

My Experience of “Our stories” by Sean Stowers, General Manager, Northern Region, IDEA Services

They say a picture speaks a thousand words and “Our Stories” is a great example of this. I attended the opening and closing of the Pukekohe Exhibition and noticed how powerfully the photos conveyed so much about the person’s unique personality and experiences. The photos had the power to challenge stereotypes and thinking about people with disabilities. These images sent the message that people with disabilities want to be part of family life. People with disabilities want to have loving relationships, to have a place in their communities, to dream of the future, to work, to contribute and to enjoy life.

I was particularly struck by the short films which the students had made profiling the person they had had a chance to get to know. For me it brought home the importance of listening to the person, of discovering the person’s dreams and of providing the right support. It was great to see this collaboration between service providers, people with disabilities and local communities. “Our Stories” will give people new insights and awareness and help build bridges towards a more cooperative and inclusive society. Thanks to all who participated in the making of “Our stories”. It’s been a huge amount of work and I’m sure all the hard work will pay off.