



ON A MISSION

Your Wellington City Mission Magazine

Issue 3 2020



Our hearts are warm, going into winter

The last few years have been really tough for me and my son, Jayden. We've both been through some intense and traumatic experiences, and after splitting from his dad I went into a downward spiral. I've been diagnosed with multiple mental health issues as well, and I was really struggling to remain in control of our lives. It was an awful time, and Oranga Tamariki were beginning to get involved. I was scared, and I needed help to improve our situation.

After working with a mental health support group I was referred to Trudy, my Mission social worker. Trudy instantly made me feel cared for, and that we weren't alone. With her by our side, bit by bit I began piecing our life back together. Our home was really run-down, but I'd never been able to make progress with Housing NZ. Trudy's advocacy made all the difference. She went straight to

Housing NZ to explain how our home was not in a good condition.

All of the broken things that I'd learnt to live with started getting fixed. Our house is freezing in winter, and is very draughty, so Trudy also made sure we had thermal curtains installed as well. It really took the edge off the cold, and helped lower our power bill.

"I feel so much stronger compared to this time last year – we've come a long way."

My tight budget gets pushed to the limit during winter. I've always had barely enough to survive. The Mission's support with food parcels, clothing, and toys for Jayden has also relieved a tonne of worry. Trudy even helped me receive my correct entitlements with WINZ, and I've been working with a budgeter to learn the skills I need to better manage my finances all year-round.

Trudy's support with Jayden's school has also made a huge impact, as he was really unhappy last year. I was pulling my hair out a bit – unsure about what to do. She has supported us to build a good relationship with the school, and has helped get him the learning supports he needs. This year has been much better – he's actually enjoying it!

I feel so much stronger compared to this time last year – we've come a long way. It's still a real grind, and our house is still pretty worn out, but I feel like I'm in control of our day-to-day life now. Going into winter, I feel more confident knowing that Trudy is there for us if I ever feel like we're going backwards. My first priority is to make sure Jayden is healthy and happy, and my longer-term goals are to find a part-time job or training, and move into a healthier home.

Trudy, The Mission, and everyone who supports them are just amazing. It really is true that showing you care for someone who is struggling can make all the difference.



Murray's Message, Wellington City Missioner

It is hard to write anything at this time without framing it in the context of Covid-19. What an experience it has been for all of us! I think we have done a remarkable job as a community and a nation in response to this global pandemic and I am in admiration of the strong and compassionate leadership we have experienced at all levels of our communities, cities and as a country. Where else would you choose to live in the world right now other than Aotearoa New Zealand.

One of the major risks we face is to presume that we now live in a post-Covid environment and not be prepared for the economic and social effects that will

inevitably be with us for some time into the future. As a Mission that exists to serve those that are struggling with a range of challenges, we are very aware that people in our communities will be hurting for some time to come and we need to be prepared and equipped to assist and serve people to the best of our abilities. We do this of course, with the assistance of many others.

On a number of occasions during the Covid lockdown, I was asked by media what I thought New Zealand might look like after the pandemic. I talked about my hope that the experience we shared together would enable us to become a kinder, more benevolent society - that we would care for and look after each other better. I think there is some evidence that we have become better than we were through this shared period of adversity.

For the Wellington City Mission, the Covid experience was full of challenges, opportunities and blessings. In particular, the team at the Mission were wonderful and tireless in their endeavours to feed and accommodate people.

The experience of Covid has also encouraged us to think differently about how we do some of the things that we do

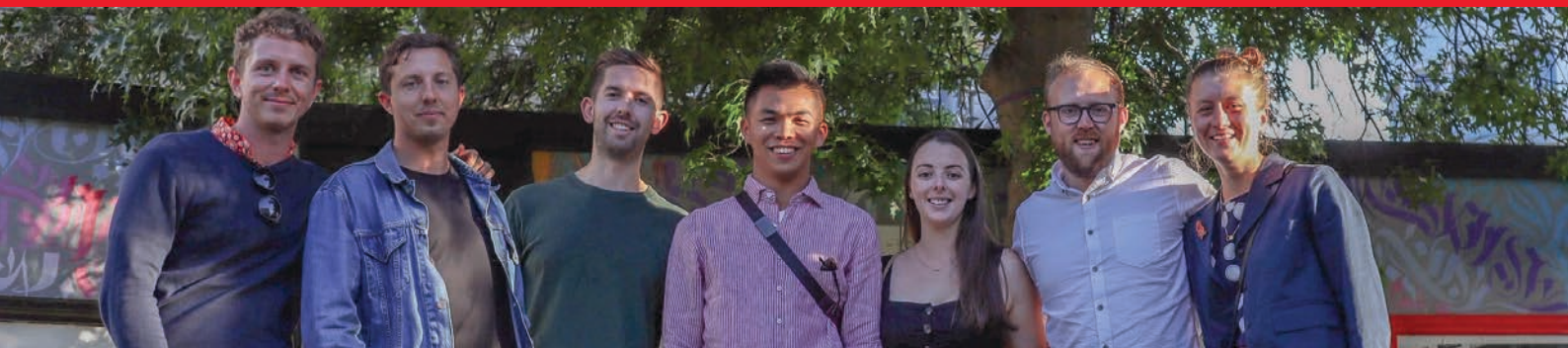
and where we should focus our resources and energies in the days ahead to take advantage of the gains that have been achieved. You will see some of these changes soon.

