

# CATWALK

NEVER SAY NEVER

OUR TEN YEAR

10

ANNIVERSARY



THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF  
**The CatWalk Spinal Cord Injury Trust**



*Above: Zara Phillips with Catriona and Sam Williams*

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 Need for Speed 10 year Anniversary Celebration



Above: Catriona with Brad Smeele and family

# Founder's FOOTNOTE

To you, the *CatWalkers*... WAHOOEEE, and to say the last six months have been a tad busy would be an understatement.

Firstly, a dedicated bunch of approximately 60 supporters stepped up to the New Plymouth WELLS Half Ironman and ALL succeeded with the exception of one, yes your Founder, who ended up in hospital with hypothermia – certainly not part of the 12 month plan but another stern reminder that one can never be too prepared. This is in fact one of a wheelie's (and especially a Tetra's) biggest problems – dealing with body temperature and I still find it interesting that my mind made my body finish the 2km open water swim distance yet my memory has no recollection of the finishing. Apparently I was also lifted to the tent by gorgeous hunks (so they tell me), undressed (I think by my husband?), dressed (dressed by super Wendy) and taken to the hospital. Amazing! A high five to all those who competed that weekend and raised money for *CatWalk* and to the Monckton family and those that helped cheer everyone on. YOU are crucial on these days. Also a special thank you to Rhoda Phillippo who purchased our evening auction prize of a few days in Queenstown kindly donated by a *CatWalk* Patron.

Then more recently we've had a fantastic evening at Skycity on June 12 and where to start with what was one jam packed evening. For the *CatWalk* subcommittee it actually started with a meet and greet with Zara up in The Sugar Club courtesy of Skycity. A magic opportunity to say thank you to everyone who put in so many volunteer hours begging favours off friends and bribing others with kindness to guarantee the evening's success. Fee McLeod, Paula Petrie, Pip McCarroll, Scott Malcolm, Kate Wilkie, Nicola Pike, Georgie Falloon and Stephanie Iremonger – take a bow you are our unsung heroes of the evening.

The brilliant team at the office backed this committee up diligently. From the wheelies Brad Smeele, Jamie Astwood,

Amanda Lowry, Hamish Ramsden, Holly Pretorius, Grant Sharman, Neil Cudby, Rob Creagh, Kate Bates, Stewart Hickey and of course our Aussie wheelies who flew over especially – Ian Macdonald and Perry Cross along with their families and friends and everyone out there who is fighting hard for a cure we quite simply say...thank you.

Having so many wheelies and their families and friends to share in the evening's fun was a real personal high. This is our charity and together we can make these research wheels turn faster. Each wheelie is going through their own daily challenges, the admiration and respect I hold for you all for getting on and living your life whilst also supporting *CatWalk* is enormous.

A special shout out to Martin Codyre, the Irish engineer who seven years ago became a C5-6 tetraplegic. He has taken himself back through university to now have a Masters in Neuroscience, he did this, WHY? Because he wanted to know what we are all hoping – is a cure really possible? Of course I held my breath and asked "Well is it?" His answer spoke volumes... "I no longer hope anymore but absolutely know that it's possible for us to expect recover significant and meaningful function in our lifetime".

And of course, the excitement of 2015 isn't over yet – to this year's *CatWalk* New York Marathoners, "Good Luck!"

Catriona Williams MNZM

# A MESSAGE FROM OUR International Patron

## Dear CatWalk Friends

I was thrilled to be part of the amazing 10th Anniversary Celebrations in Auckland. The excitement and energy at the Need For Speed reinforced once again how far everyone has come in such a short time in the search to find a cure for Spinal Cord Injury.

As I said on the night, Catriona's enthusiasm is inspiring and at a personal level, I just admire her courage and get up and go. Another very real highlight of being with you all was visiting the Centre for Brain Research at the University of Auckland and learning about the work going on there and meeting the team behind it.

I have no doubt about the progress being made and I look forward to continuing the journey with you.

Thank you for having me.  
With my best wishes,

Zara Phillips, MBE



*Zara Phillips with fellow Patron Toni Street*



*Zara Phillips at the Centre for Brain Research*

## NATIONAL PATRONS

Sir Brian Lochore, ONZ, KNZM, OBE; Richie McCaw; Dr Rick Acland, Dion Nash; Lance O'Sullivan, ONZM; Aaron Slight MNZM; Toni Street, Sir Mark Todd, CBE; Sarah Walker.

