

Update from Wwoof Headquarters

Wwoof NZ Newsletter

July 2005

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From the Coordinator's Desk

Dear Host,

it's again time to touch base with us at Wwoof headquarters, tell us if you are continuing to take Wwoofers and update your details in the Wwoof book. We're also interested to hear how your Wwoofers are going and if there are things we can do to improve the service. Winter is generally a quieter time for Wwoofers. September through February is the main period when Wwoofers are out and about looking for hosts.

Thank you to those who replied to our email/letter back in April. Apologies if you didn't all get a personal reply, we also wrote to about 5000 Wwoofers around the world at the same time which resulted in a bulging post box! Many Wwoofers wrote back about the experiences and hospitality hosts had shown them while Wwoofing. Following are a few of the comments:

- Rhonnie Seager and Anthony Opie in Marahau. "Their knowledge and passion and hospitality were wonderful". -Kristi Tatebe
- Dianne Kennedy and Emma Wood, Banks Peninsula. "I feel in my heart THESE TWO LADIES ARE CREATING THE BETTER WORLD".—Lea Vesel'ská
- Sally and David Handyside near Cheviot. "They are very interested in oneself although they have been in the wwoof system for ages. Sally and David also told me a lot about the organic way and were very interested how we do things here". -Julia Hilke
- Murray Alderson and Rose Waterworth near Dannevirke are really the best hosts a Wwoofer could dream of!! Rose and Murray even managed to take some days off on their beef and deer farm and took us tramping in the beautiful Ruahine Forest Park, to Ocean Beach and organized a horsetrek for the four of us!! - Ingrid Schulz
- Gabriella Lewenz on Waiheke Island. "Her hospitality was overwhelming, the accommodation and food was incredible and I really enjoyed working in her garden with wonderful views over Church Bay. It was the highlight of my whole trip to New Zealand and made Waiheke Island my favourite place. I have now started my own organic garden in the UK thanks to Gabriella giving me gardening encouragement". — Debbie Spikins
- "Pete and Sabrina Griffiths (Kaitaia) completely opened their home to me and made me part of the

family. They extended so much trust to me, and offered so much knowledge of organics. They were wonderful wonderful hosts. Shawn Bishop and Michael (in Warkworth) too gave a good amount of their time to the Wwoofers. They completely opened their lovely home to us and really made the experience an exchange. I am here for a year and hope to meet more and more wonderful people"! -Bronwyn Shiffer.

- "I just wanted to say that my hosts, Cliff and Heather Tyler from Silverdale Auckland have been the most amazing people to stay with. They have invited me to all their family events and really made me feel welcome in their home. They are wonderful caring people and I would encourage anyone to stay with them. I also wanted to say that I think wwoof is a wonderful program and I have had an exceptional time doing it, keep it up! thanks so much". -Anne O'Regan

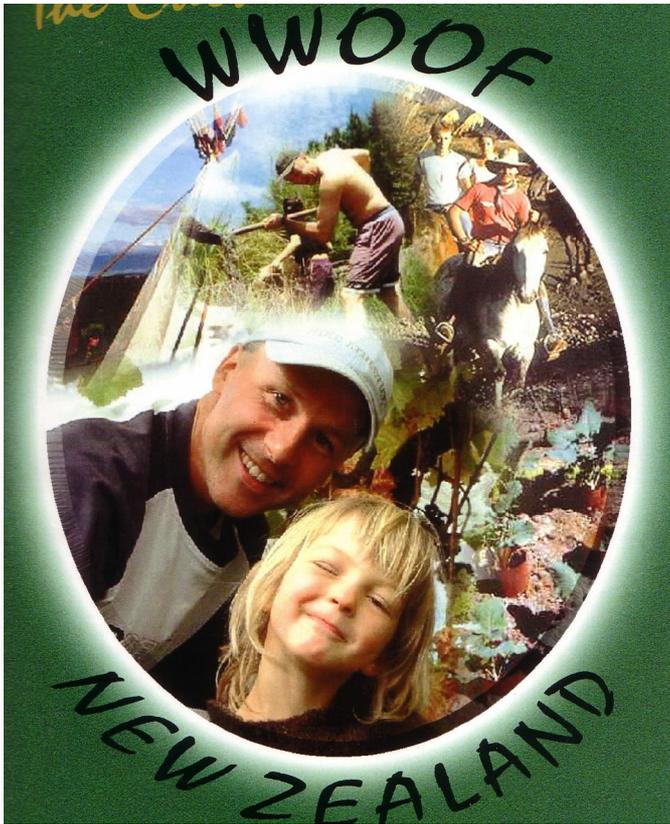
Thanks to all those Wwoofers who wrote, these hosts will receive a \$20 gift voucher from the Eco-Store.

Return Slip: Enclosed is a green slip to be completed and returned in the envelope provided. If you would rather do this slip online go to www.wwoof.co.nz/renew.php (if you do use the online version you wont need to post in the enclosed slip). The deadline for making changes to your listing is *Monday 25th July*. The book will be updated and printed through August and we will post you your copy in September. Remember there will be another update to the book around February next year if you find you want to make changes later on.