The blessings of Covid include the extraordinary support and generosity that we received from people throughout the Wellington region. It was this support that enabled us to do what we did and the help that was provided to so many people in need.

On behalf of all of us at the Mission; thank you, thank you, thank you.

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippians 4: 6,7*

Murray Edridge
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A Happy Ending

A couple of months ago, young couple Ella and Cam were beginning an exciting new journey in their lives as they were about to shift to the UK. They'd resigned from their jobs, handed in their notice at their flat, and booked the flights.

Then, like for so many of us, the COVID-19 pandemic stopped their plans. Ella and Cam found themselves out of pocket, with no jobs, and no house. They moved back to Ella's parents' house, while trying to find their next steps.

In true Kiwi spirit, a group of their friends decided to help out. Over a week, Joey and 12 others fundraised amongst themselves. In the end, they raised \$700 to cover some of Ella and Cam's losses, and relieve some of the stress they were under. Thankfully, as it turned out, Ella and

Cam were able to get their jobs back and begin working remotely. When they were offered the money, they humbly declined. They considered themselves lucky when compared to so many others who were at a complete loss. As a group, everyone decided to donate the money to charity.

Joey explained: "At the time, we were seeing supermarket shelves stripped bare. Also, all of the budget brands were being snatched up - leaving mostly luxury items available. We knew that people with little money would be hit the worst. I hate to think that, on top of everything else, people would be worried about having enough food to survive - that's such a scary thought for anyone."

"We realised that food parcels would be a really important service. We chose to support The Mission, because we knew about the work they were doing to offer immediate relief to people feeling the effects of COVID-19 lockdown."

"I just figured friends should be there to help each other out whenever we can," Joey said. "We often talk about being a community, but then we also need to follow through. I'm doing OK, so why wouldn't I try to help out those who have lost their livelihood?"

"We knew that people with little money would be hit the worst."

This generous \$700 donation, is one example of the remarkable support Wellingtonians have shown towards The Mission, and all of the people and families who need our help to get by.

We can't thank all of our donors enough, for showing your deep care for those who have been hit hardest. Together, we can continue to be here for Wellington.



Te Paamaru has become our safe haven

After leaving the NZ Army, I made some bad decisions, and ended up in Rimutaka Prison for a couple of years. While I was there I knew I needed to get back on the right path, so I could be a good father to my children.

It was really emotional the day I got out. My daughter was waiting for me, we cried together and I promised I would do better. I landed on my feet, I found a flat and a job at a butcher. I had my daughter back in my life, and my son was living up North with his mum. For seven months or so, things were going well for me, and I was looking forward to the future.

Then I got sick. I couldn't afford to take time off, so I kept working. I didn't realise how bad it was until one day I started coughing up blood, and I was told I had double pneumonia. I lost my job and became homeless. I tried to get help from the Ministry of Social Development, but never

got anywhere. It was so frustrating that I decided to carve my own path, and set up camp in the hills. But without electricity, I was missing out on having contact with my kids.

"Te Paamaru has become a real safe haven..."

I hunted for jobs while staying at The Wellington Night Shelter (now The Mission's Te Paamaru). It was so frustrating applying for jobs every day and being skipped over because of my conviction, and all the while I was homeless. So I went on the benefit and started volunteering at The Night Shelter. I became a bit of a role model for the guys. I was always ready to discuss the personal issues they were struggling with, make sure the guests were respecting the place, and I was often the peacemaker in what was a pretty volatile and dangerous environment at times.

