

Mary Margaret Schuck

4 February 1964 – 16 November 2020

It is with heavy hearts we share the news that Mary Margaret Schuck, Playcentre Aotearoa Associate Member, Hutt Playcentre Association and Waterloo Playcentre Life Member, passed away on Monday, after a 15-year journey with cancer. Mary Margaret was a staunch advocate for her own children, for parents, for women and of course, for Playcentre.

Mary Margaret was born in Canada and moved with her husband Dougal, and their 2 small children to NZ from Australia in 2001. Having trained as an engineer and scientist, Mary Margaret was one who “loved paperwork and processes and numbers” and was certainly not one to walk away from a challenge.



She joined Waterloo Playcentre in Lower Hutt, 2 weeks after arriving in NZ and became the President less than a year later. After attending her first Association meeting, and while wearing her youngest child who was then a week old, Mary Margaret was introduced to the world of Playcentre governance and in 2005 she became Co-President of the Hutt Playcentre Association. After representing the Association at NZPF national meetings for 3 years, and then with Course 5 of the Playcentre education programme under her belt, she joined NZPF Standing Committee. At that time, she wrote:

“...Playcentre has also given me a passion for supporting parents to spend as much time as possible with their young children. I think there is no other option for early childhood that offers so much to New Zealand society as Playcentre and I’m passionate about supporting Playcentre in our changing society. I believe we need to make the community (and government) aware of how much we all gain through educating children, building networks within our communities, creating friendships, giving parents education about their children and more, and helping families grow together...”

During her time with Playcentre, Mary Margaret was not only a passionate parent and valued volunteer, but also an avid student, a great facilitator, a strong leader and influencer, an amazing writer and an incredible mentor to many.

In recent years, Mary Margaret had continued her passion for education and social justice, through her children’s schools’ Board of Trustees, studying then tutoring at Massey University, advocating through Hutt Valley Benefit Education Service Trust (BEST) and involvement with many other influencing bodies and most significantly with her Church. Presenting several times to Select Committees at Government, along with protesting and advocacy work, Mary Margaret certainly walked the talk of her strong values and beliefs.

On behalf of Te Whānau Tupu Ngātahi o Aotearoa - Playcentre Aotearoa whānui, our sincere condolences to the whānau pani of Mary Margaret.