

Monthly Newsletter



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Here's what has happened and what's to come!

Kia ora and welcome to our latest newsletter!

It's been an incredibly busy month here at Volunteer Great Lake Taupō. Planning for the Christmas Carnival and Remains Santa Parade is well underway, and this year is shaping up to be one of the biggest Taupō has seen.

We're excited to be partnering with The Easterfest Trust and a fantastic mix of community groups, churches, and local businesses to bring the North Domain alive with festive fun. Expect hundreds of dollars in giveaways, more games, bouncy castles, food trucks, the Taupō Brass Band, Christmas carols, and plenty of joy for all ages.

A reminder that the Parade starts at 10am, followed by the Christmas Carnival from 11:30 - 2pm on the North Domain. It's a great chance to come together, celebrate the season, and support the volunteers and organisations who make events like this possible.

There have also been some changes here at VGLT. We want to acknowledge and sincerely thank Abinhav, who has stepped down from the Board, for his contribution and support during his time with us. We are now seeking new board members to help guide VGLT as we continue strengthening volunteering across the Taupō District.

Looking ahead, the United Nations has declared 2026 the International Year of Volunteers for Sustainable Development (IVY 2026). This global initiative will shine a light on the essential role volunteers play in community wellbeing, environmental care, and sustainable development. It's an exciting opportunity for our local volunteer sector to gain well-deserved recognition.

As we move toward the end of the year, please note that the VGLT office will be operating on skeleton staff from 18 December to 20 January 2026. We'll still keep an eye on messages and emails, but replies may take a little longer.

We're planning to send one more newsletter before Christmas, along with our usual Christmas Cheer message to wrap up the year with appreciation and celebration.

Thank you to everyone who continues to give their time, energy, and heart to our community. Your contributions make Taupō a wonderful place to live, and we're grateful for every one of you.

MANAGER - JULIAN BISHOP

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Community Carnival 24

Community News

Here's a look at what's happening across our district as we head towards the end of the year. A season that is already asking a lot of our communities and also showing how strong and connected we are.

As you may have heard, there have been serious fires on Mount Tongariro in recent weeks. Our thoughts are with everyone affected, and we want to extend heartfelt thanks to all the fire brigades and their volunteers for their incredible work, as well as everyone helping behind the scenes. From the three local marae supporting whānau and crews, to those providing food, transport, accommodation, and coordination, your aroha and mahi have been immense. Moments like these remind us that community is not just a word. It's people stepping up for each other when it matters most.

Against that backdrop, International Volunteer Day on 5 December feels especially meaningful this year. It is a time to pause and recognise the many people across the Taupō district who quietly give their time, skills, and heart. Whether you are coaching sport, helping at events, running a support group, or checking in on neighbours, we see you and we appreciate you. Taupō simply would not be the same without you.

The festive season then kicks off in style with the Tremains Santa Parade on Saturday 6th of December, starting at 10 am in the town centre. Expect colour, music, and plenty of Christmas cheer as floats, community groups, and characters make their way through the streets. Once the parade wraps up, the fun continues at the Christmas Community Carnival on Tongariro North Domain. This year we have 19 community stands, a big step up from last year, with games, food, activities, and fundraising stalls all helping to bring our community together for a day of celebration. So follow the parade on to the park, there's well over \$1,000 in giveaways and plenty of spot prizes.

We also know that Christmas can be a tough time for many families, especially with extra pressure on household budgets. Tremains have set up a Giving Tree, with gifts going to Pregnancy Help to support parents and pēpi in our region. If you are able, please consider dropping off new items, such as baby clothing, nappies, toys, or practical essentials to the Tremains office. Even a small gift can make a real difference to someone's Christmas.

If you are looking for gifts for your own whānau, an option to consider is the Taupō Toy Library as they have a huge range of toys you can hire over the Christmas period, from ride-ons and puzzles to dress-ups and outdoor play. You can wrap them for Christmas Day so there is still something exciting to open, then return them in the New Year. It's cheaper than buying new, better for the environment, and a great way to avoid the post-Christmas clutter that so easily builds up in our homes.

For those wanting to give a gift that truly changes lives, you might like to consider gifting your time. Many local charities and community organisations are looking for volunteers over summer and into the New Year. From one-off event help to ongoing roles, there are plenty of ways to get involved. You can explore opportunities online through SEEK Volunteer, or get in touch with Volunteer Great Lake Taupō if you would like help finding something that fits your interests and time.

On the wellbeing front, our last ADHD Adult Support Group meeting for the year is coming up on Tuesday 2 December, 7 pm at Waiora House. This is a relaxed, judgement-free space for adults with ADHD (diagnosed or self-identified) to share experiences, swap strategies, and feel a bit less alone. If you have been thinking about coming along but have not made it yet, this is a good chance to pop in before the year ends.

For those affected by changes in vision, or supporting someone who is. There is a free Macular Degeneration Seminar in Hamilton. Ophthalmologist Dr David Worsley will share the latest information on treatments and offer practical advice on how best to manage macular degeneration. The seminar is on Saturday 29 November at the Wintec Bill Gallagher Centre, Events Room 1, from 10.30 am to 12.00 pm.