When The Mission took over Te Paamaru, everything changed for the better. Everyone had their say about what needed to change to create a better service for people who were experiencing homelessness. We began

seeing more food available, better security, and an adjusted curfew. The main thing that stands out about The Mission team is that they follow through on what they say they'll do - so the guys here feel really supported to break out of the cycle they're stuck in. Te Paamaru has become a real safe haven for people who would've otherwise been living on the street during COVID-19 too.

A couple of months ago, I was offered paid employment here. It's awesome to know I am making a difference. You see a lot of people who feel like they have no say in where their lives are going, so I get a lot out of being able to support and encourage them to create change. A lot of people have found flats, been linked up with other Mission services, or are volunteering.

For me, I've always wanted to be a positive member of our community, but I had a series of incidents where I did the wrong things, and had some bad luck. It's being there for my kids that drives me now. I'm working hard to make up for the years we lost when they were younger, and influence them in a good way. All I needed was the re-start I got here at Te Paamaru to knuckle down, and get back to doing the right thing.

Neville's story

My name is Neville.

For a number of years, I had a very good job. I looked after myself, had my own little flat, or stayed with family and friends. To this day I still don't know what changed, but I found myself feeling lost and in a dark place. I started drinking heavily, not caring about myself at all. I was 'existing' rather

than living, and constantly thinking to myself "there is no way out".

But then I heard about a place called Te Paa (Britannia House) - a place where there was hope.

With their support, I was able to see a new direction. I discovered that there are people out there who do truly care about you, even at your darkest time, when you don't care about yourself. It was like being reborn with a whole new outlook on my life. I began

picking up the pieces of my life that I had lost for so long, and I started reconnecting with family and friends.

Thank you to The Mission and the team at Te Paa for your support and understanding.

If nothing else, I would say to anyone out there who finds themselves feeling lost, to just ask for help. You will be surprised by the outcome!

RECENT NEWS



Community Lounge

COVID-19 presented many challenges for the people and families who walk through our doors every day, as well as for us as an organisation. It also offered us a learning opportunity, one where we could be better and do better. Post COVID-19 lockdown, we were excited to officially re-open a refreshed space that was formerly known as the 'Drop-in Centre', but is now called our 'Community Lounge'.

We refurbished this space with a pop of colour, warm carpet, soft furnishings such as couches, and plants. We wanted to provide our manuhiri (guests) with a mana-enhancing space to relax, and enjoy the company of others in our community every day of the week.

In our Community Lounge we're serving delicious café-style food such as baked muffins, scones, cupcakes, slices as well as fresh and toasted sandwiches and savouries. Our volunteers continue to play a vital role in helping to make our manuhiri feel at home, by not only helping to bake but also by sitting down on the couch or at a table and having conversations with them.

Providing social connectedness and walking alongside people who experience social isolation is the main goal of our refreshed Community Lounge. Community Development Manager Ray Tuffin has helped manage the transition from our former Drop-in Centre model to the new and refreshed Community Lounge.

"When we were encouraged to think about what we offer, and how we offer it,

I took this very seriously and put my hand up to help refresh the space. I saw this as a window of opportunity for us to offer something that was more mana-enhancing for our manuhiri. When we started to knock down walls and add some colour, I got excited knowing that we were onto something transformative. I knew that we were creating a space that was warmer, and more welcoming and that this would help us build a community where people can make new friendships, participate in meaningful activities, and still enjoy some home-baked goods. It also helps create a community where there is no us and them - because staff are also beginning to come down and use this space for meetings, and to interact with our manuhiri. It's become a space for everyone." Says Ray Tuffin.



Volunteer with The Mission

Recently we celebrated National Volunteer Week, and acknowledged our extraordinary whānau of volunteers who generously give their time to The Mission. From our Food Bank and Community Lounge to those who volunteer for us at events, our volunteers are an integral part of our organisation and whānau.

There are opportunities for you to volunteer, including in our refreshed Community Lounge where you can come and be a part of helping to foster connection and

community, and interact with our manuhiri. Tasks vary from preparing and serving food, to helping run activities. You can also volunteer in our Food Bank, and help to sort, re-stock and prepare food items so that we can support people and families with food bags.

If you wish to enquire more about volunteering please contact Susan Penetito on: susan@wgtncitymission.org.nz or you can read more by heading to our website wellingtoncitymission.org.nz

WINTER APPEAL

Fill a Heart this winter.

Donate today.



