



ON A MISSION

Your Wellington City Mission Magazine

Issue 3 2021

Working Towards a Better Life

I came to The Mission last year in a really bad way. My wife and I had split up, and even though I was working full-time I couldn't afford another flat. With no friends or family around I had no choice but to leave my three kids with their mum at home, and live in my car.

All of my money went towards supporting my family and paying off our debts. I ended up being left with around \$50 for food. I was eating once a day, sleeping in a freezing cold car, and missing being at home with my kids. I was in my own bubble and had a depression I had never experienced before. I didn't know how I would ever get out of my situation, and I got to the point where I was having terrible thoughts about my life.

Then I went to The Mission and met one of their social workers, Tom. Having him to talk to released a lot of the pressure in my mind and heart. His encouragement gave me hope, and he even found me a place at one of The Mission's Transitional Housing facilities. I also started working with Carla, a Mission financial mentor, to help me make a budget to pay off my debts, support my kids, and work towards paying for a flat. She advocated for me with Newtown Ethical Lending, so that all of my debts were combined to reduce interest. It made a massive difference for my day-to-day budget, and was such a relief.

While I was in The Mission's Transitional Housing, I found out my kids had started being mistreated. I began doing everything I could to give them a better home with me. I took on a second job to afford my own flat, and with Tom's and Carla's help I was able to get into council housing. I was granted full custody of my kids, and we moved into our one-bedroom flat.



"The Mission has been a miracle for me. I'm so grateful to have met so many special people, who are keen to help complete strangers."

It's awesome to have a home, but we still have challenges to overcome. My three kids are living in one bedroom and I am on the couch. It's very cold in winter and with everyone so close together there's a lot of condensation, which has caused my son to get a bad cough. I'm doing everything I can to give my kids a healthy upbringing,

so I still see Carla every week to track my budget, make plans, and just get personal support. The Mission also gives us vouchers for things I can't afford for the kids such as winter thermals, as well as special activities like swimming pool passes. We receive food from the Social Supermarket each week too, which is a great help. It's always really nice to receive any kind of food support, but getting the opportunity to choose food that we will eat and cook with is even better.

The Mission has been a miracle for me. I'm so grateful to have met so many special people, who are keen to help complete strangers. Our life is way better than it was just a year ago. I've gone from complete disorder to feeling confident that we're on the right track. Most importantly, you can see my kids are so much happier, and we're a real team!



Murray's Message, Wellington City Missioner

We recently bid a final farewell to my Dad, which was incredibly sad and challenging; but also, the opportunity to celebrate a remarkable and generous life, very well lived.

I had the privilege of having a father who I loved, admired and respected. He taught me many things and from a place of faith; thought deeply about people, community and the ways we connect together.

At his request, one of his favourite passages

was read at his funeral. It was "Joy and Sorrow" from The Prophet by Kahlil Gibran.

These words are contained in this passage:

"Your joy is your sorrow unmasked. And the self-same well from which your laughter rises was oftentimes filled with your tears. And how else can it be? The deeper that sorrow carves into your being, the more joy you can contain".

These powerful words talk about how joy and sorrow are inseparable. They are two sides of the same thing and complement one another.

I reflected on this as I read the remarkable stories that are contained within this edition of the newsletter. Of people's lives that had more than their fair share of sorrow but with the support of the team at the City Mission, were able to come to experience real joy in their lives.

The Mission's vision talks about "Fullness of Life" which I believe, for all of us, includes the presence of joy – the joy of self, of family, of friends, of others.

How wonderful it is, to help bring joy into people's lives. We are only able to do that with the ongoing support and generosity so many of you demonstrate. We want to thank you for that.

One of the benefits of bringing joy to others is the joy it also brings to each one of us.

I hope and pray for each of you that you feel that joy as you assist us to help change lives and enable others to live into Fullness of Life for themselves.

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him. (Romans 15:13)

Blessings,

Murray Edridge
Email: murray@wgtncitymission.org.nz



A Place of Connection & Care

My diagnosis of bipolar II has chronically affected my life.