## TRUSTEES

Scott Malcolm (Chair); Stephanie Iremonger, Derek Lindsay, Pip McCarroll, Rebecca Scott, David Pretorius



*Zara Phillips with Catriona Williams*

# Farewell TO CATWALK

I SAY GOODBYE TO CATWALK AS CEO THIS MONTH



Libby Young

I am very proud of the things *CatWalk* has achieved in this tenth anniversary year.

We have a fresh new look that is attractive to businesses that want to be aligned to hot charities like ours.

Popular TV broadcaster Toni Street has joined us and on top of her generous and warm spirited personality she provides a voice for *CatWalk* to over half a million New Zealanders who tune in every evening to Seven Sharp.

Spinal Cord Injury research is now on the radar of key politicians including ACC minister Nikki Kaye and Health Minister Dr Jonathan Coleman. They joined our International Patron, Zara Phillips at the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility in Auckland to personally see the world breaking research that the *CatWalk* funded facility is achieving. (see more on page 10).

I truly leave on a high after our wildly successful tenth anniversary fundraiser in Auckland, which raised a record **\$430,000** for spinal cord injury research. That's almost ten percent of the total funds raised in the past ten years. Everyone celebrated exuberantly and the generous donations just kept coming in.

Inspiring Kiwis like quadriplegic wakeboarder Brad Smeele are joining forces with us to create a family of inspirational *CatWalkers*, who together will be unstoppable in finding a cure to get everyone with spinal cord injury out of their wheelchairs and back on their feet.

*CatWalk* is in the capable hands of a very fine Board, the Founder Catriona Williams and Meg and Donna based at the Masterton office.

Best wishes to everyone on the *CatWalk* journey.

Libby

Libby Young,  
CEO The *CatWalk* Trust.

# BrandNEW

**CATWALK**  
NEVER SAY NEVER  
OUR TEN YEAR **10** ANNIVERSARY

**T**EN POINTS FOR ANYONE WHO HAS NOTICED OUR SHINY NEW LOOK! WE'RE CELEBRATING 10 YEARS AND LOOKING AHEAD WITH A REFRESHED BRAND THAT SHOWS OFF WHAT WE'RE ALL ABOUT: IRREPRESSIBLE AND DETERMINED.

**#Thanks** to Nick Baylis and Brandology for their creative genius and their generous support. Brandology make brands influential. At the core of what they do is the belief that influencing consumer behaviour can only be achieved when the brand behaviour is well defined, aligned throughout the organisation and lived daily at all touch points. They've done their bit, now it's up to us to walk the talk!!

THANK YOU **brandology**



# Need for SPEED

“MAKE NO MISTAKE, IT WILL HAPPEN”

TEN YEARS ON FROM OUR FOUNDING, AND AS CATWALKERS PARTIED IN STYLE AT THE NEED FOR SPEED, THERE COULD YET BE NO MISTAKING THE VERY SERIOUS COMMITMENT WHICH UNDERPINS EVERYTHING WE DO, PREPARING FOR A FUTURE WHERE PARALYSIS DOES NOT MEAN LIFE IN A CHAIR.

The 800 friends who packed out SKYCITY got the message loud and clear. Everyone from our international patron Zara Phillips to the 13 wheelies for whom this search for a cure means everything – we all left knowing that *CatWalk* remains in the game, and that we’re in it for the long haul.

Of course, the “fabulous chaos” which was Need For Speed didn’t just happen – on the night, months of planning and preparation may have passed in a dizzying blur but that belies the dedication of a core crew behind the scenes. We’ll take time to acknowledge some key players, most particularly our four main sponsors, Skycity, Crowe Howarth, Darley and Godolphin. Without their support, our vision of celebrating a decade in the business of SCI research would never have got off the ground. Their generosity of spirit goes above and beyond the commercial realities in which



*Paul Ifill, Elle Isaac & Charlotte Glendall*

they operate their businesses. To our very own Fab Four, who played a starring role in raising an incredible \$430,000, our most sincere thanks.

In closing, it may be best to let pictures of the night speak a thousand words about the fun, the laughs, the friendship and the messages we will take away from an incredible ten years.

This time round, the images I won’t forget are of Zara taking time to meet with our researchers at Auckland University, learning from them in the lab, and then having quiet time with our wheelies before the fun kicked off at Skycity. Two faces of the same coin – the quest for a cure, and living life along the way.

