



# ON A MISSION

Your Wellington City Mission Magazine

Issue 2 2022

## Connection Is The Opposite Of Addiction

Around 20 years ago, the direction of my life completely changed. The relationship with the father of my children broke down, and my whānau were going through treaty claims which meant dealing with intergenerational mamae (hurt). The leadership, wairua (spirit), and feeling of safety that surrounded us growing up had fallen away, and I was hit with an overwhelming sense of hopelessness. I didn't have the tools to cope. I got involved with the wrong people, and lost my way. I started taking drugs at parties, which escalated to heavy daily usage, and I became addicted to meth.

In 2014, in an attempt to break away, I relocated to Australia with my youngest daughter. I lived clean for three years, and built a glorious lifestyle for us. I attained a high-paying management position, lived in a beautiful apartment, and had a healthy lifestyle. But my daughter was longing for cultural connection, and she missed her older brothers and sisters. It wasn't fair to deny her that, so we came back home.

But trying to reestablish ourselves was extremely difficult. We had nowhere to live because of the housing shortage. My daughter and I lived in a caravan for six months, and then we continually moved from place to place. Drug taking had become so prevalent in my turangawaewae (tribal home area), everywhere we went I was coming into contact with people, places, and things that triggered my addiction. I crashed and burned big time, and fell back into addiction.

Thankfully my older children and ex-husband were there to help keep my youngest daughter safe, because over the next few years I reached the point of total desperation. I felt like I didn't matter, and that I had nothing to offer anyone. I was a shell of a person, and was in and out of the



*"It felt like a safe place to ground myself..."*

mental health ward. The drug taking got so bad that my body and brain would shut down, and I'd suddenly find myself unable to walk and talk. It was worse than rock bottom. At one point I became eligible for emergency accommodation, and moved into a Dwell Housing complex. Being in such a lovely house signalled a new start for me, but I continued struggling with my drug use, mental health, and budget.

Then one day in June last year, I came upon The Mission's Tā te Manawa Community Lounge. The way it's set up is bang-on for making you feel comfortable quickly. The volunteers visited me at my table to offer food and a barista coffee. It felt like a safe place to ground myself, connect with new people over kai and feel part of the community. I was also asked if I wanted to talk to a Mission social worker. That's when

I met Rachel. It was such a relief being able to reach out and say to her, "I'm really not coping." We quickly formed a bond, and she started putting in place individualised systems around food, budgeting, and social work.

Rachel took the time to get to know me, and to see me for who I was inside. She recognised that I was capable and passionate about life, but being stuck in such a bad space had left me without the will to live. Her support made me feel embraced, and it inspired me. For the first time in years, everything started coming together. She began visiting me at home to go for walks together, as well as catch up about my progress, offer suggestions, and arrange advocacy with agencies. It all helped improve my physical and mental health, and I started attending rehab and addiction therapy groups. I also started working with Jill, my amazing Mission Financial Mentor, because I owed a huge amount in high-interest debt. Setting up an automated payment system and

Empowerment. Transformation. *Fullness of Life.*

consolidating my debts through Newtown Ethical Lending was such a relief!

During the Covid Lockdowns, I was grateful to receive food support to make sure there was food available at home, and to help stretch my budget. And then shopping at The Mission's Social Supermarket was even better. At the Supermarket, you can choose the food that's right for you. Getting the chance to bring home a special treat for my daughter gave me so much joy, and at Christmas time I was invited to shop at The Mission's Toy Store to choose presents for my grandchildren! The Mission also gifted me a membership to the Kilbirnie Rec Centre, which I would struggle to afford otherwise. I started going to the

hydrotherapy pool every day. It makes me feel so good physically, and I belong to a beautiful community of diverse people.

The Mission's services are all about manaakitanga (compassion). They want you to take your independence back, and that makes you feel more connected to what they are trying to do for you. The whole experience creates a beautiful and rewarding feeling. Over time, I started healing, and I vividly remember the first time I woke up with a smile on my face!

I've had the most amazing support to be able to get to this point. I have all the right people on my team to keep me safe, as I am still at risk with my addiction. Rachel

continues to be there for me at just the right time, and I'm still working with Jill. I'm on top of my bills, and have almost paid back all of my debts. Being able to provide for yourself makes such a difference to your state of mind.

I'm determined to continue on my path because I see that I can be a better version of myself. I'm nine months clean, and my children and grandchildren are glad to have their mum back. I'm studying towards a diploma in homeopathy, because now I want to help others heal. I've also taken on the role of Group Service Representative for the Wellington Women's NA group, and it's amazing being able to contribute. I've renewed my faith in God, and I have hope - something I thought was never going to happen for me.