Growing up I had a supportive family, I graduated from university, and worked in a variety of jobs. But over time, I realised that the pressures most people can deal with on a day-to-day basis were overwhelmingly stressful for me. Even on my medication, Bipolar II requires me to constantly cope with extreme ups and downs, and I was unable to continue working. Paying for my bills, particularly my rent, has been a relentless grind. Nearly 70% of my income goes straight to rent, leaving barely enough to pay my bills and buy food and there's never anything left.

Coming to The Mission's Community Lounge/Tā Te Manawa has made a positive impact on my life. It's the simple things that are actually really meaningful. I know I have a meal I can count on during the day, which helps stretch my tight budget. That's even more valuable in winter when it's cold and the bills increase. The addition of having barista coffee is amazing as well. Being able to enjoy a proper cup of coffee sounds so small, but it's one thing that's simply out of reach when you have a budget like mine. It lets you feel like a normal person.

The unexpected opportunities that come from the wraparound support you get here are fantastic as well. When I had a flurry of bills I asked for help with food, and I was shopping in the Social Supermarket the same afternoon. It felt really special having The Mission accept my word that I needed help, without putting up a bunch of barriers.

I actually found shopping there quite emotional, because going into a regular supermarket with a limited income has always caused immense stress and anxiety. I came away with three shopping bags full of food and household items I hadn't been able to afford for a very long time. Ray even offered me a gym membership, which has been an amazing way for me to feel better about my physical health.

Tā Te Manawa has also added a new level of community connection in my life, and fulfilled a social and emotional need for me. You can strike up a conversation with anyone, learn about other people's lives, and share a laugh. Mission staff and volunteers genuinely care about the manuhiri who come here. That's really beneficial for your well-being, because everyone needs to feel cared for and loved. Here, you never see someone who is upset sitting by themselves. There will always be a Mission team member, or other manuhiri sitting and talking with them. Even people who do like to be by themselves are welcome to come here to sit quietly and enjoy a warm meal, a hot drink, and soak up the vibration around them.

I look forward to coming here each day, and it's an important part of my routine. I always walk out feeling better, and the difference it makes for other manuhiri is palpable. You can see the weight off people's shoulders as they head out the doors and face the world again. The Mission truly is a place of giving, empathy, and social responsibility, which is so rare nowadays. I believe you can truly save a life by offering people that kind of care!

Empowerment. Transformation. *Fullness of Life.*

I've Finally Found A Home

All of the bad experiences I've had led me here to The Mission's Te Pā Manawa, where I'm building the life I thought I could never have.

As a child I was abused, and I began running away from home. By the time I was 15, I had left school, was working, and living in a flat. At 24, my wife and I had four kids. I loved my kids very dearly, and I wanted them to have a better upbringing than I did, but something inside me was unsettled. I was struggling with drug and alcohol addictions, and was leaving home for periods of time. Eventually, my wife left me. That was the right decision for her and our children, but losing everything pushed me further downhill.

I became homeless, and for the next 25 years, I bounced between jobs, flats, boarding houses, pubs, and garages – or lived on the streets. My relationship with my family was always really important to me, and I've helped out however I could. I'm proud to have seen my kids grow into successful and happy adults, with families of their own. They've offered to take me in, but I've always felt I was just too far gone, and I didn't want to be in their way.

I ended up living in my car at Petone beach last year. That winter was really tough. Not only does the cold break you down, but the isolation gets to you. You're lonely, crammed in, with the windows fogged up and dripping condensation. You're stuck in your regrets, and you slip into depression. I clearly remember thinking "I can't believe it's come to this, living in my car at 54 years old. I want to be a better father and grandfather." As soon as I walked into Te Pā Manawa, I could feel that it was special. It was the first



time I'd ever found a place like this, and I knew it was where I needed to be to take my first step out of homelessness. I had found the people I've needed my whole life.

Here, we are a family together. We speak openly with each other about our troubles – especially in our group meetings every morning. I also began counselling, to start dealing with the trauma that had deeply impacted me at a young age, and caused me to always run away from my loved ones. Even having opportunities like writing with a poetry teacher has been amazing. It's tapped into something I never knew was there, and has become an outlet for me to express myself. I'm really happy to have been offered a role as a kaitiaki (guardian) at Te Pā Maru now too!

