



Mercy celebrates 'second home's' fifth birthday

Manukau resident Mercy Tangimai is just one of 38 people who have benefitted from the home comforts of the Kidney Society owned Dialysis House in Papatoetoe, and he was back on 27 March to help Kidney Society Auckland celebrate the House's fifth birthday.

Mercy lives with kidney failure and

has dialysis treatment for four and a half hours a day, three times a week in the comfort of his home.

However, when he was first diagnosed it wasn't convenient for him to have treatment where he lived so for five months in 2006 he was able to use the Dialysis House provided in the community by Kidney Society Auckland - a home away from home for people to do their own dialysis outside of a hospital setting. He was then able to take his machine home, making it possible for him to lead an even more independent lifestyle. He now looks after two younger family members and helps out with their school work and activities as much as he can.

Living with kidney failure can mean travelling to a hospital for dialysis many times a week. For patients this can be daunting and may mean they lose some of their independence.

"Having dialysis in the Dialysis House made me feel comfortable and independent," says Mercy. "I had my own key so I could go in my own time and was able to cook my own meals in the kitchen, watch TV and have family members visit."

Dialysis machines are provided free of charge by the Counties Manukau DHB for patients to use at the house. At any one time up to 11 patients can use the House to do their dialysis on alternate days, with two patients sharing a machine between them and negotiating the days and times they come for their treatment. This gives maximum flexibility and independence, something that is not possible for people dialysing in a hospital setting where there are fixed dialysis schedules.

Five years ago the house opened with five machines, but with the addition of two machines in the outside room we can now accommodate up to 14 people. The house is "just like home", it's unstaffed, people using it can come and go - just to do their dialysis - using their own key. As there are only two patients using each machine they can dialyse whenever they want, provided they work out their dialysis times with their machine partner.

The partnership with Counties Manukau renal service without which the house would not be possible has flourished. They are happy for us to run the house "kidney society style", but now contribute most of the cost of running the house which frees up money for the other work we do. Grants and donations are still needed to make up the difference, pay for administration and maintenance and things like that. With the great community support we have from our families, supporters and not to forget our volunteers the house continues to be one of the most successful projects the Society has ever been involved with.