As always, you will spot members of the Volunteer Great Lake Taupō team out and about at many of these events – sometimes in hi-vis, sometimes behind a stall, sometimes just chatting in the crowd. If you see us, please come and say kia ora. We would love to hear how you are going, what support you need, and how we can help you stay connected in the months ahead.



October - Tremains Volunteer of the Month

For this month's issue, we are recognising the incredible contribution of Jill, who has been part of Pregnancy Help since late 2019, early 2020. Jill is one of those remarkable people who quietly make a huge difference. A hardworking, humble, and deeply caring member of our volunteer whānau who steps in whenever she can and simply gets things done.

Jill brings a wonderful sense of calm to our busy hub. Her "can-do" attitude, steady presence, and contagious laugh brighten even the darker days, reminding us of the power of kindness and connection. There is truly nothing too hard for Jill. She goes out of her way to make everyone's jobs easier, always thinking of others and always willing to help.

She has also formed a special bond with many of our Filipino community members. Jill welcomes them with open arms, ensures they feel supported, and makes sure no one goes without. Her warmth and generosity help create a space where people feel safe, valued, and at home.

It's fitting that we celebrate Jill as this month's Tremains Volunteer of the Month. Her dedication, compassion, and genuine care for people shine through in everything she does.

On behalf of our volunteers, community groups, and the many families she has supported, we extend our heartfelt thanks. Jill, you are truly one-of-a-kind, and Pregnancy Help simply wouldn't be the same without you.



VGLT Christmas Community Carnival

Volunteer Great Lake Taupo and Christmas in the Park invite your group to join the Community Carnival on Saturday 6th December 2025, right after the Tremains Taupo Santa Parade!

06 Dec 2025



Support Pregnancy Help by dropping a present to the Tremains Giving Tree located at their office.

Recent opportunities and where we need help!



Christmas Helper Elves & Event Support Volunteers

Help us spread cheer as we bring one of Taupō's most loved community events to life, from welcoming families and handing out tokens, to helping with games, setup, and general event support. It starts with the Tremains Santa Parade and other activities till around 2 PM. It's all about creating smiles, laughter, and festive memories together.



Freedom Philosophy Trust

Believe in second chances?

Join us in Turangi Prisons as a calming, consistent presence that helps transform lives from the inside out. No speeches, no pressure - just showing up and supporting people as they find freedom within.

Visit our website to find out more and browse all our available opportunities
www.volunteerglt.org.nz



We're on the lookout for new Board Members!

Help steer the future of volunteering in the Taupō district and make a real impact in your community

Volunteer Great Lake Taupō is seeking passionate, community-minded folks to join our Board.

Whether you bring skills in governance, finance, HR, comms, or simply care deeply about community connection. We'd love to hear from you!



The Salvation Army

Join our friendly team in Taupō!

Looking for a way to give back, meet new people, or build your confidence? Come volunteer at The Salvation Army Family Store in Taupō!

- Flexible hours
- Fun, supportive team
- NZQA-accredited retail training

Make a real impact in your community Whether you're a people person or prefer behind the scenes, there's a role for you.



**Pregnancy Help
Taupo**



Pregnancy Help Taupō

When a pēpi is on the way or a little one has just arrived, money should be the last thing standing between a whānau and the essentials they need. That's where Pregnancy Help Taupō steps in, providing practical support and essential items to our community completely free of charge.

Pregnancy Help Taupō is a safe, welcoming, non-judgemental space for all things pregnancy through to early childhood. We believe every whānau should feel empowered, informed, and supported at every stage, whether they're expecting their first baby or juggling a busy brood.

Our service is funded through grants that our coordinator tirelessly applies for, along with local fundraising events and a Givealittle page. On top of that, we're backed by incredible community generosity, with donations of good-quality baby and children's items arriving at our door every week.

Behind the scenes, a beautiful team of volunteers sorts, folds, organises, and puts away donated items. They make up tailored packs for clients, greet and support whānau who visit, and wash items that need a little extra care. In October alone, they contributed an amazing 203 volunteer hours.

The impact of this mahi is huge. In October 2025, Pregnancy Help Taupō supported 277 tamariki with more than 3,300 items of clothing, six safe sleep spaces, and 80 baby blankets, plus countless other essentials including nappies, wipes, sanitary products, toys, and larger items such as highchairs and baths.

We're open three days a week, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 9am to 2pm with a focus on helping whānau not just get by, but thrive. By building connections and relationships, and working alongside other social services, we help ensure families can access all the support available to them.

Pregnancy Help Taupō supports whānau across Taupō, Tūrangi, Mangakino, and Reporoa, and we can send packs out where needed. Tūrangi has its own hub under our umbrella, run by REAP Central Plateau on their playgroup days, and we've recently begun reaching out to Taumarunui as well.

Every donated item, every volunteer hour and every conversation in our hub weaves a stronger safety net for local whānau, one warm blanket, tiny onesie, and kind word at a time.

Thank you for reading!

Volunteer Great Lake Taupō is able to do its mahi thanks to the generosity of our supporters and funders



**Te Tari Taiwhenua
Internal Affairs**



GREAT LAKE TAUPŌ
Taupō District Council