



FREE AUTUMN 2025 SEMINAR SERIES

Making a Difference: the Power of Volunteering in the Manawātū



Palmerston North Central Library
4 The Square, Palmerston North

Wednesdays 1:00pm – 2.30pm
(Note the change of time and venue)

This seminar series is organised by U3A Manawātū. It is open to the public. After the presentations, audio recordings and PowerPoint presentations will be made available on the Manawātū U3A website. See: <https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/seminars/>

There are about 480 volunteer groups in the Manawātū covering a broad range of activities. Who volunteers? Why do they volunteer? What do they do? Learn more about this massive sector, their participants and the organisations that support them.

May 7th: Gardening to Governance, Emergency to Everyday: Volunteering Capacity and Capability

Kate Aplin (she/her), Whatunga Tūao [Volunteer Central, Tumu Whakahaere | Manager
Whatunga Tūao Volunteer Central is the contact point for “all things volunteering” for Palmerston North, Horowhenua, Manawatu, and Tararua. It focuses on building community capacity and capability through volunteering throughout these districts while providing support, education, advice, volunteers, and volunteering opportunities. Whatunga Tūao Volunteer Central works across the whole community no matter backgrounds, cultures, ages, education level, employment status, financial status, language with the aim of having “A Connected Community”.

May 14th: Our Community's Backbone: Building a Sustainable Future

Rennie Williamson (she, her), Communications Lead, Environment Network Manawātū
We are the environment hub for the Manawātū region, providing sector leadership, building capacity and capability, and creating community. Volunteers play a vital role within Environment Network Manawātū (ENM). They are the backbone of everything we do, supporting the work of our 65 member groups. Let’s celebrate the incredible contributions of these volunteers, discuss what draws people to environmental volunteering, and address the challenges we are facing.

May 21st: The Joys of Volunteering

Katrine Imrie, Volunteer House Manager, Abbeyfield Palmerston North, Plus...

I’ve had extensive experience as a volunteer with numerous organisations including Abbeyfield, Strive and Rotary. Much of this is in an administrative capacity as well as being house manager for the Abbeyfield House in Roslyn. Volunteering offers many rewards in terms of community involvement, purposeful activity and mental stimulation. I will give a participant’s perspective on the organisations, how volunteers contribute, and what is achieved.

May 28th:

Empowering Experienced Minds: Volunteering Opportunities at the Manawātū Multicultural Council

Kanchana Seneviratne, MMC Service Manager

This presentation will explore the meaningful impact of volunteering at MMC, highlighting the importance of giving back to the community. We will discuss why volunteering matters, the significance it holds for personal growth and community development, and the diverse range of opportunities available. Additionally, we will emphasize how volunteering fosters cultural diversity, enriching both volunteers and the communities they serve. Join us to learn how you can contribute, connect, and make a difference.