Thank you all for supporting *CatWalk*.  
Charlotte Gendall



# Need for SPEED

A few more special acknowledgements:

- The volunteer sub-committee of **Fee McLeod, Georgie Falloon, Paula Petrie, Kate Wilkie, Nicola Pike, Penny Barnett, Pip McCarroll, Scott Malcolm and Stephanie Iremonger** who helped make the place rock
- Tremendous thanks to **all our Patrons** who were either there in person and worked the room, sent in video clips or donated some of those 'money can't buy' prizes
- **Zara Phillips** and her brilliant 48 hours for *CatWalk* – literally walking the talk
- Our debaters **Heather Du Plessis-Allan, Dion Nash, Grant Sharman, Mark Chittick, Charlie Meyer and Viv Fauvel** who each took time out of their busy lives to ensure we were in fits of laughter
- Those **wonderful wheelies** who were tossed and turned to get their black tie outfits on, and then came along to celebrate with us, along with their friends and families
- Our steadfast supporters who've been there every step of the way over the past 10 years. Ambassadors like **Ian Douglas** and his team at the **Village Goldsmith**, coming up trumps again with a very special pendant, a feature of our silent auction
- **Mangan Graphics** for branding our Pit Crew
- A special mention to **Ben and Al Falloon** who not only donated the Bali package but purchased themselves a little getaway on Great Mercury Island as well
- Speaking of Great Mercury, **Sir Michael Fay** – you are a true New Zealand treasure
- To New Zealand's premier resort, the fabulous **Huka Lodge** – we can only say we love you!
- To our songbird **Bex Murray**, what a truly stunning performance (listen up now readers, Bex' wish is to sing the national Anthem before an All Black game, let's see if we can make this happen!)
- To our amazing band **Whistlejacket**, you sang it loud and proud for *CatWalk*
- To the trio who kept things humming on the night, **Toni Street, Rawdon Christie** and our auctioneer extraordinaire **Steve Davis** – where would we have been without you?





# Need for SPEED...continued

“...the fun, the laughs, the friendship and the messages we will take away from an incredible 10 years”





# THE luck OF THE irish

For those of you who joined us at The Need For Speed, you'll remember a dapper Irish gentleman who Catriona introduced us all to via video link. Martin Codyre not only has an accent that makes us want to recite a limerick, but more impressively, has as an array of letters after his name that would make a Welsh street map envious. Below he outlines why he is a stand-out Inspirational *CatWalker*.

I hate spinal cord injury. It just **SUCKS**. I hate it so much I went back to college to become a neuroscientist and solve the problem myself.

My trip down the rabbit hole started seven years ago in August 2008. I fell on the dancefloor at a wedding in Ireland, broke my neck at the C5 level and was rendered a complete quadriplegic. Uh oh!

**“Is a cure out there or even really possible?”**

I was discharged from hospital eight months later and then I started travelling the world attending conferences, meeting with surgeons, scientists, business people, research charities, philanthropists, and other people with injuries to understand ‘Is a cure out there or even really possible?’

After following this path with many dead ends for about four years and getting about 500,000 km of flying under my belt, which is not easy when you are quadriplegic, I realised that despite my technical engineering training, I needed to understand more.

I made a decision to go back to college. I was going to become to become a neuroscientist. So instead of physically pushing myself skiing and playing rugby I push myself mentally and spend lots of time staring into microscopes. Not as much raw enjoyment I'm afraid but certainly awe inspiring to learn how biology and specifically the brain and spinal cord works.



*Above: Martin Codyre*



*Above: Martin and friends*

One of the primary reasons to do this was to understand whether committing a huge part of the rest of my life to helping to solve this problem was going to be futile.

When I started my neuroscience masters training I had a deep belief and in truth hope that spinal cord injury would become curable but now, with a deep understanding of the biology, the medical profession and the preclinical work that has already been done I don't hope anymore, I know it's possible.

I have an absolute expectation that neurally regenerative treatments that restore significant function to those with spinal cord injury will become available within my lifetime.

Unfortunately this is not a *fait accompli* and is dependent on many factors. We have a lot of barriers in our path, not least of which is the maddening acceptance of SCI as a life sentence by the majority of those in wheelchairs. We have got to realise that no one else is going to fix us. We must drive the science and medicine forward. Getting neuroscientifically educated is my latest step on that path.

What's yours?