Winter looks different for many of us, and is a season where for those in need, some decisions are difficult, and some are impossible. The impact of COVID-19 has been devastating for many of the people and families who walk through our door every day – many have lost their jobs, taken pay cuts or have had to sacrifice their own needs in order to make ends meet.

The increased costs that come with trying to keep the house warm, the bare dinner plates and empty pockets, form the unsettling reality for many people and families this winter. Together, we can change what winter looks and feels like for people and families in need in the Wellington region. People are doing it tough, but with your support, we can make winter warmer for them.

Fill a Heart, by donating to our Winter Campaign today.

**FILL A
HEART**
Winter Appeal

wellington
citymission



WHAT IT MEANS

Nicole

**Community
Development Volunteer**



I had read about The Wellington City Mission and I wanted to volunteer here as I had seen the newsletters and heard about the work they were doing in the sports poverty space. Now here I am. Twice a week I get to come into The Mission as a volunteer. I not only enjoy the work that I get to do helping to co-ordinate the running of our Community Sports Banks, but I love the connections I've made with other staff, and our manuhiri (guests). In my role I'm seeing how tough it is for people and families to get by, particularly when there are families with children who want to but can't play sports because of the cost of equipment, transport and fees. At winter, this is obviously made even more challenging with competing priorities like rent, electricity bills and putting food on the table. What makes me really proud though is telling people I work at The Mission, knowing we are helping to alleviate some of these pressures in people's lives, especially throughout the winter season.

Holly

**Social Worker
Mission for Families**



Everyday I work with families to figure out what support they need and help them to set goals and achieve them. At this time of the year, our families are needing more support because it's colder, people are struggling to be able to afford to pay the power bills and so money and spending gets tighter. Often people who get sick at winter need help accessing and navigating health services – my role is to help them do this. I walk alongside them to make it easier for them to get what they need. I see this as being important, because it means I'm able to help people who without our help, may fall through the cracks. My work means they have more money in their pocket to pay bills and have warmer homes, can put more food on the table, and have improved wellbeing.

Mission for Families provides early intervention for families through advocacy, education, support and guidance, equipping families to better manage their own circumstances.



A Word From Jane – Social Worker, Mission for Independence

Everyday I'm reminded of the importance of our work, and how tough it is for people and families out there in our community. As a social worker, my role is to work in the service gaps. This means working alongside people who can't access social workers in other organisations because they don't fit the entry criteria of those organisations.

I've come to The Mission with a Masters degree in social work and have worked in the Hutt Valley for over 12 years. I feel this has been helpful in supporting the diverse

needs and challenges of the people and families I work alongside.

While my work varies throughout the year, I always find myself busy. I'm currently working with parents who have had their children removed from their care, adults who have both physical and mental health challenges, and housing and benefit needs, disabled adults living at home with their elderly parents, and people living in emergency housing who aren't yet connected with a transitional housing provider. While the work can sometimes be challenging, I find it rewarding being able to help some of our community's most vulnerable.

The impact of COVID-19 has been significant, particularly when it comes to housing. So many of the people I'm helping are living in motels at the moment, and they're the lucky ones. There are so many more people who are couch-surfing too. Living in motels is tough and it creates so much stress as the payments are week-to-week so they never know if they will be back out on the street.

I had a woman recently who was told that the motel had a large booking, so at the end of her week that had been paid,

she was given two days notice. The story has a happy ending, but the middle part was incredibly stressful for her. I totally understand that motel owners have to keep their businesses going, and I also understand that a week in a motel is better than a week in a car, but these are our fellow New Zealanders and people in our community who find themselves living under this cloud of uncertainty.

I've found that even when someone finds a house, it's not uncommon for them to be paying 70% of their net income in rent. I find it sad that people go from the stress of living in a motel, to the stress of living in a house they can't afford.

That's where I come in. To help relieve some of that stress and the pressures that come with the hardship that people experience. Through working at The Mission, I've seen the incredible impact that people's generosity can have on our services – it changes the trajectory of many people's lives. We talk about not wanting to let people fall through the gaps, and what I do is work in those gaps. The people I work alongside often feel like there is no-one out there who could or would help them, and that would be true, if it wasn't for the generosity of those who support our work.

THANKS TO YOUR HELP...

March - June 2020 Key Statistics (including a period of COVID-19 lockdown)



3500

We distributed over 3500 food bags to people and families in need



8000

We helped feed people and families by distributing over 8000 frozen food meals



900

We helped feed over 900 children



100%

In three months we've distributed over 100% of what we would normally distribute in a year



400%

We experienced a 400% increase in food bag demand in the first 7 days following lockdown.