There's always trauma in homelessness, and I believe that God has a purpose for me to use my story to help young people, and prevent them from taking the path I did.

I feel like I've survived the hardest times in my life. I know that everything I'm doing is

setting the foundation for the rest of my life. Most of all, I can't wait for the day when my grandkids come to visit their grandfather in his own home, and for my kids to see that their dad is finally able to look after himself.

Paki's Poem: The Wellington City Mission

*There's a place with care and comfort
Clothes, food and shelter
God bless the generous giver
Business, public, stranger*

*There's a place for the homeless and poor
Deprived, abandoned, oppressed
They can open many doors
They are our voice in our distress*

*There's a place with frontline workers
So humble your tortured soul
They will meet you where you're at
They will guide you where you can go*

*Thank you for the good intentions
For the care of our well-being
To know we had met as strangers
To feel we can leave as friends.*

A Home for More Wellingtonians

Exciting news! Forty-two manuhiri (guests) have been welcomed into Te Pā Pori, our newest supported Transitional Housing facility.

You might know the building as 'The Zebra Building' which is on Tory Street in central Wellington. It has undergone an extensive upgrade, and has been renovated to standards of a boutique hotel. Tanoa, who has recently moved in, said: "I feel so spoilt. This is a beautiful place." Te Pā Pori has the potential for multiple communities such as men, women, transgender, and couples. And each community has amazing communal areas to facilitate shared meals and group activities.

In total, 77 self-contained units are available to support those experiencing homelessness and each room has its own kitchen, bathroom, TV, bed, and living room furniture. Community and Government backing has been absolutely critical in our Transitional Housing initiative, bringing together support from the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development and Mission donors who have sponsored resources for manuhiri.

Our model of supported Transitional Housing, Te Pūnaha Pa, is structured, purposeful and intentional. Manuhiri are supported holistically to move forward in their journey towards living independently, and Te Pā Pori is staffed 24/7. The skills of our Pā team include security, leadership, social work and clinical psychotherapy. A number also have lived-experience of difficulties and homelessness.



Maria Millin, GM Residential Services, says: "We say to our manuhiri when they first arrive, 'You are in the right place. You are where you are meant to be. And you are enough.'"

OUT & ABOUT

Sharing Our Approach With the PM

Straight after the release of The NZ Budget 2021, Mission staff and volunteers were delighted to welcome Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern and Minister Carmel Sepuloni to The Mission.

It was a very special opportunity for some of The Mission whānau to spend the morning with the PM and the Minister, and be part of the conversation around the needs we see for people in our community.

The Mission's mana-enhancing approach of doing things differently aligns with The PM's clear focus on enabling dignity – as highlighted in her Budget 2021 presentation.

The PM and Minister first took a tour of our Social Supermarket, which has now replaced the traditional food parcel model.

They also met manuhiri in Tā Te Manawa with warmth, and it was clear to see how special our manuhiri felt when they were speaking together. Missioner Murray Edridge also discussed the progress on The Mission's new home, Whakamaru, which has received a shovel ready grant. The Mission will have an even greater impact on people in our

community when we move to Whakamaru in 2023!



Giving from Family2Family

In June, we held our key winter food drive, Family2Family, in partnership with the team at New World. People and families in the Wellington region took up the call to fill our special brown paper bags with non-perishable goods, and donate them to their local New World or directly to The Mission.

This year, our community showed how much they care, and donated an amazing total of 3,500 bags! These donations are now helping to fill the shelves of our Social Supermarket, or supporting other

areas of our work such as Tā Te Manawa and Te Pūnaha Pā supported Transitional Housing. Food donations like this are absolutely crucial for those The Mission is working with – especially during hard times like winter, when people on low incomes or who are without a home are unable to meet their basic needs each day.

Thank you to everyone who donated food, our volunteers who sorted the donations, New World suppliers who ran extra in-store promotions and to our partners New World, for making a difference for so many people and families in the Wellington region this winter!



