

Parent Tracey Royal said she felt a little silly and embarrassed as the laughing exercises began, but soon was just laughing and really enjoying it. The half hour session was over before she knew it. Tracey says she came away feeling exhilarated.

Karen says that as adults we do not laugh enough - unlike the pre-school teachers who do manage to pick up on some of the childhood laughter throughout the day.

Staff member Sarah Tauposa says she gets more of the joy and innocent laughter from working with youngsters, but after a tough day the laughter yoga helped lighten her "mind list load".

Karen says laughter yoga is all about letting yourself go. "Fake it until you make it with laughter! The brain does not realise whether you are really laughing or not. This is the benefit of laughter yoga - it creates endorphins no matter what your mood and leaves you feeling like you have



Best Start Sunkist Bay Kindergarten staff and parents unwind with a session of laughter yoga. Photo / Mariska Steyn.

had a right good laugh. The deep breathing required for laughter allows lots of good oxygen to reach your cells. As they say 'Laughter makes the best medicine'."

Karen has previously run Mindfulness sessions for parents and staff of Best Start Kindergarten; a skill which staff have transferred into their weekly childcare

practice.

"More and more scientific research shows mindfulness has positive effects on mental health and well being for all ages," says Karen. "Practicing mindfulness has shown to improve attention and reduce stress. It can also help to regulate emotions."

Karen is willing to run local laughter yoga or mindfulness sessions for local groups. For more info contact her on 027 741 3034.

For more information on Best Start Sunkist Bay Kindy please contact Debbie Johnson on 09 536 5313.

## Auckland Transport explains crash stats discrepancy in wake of NZ Herald article

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"The Whitford Road Safety Accident Register on Facebook was set up to capture the crashes as we were concerned that AT's data didn't reflect the reality of what we were seeing on the roads," says Sarah. "It is important that AT are aware of the high accidents that are happening, even minor accidents have the potential to be serious on our rural road.

"We want to see our roads maintained, sealed properly and safety measures put in place."

Since the beginning of June this year, the WRSAR has recorded 8 accidents on

Whitford Road, and 9 accidents on Whitford Maraetai Road.

The WRSAR's statistics show a higher rate of crashes than statistics provided by AT. So why the difference?

AT says its statistics come from the NZ Transport Agency's Crash Analysis System (CAS). CAS only records crashes which are attended by (or informed to) police.

AT spokesperson Mark Hannan says many of the incidents recorded on the WRSAR had not been reported to police, and were therefore not recorded in CAS - and therefore not supplied to AT.

Some incidents recorded on the WRSAR

were outside the temporary 60km/h zone, while others which had been attended by police were non-injury or minor crashes.

Of the 8 accidents recorded by the WRSAR on Whitford Road, six were unreported, one was recorded by CAS as non-injury, and the other was recorded by CAS as minor.

Of the 9 accidents recorded by the WRSAR on Whitford Maraetai Road, 5 were outside the temporary 60km/h speed limit zone, 2 were unreported, and one was recorded as a serious crash. A further crash recorded on the register on 3 July (a concrete truck off the road near Waikopua bridge) was not mentioned by AT.

Both AT and the WRSAR's statistics do show the number of crashes on Whitford and Whitford Maraetai Roads has decreased within the 60km/h temporary speed limit zone.

But while the reduction in crashes over the past six months supports AT's message that slower road speeds cause fewer crashes, there are still enough crashes on both Whitford Road and Whitford Maraetai Road to cause concern.

As reported in last week's *PC Times*, AT has plans to resurface high-risk areas of the roads early next year, and will carry out public consultation on road speeds in the New Year (see page 2).

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