Feedback: Wwoof Coordinators like to "keep their ear to the ground" so they know when things are going well and also when there are any problems. If a host or a Wwoofer does have a problem then the coordinator is there to act as a mediator who helps sort things out. Of course this system relies on having regular contact with members, which is one reason why there are now feedback forms available for hosts and Wwoofers to use. The advantage of a form is that it encourages members to make contact with Wwoof Headquarters and also asks for specific comments. Of course the form is only there for those who wish to use it (try it out at www.wwoof.co.nz/feedback.php).

Photos on the Cover of the Wwoof Book

Each edition of the Wwoof Book now has a different montage of photos on the cover which helps give it a personal touch and show a little of what Wwoof is



May 2005 Cover

all about. It also helps identify different editions (the actual edition number and print date are printed on page1). Photos are needed for the next edition so if you would like to make yourself and/or your Wwoofer more familiar to thousands of people around the world you are welcome to post or email them in. Anything showing Wwoofing in action would be gratefully welcomed.

Dealing with no-shows: Hosts continue to say that one disappointment they have is Wwoofers who fail to show up on a pre-arranged date. For a range of reasons this is very disruptive and frustrating. Part of the problem is that travellers tend to be quite fluid with their plans, changing them to suit whatever new adventures come along!

So, what to do? Here are some ideas:

1. If a Wwoofer sets an arrival date with you, note down their email, membership and mobile numbers, especially if the planned arrival date is a month or more away. If they don't show let us know, we will follow up on their whereabouts for you.
2. Ask the Wwoofer to contact you closer to the

date to confirm they are still coming (maybe a few days or a week before). Say that if you don't hear from them that their place may be taken by another Wwoofer!

Photos/Captions:

You can add photos to your online listing at any stage. Send them in by post or email, real ones will be returned. Send in captions also, they add a lot more meaning to the photos.

All the best through the rest of the winter, spring can't be too far off now! Don't forget to get your return slip completed.

Regards, Jane and Andrew.

Hints for Hosts

Pam wrote with the following ideas for arranging stays with Wwoofers:

"I find emails from prospective Wwoofers a good mode of communication and I often ask those who call to email me if I am not sure about having a Wwoofer. This gives me time to think and I don't have to make a decision on the spot. I am able to write out instructions for getting here in a relaxed manner and I can ask any questions I like without worrying about how much it may be costing, as often their calls are toll calls. I can answer after I have had a chance to discuss a Wwoofer coming with Bruce. I know that some people prefer phone calls but I find email much easier to manage. Emails also eliminate the accents".

Pam suggested the following questions to ask prospective Wwoofers:

- "Why do you want to work on an organic farm?"
- Do you smoke and are you vegetarian?
- How many hours per day do you prefer to work? (most hosts would ask you to work between 3 and 5 hours a day.)
- What if any Wwoofing experience do you have? (Experience is not always required.)
- What recreational activities do you enjoy?
- Tell us a little about yourself.

Changing you listing?

"Kia ora Folks. We have found it really interesting the way our Wwoofers have changed after we altered our blurb in our listing. (we thought we were being more holistic!!!!) we have got quite different sorts of people this year. So if you are not attracting the sort of Wwoofers you want try re-hashing your blurb!!!! Cheers, Maggie and John".

Queenstown to Motueka

I had been travelling Australia and New Zealand for two months, staying in hostels, sleeping on buses, sleeping in the wild. It all caught up with me right around Christmas, what a time to fall ill! I was in Queenstown, and more of a regular at the medical clinic than anywhere else in town. I knew I needed a break, my mind, body and spirit needed to slow down. It was time to get into woofing.

I wasn't having much luck of finding a host anywhere near Queenstown, only because it's such a popular area, and hard to get a spot. I decided to go north, to Motueka, which is known as one of the sunniest regions of NZ. Sure sounds better than Queenstown in December I thought, which was just getting pounded daily with rain. I found my first host, Peter Alspach. He owns a "neglected farm" in Motueka, and I picked his farm because he had a bit of scrub brushing to do. I'm quite experienced at that, so I figured I'd be helpful right away and wouldn't need much instruction. Also Peter is a keen trumper, kayaker and cyclist. It really seemed to be an ideal match for me.

I arrived and immediately felt "at home." It was nice to have my own room, my own bed, and the chance to relax a bit, in between a few hours of work here and there. The work was unsupervised, which was fine because I enjoy working at my own pace. It was exactly what I needed. On the weekends, Peter took me out tramping and kayaking. It was an absolute blast. After 2 weeks of Wwoofing I headed to Kaikoura Roots fest with Peter's son, Michael (respect!)

I also had the amazing opportunity to work in the Marlborough Sounds last February with Mussel farmers Kathy Mead and Gus Beal. We made arrangements to meet in Nelson. From



there we drove to Elaine Bay where we left the truck and got on their boat. Most of the Sounds are accessible only by boat, and can be a bit isolating for some, but I loved it! Our tasks were quite varied, each day brought a few new challenges. Our hosts were incredible. I could go on for days about them! Between hunting possums, tending to the orchard, and pruning pine trees, we found time for hiking, swimming and eating all the fresh mussels we could. It was truly paradise. We extended our stay because we were having so much fun! Thank you guys!!