Through my experience, I've learnt how isolation feeds addiction. You hide from other people, even your loved ones, because you're ashamed. But connection is the opposite of addiction. I just needed to find gentle, patient, and caring people, who weren't going to judge me, and who would make me feel that I do belong.

I have been so inspired by the wonderful people we have in our community who think about others, and support organisations like The Mission. From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank everyone who is part of The Mission. I just want you to know that my whole life has changed because of all the support you've given me!



## Murray's Message, Wellington City Missioner

I have been thinking about milestones lately - about those times in our lives when we remember, acknowledge, and celebrate different stages and outcomes of life.

My own current milestones include having worked for the Wellington City Mission for four years, my grandson being 6 months old, celebrating a significant "0" birthday myself, and approaching both the one-year anniversary of my Dad's death and the 20 year anniversary of Mum passing away.

Nelson Mandela said: "Remember to

celebrate milestones as you prepare for the road ahead."

It seems to me that milestones are a point in time on our journey through life; some good and some challenging, but all of them added together, contribute to defining who we are.

Each of you will have your own milestones, and as you look back on these, I am sure it will be with a mixture of feelings such as joy, perhaps sadness, perhaps regret, perhaps celebration, and hopefully gratitude ... because all these things are what life is all about!

We have some wonderful stories in this publication about some of those that we have had the privilege to walk alongside. They generously tell us their stories, give us some very personal insights into how life has been for them, acknowledge their own milestones, and express their appreciation of the support and assistance provided to them by the Wellington City Mission.

I hope these stories touch you in the way they do me, knowing with confidence that we have made a genuine difference and assisted someone positively in their life journey.

I hope too that you take some encouragement and satisfaction from knowing that these life-changing opportunities, these milestones, have only happened because of the generosity of your support!

Thank you so much!

As we travel into the coming winter months together, I wish warmth, comfort and blessing for you and your whānau.

*We plan the way we want to live, but only God makes us able to live it. Proverbs 16:9*  
The Message

Murray Edridge

# I Saw How Hard Life Can Become

I never thought I'd have to rely on a service like The Mission. But during the Omicron outbreak, I suddenly found myself in a really uncomfortable position where I needed help from the community.

While in between flats, I decided to stay in my campervan to help save money. Working in construction on a lower wage, you can do 50 hours a week and end up spending most of your income just on surviving. But then when I got sick, it became impossible for me to isolate responsibly because I was using some public facilities. It was really important to me that I did the right thing, by doing everything I could to reduce my risk of spreading Covid to other people. I didn't have any family I could stay with, and even though I had some money saved, hotels wouldn't allow me to isolate in them.

I looked for a bit of advice and support, but I simply couldn't access anything. I spent about four hours on the phone getting passed back and forth between agencies, and hitting dead ends. I also felt that I was being judged a lot because of my living situation. I'd never felt stuck like that before, as I've always had some sort of security to fall back on. I tried everything I could think of, and eventually the City Council referred me to The Mission. They got in touch with me pretty much straight away, and within two hours I was moving into Te Pā Pori, one of their supported Transitional Housing facilities. I was really grateful to have The Mission on my side.



The level of support I received was totally unexpected. My room was like a hotel! It was clean and modern, had a kitchenette and bathroom, and a comfortable bed. The staff were so welcoming and friendly, and they even brought me meals and did wellness checks every day. You could just tell it was a good environment to live in, and it was a huge relief knowing that no matter how sick I got I was in the right place to recover properly and do my part to keep other people safe.

When I checked out after a week, the first thing I did was make a \$500 donation. I had been shown such kindness, and without The Mission, I could have spread Covid to someone else who may have got really sick or even died.

It was actually a really humbling experience, because I would consider

*"I was really grateful to have The Mission on my side."*

myself as someone in quite a privileged position. I have a university degree, I've travelled all over the world, and I have a job, but I still had to really fight for myself. It really showed me how hard life can be for someone who perhaps has difficulty communicating, or even doesn't have basic resources like access to a phone and internet. It would be so hard to advocate for yourself, and you'd feel helpless – like everyone is against you. That's why The Mission really stands out for me. They're not there to judge you, all they care about is how they can be there for you when you need it.

## OTHER NEWS



### A Powerful Gift

We are so thankful and proud to have been gifted this spectacular mural by local artist Raukawa Comerford!

The huge mural greets everyone who enters Te Pā Pori, our supported Transitional Housing Pā on Tory Street. It represents Te Ao Mārama, a concept of life, energy, light, and potential. It also tells the story of what The Mission offers our manuhiri, as well as our challenge for them to stand, communicate, and connect with the world at this time in their journey.

We've seen how so many people who come to Te Pā Pori are impacted by it, and can take their own meanings away from it. The mural took Raukawa more than 400 hours to complete, all in between her full-time work! Knowing that she gifted her time, talent, and aroha has also made our manuhiri feel even more uplifted and treasured. Raukawa's gift recognises and values their choice to courageously take their path towards becoming the best they can be!

