



THE Dandelion

THE NEWSLETTER OF FERTILITY NEW ZEALAND, A REGISTERED CHARITY SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH FERTILITY ISSUES

AUGUST 2017

Meet our **new** Ambassadors!

Former Black Cap cricketer Chris Harris and his wife Linda have experienced infertility first-hand.

After conceiving their daughter naturally, the couple had no idea that they would go through seven rounds of IVF and other medical procedures, before they had twins, Louie and Phoebe.

Every Christmas their daughter would ask Santa for a baby brother or sister, and the couple's hearts would break. They too were longing for more children and were constantly being reminded through well-meaning questions from family or friends, and by watching their friends' families grow, that their desire to build their family might not come to fruition.

In becoming Ambassadors for Fertility NZ, the Harris's want to offer hope to those in the midst of trying to have a baby, and to support the work of FNZ. Support groups and other resources play a critical role in lessening the feelings of isolation and fear.



The couple say they never understood the toll infertility and the resulting treatments could have until they were faced with it themselves. In becoming Ambassadors for Fertility New Zealand and sharing their story, they hope to raise awareness and encourage others to seek support, "We always thought having a big family would be easy, a natural part of life. But when it didn't happen that way we were really

Continued on page 3 ▶

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- A word from the President
- About Fertility NZ
- Pregnant after fertility treatment?
- Journey to adoption
- Fertility Week 2017: How Kiwis Make Babies
- Noticeboard: events roundup

PAGE 4
Achieving a family dream



PAGE 6
Fertility Week preview



Watch Linda and Chris' interview with Hilary Barry on TVNZ's Breakfast – link on our Facebook page and website





Welcome Notes

Welcome to *The Dandelion* newsletter.

When former Black Cap Chris Harris was in the heyday of his international cricketing career, few people knew what was going on at home. Chris and wife Linda underwent a rigorous fertility journey, finally achieving a successful pregnancy on their seventh and final IVF cycle. They are immensely grateful for being able to complete their family and want to help raise awareness of fertility issues. We are delighted to welcome Chris and Linda as our new Ambassadors!

Unfortunately, not everyone receives the 'golden prize' of a full genetic child at the end of their fertility journey. Some couples come to a point on their fertility journey when they start considering alternative options for family building. Adoption is one of those options and we are delighted to publish a story on page four about one

couple's rich journey with their family created through international adoption.

Following the success of previous campaigns, Fertility Week 2017 will again involve specialist information and advice, in-person events around the country and webinars held during the week. Entitled *How Kiwis Make Babies*, the campaign aims to educate and also reflect some of the different ways that families are built in New Zealand. We are very grateful to our supporters who enable us to deliver information and events to our community.

If you are not yet a Member of Fertility NZ, join today (free of charge) at www.fertilitynz.org.nz/register. Benefits of becoming a Member include receiving news (Members receive *The Dandelion* via email), and/or receiving notifications about

support groups in your area. Members can also participate in the forums on our website. Importantly, Fertility NZ Membership supports all New Zealanders experiencing infertility – the more Members we have, the stronger our voice. This is particularly important when lobbying the Government. We also survey our Members on issues including relevant legislation changes and experience of NZ fertility clinics.

Fertility NZ exists to support you, and any feedback you have on the information, support and advocacy we provide is always welcome.

I would like to thank you for taking the time to read *The Dandelion* and look forward to continuing to provide support over the coming months.

Cheers

Nigel McKerras – President

About Fertility New Zealand

Fertility New Zealand is committed to supporting, advocating for and educating all people who face infertility challenges at all stages of their journey and beyond.

Fertility NZ was founded in 1990 and is a registered charity. It operates on a national level and much of its work is undertaken by dedicated volunteers. Fertility NZ provides assistance for people with fertility issues through the following channels:

- **Support** A network of regular support gatherings, workshops and contact groups throughout the country; an 0800 line and email address for enquiries, and infertility forums on our website where

Members can provide support to one another.

- **Information** Fertility NZ's website www.fertilitynz.org.nz is the focal point of information; informative fact sheet brochures are available for Members and through Clinics; regular publication of *The Dandelion* newsletter and email updates to Members; conferences and information events.

