

**A ball can
change your
life?**



**Where sport is
the intervention**

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Street Football Aotearoa

Street Football Aotearoa

A charitable trust set up early in 2008 to facilitate participation in sport for homeless and marginalised people.

The trust aims to:

- Provide opportunities for fitness and football training for homeless and excluded people
- Provide opportunities for selection and to represent Aotearoa/NZ at the international Homeless World Cup events
- Provide financial support to individuals chosen to represent Aotearoa/NZ at the international HWC events

Why sport?

- *“Sport has the power to unite people in a way little else can. Sport can create hope where there was once only despair. It breaks down barriers. It laughs in the face of discrimination. Sport speaks to people in a language they can understand”*

Nelson Mandela

- *“Sport can and should play a positive role as a catalyst for our societies, that physical exercise and sport are contributory factors in social cohesions, tolerance and integration; and that they are powerful instruments for physical and socio-economic development”*

Jaques Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee.

Homelessness and Health

- Link between homelessness, poor housing and high levels of both physical and mental ill health
- A review of different international research indicates
 - alcohol dependency up to 60%
 - drug dependency up to 55%
 - mental illness up to 45%
 - high levels of smoking related diseases; diabetes; anaemia; skin conditions including frost bite and sunburn; sexual and reproductive health problems and chronic dental disease
- Homeless people experience significant barriers to accessing both primary and secondary health care
- Tobacco industry targeting marketing to the homeless and mentally ill (Apollonio and Maoline, 2003)?

Sport as an intervention

- Model of 'fun, fitness and friendship'
 - New experience or re-awakening forgotten skills and ability
 - Peer support - skilled players who help to gel the groups, encouraging new players from the position of a shared experience of homelessness
 - Opportunity to interact with agencies on an equal footing
- Focus on strengths and skills rather than situation or problem
- Alternative and complementary engagement to traditional agency/client relationships
- Physiological benefits – fitness and exercise
- Emotional and cognitive skills - self esteem, problem-solving, communication

The Players

- Open sessions – all welcome
- Players are or have been homeless and face a number of challenges in their lives including experience of trauma, mental illness, offending, gambling, drug and alcohol issues, family difficulties, poverty and isolation.
- Players from 16 years to late 60s
- Mostly men but some women
- Maori, Pacific Island, NZ European and refugees from Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan

Weekly training

- Auckland, Wellington and now Christchurch City Centre
- Hour long sessions (indoor and outdoor)
- Consists of warm up, skills development, training drills followed by a game
- Volunteer Coaches take the sessions
- Assisted by Support Workers from Homelessness agencies- LIFEWISE; DCM; Sisters of Compassion; City Mission; Evolve & The Salvation Army
- Funding from WCC; LIFEWISE
- Average of 8-10 players each week depending on the weather
- Provide fruit and healthy snacks



The Homeless World Cup

- International Street Soccer tournament
- Established in 2003
- Graz, Gothenburg, Edinburgh, Cape Town, Copenhagen and Melbourne in 2008
- Publicise issue of homelessness and poverty
- Empower people who are homeless to make positive changes in their lives
- Make friends and share in the international language of football

Who can play?

- Anyone homeless according to national definition at any point in the 12 months leading up to the tournament
- NZ definition, taken from NZCEH uses Chamberlain & McKenzie model, includes rough sleepers, hostels, temporary or unsuitable accommodation
- People undergoing drug or alcohol rehabilitation who have been homeless in the previous 2 years
- Asylum seekers or those recently granted refugee status
- Open to men and women aged 16 years or over
- Selected according to skills, commitment and ability to travel to the competition

Otaki Training Camp

- Training & bonding trip at a rural retreat near Levin in November 2008
- Football and fitness training
- Fostered team spirit
- Support and advice from Norm Hewitt & Wynton Rufer
- Haka training and a Hāngi on the Saturday Evening
- Team building exercises, confidence course, clay pigeon shooting



Melbourne 2008

- Melbourne saw over 400 players from 52 nations
- Opening Parade through central Melbourne
- Special Stadia in heart of the City at Federal Square
- All players accommodated together, run like an Olympic village with shared meals and recreational time
- 4 a-side, 14 minute game with rolling substitutes
- Rubber pitch 22m x 16m
- Teams compete for 6 cups
 - Afghanistan: Homeless World Cup champions,
 - Zambia: Women's Champions



Team New Zealand

- Supported by Air NZ, Canterbury Teamwear; Cancer Society, Trusts and private donations
- 16 games over 6 days
- Souvenirs, flags, memorabilia from countries around the world
- Aotearoa/New Zealand finished 40th
- Each player presented with a medal
- Given award for Best Newcomers
- Proud ambassadors for the country (discipline and attitude)

Outcomes

- 61 participants in the seven months of training up to the tournament in December; 8 female players.
- Of the squad:
 - Three players have re-established relationships with whanāu
 - Two players have moved into employment and two others have maintained supported jobs
 - One player has moved from rough sleeping into a hostel, another from the night shelter to longer-term accommodation
 - Three players have moved on from hostel or insecure accommodation into their own homes
 - Three players have addressed issues relating to offending and are staying out of trouble
 - One player has spent time at a detox service and moved on to a Salvation Army Bridge rehabilitation programme and another two have reduced their alcohol use considerably
 - Three players are exploring returning to education

What next?

- Expand football projects through local partnerships in other cities in New Zealand
- Welcome approaches from groups and can support local projects with grants for training and equipment
- Profile raising initiatives
- Wellington have established multi-agency group to support future development of project
- Auckland training will move to an indoor facility this winter
- Auckland offering Touch Rugby in partnership with local Police