Martin Codyre,  
BEng Mech, MSc Neuroscience, MIEI



Above: Dr. Simon O'Carroll, the Hon. Nikki Kaye, Zara Phillips, Catriona Williams and the Hon. Dr. Jonathan Coleman

# ROYAL VISIT

## highlights kiwis' world-leading research

THE CATWALK FUNDED SPINAL CORD INJURY RESEARCH FACILITY GOT A ROYAL WELCOME ON THE MORNING OF 12 JUNE WHEN INTERNATIONAL PATRON, ZARA PHILLIPS, WAS ESCORTED THROUGH THEIR ANATOMY LIBRARY TO SHOWCASE EXCITING NEW DISCOVERIES THAT WILL ONE DAY HELP PEOPLE IN WHEELCHAIRS WALK AGAIN.

Ms Phillips joined Minister of Health, the Hon. Dr. Jonathan Coleman and Minister of ACC, the Hon. Nikki Kaye on a tour of the Facility to get an intimate update on the breakthroughs happening in this area of research, of which Kiwis are world-leaders.

Dr. Simon O'Carroll, Director of the Research Facility, based at the Centre for Brain Research at the University of Auckland, said the visit was a great opportunity to show key thought leaders how Kiwi researchers are leading the charge in Connexin (protein) research, directly related to reversing paralysis.

“We walked our visitors through our research showing how we are able to prevent the spread of damage following injury and how early delivery of our peptide has real potential to greatly improve outcomes for people who suffer a spinal cord injury.”

“These connections spell good news for everyone – not just those with a spinal cord injury”

The research doesn't stop at helping people in wheelchairs, fellow researcher, Professor Louise Nicholson explained.

“The most startling discoveries in this new area of research are the

unique connections between the brain and the spine, which together form the body's information super highway.

“These connections spell good news for everyone – not just those with a spinal cord injury. Some of the very same research breakthroughs that will enable people to walk again could also help find a cure for many brain-related disorders – Dementia, Parkinson's and Depression among them.”

At *CatWalk* the challenge is now to keep up with astounding speed of discovery in this innovative field of research. It is happening faster than we can fund it – the faster we raise funds, the faster people with spinal cord injuries will walk again.



*Above: Catriona, Dr. Jonathan Coleman and Holly Pretorius*



*Above: Catriona addressing the attendees*



*Above: Zara Phillips and the Pretorius family*



*Above: Catriona with Trustees, Rebecca Scott and Pip McCarroll*



*Above: Prof. Louise Nicholson, Nikki Kaye, Zara Phillips and Dr. Rick Acland*



*Above: Dr. Rick Acland and Dr. Simon O'Carroll updating guests on SCI advances at the Need For Speed*

# Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility (SCIRF) Update

FROM DR SIMON O'CARROLL

Work is progressing in the SCIRF on a number of projects looking at preventing inflammation (protecting the spinal cord tissue) and removing the scar (to allow regeneration of nerve cells). Our work testing systemic delivery of our peptide with collaborators in Sydney is progressing nicely and we have new data showing that we can also reduce neuropathic pain, which is an exciting discovery that has real potential for people with an injury. Our latest work has been using magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to look at changes in the spinal cord following our peptide treatment. MRI is a powerful tool that allows us to see changes as they happen in the cord and is an important step as it will allow us to follow the changes in human patients in clinical trials.

The visit of Zara Phillips to the University of Auckland and the SCIRF was a great opportunity to profile the exciting work we are doing and an opportunity to talk about what we were doing with Zara and government ministers.

Prof. Louise Nicholson and I attended the Need For Speed dinner, which was a fantastic night and it was great to see so many people giving generously to support *CatWalk* and research into finding a cure.



*Above: Team CatWalkers post-event*

# Indomitable **WILL**

NEW PLYMOUTH TURNED ON A SPECTACULAR FEBRUARY DAY FOR TEAM CATWALK'S INAUGURAL NEW PLYMOUTH HALF IRONMAN EFFORT, AS 60-PLUS CATWALKERS ZIPPED UP, CLIPPED IN AND LACED UP TO TACKLE THE 2KM SWIM, 90KM CYCLE AND 21 KM RUN, A TRUE TEST OF ENDURANCE.

Thanks to the support and sponsorship of event organisers Gayle and Selwyn Brown, Catriona and Team *CatWalk* were welcomed with open arms into the 2015 WELLS New Plymouth Half Ironman. As our team were to discover, it is truly one of the most unique multisport events in the country and New Plymouth is a spectacular part of the world! Gayle and Selwyn willingly provided all the additional necessities required for a world-first tetraplegic attempt, along with the consequent increase in *CatWalk*-related entries.

In true style, a fun-loving group descended upon New Plymouth, ready to party, compete and party again. Camaraderie is the word that springs to mind, and once again we were reminded why *CatWalk* consistently punches above our weight – we have THE BEST SUPPORTERS.