- **Advocacy** Representing the voice of people affected by infertility on medical, ethical and policy issues.

Our vision

FertilityNZ has a vision of a 'fertility friendly' and fertility-aware New Zealand where:

- Infertility is recognised, understood and supported;
- All men and women faced with the medical condition of infertility have access to appropriate, timely and fully-funded medical treatment;
- Men and women have all the information necessary to enable them to make informed decisions regarding their fertility;
- Young New Zealanders learn about fertility preservation;
- Fertility and all alternative forms of whanau and family-building are respected and valued.

Our new ambassadors

◀ From page 1

thrown. It's a big thing to come to terms with and treatment is tough," says Chris.

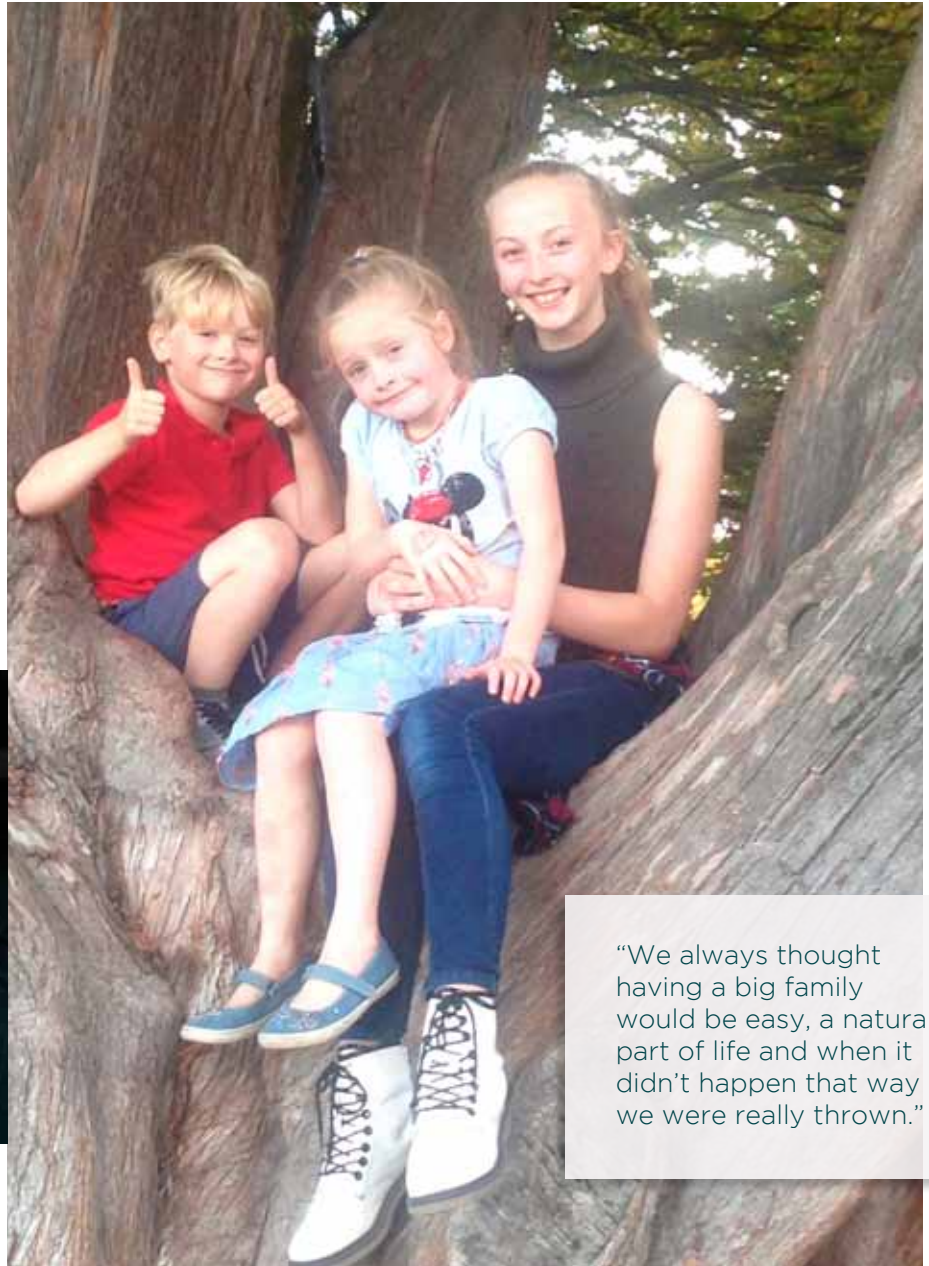
For Linda, going through IVF alone, while Chris was playing cricket in the IPL in India was particularly lonely. She says support and resources such as those offered by Fertility New Zealand would have been a great help,

