



person, Eddie Roberts, pictured centre, a tradesman painter with a complimentary set of skills to offer. They've also begun putting together a Business Plan. This includes such aspects as: identifying other tradesmen who could become part of their venture, developing a brochure and a website, looking for long-

term premises, and developing the business processes that will be needed e.g. a central service hub with one phone number for all the trades people involved.



The overriding theme of their project is making things less complicated, more affordable and less stressful for quake effected people in Christchurch. Gary, Paul and Eddie are confident they can provide

Tough Times lead to Self Employment Initiative

The recent earthquakes have left us all scratching our heads and wondering what the future will bring. Luckily there are some who have been able to turn an uncertain situation into an exciting business opportunity.

Paul Lee, pictured right is a client receiving support from Catapult. Pictured left is his associate Gary Peart. Both are qualified builders with decades of experience between them. Having seen the state that Christchurch was in, they decided to use their skills and experience to organise a helping hand for the rebuild.

Paul has been in the construction business for over twenty years. During that time however, he suffered an unfortunate accident that would leave him with post-traumatic stress disorder. He wondered whether he would ever work again. Then he ended up meeting Gary when they were both working on a car park. Gary has over 48 years of experience, and he encouraged Paul to keep on working despite his injury. He quickly saw the potential they both possessed, so he suggested to Paul that they form a co-op, and now they are well on their way to putting together a new enterprise: **Christchurch Tradesman Co-op**

Instead of going from one side of town to the other looking for a builder, electrician and plumber, one could simply find them all at one location....a one-stop shop for the trades, so to speak.

Gary and Paul have been working on their idea for several months now, planning and researching about the processes and resources they'll need to have in place to make it happen. One of their first steps was to also recruit a third

a high quality service that's easy to access and culturally friendly. There have been, and will continue to be, obstacles to face along the way. The current complex environment in Christchurch of EQC and insurance claims can be difficult to navigate, and there have been issues for trades people getting paid for work completed.

Despite this, Gary and Paul have managed to develop some really positive goals for themselves and their business. They are particularly inspired by the concept of developing other employment opportunities for people with disabilities. In the future they are interested in offering employment to people who may be working with health issues, and this could also include apprenticeships.

To date Paul has already gone from being unemployed earlier in the year to having a steady number of hours per week doing the kind of building work they plan to expand. This self-employment came about through Paul and Gary's self initiative, and through sharing ideas and enthusiasm with each other.

Although Gary and Paul deal daily with their own health issues, they retain a positive outlook on the future of their business and of Christchurch as a whole. If the culture of their business is a reflection of their own friendly, encouraging, can-do attitude, it should surely be a success. It could also become a model for others, showing what can be achieved with a bit of self enterprise and a co-operative spirit.

The **Christchurch Tradesman Co-op** can be contacted on ctcguys@gmail.com

Employer of the Month

Webbuild

Setting up a local radio station (www.equitasradio.co.nz) in your own home is a pretty impressive feat and it has been a project that Shaun Edwards has thoroughly enjoyed doing. What's more, it's led Shaun into some work with local company Webbuild run by Mark Irwin.

Mark and Shaun met at a social function and when the conversation turned from radio stations to web sites, and Mark heard that Shaun had done some accessibility testing for Humanware, an international company who provide technological equipment for the visually impaired, he realised that he could use Shaun's analytical skills in his company.

Accessibility, as far as websites are concerned, is the degree to which the website is available to as many as possible. Many of us, through lack of mobility or sight, for example, use the keyboard to navigate around the website. This can result in all sorts of difficulties for the keyboard navigator and can take much more time and frustration than it should for the person to get the information they are seeking. Shaun's product testing experience led Mark to offer him some work checking the accessibility of the websites that Mark's company builds. Mark also is one of those people with empathy for those who have setbacks in life and he wanted to help Shaun realise his ambition of earning his own living.



Shaun Edwards, pictured above, working at Webbuild.

Although Shaun, who has been blind since babyhood, had some experience of accessibility testing, it was limited, and Mark has increased Shaun's skills by teaching him about different aspects of accessibility as well as the structure and coding of websites. They have also developed a manual of instructions for making sites accessible for all visitors. Checking a website out to find out about a business or something of interest is second nature to most of us these days and Webbuild's aim, to "make a real life difference for real life visitors" to any websites they work on, increases the opportunity for more people to be able to do this.

Are you an employer who needs new staff?

Catapult is a free service to both employees and employers, contact us now on 365 7005.

We have just the right person for the job!

New Staff at Catapult

This year has been a year of many changes for Catapult including five new staff members. Catapult welcomes, Roni, Judy, Kevin, Greg and Di to the team.



Roni Jordan

Joining Catapult as an Employment Consultant in May 2011 Roni brings to Catapult extensive experience in Vocational Consultancy specialising in the areas of ACC and MSD contract work. Roni's background includes human resources, negotiating employment agreements, recruitment, training and advocacy. She has recently completed a Diploma in Career Guidance at NMIT.



Judy Andrews

Judy began working at Catapult in May and was initially employed for six months to help with the administration involved in recovering from the earthquake. Since then Judy has now secured a permanent part time position as our Office Assistant providing administration support.



Kevin Kirner

Kevin joined Catapult as our Job Coach in June 2011. Having a background in management and the supervision of staff along with skills in grievance and problem solving enables Kevin to liaise effectively with our clients and employers achieving and sustaining positive outcomes for all parties involved.



Greg Chilton-Smith

Joining Catapult as an Employment Consultant in July 2011, Greg has an extensive background, ranging from farming to owning his own business. This experience, along with Marketing and Management qualifications, sees Greg well equipped to work in assisting people into the workforce.



Di O'Donnell

Di joined the team in October and is our newest Employment Consultant. Having three immediate family members with ASD enables Di to bring a vast amount of first-hand experience and knowledge in the area of support and understands how it is to live with challenges. Di has a widely varying educational and employment background and brings a good insight into many areas of the employment sector.

For more information on the services Catapult provides visit our website

www.catapult.org.nz