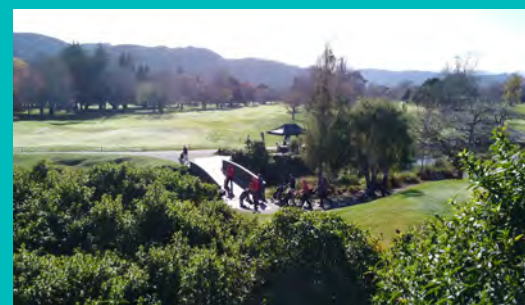
Art Auction

Thank you to our Mission supporters Hamish McKay and Sarah Wickens for organising our Art Auction! Thanks also to the galleries, artists, and auctioneer Ben Plumbly who donated their amazing work and time, and to all of our guests. The event was a huge success, and raised \$184,000!



Pak'canSave

We also ran our first-ever promotion with local Pak'nSave Supermarkets! For a fortnight at the start of July, people brought extra cans in their weekly shop and dropped them in collection points in their local Pak'nSaves to donate to The Mission. Thank you again to the team at Pak'nSave and everyone in our community who took part – we “can, can” make a difference when we all work together!



Golf Day

On a beautiful winter's day in June, 29 teams took part in our charity golf tournament. Big thanks to Dan Parker, Dylan and the team from the Royal Wellington Golf Club, and everyone who got involved – in total we raised \$60,000!

GET INVOLVED



Soap for Society

Soap for Society, created in 2018 by well-known blogger Lucy Revill of The Residents, aims to shine a light on and reduce health and hygiene poverty. We are excited to be partnering with Soap for Society again.

We believe that creating fullness of life starts with the little things, and feeling comfortable in your own skin is a fundamental right for anyone. This partnership will help more people in our community feel an enhanced sense of dignity in their everyday lives.

Get involved from 6 - 19 September, by donating health and hygiene products to our Newtown office, City Mission Stores, or Kemp Home & Hospital. Visit soapforsociety.org, or our website, to find out more.



Help us do things differently this winter.

Our Winter Appeal is now on! Check out our special insert to find out how you can help do things differently for those in extreme hardship.

Become a ChangeGiver

Become a ChangeGiver, to journey with people and families in our community. You can set up a monthly gift on our website donation page by choosing the monthly option. Or email vivienne@wgtncitymission.org.nz - Viv would love to hear from you!



Volunteer?

Do you have any specialised skills that you think could support The Mission's work? We're always looking to expand our volunteer programme, so please get in touch if you have any ideas!

Contact:
volunteering@wgtncitymission.org.nz.

WHAT IT MEANS

Kris

**Team Leader (Kaihautu),
Te Pā Manawa**



When someone comes to our Pā, they may be sceptical because of negative experiences they've had with housing systems. But they quickly realise that here they are accepted for who they are, and they become part of a family. It's humbling to see so much gratitude for the things most of us take for granted, like having a roof over our heads, food in the cupboard, and a warm bed - especially when the cold of winter hits. With all of the problems our country is facing, the transformations people are creating here are amazing. I love seeing our manuhiri grow and create happiness for themselves. Many find a power within themselves that they never knew they had, and I feel privileged that these amazing people trust us to walk with them on their journey towards independence.

Carla

Financial Mentor



Those we work with often come from really hard backgrounds, or have found themselves in extremely difficult situations. Often someone will feel stressed and even embarrassed to ask for help, because money is a very private thing. But we are not here to judge, and building a relationship creates a huge relief for clients. Beginning to trust others is often a huge step forward, and our whole Mission team (including social workers, Tā Te Manawa, and Social Supermarket) will gather around a person. We work together to deal with the deeper issues that have caused their current situation, and they're so genuine and grateful for that. It's my passion to work with the vulnerable people in our community, and to show them that they are not alone!



A Word from Kirsten – Community Social Worker

As a member of our community social work team, I work with all different types of people, from single individuals and seniors to couples and families.

There are so many circumstances that lead someone to a place where they need some support, but the biggest challenge people and families are facing is still finding appropriate, safe, and affordable housing. The price of private rentals is simply out of reach for so many of us, and social housing is in high demand. Many people are living in freezing cold, damp, and overcrowded

houses. Most have no choice but to couch-surf with friends and family if they can, and others end up rough-sleeping in their car or on the street.

