



This is the article that I have been most eager to write. The reason is not to brag about the retreat's success but it gives me an opportunity to remember. Every time I think about the retreat it brings a smile to my face and yes it was that good.

Charlotte Hathaway, the Wellington regional field worker, first suggested the idea about the retreat. A retreat is not a unique idea for people with a chronic illness and there are many options available and on offer. However, the costs of attending a professional retreat can be a factor in staying away. The Moose Group was started to take a lighthearted proactive approach to managing MS for people with MS and their partners so we approached the retreat with the following criteria:

1. Cheap (so everyone could attend)
2. Fun (nothing else to be said)
3. Positive (changing)

We got around the cheap by persuading professional skilled people to give their time for free and I will cover that later. Bayer Healthcare also donated \$500 to pay for people who are not working so it really was open to everyone who could attend. The Moose Group really does know to have fun so that was not a



worry. Retreats generally provide motivation, education and ideas or programmes around how to make a positive lifestyle change. The great thing about our retreat is that we got to design our own programme specific to our needs. And this is how we did it.

Friday 30th October

The group arrived at Riverslea Retreat in the evening, grabbed a bed and a free copy of MindFood magazine along with a free skincare sample to get us in the mood (thanks MindFood).

A hearty tasty vegan meal, some chats and a DVD presentation of Dr Jelinek's recent Auckland talk put us in a frame of mind to focus on positive change. We had organised astronomy but the moon was out in full but nobody cared. It was good to be out in the country among friends.

Saturday 31st October

It was a full programme centred on workshops run by Charlotte Hinksman (www.charlottehinksman.com) a well-

"Thanks so much. I had a great weekend and came home in a very good mood, feeling extremely relaxed. The food was fantastic, and I learnt some useful things to take away with me too."

regarded NLP Practitioner (Neuro-linguistic Programming). The workshops gave the group a basis for starting to change perspective, thoughts and ultimately behaviour and attitude. As the workshops unfolded, you could sense changes in the people around you, some where profound. There was no explosion of emotion, heartache, guilt, blame etc. What Charlotte achieved was to gently and respectfully guide us through the process of change with love, laughter and belief. Talking



The Moose Group Retreat

we don't retreat we have fun!

of laughter, Charlotte also ran a "laughing yoga" session that had our sides splitting. Muscles that we obviously don't use enough.

We finished the day's programme with a tour by Steve at Nature on wild foods. We took a gentle walk stopping to eat basically weeds that some tasty and they all had medicinal properties. Steve was a highly interesting character who inspired us to feel differently about nature.

We rushed back for a quick costume change. The theme was Halloween (obviously) with a prize for the costume for the least amount of effort. Judging this competition was our two children on the retreat who did an excellent job picking the 3 winners. Riverslea retreat outdid themselves with an amazing curry followed by a vegan desert to die for. The next couple of hours proved to be a highlight with a pub quiz designed by our very own mooses, Becs and Robin.



Prizes to the winning teams were donated by Trilogy (\$150 worth of skincare), Lush (\$150 gift box) and a Wellington Master Painter and decorator Kieran Kelly who

donated \$450 prize.

Sunday 1st November

Charlotte Hathaway joined us for a fantastic yoga and meditation session that inspired many to resolve the couch potato

" I felt it gave me a lot of help and I was with people who were prepared to work hard to move forward. Being with the people on the retreat gave me the determination to triumph over MS"

syndrome back home. The final NLP workshop saw us all make fundamental shifts in our thinking and left us feeling positive and serene of all things. Tralee and Lene from Absolute Therapy (www.absolutetherapy.co.nz) provided free massage and reflexology to the majority of us at the retreat. Please check them out. We all agreed they were the best therapists we have used.

We wrapped up the retreat with presentations and gifts to those that helped us make the best Moose Group retreat ever!

I still feel choked thinking about the time and effort Tralee, Lene, Charlotte Hathaway and of course Charlotte Hinksman put in. Charlotte Hinksman was with us for the 2 days and joined in as an honorary member of the Moose Group. The owners of Riverslea



Retreat could not have looked after us enough. Sensational value for money in a beautiful setting. Most of all I remember how a great bunch of people got together for a retreat that was cheap, had the best fun and left feeling positive and uplifted with a determination to do it all again next year.

Roisin King

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