Coming from various parts of the country, individuals had been feeling the respective burn in training for their chosen discipline



(or for the 'Magnificent Seven' – the triple-threat of all three events). Feeling fit and limber, we began the weekend with a catch-up at New Plymouth hotspot, Snug Lounge. The team talked the talk over some light refreshments and a few bowls of carb-laden white rice for the serious athletes.

Come race day, the game faces were on. Therein lies the special character of *CatWalkers* – work hard, play hard. The Men's Individual race kicked off the abled-bodied event, followed by the Woman's Individual; closely trailed by the various team events. Team *CatWalkers* made up a large percentage of the team entries in this boutique event – non-*CatWalkers* soon knew who we were!

Over the course of the day, our athletes crossed the finish line tired and aching, and doing us proud. And of course as well as the fitness component, this team of heroes also fundraised, making over \$50,000 for SCI research.

*“For the hours of training, appeals for donations and ongoing support, CatWalk says thank you all. What a weekend it was and what a team you were.”*

That leaves just one final acknowledgment to make, recognising our resolute Founder. Catriona had set her mind to completing the full individual challenge, and she left no stone unturned in the process! Countless hours of training went into her 12 months of preparation leading up to race day. Lengths and lengths of backstroke, thousands of hand cycle revolutions and, the newest challenge, bicep-burning pushing from the wheelchair.

Finally, the week of the race arrived... cue... Mother Nature.

The North Island’s west coast had been enjoying stellar New Zealand summer conditions, until a mini-break in the weather brought a cool change. The water temperature in the Port of Taranaki plummeted to a bitter 18 degrees. Stanch in her will, at 6am race day, Catriona was gingerly laid into this icy water bath by husband Sam Williams, and her 2km swim commenced.

Watching from the shore was an emotional and reflective experience. This tiny woman continued to slice her arms through the freezing seawater, alone in the immense seascape except for Sam paddling alongside her to keep her straight, no lines on the ceiling to guide her there. It was overwhelming to witness.

After 90 minutes, she had finished. The full array of able-bodied competitors waited on the beach clapping, cheering and crying. Catriona was lifted from the water by four of the male competitors and taken to her transition tent to prepare for the second discipline...

The rest, as they say, is history.

*Strength does not come from physical capacity. It comes from an indomitable will*

– MAHATMA GANDHI



*Above: The Kapiti Kats*



*Above: Team W.T.F (Where's the Finish?!)*



*Above: Selwyn and Gayle Brown with Catriona at the Port of Taranaki*



*Above: Team Blueprint*



*Above: Petrie Support Crew*



*Above: Catriona Training with friend Mandy Allen*



# Team CATWALK

Let us introduce you to the New York Marathon class of 2015



## VIKKI MACLEAN

I will be 56 when the NYM comes around. I have done it before very slowly when I turned 50 for Starship. I have two sons Ollie (17) and in Year 12 and Angus (21) who is away off travelling. My husband is Andrew who I have been married to for 22 years. He was born in New Zealand. I am from Glasgow and made my home in New Zealand back in 2004. I am a Partner with Leadership and Executive Search Consultancy called Kerridge and Partners whom I have been with since 2006.

I attended the *CatWalk* Trust 10 Year Anniversary dinner with friends and was moved by Catriona's story. Fuelled by a couple of glasses of red wine I thought I could potentially assist in making a difference by competing in the NYM again – damaging your spinal cord can happen to anyone and if through raising funds we can assist in making this devastating injury less traumatic than I am up for the challenge.

If it can lead to research to help make others more mobile and help prevent the severity of these injuries then I can focus my energy on raising some well needed funds. Not being a runner people pay good money to see this spectacle!!!



## TERRY O'NEILL

I am a father of three and a forester in Ashburton. In January 2013 I fell while topping a tree for a friend. The fall broke ribs, punctured a lung, broke my back and severed my spinal cord. The spinal cord injury was at 'T10' (belly button level) and means I now have no use of my legs and have limited trunk stability. The spinal cord injury also affects my life in many other ways – including chronic nerve pain. Having been a physically active person prior to my injury I am now looking for new ways to extend myself and to try and go beyond my disability. Competing

in the New York Marathon in a racing wheelchair will definitely do this.

I have joined the *CatWalk* Trust team to help raise money for spinal cord injury research. I have a lot of hard work ahead of me with many training hours on the road required so that I can acquit myself well in New York. This training has been underway for some time and has included competing in the Christchurch Half Marathon. I achieved a pretty respectable time of 1 hour and 21 minutes, the photo attached is from this event. I have also been blogging about my training, if you would like to see more the link is <http://terrysinymarathon.blogspot.co.nz/>.