"The support and empathy of those going through a similar process would have been incredible. The support groups and other services Fertility NZ offer are just so useful."

Linda and Chris will be speaking at the Fertility Week event in Christchurch on Wednesday 1st November (FNZ Members will receive event details via email).



ABOVE: Linda and Chris and RIGHT: children Louie, Phoebe and Sophie .



"We always thought having a big family would be easy, a natural part of life and when it didn't happen that way we were really thrown."

Pregnant following fertility treatment?

Pregnancy can be a challenging time for women who have been through the challenges of fertility treatment, and/or spent years trying to conceive. Immense joy and gratitude can be accompanied by feelings of disbelief and anxiety.

It can be difficult to relate to women who fall pregnant easily. We now have group which meet regularly in Auckland and Christchurch to provide positive support to women who are pregnant following fertility treatment. We also have a closed Facebook group

for 'Pregnant After Fertility Treatment, open to all New Zealanders.

For more information on the support groups, or the Facebook group, email Karina on aucklandsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz or Carolynne on christchurchsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz



Mia and Manat at the Fo Guang Shan Temple, Auckland.

Anne and Marcel's journey to adoption

A family was always part of the equation for Anne and Marcel when they married in 2000 but they suspected it would not be an easy dream to achieve.

At the age of 35, Anne's fertility was declining and she had been on the contraceptive pill for most of her adult life. And while Marcel already had a daughter from a previous marriage, conceiving her had been quite difficult. So after two years of trying to conceive naturally, Anne who was now even more desperate to have a baby, was increasingly concerned. Marcel, already a father, was somewhat more relaxed about their situation but supported Anne as they went through two years of fertility treatment.

"It is expensive and particularly hard on women I think, but as I could tell Anne was very keen on a positive outcome I was happy to do it," Marcel said.

The process included Donor Insemination, IVF with ICSI, herbal treatments and surgery for endometriosis. But with every unsuccessful attempt, the prospect of being unable to have a child together started to become a reality and the couple discussed options. This included surrogacy but they felt it was too difficult.

"I was always quite keen to adopt, even prior to having fertility issues but Marcel, at this point, was a bit more reluctant," Anne said.

"While he thought it would be good to give an adopted child a loving family he didn't want to rush into it."

As the fertility treatment

progressed, Anne, feeling the chances of success were becoming an increasingly low probability, started to explore options to adopt either from within New Zealand or from overseas. Remaining childless was simply not a palatable option for Anne if she could not have her own baby.

"Our initial intention was to probably adopt from Russia which, at the time, had the largest and most active program. However, there is a lot of encouragement to adopt locally and so we thought we would try this first," Anne said.

More certainty overseas

After waiting 18 months to adopt a baby in New Zealand, they decided to focus on an overseas adoption and at this time Anne and Marcel felt the program with China would give them more certainty.

"Another factor was that we loved Vietnam and the Vietnamese people as we had travelled there a lot but as adopting from Vietnam was not possible we liked the thought of a Chinese child as an alternative," said Marcel.

After undergoing the necessary vetting and approval process required in New Zealand to be able to adopt from overseas, they eventually travelled to China in 2006 to bring home their daughter, 22 month old Mia who was living in an orphanage. The process took 15

"Mia was an unhappy child before she settled in but I knew to expect this and over the next six to twelve months she became a happy and content toddler,"

months from the time their adoption file arrived in China from New Zealand. And while arriving home with any new member of any family brings with it a variety of challenges, international adoption often comes with some unique issues due to the circumstances of the child in their home country.

