

## SUPPORTING KIDS

### Wellington Hospital Set for New Lions Playscape

by Murray Pringle, 202M GST Team Leader

There is a new children's hospital currently under construction in the grounds of Wellington Hospital where all of the existing children's wards are old and scattered throughout the site. This concept puts all the services in one spot – directly opposite Ronald McDonald House in Wellington - a project set to be an investment of around \$105m.

Lions have been asked to fund the playground to the tune of \$500k. This will be called Lions Playscape and is a joint effort being supported by MD202 Districts D, E, and M. The name Playscape has been chosen as it is not a "normal" playground as we historically would imagine, but includes some special / specific areas and features to assist the children with their recovery. It will be a holistic 'green' healing area where young patients of all ages will be able to enjoy the outdoors. Patients age range is from 0 to 16 years and Playscape has been designed with this in mind, with not only play areas, but also quiet and reflective areas for older patients to sit with friends and family.

It is professionally designed to ensure that it is;

- (a) Safe and secure
- (b) Provides stimulation and fun
- (c) Is tactile yet calming ,and;
- (d) Provides a sanctuary for children of all ages

As a Tertiary hospital, Wellington Regional Children's Hospital will provide a specialist tertiary care to babies and young patients from New Plymouth to Gisborne, and down to Nelson / Marlborough area, hence Districts 202D and 202E being asked to assist with the fundraising as well. The timetable was to raise the money within a 2 year timeframe, but with the Covid-19 Outbreak, the timeframes have been set back allowing more time for the funds to be sourced.

The fundraising had only just commenced before the National Wide Covid-19 Lockdown and to date clubs from 202M have donated a total of \$43,473.00 toward the success of the project, which does not include any pledges from clubs that have been received.

If any club wishes to donate, there has been a special account set up with The Lloyd Morgan Lions Clubs Charitable Trust, to hold and record the donations.

The bank account number is 02 0528 0038410-00.

Clubs depositing funds should enter their club number in the reference field. The club should also send the Chairman of the Trust, Keith Kenderdine, an email confirming the amount banked for the project to:

[lmlcct.admin@lionsclubs.org.nz](mailto:lmlcct.admin@lionsclubs.org.nz)

#### Playscape - Conceptual Design



## YOUTH EXCHANGE

### A First Hand Experience

by Marta Murolo (Italy YEX)

Last December I left to go to New Zealand, with a lot of happiness but also a bit of fear. In fact, it was my first time traveling out of Europe and my first solo travel, and I would spend such a long time without my family. It took 3 flights and about 25 hours to get there.

During my first flight from Rome to Dubai I was with another Italian boy, Francesco, and once in Dubai we met Matteo and Elena and we spent the second (and very long) flight to Auckland together.

This was a positive aspect, spending the seemingly endless journey with the other Italians. However, when we arrived in Auckland we got separated. I had a flight to New Plymouth with Matteo, while Francesco and Elena had a different flight to Palmerston North. Both cities are in the North Island of New Zealand, which is the one we visited and where we stayed for one month.

When I arrived at my destination, I was greeted by Joyce, my adorable host mum. I spent 6 enjoyable days with her visiting the city, going to the beach and going shopping. I also spent Christmas day with her and her family where we had a big lunch and we unwrapped lots of presents.

I was surprised to receive a lot of presents from Joyce and also from the other members of her family! They have been so kind to me and I will never forget them and their hospitality!

I was sad to leave Joyce when I went to Tauranga, where I spent 10 days at the Lions Youth Camp. It was a unique experience because I spent this period with 35 other students from all over the world. We Italians were the only ones from Europe, when in fact the other guys were from Australia, Malaysia, Japan and even New

Zealand itself.

It was wonderful spending these days doing a lot of activities and going to the city, the beaches and the mountains and finally being the first ones in the world to celebrate the New Year!

However the most important thing is that I shared all of these moments with people of different languages, different religions, different traditions and cultures but this was our strength. Breaking down every barrier and every difference and feeling as part of a big family beyond our borders, beyond our languages and beyond our cultures.

After the camp I went with the other Italians to Whangarei where I spent a night with Elena's family. In fact my second host family was in another town further away and because of the long journey, I continued the next day to my destination; Omapare. Omapare is a village with about 400 inhabitants in Hokianga, where I was hosted by the amazing Sue.

Omapare is a seaside village, so there is a spectacular view of the beach and the ocean. During my stay here I also had the opportunity to have a tour in the forest to see the oldest tree in the world dating back to the years of Christ. I then went back to Whangarei, where I spent another night, with a visit to a marae that is like a Maori temple. I think Omapare is the most beautiful place I've visited in New Zealand, it really left a mark with me and I have a huge desire to go back there one day.

I spent the last week in Auckland, the main and biggest city of the North Island, in a family together with the other Italians. Here we were hosted by an amazing host mum Linda, who satisfied all our wishes going shopping, visiting the city and going to some beaches. We also cooked Italian pasta for Linda and we had

a lot of fun together. I was again sad when Linda drove us to the airport on the 18th of January where we took our flight back to Italy.

Undoubtedly the experience in New Zealand is one of the best I have had in my life. I will never forget the stunning landscapes, my new friends from different parts of the world and especially my host families that were unique. I'm still in contact with all of them and I will never forget what they have done for me. I hope to meet them again in the future somewhere in the world.

I thank the Italian Lions for giving me the opportunity of such an experience and the Lions from New Zealand for hosting us warmly and for always being available for us during all of our stay in their beautiful country.



Photo: Lion George Goodhew with Elena and Marta at Waitangi.