## NAOMI MCRAE

I'm a 31 year old Police Officer from Auckland. My family includes mum and dad who live in Tauranga – dad is a fireman and has been in the job nearly 40 years – and my younger brother who lives in Melbourne. My partner, Richard, is also in the Police and is joining me in NYC after the marathon.

Why have I decided to run NY? In short, it's on every marathon runners bucket list! Why for *CatWalk*? I can run marathons for myself any day of the week. I'm fortunate to have a pair of legs that work and work well, and I wanted to use something I love (running) to make a difference for people that can't. I met a very special person last year, her name is Teina Boyd. Teina and I met at the physical tests for Police College and headed off to College together with all the excitement and adventure a new career like that can bring. A freak accident one weekend (please note, not during any activity undertaken by the College) left Teina with a broken neck and subsequently a tetraplegic. This race is for her.

I have always been a runner, including representing NZ while running for Tauranga Girls College when I was younger, before deciding to take up longer distances. NYC will be my 7th marathon and I have also completed two Ultra's (60km and 100km).

My other great love is equestrian and I have been lucky enough to compete and also race some very talented horses over many years.



## KARIN DALGLEISH

I am in my mid-fifties and live in Wellington. I am the proud mother of three adult children, James, Kate and Nicky who are all supporting me in this challenge. I am currently Group Manager Early Childhood Education at the Ministry of Education. I hail from a well-known equestrian family – my parents are Janet and Warren Scott, and I am the sister of Andrew (and also of Robyn and Sarah) as well as being the niece of Jenny and the late Carey Scott and cousin of Dougal Scott. So it was only natural that when I committed to running the New York marathon I would choose to do so to support *CatWalk*. Last year when my nephew Sam tragically died as a result of a traumatic head injury our family asked for donations to be made to *CatWalk* in his memory, and I like the fact that I can continue to raise money to support Sam's memory.

I have known previous *CatWalk* New York marathon runner Charlotte Gendall for almost as long as I can remember and it was Charlotte who threw out the challenge to me. I am very much a novice runner, but a determined one and have built up my running over the last year from 5kms to 10 kms+ and while I initially didn't enjoy running I did enjoy the way it made me feel afterwards. I find it a great de-stresser from my busy job, and I'm enjoying the challenge of building up my strength and endurance. You will find me running in the coolest little capital in the early mornings before I head off to work. You can follow my challenge on my Fundraising page where I have a blog that I will be updating regularly.

I am honoured to be representing *CatWalk* and what it is trying to achieve, so please support my fundraising by going to <http://www.fundraiseonline.co.nz/KarinDalgleish/> and making a donation.

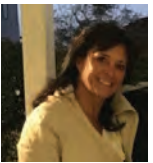


## ERICA GUY

As a mum to three young children – Henry, aged 10, Frankie (8) and Jeremy (6) – I am focused on helping them to do their best in all they attempt. When I'm not driving them to swimming, jazz, gym, piano or tennis, I keep my hand in as a public relations practitioner through contract work from home.

I took up jogging as an efficient way to get fit once Jeremy began kindly. I also enjoy the social aspect of being able to run

with friends and family. The enjoyment I gain from running has grown through participating in events, and earlier this year I completed my first marathon – the Motatapu Classic – with my husband Nathan. I'm really excited about the opportunity to run the New York event and to be able to support Catriona and *CatWalk*. Catriona is an amazing and inspiring leader with huge energy. I'll do my best to raise funds to help her team find a cure for spinal cord injury.



## TRACEY GIECK

I got invited to this wonderful black tie event. I thought it would be fun. It was! I thought I'd be inspired by what I heard. I was! But so inspired that I would commit to running 42.6kms/26.2miles? Yep. I heard myself committing to run the 2015 NY Marathon.

What was I thinking?! Actually I feel very excited and humbled to be running and raising money for The *CatWalk* Trust. My body is a little worn out, my mind a little disbelieving, but with 16 weeks to go, a lot of mileage ahead and infinite willingness, come 1 November 2015 I'll be on that start line - with 50,000 strangers!



## MARJORIE MONCREIFF

I was born and had my schooling in Scotland went to Uni in England, worked all over the shop, coming to live in South Australia fifteen years ago.