"Mia was extremely traumatised as she didn't know what was happening. I'm fairly certain she'd never left the orphanage or seen foreigners and she cried loudly and a lot, clinging to Marcel and not wanting anything to do with me," Anne said.

"She was an unhappy child for a number of months before she settled in but I knew to expect this and over the next six to twelve months she became a happy and content toddler, finally smiling and playing and doing all those things you'd expect of a normal young child."

Continued on page 7 ►

1st-7th
November
2017

Introducing Fertility How Kiwis Make

The 2017 campaign aims to educate and raise awareness as well as reflect modern New Zealand family building. Entitled 'How Kiwis Make Babies', the campaign will have three main silos of information which aim to inform and help people take control of their fertility:



<i>Making Babies, DIY</i>	<i>Making Babies, with help</i>	<i>Making Babies, with donorship and surrogacy</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For anyone planning for a family in the future • For anyone trying to conceive naturally, now • Vital information for anyone on a fertility journey! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people who have been trying to conceive and it's not happening, or have experienced pregnancy loss. When should you seek help? What are your options? What is publically funded? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For people considering building their family – or currently building their family – through egg, sperm or embryo donation or surrogacy.

Key programmes of 'How Kiwis Make Babies' will be:

- www.fertilityweek.org.nz – the hub of Fertility Week
- information events held within our support centres (see right)
- a series of information webinars throughout the week
- sharing of people's stories (currently being sought through www.fertilityweek.org.nz/your-story)
- interactive quiz
- social media campaign

We look forward to sharing *How Kiwis Make Babies* with you!



**How Kiwis
make babies**

Fertility Week 2017

Week: Babies

Fertility Week

CALENDAR OF REGIONAL EVENTS

Wednesday 1st November

- **Chris Harris's Spin on Infertility**, Christchurch

- **How Kiwis Make Babies: Meet the Professionals**, Wellington

- **How Kiwis Make Babies: information evening**, Hamilton

Saturday 4th November

- **How Kiwis Make Babies: half-day seminar**, Auckland

Tuesday 7th November

- **Making Babies with Help: presentation and self-care**, Nelson

- **How Kiwis Make Babies: information evening**, Dunedin

Webinar programme to follow

- **Keep an eye on the Fertility Week website for details of the free-of-charge live Webinars to be held each weeknight.**

◀ From page 5

For Anne, having an adopted child has always felt 'right'.

"I've never felt any unfulfilled desire for a birth child and I'm sure I feel the same mother-child bond that a birth mother feels," she said.

When Mia was small, Anne would often get asked about not being her 'real' mother.

"I would briefly explain we had adopted her from China and would field further questions they had. I generally found people were interested in the adoption process as they were perhaps considering it themselves or had a friend or relative considering it," she said.

After a further 12 month compulsory wait time after an adoption Anne and Marcel began the paperwork for another adoption and 22 months later, in 2009, brought home their second child Manat, aged 42 months, from Thailand.

"Manat was a much happier and more confident child from the beginning. His orphanage had given him lots of different experiences and outings and his nanny really cared for him " Anne said.

Heritage and culture

Family life for Anne and Marcel is now like any other family; mostly lots of love and fun interspersed with the normal day-to-day issues. They consciously try to keep their heritage alive by talking to their children about their birth country and, where possible keep up with Chinese and Thai culture and events in New Zealand. They have consciously sent their children to kindergartens and schools with strong Asian populations and they also travel regularly back to China and Thailand.

"I think it has worked well having children from China and Thailand and I'm very happy with everything. Perhaps we would have adopted sooner if we had known it could be done like this and the family it would bring us," Anne said.

"I was less enthusiastic than Anne about inter country adoption; probably because I was already a father, but there's nothing I would change now," Marcel said.

"I'm very happy with everything. Perhaps we would have adopted sooner if we had known it could be done like this and the family it would bring us,"

Anne believes her outlook on their adoption journey and its future is very positive.

"Is it harder having a non-biological child, or a child with a more difficult beginning because of their circumstances? I don't know because I can't compare but I'm a happy mother so if it is harder it's not too hard and it's definitely worth it."

Anne now uses her personal experience in inter country adoption to help others who are considering it. She is a Trustee of Adoption First Steps which helps New Zealand residents begin the process of overseas adoption. (See box below.)