In retrospect, Wwoofing was the best possible way to enhance my stay in NZ. It gave me a chance to get off the tourist trail, and get right into NZ culture. I hiked the trails the tourists never hear about, kayaked in rivers they only drive over in their campervans. I got my hands dirty and ask any Wwoofer how much better you eat when you Wwoof than when you're on your own! It's such a healthy lifestyle, and one of the best experiences of my life. I can't wait to Wwoof in other countries! Go ahead, make a phone call, and immerse yourself in the Wwoofing lifestyle. You'll be glad you did! Peace!

Jon Pierson (Mt. Kisco, NY)

From Wwoof in the USA

In the past there have been many different groups in the USA that use the name Wwoof or maintain a similar service. Many of these programs were regional networks that did not cover the entire country. Now two organizations have emerged as major national Wwoof programs for the USA- Wwoof USA (www.wwoofusa.org) and OrganicVolunteers (www.growfood.org). In addition there are still numerous local networks operating. Both programs are non-profit organizations and have similar missions. For the time being we have chosen to continue to run autonomous programs. We are both thriving and don't seem to suffer by the others presence.

We plan to stay in communication with each other and are discussing the possibility of further integrating our programs. For the time being please link to both of our organizations.

In solidarity,
Ethan Schaffer
Director
OrganicVolunteers

Autumn Allabach
Director
Wwoof USA

Why My World is Richer for being a Wwoof Host

I've only been a host for 16 months, and already so much of the way I now live has come from things I've been introduced to by all the wonderful people who have stayed in my home. I feel sad to hear that many of the hosts are just treating Wwoof as a type of labour exchange, not just because the Wwoofers are missing out on learning, but also because the hosts have no idea what they are missing out on by choosing not to take the opportunity to really live with these wonderful people while they are in their homes.

Every morning my first meal is my new favourite, ultra healthy breakfast, introduced to be by Allison (England). Esther (England) and Gérald (France) inspired me to live my dream of learning to play classical guitar, Susanne (Denmark) helped me to re-find my singing voice, and Stefan (Germany) left a gift that enabled me to learn how to transpose songs into a key I can play on the guitar and sing with. I'd forgotten how much I need music in my life, and these fantastic Wwoofers have made it part of life every day again.

Thanks to Kanako (Japan) I enjoy making and eating sushi most weeks and Keiko (Japan) introduced me to Okonomiyaki, which has become a fantastic and tasty way to use excess cabbages. Mymi and Tony (France) have left me knowing I can enjoy quiche and crepes despite dairy and wheat allergies, and the coconut cream and vege pasta sauce Nikki (Sweden) introduced me to has become a firm favourite. Margarita (Spain) taught me how to cook broad beans and artichokes in a way that means they'll never be wasted again, and came up with a brilliant way to use lots of cauliflower.

Agustin (Spain) built an amazing driftwood sculpture which still stands in my garden and reminds me of the fun I have at the beach with Wwoofers. Christian (Denmark) just wanted to work all week, and with the help of Patrick (Germany) and Pieter (Belgium) made a brilliant extension to my garden - The European Blokes Patch has become a source of much food and enjoyment for which I am very thankful. Michelle and Kirk installed a smaller water tank, that enables me to use water for the garden without need for the pump to go, and Tony (France) helped me deal with a major rat problem that had become (and no longer is!) a big source of stress for me. Lizzi (Israel) painted a real picture of the eco system I feebly draw on the whiteboard for each new

Wwoofer, and Ima (France) taught me to make my first kete.

I've also made some great friends. Jel (NZ) came as a Wwoofer, became a flatmate, and then a very good friend. Michelle and Kirk (England) are definitely a part of the family and we continue to swap recipes and ideas for treading more lightly on the Earth a year after they were here. Pieter provides inspiration in his regular emails from Belgium, and Zack (USA) and I enjoy sharing ideas for our gardens by email.

If there are any hosts out there who are reading this, I urge you to make sure your Wwoof experience is all that it can be. Living with these wonderful people as family reaps far richer rewards than just the work they can do for you as labour. Teach them what you know about organics, and you will find you learn far more in return.

Jo Hainsworth, New Plymouth

Farm Safety, Insurance, ACC, OSH...

Hosts often ask what they are required to do to make sure they and their Wwoofers are covered in case of accidents. There are a number of aspects to this:

1. Any farmer who has people on their farm, whether they are employees or guests, must ensure they make their farm as safe as practically possible. This means Wwoofers should not be expected to do jobs they don't have the proper experience or training to do (e.g. chainsaws, tractors, moving large rocks etc.).
2. One good thing about ACC is that it will cover Wwoofers if they have an accident, even if they are from another country. Wwoofers should however still have travel insurance to cover medical expenses if they get sick or if they lose their belongings.
4. House and contents insurance will cover accidental damage but will not cover intentional damage or theft by someone who is living with you (family, guests or Wwoofers).
5. Most car insurance does not cover drivers under 25 years old. This age covers many Wwoofers so don't be too quick to loan out your car!



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