I recently came to Auckland to celebrate my 60th - great decision - unfortunately I caught up with my now teammate Vikki Maclean, an old friend from Scotland full of enthusiasm for *CatWalk* and a

wish to re-run the NY Marathon. Well anyone who has met Vikki knows that I had little chance of escape even if I have never run for a bus not to mention a mile!

I am however proud to be run/walking the NY Marathon alongside her with *CatWalk* to raise money for spinal cord injury research as I have a great friend and mentor who has been living with such an injury for 55 years. I am already enjoying the challenge of putting on my sports bra and running for my life - not away from it!



## DAVID PRETORIUS

See page 16 for a full profile on David and his very special family.



Above: Holly and Alex Pretorius

# Modern FAMILY

When *CatWalk* caught up with the Pretorius family in Auckland recently, it was the middle of the school holidays and a sleepover was in progress. The sound of giggling girls punctuated a thoroughly refreshing conversation firstly with dad David, and then our interview subject, Alex.

We'd been wanting to chat with Alex (14) about a teen's take on a family living alongside SCI, and how injury has impacted (or not) her relationship with younger sister Holly (11).

From the outset, it must be clear to any observer that the entire Pretorius family has drawn on a remarkable inner strength since a 2010 accident which marked a watershed in their lives. David (with a background in finance and accounting) and wife Natasha had emigrated to New Zealand from Cape Town in 2004 with their young family. Their three story home in the Auckland suburb of Redvale was gorgeous and they were living the Kiwi dream.

And then came early 2010 and immeasurable challenge – a car accident. To an outsider, the death of darling Adam and Holly's severe injury might have combined to represent an unbearable burden. But shoulder that weight the Pretorius' have, with a resolve which now allows laughter and fun to warm a cold winter's night in July 2015.

After 2010, David and Natasha began engaging with organisations that have spinal cord injury rehab and cure as their main objectives. Through this global network, they were introduced to Catriona in 2013, and a close friendship developed. David is now on the *CatWalk* board, and Natasha (a new entrant primary school teacher) lists as her greatest desire to see Holly walk again, which will only happen if SCI is cured completely for all people.

David is going the extra mile – literally to make that happen. He'll be part of Team *CatWalk* running this year's New York Marathon and will have his family backing him every step of the way.

*"I wish my sister was able to walk and run like she used to be able to...the sooner the world cures this problem, the better for everyone."*

As for the kids, life is to be lived to the max when you are a teenager and today Alex – a Year 10 student at Carmel College – and Holly are supportive and loving sisters with a combined passion for horses and an enthusiasm for everything else they do. The Pretorius weekend routine now revolves around all things horse-riding and David's sad realisation that he will never have time to own and run a boat around Auckland's beautiful waterways.



The family now live in a new – and equally lovely – family home at Dairy Flat, utterly flat and with no impediments to prevent Alex and Holly growing up alongside each other. We decided to ask Alex a few questions about life in a crazy busy household, and in the process discovered her insightful take on SCI.

**Q:** If you had to describe your sister in three words – what would they be and why?

**A:** Lazy – because she never does her chores and even when I ask her to, she ignores me!  
Goofy – she has a great sense of humour and makes me laugh a lot.

Adventurous – she rides horses with me, which is awesome, and she is always keen to try something different.

**Q:** All sisters have a special relationship – is yours any different just because Holly's in a chair?

**A:** No, just because Holly is in a chair does not make anything different. I treat her the same as I ever did. Most of the time we're really silly with each other, calling each other Harli and Arli! We do a lot together, and laugh at most of the obstacles that come our way. I help her through them happily – the best example is the morning bus ride to school. Lots of people everywhere, most of them staring at Holly, and not moving when we need to get off. So I take charge and push her through the people, driving over a few feet! We always laugh afterwards at how people are so ignorant of wheelchairs.



*Above: Pretorius family, from left, David, Natasha, Holly and Alex*

*“We do a lot together, and laugh at most of the obstacles that come our way. I help her through them happily.”*



*Above: Holly (left) and Alex*

**Q:** What would you tell the rest of the world about SCI?

**A:** I wish more money was spent on researching this injury because it's horrible! I wish my sister was able to walk and run like she used to be able to ... it's all so unfair to be stuck in a wheelchair, and the sooner the world cures this problem, the better for everyone.