Taking the first step

Adoption First Steps is a Charitable Trust accredited by the New Zealand Government to help New Zealand residents wanting to adopt children from overseas.

It provides advice and information on the requirements and process. It also provides the services required to seek New Zealand Government approval which is the first step in the adoption process.

New Zealand currently has programs in place for adoptions from Chile, Lithuania, India, Thailand and The Philippines.

For more information, visit www.adoptionfirststeps.org.nz or contact Director, Sue, by phone: 027 237 2014 or email: info@adoptionfirststeps.org.nz

noticeboard

Support
Group
Dates

AUCKLAND: FERTILITY SUPPORT SERIES

Tuesdays 10th, 17th, 24th October

AUCKLAND: PREGNANT AFTER FERTILITY TREATMENT

Sunday 3rd September

Sunday 1st October

Saturday 4th November
(Fertility Week)

AUCKLAND: CASUAL COFFEE

Tuesday 15th August

Tuesday 19th September

Tuesday 17th October

Saturday 4th November
(Fertility Week)

AUCKLAND: SECONDARY INFERTILITY

Sunday 30th July

Sunday 27th August

Sunday 24th September

Sunday 29th October

Sunday 26th November

Sunday 17th December

AUCKLAND: SINGLE WOMEN

Sunday 6th August

Sunday 3rd September

Sunday 1st October

Sunday 5th November
(Fertility Week)

Sunday 3rd December

HAMILTON

Saturday 19th August

Saturday 16th September

Saturday 21st October

Wednesday 1st November
(Fertility Week)

Saturday 16th December

TAURANGA

Saturday 5th August

Monthly on a Saturday –
dates TBC

HAWKE'S BAY

Sunday 17th September,

Sunday 19th November

WELLINGTON

Wednesday 9th August

Wednesday 20th September

Wednesday 1st November
(Fertility Week)

NELSON

Tuesday 15th August

Tuesday 19th September

Tuesday 17th October

Tuesday 7th November
(Fertility Week)

CHRISTCHURCH

Tuesday 25th July

Tuesday 22nd August

Tuesday 26th September

Tuesday 24th October

Wednesday 1st November
(Fertility Week)

DUNEDIN

Tuesday 1st August

Tuesday 5th September

Tuesday 3rd October

Tuesday 7th November
(Fertility Week)

Tuesday 5th December

Local information

How can we help you
in your area?

Fertility NZ Local Contacts

Whangarei

whangareisupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Auckland

aucklandsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

(Fertility Support Series, Casual
Coffee, Pregnant After Fertility
Treatment)

secondariesupport@fertilitynz.org.nz
(Secondary Infertility)

singlewomensupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Hamilton

hamiltonsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Tauranga

taurangasupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Rotorua

rotoruasupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Gisborne

gisbornesupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Hawke's Bay

hawkesbaysupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Wellington

wellingtonsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Nelson

nelsonsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

West Coast

westcoastsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Christchurch

christchurchsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Central Otago

centralotagosupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Dunedin

dunedinsupport@fertilitynz.org.nz

Tauranga support group

Our wonderful new Tauranga volunteer, Sarah, facilitates regular support gatherings in Tauranga. The free-of-charge sessions are held monthly and open to anyone experiencing infertility. The sessions are very casual with a 'coffee and chat' format (some sessions will have guest speakers). Please contact Sarah on taurangasupport@fertilitynz.org.nz to enquire or register your interest.

This material is supported by way of an educational grant from Bayer New Zealand Limited. The information submitted is intended to assist health care professionals and patients in forming their own conclusions and making decisions, but may not represent a comprehensive listing of all available information on the subject. The views and opinions expressed by the individual presenters do not necessarily represent the opinion of Bayer New Zealand Limited.

Fertility New Zealand accepts no responsibility for any information contained in this publication, and the views are not necessarily those of Fertility New Zealand. © Permission to reprint any articles from this magazine must be sought from Fertility New Zealand prior to publication.

CONTACT US

• phone: 0800 333 306 • email: support@fertilitynz.org.nz • web: www.fertilitynz.org.nz
• post: Fertility New Zealand, PO Box 28262, Remuera, Auckland 1541 • Visit us on Facebook!