

## 2 MINUTES WITH ..... Denise Byarugaba

Denise Byarugaba is the Neighbourhood & Community Advisor at the Linden Social Centre. Considerable attention is currently being given to Linden, particularly north Linden, with community leaders and city council officers liaising with local residents to determine what improvements could be made to enhance the area. Denise is an integral part of that project.



The Kai Kitchen initiative – free hot meals to all Linden locals, friends and whanau every Friday from 12.30pm at the Linden Social Centre – has been running since June under Denise’s leadership. From small beginnings it has grown to cater for dozens of locals who gather to enjoy both the company and the tasty soup, etc each week.

With Denise’s enthusiasm and energy at the fore, we can expect a lot more to happen in the “Linden space” in the weeks and months ahead.

*Where were you born?* I was born in beautiful Uganda, a small country in equatorial Africa.

*Where did you grow up?* I grew up in the capital of Uganda – Kampala.

*Where were you educated?*

My early education was in Uganda, but I moved to Zimbabwe to do my University. All my post-graduate study was done in New Zealand.

*How long have you lived in Tawa?*

I lived in Tawa for over 10 years. I have only recently (3 months ago) moved to Upper Hutt to be near work for my husband.

*What do you like about Tawa?*

Tawa is such a wonderful suburb, with a great community feel. It is self-contained and has everything you could ever need. There are so many opportunities available for any resident to get involved with a variety of activities irrespective of age or interest.

*What about family?*

I am very blessed to have a beautiful family – my husband Peter, and my three boys Mikka, Ethan and Caleb, aged 23, 18 and 6 respectively.

*Work experience over the years .....*

My background is in Social work. I have over 20 years of work experience in a variety of areas: Youth work, Whanau Support, health and wellness, Mental health and Community development. Yes, I have been around the block!

The beauty of my current role as Community Advisor for Wellington City Council is that it brings together all these different skills and work experiences and I can use them all to inform and enrich my service.

*What are your interests and hobbies?*

I love gardening. It’s a new hobby admittedly, but I’m learning a lot and fully enjoying the experience.

*What is your favourite holiday destination in New Zealand?*

The whole of New Zealand is honestly stunning! My goal is to visit a different area each year – so far I haven’t visited enough of New



Denise at work (as in our July newsletter)

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Zealand to pick a favourite because each town I have visited has been great for different reasons. Ask me again in five years, I might have a favourite then .....

*What accomplishments/achievements in your life give you the most satisfaction/pride?*

My sons are hands-down my best and greatest achievement! They fill me with pride and purpose every single day. They enrich my life and make me a better person.

*What are two or three interesting things about you that local people may not know?*

I don't know how to ride a bike or swim. Unbelievable but true!

*What are one or two things you would like to do before you die?*

1. I'd love to travel around the world and see all the places I have only read about;
2. I'd love to be a part of an eco-village one day;
3. I'd love to make a positive contribution that will improve the world, before I go.

*(Compiled September 2019)*