

tribute

Associate Professor Anne Bray, October 1944–June 2008



We wish to acknowledge with sadness the death of Associate Professor Anne Bray, a long time and highly respected colleague, friend and supporter of the Children's Issues Centre, and an enthusiastic and valued member of the 'Children and Young People as Social Actors' Research Cluster. Anne died in June 2008 after a three-year battle with cancer. Anne was a close and special friend and colleague of the Children's Issue's Centre's first Director, Professor Anne Smith. She was Director of the Donald Beasley Institute, a national organisation that undertakes applied research on intellectual disability issues and promotes related education, and also Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and Associate Professor of Research in the Division of Health Sciences. Her work at the University of Otago began in 1976 where she held the position of Lecturer in Education until 1984.

Anne's work focused on wide-ranging and critical issues that affect disabled adults, children and their families. She was a strong and effective rights advocate, her interest in this area arising initially out of her own experience growing up with a brother with Down syndrome. Anne challenged the

institutionalisation of disabled children and adults, and promoted their rights to live in families and in the community. Her concern for the rights of disabled children extended into the field of education, and she was instrumental in changing the 1987 Education Act that gave all children the right to an education in New Zealand. To ensure that young people living in Cherry Farm (psychiatric hospital) were able to access education, Anne started up a school in Castle St., Dunedin called Project MESH, in the early 1980s. The school became an important part of the University as numerous students across a range of departments learned first hand about the experience of disability.

Anne believed that to learn well, students benefited from working directly with disabled children, adults, and families, skillfully combining this direct experience with an emphasis on academic integrity and rigour. She was an excellent supervisor and always enjoyed sharing and critiquing ideas with her students. Many of Anne's students and colleagues remember her for her compassion, warmth and genuine concern to create a better society for disabled people and their families.

Jude MacArthur