Lots of the parents I work with actually have full-time jobs, but can't earn enough to pay for the essentials their family needs, and winter brings unbearable strain. After rent, power, and travel costs, they can never afford wholesome food, suitable clothing, warm bedding and healthcare. They often start taking on debt just to get by, and fall even further behind. Some of the individuals I see are extremely isolated as well. In winter they barely leave the house, and they lose connection with their family and friends. When you're barely surviving, sick, and unable to cope, it's so difficult to think constructively about your situation, and it becomes a negative spiral. Many people sink into depression, anxiety, and helplessness.

But every day, The Mission is empowering our people through personal support, advocacy and vital resources. It's not about simply telling people what to do or supplying items, it's about encouragement. We help people realise that there are options and opportunities available to them, and they begin to find the motivation and hope they need to achieve meaningful changes in their lives.

For example, we advocate for people to find a suitable home, and provide winter jackets, bedding, and nourishing food to keep healthy and positive during the colder months. Our financial mentors support and educate them to make the most of their budget. We also facilitate reconnection with their families and friends, and encourage them to utilise warm and vibrant community spaces like Tā Te Manawa. Even something as simple as greeting someone with a big smile and a listening ear can make a huge impact on their whole outlook.

The way we are doing things differently, like in our Social Supermarket, has had a hugely positive impact as well. I've seen people who have gone from being unable to leave their homes due to anxiety to having fun and confidence in themselves as they tick off their shopping lists!

In my role I get to see so much compassion for those who are suffering, because everyone who is part of The Mission whānau has a powerful sense of empathy, and is willing to help others create happiness in their lives. Together, we are showing those who are suffering that they are not forgotten, they are cared for, and their lives do matter. We are giving people the opportunity to find purpose, to live full lives, and to feel loved.

THANKS TO YOUR HELP...

April – June 2021 Key Statistics



64

Our Pā provided 64 manuhiri (guests) with Transitional Housing



100

Each day, around 100 manuhiri visited Tā Te Manawa, our Community Lounge



348

Our social work team carried out 348 face-to-face sessions and home visits with people and families



10

10 Manuhiri from our Pā moved into permanent housing



162

Our financial mentors provided budgeting advice to 162 clients



800

Over 800 families and individuals shopped in our Social Supermarket

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WAYS TO DONATE

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wellingtontcitymission.org.nz

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Email donations@wgtncitymission.org.nz with your details if you wish to receive a receipt.

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E-NEWSLETTER

To sign up to our quarterly e-newsletter, please email your details to enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz or call (04) 245 0845.



The Wellington City Mission



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Help us do things differently this winter.



Your support is crucial.

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Help us do things differently this winter!



Wellingtonians are famous for the way we love and care for our communities.

And that is being demonstrated now more than ever.

We know that it's not right that so many of us simply can't make ends meet.

We long for this to change, but it's clear that the traditional models of support just aren't working.

That's why we're doing things a bit differently at The Mission.

We believe that restoring dignity should be at the heart of caring for each other.

So, we've set up our Social Supermarket to change the way we support those experiencing food insecurity. Rather than receiving a pre-packed food parcel, people are invited to shop for free, choosing

items their family actually need and enjoy. This new way of doing things also allows time for a proper chat. We're able to find out how the Mission could support our shoppers more. Services like financial mentoring and advocacy can contribute to exciting changes and offer so much hope.

In Tā Te Manawa, our community lounge, manuhiri (guests) are treated with extraordinary respect. There is no charge for the delicious café style food and barista coffee, and table service by our staff and volunteers is all part of the mana enhancing experience.

Our Transitional Housing facilities have revolutionised the way we support those experiencing homelessness. Since we opened our first Transitional Housing facility, over 130 manuhiri are now living in permanent homes and experiencing fullness of life.



Donate Online Today

You can be a part of the new ways we are caring for our community.

Go to our website
wellingtoncitymission.org.nz
to support your City Mission now.

**Together, let's do things
differently!**