DONATE NOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

WAYS TO DONATE

Website:
wellingtoncitymission.org.nz

Phone:
(04) 245 0845 to make a donation.

Internet Banking:
To our Bank account 03 0547 0296036 17 (Ref: 1A20/21)
Email donations@wgtncitymission.org.nz with details if you wish to receive a receipt.

CONTACT US

Call in, or contact our Newtown office and Drop-in Centre:
19 Gordon Place, Newtown, Wellington
PO Box 7477, Newtown, Wellington 6242
T: (04) 245 0900 E: enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz

E-NEWSLETTER

To sign up to our quarterly e-newsletter, please email us your details enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz or call 245 0845.



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THANK YOU

We experienced unprecedented demand on our services during the COVID-19 lockdown which saw us help more people and families in need than ever before.

On March 24 at 11:59pm, Aotearoa New Zealand went into lockdown as COVID-19 tightened its grip on the planet. We saw this global pandemic disrupt peoples and families circumstances and their realities.

The forceful impact that COVID-19 has had on our services, shows how this global pandemic has amplified the needs and challenges of hundreds of families who were already struggling prior to COVID-19 and lockdown.

Through the provision of our food parcel distribution we have been able to help feed over 900 children. In the first 7 days following lockdown, our food bank

demand increased by four times our weekly average.

In three months, we've distributed the same number of food bags that we would normally distribute annually. This shows the financial pinch that many people and families have experienced because of COVID-19.

Throughout the COVID-19 period, we stayed in touch with families by talking to them over the phone. We would usually visit them at home. Families with young children struggled immensely, particularly as their children wanted to be outdoors, enjoying playgrounds and playing with their friends. They missed social contact.

For one solo mother of two who we supported through COVID-19, she missed her social worker coming into her home

for a chat. She believes home visits are a breath of fresh air, and sees that as a vital service. Now that we're out of lockdown, she's pleased to have seen her social worker again in person.

Looking after her two children during this period had been by no means easy. We supported her and her family by giving her food parcels and frozen meals because she couldn't get out to the supermarkets easily.

Her story, is amongst many others who we've heard from, and who we've been able to help during the COVID-19 period.

We know that being able to support people and families with food parcels and frozen meals not only provided nourishment, but during the COVID-19 period it gave them a peace of mind knowing they had food to help get them through the week.



The Wellington City Mission would also like to extend a huge thank you to all of the companies, groups and organisations who supported us by giving product donations throughout the COVID-19 period.

Our whānau at The Mission have been humbled by the generosity shown, and would especially like to thank the

following supporters:

- ANZ (Wellington office)
- 100% Pure NZ Honey Ltd
- Nando's
- Domino's
- Whittaker's
- Heinz Wattie's
- Kellogg's
- MorningStar Farms

- Foodstuffs
- MediaWorks
- Fix & Fogg
- Tuatua Café
- Tommy's Fresh Vegetables
- Bikaner Wellington
- Black Diamond Technologies Ltd
- Spy Valley Wines
- Moore Wilson's

- My Food Bag
- Ekta NZ
- BAPS Swaminarayan Sanstha Anand
- New World Newtown
- Taylor Preston
- Boys and Girl's Institute
- Anchor cheese
- Shoots Microgreens



WELLINGTON CITY MISSION TAKES OVER NIGHT SHELTER

During the COVID-19 period, we took over responsibility for the management of the Wellington Night Shelter, to continue our support of Wellington's street-living community. We managed the Night Shelter as an extension of our delivery of housing support, including Te Paapori - an accommodation of 38 self-contained units which we opened to allow the City's homeless and rough sleepers to self-isolate during the COVID-19 period.

While we took on the Night Shelter on an interim basis, we've now been 'gifted' the Night Shelter building for permanent

use with the Night Shelter Trust Board ceasing operations.

The building and the housing support that we provide there, has taken on a new name 'Te Paamaru'. Some of the changes we've implemented include, renovating and refreshing the building, not requiring the manuhiri (guests) to leave in the morning, and they are also offered further wrap-around support.

People come to the Night Shelter because they're in need of support, and a place to shelter. We work with them to plan their future and support them

into permanent housing. The idea is that people don't come here with it being their final destination, but as a part of their passage through life and we add value to their journey along the way.

Te Paamaru has grown The Missions work for providing transitional housing in the Wellington region to work closely with local and central government to develop our support in this area further.