*– As told to Charlotte Gendall*

**Q:** Every family has its moments – what is Holly's most annoying characteristic?

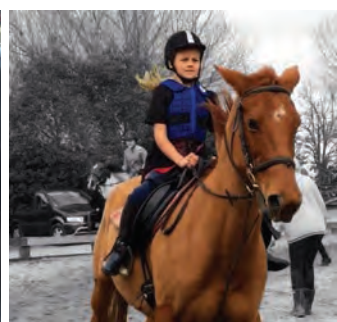
**A:** America! All she talks about is America..... America this and America that – It drives me mad!

**Q:** On the plus side – what makes you smile when you are with Holly?

**A:** We have this little thing where we call each other Harli and Arli, which for some strange reason makes us laugh and laugh. She is like having a little buddy with me all the time!

**Q:** What do you enjoy doing, and how does the rest of the family – including Holly – support you?

**A:** I enjoy riding horses, playing tennis, art and I'm currently learning French... Holly got me into riding after I saw how much fun she was having. My pony Flash is 17 years old and I love showjumping him. My parents support me with my other interests by letting me have a go at something when I think I might like it.



# Brain Bee CHALLENGE

Since its inception in 2007 The *CatWalk* Trust has been a major sponsor of the New Zealand Brain Bee Challenge supporting Round 2 of the competition that takes place at the Centre for Brain Research, University of Auckland and Otago University's Brain Health Research Centre as part of the Australia-New Zealand competition.

Previous Brain Bee winners currently grace the halls of Harvard, Princeton and of course the Spinal Cord Injury Research Facility. These students are the best of the best, and by supporting this challenge, *CatWalk* aims to encourage New Zealand's brightest minds to further their education and career in the path of neuroscience.



*Above: The 2015 Brain-Bee Challenge Winners*

## NORTH ISLAND

On July 2, a total of 182 students from 40 North Island schools converged on the Faculty of Medical and Health Science's Centre for Brain Research at the University of Auckland to compete in both the Individual and Teams competitions of the annual second stage of the Brain Bee Challenge.

During the course of the day they were treated to an experience rich in science, fun and camaraderie. Hosted by Associated Professor Maurice Curtis, with Rutherford Discovery Fellow Jessie Jacobson as the Quiz Master, these year 11 students and their teachers explored the network of lecture rooms and laboratories that make up the Grafton campus in a day of learning and discovery.

After the first round, the Teams competition took place. The finals of both the individual and Teams competitions was held in the afternoon broken up by an opportunity for students to listen to early and mid-career researchers narrate with enthusiasm their personal neuroscience journeys.

Another hugely successful science communication/outreach event with Brain Bee winners from 2010 and 2011 (who are both undertaking research in the SCIRF right now) amongst the helpers.

### NORTH ISLAND INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

- 1st Matthew Fulton, Auckland Grammar School
- 2nd Jonathan Chan, Auckland Grammar School
- 3rd Daniel Chow, Francis Douglas Memorial College

### NORTH ISLAND TEAM WINNERS

- 1st Mt Roskill Grammar School
- 2nd St Cuthberts College
- 3rd ACG Parnell College
- 4th Auckland Grammar School

## SOUTH ISLAND

More than 80 Year 11 students from 16 South Island high schools met in Dunedin on June 30 at the Otago Museum for the second round of the Australia and New Zealand Brain Bee Challenge.

The challenge is a very important addition to the science experience of these keen young students as it introduces them to neuroscience, a topic which is not part of the high school curricula. Round 1 (held during Brain Awareness week) was an online quiz hosted by Education Perfect, and from this, students were selected to come to Dunedin to take part in round two. This competition is New Zealand's only neuroscience competition for high school students.

The students compete in individual and team events to find an individual winner who will represent the South Island in round three, the National Final held in Australia. The Australia and New Zealand winners of that round will go on to the World final, the International Brain Bee Challenge. The 2nd and 3rd place getters in the individual competition are well rewarded with a place in 'Hands on Otago' where they can experience a week of science in the summer vacation.

While in Dunedin the students get many opportunities to experience what being a student at Otago University may be like. They attend a short lecture from some of one of Otago's leading neuroscientists and take part in an interactive "NEURO 101" laboratory session using one of the teaching laboratories used for First Year Health Science classes. This allows students to gain insights into working in neuroscience and explore potential career opportunities.

### SOUTH ISLAND INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

- 1st Kate Jenkins, St Margaret's College
- 2nd Marisol Hunter, Rangi Ruru School
- 3rd Prathe Chandru, St Margaret's College

### SOUTH ISLAND TEAM WINNERS

- 1st Rangi Ruru Girls School
- 2nd Cashmere High School
- 3rd St Margaret's College

# CATWALK

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OUR TEN YEAR **10** ANNIVERSARY

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