**You can read more about what this spectacular mural represents on our website!**

## Peter Tia – Kaiwhakawai, Clinical Lead/ Psychotherapist, Te Pūnaha Pā

Those who come to our Pā, generally speaking, are struggling with overwhelming financial hardship, lack of housing, food insecurity, and feelings of displacement and loneliness. But it's also important to realise that people accessing our supported Transitional Housing are not just those who have a history of homelessness, or long-term issues that have compounded over time. The need has evolved. We're supporting more and more people who have had a sudden

change in circumstance which has massively disrupted their life. Many of our manuhiri (guests) have found themselves unable to meet living costs after losing their jobs, they've had a relationship breakdown and become estranged from loved ones, or have been impacted by Covid. Some of these people are even working full-time jobs.

For anyone, these challenges can create feelings of hopelessness, grief, and a lack of confidence. And sadly, they begin to believe that being in this situation means they have no value. Once you start down that road of isolation, it becomes increasingly difficult to break away from it. So it's essential that professional support is easily accessible for anyone who needs it, right from the get-go.

Taking those first steps can be really hard, but it does get easier. We aim to provide

a service where people are safe to begin their new journey and start to feel valued, heard, and seen. Here, we first provide the basics, such as food and housing security and reconnection with whānau and community. We also help manuhiri start unpacking their burdens, through daily routines, learning opportunities such as budgeting, group activities and community outings, and professional counselling and health services. Those we work with begin to break the cycle they're in, by processing what they're going through, talking about their experiences, and connecting with meaningful opportunities and services – either within The Mission or through advocacy and referrals to external partners. Over time they begin to prosper in life, and become confident to live in a permanent home – knowing that we will continue to support them throughout their next chapter too.

I think the beauty of The Mission's support is that, for over a century, it has always been about creating and adapting services to address the voids that people fall into, in the most professional and caring way possible. And I can see that what we're doing here is working.

Personally speaking, it's a privilege for me to be in my position – from seeing where someone starts with us through to the prospering of their new journey. I do think services like this are needed now more than ever, as there are so many circumstances that are leading people to feel like they don't have a way forward. Our challenge is to respond to the issues, and make sure that our community doesn't normalise viewing people as 'us and them' or 'haves and have nots'. And knowing these services are here to offer hope to anyone who is in their lowest time is a real blessing.



You're  
invited!

## See You At Tā Te Manawa

For those manuhiri who are doing it tough and are feeling unheard, Tā te Manawa is the front-facing hub of The Mission. It also provides a link to our other services, like food assistance through our Social Supermarket, social work support, and budgeting.

This winter it will be such a bright light for people as the temperature drops, budgets are challenged, and people become more isolated from the outside world. It's a place where everyone can find warmth, nourishment, and connection to both our

community and supportive services. Here, all of our guests can find a different perspective on life, and have the chance to contribute to others and improve their wellbeing.

And you're invited too! You're welcome to enjoy a barista coffee and food, meet some of our amazing manuhiri and volunteers, chat to one of our social workers, or take part in one of our many activities. Or, you might just want to sit and be!

**Tā te Manawa is open from Monday to Thursday between 9:30am – 3:30pm, and on Friday between 10.30am – 3.30pm. See you there!**

# GET INVOLVED

## Too Late To Say Thank You

When Ross passed away recently, his wishes were that the residue of his estate go to a Christian charity demonstrating the gospel message of God's love. The trustees of his estate chose the Wellington City Mission to further the work we do. The bequest came as a surprise to us. We would've loved to have been able to thank Ross and have him see what good his money would have done whilst he was alive.

*The saddest thing for us  
was that it was too late to say  
"Thank You".*

Bequests are the fastest growing source of philanthropic support in the world today. As people live longer and their children also become independently wealthy, more and more people are supporting their favourite charities by leaving something by way of bequest. It is often the largest and most important gift they can make, and it is an extension of a lifetime of commitment to the cause they have believed in.

We are having more and more people enquire about leaving a gift in their Will. We want to make sure that we are available to answer questions and provide whatever information may be needed. And of course for those who have made that decision already to leave a gift in your Will to the City Mission, thank you and please, let us know.



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If you are just thinking about a bequest, and would like to have a respectful and confidential conversation, please contact Gay Keast on 04 245 0884 or via email [gay@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:gay@wgtncitymission.org.nz)

### OUR IMPACT FROM JANUARY - MARCH 2022



# 1258

We had 1258 shoppers in our Social Supermarket – supporting 2163 adults, 383 teens and 1098 children



# 114

Our Financial Mentors provided budgeting advice to 114 people



# 234

Our Social Workers visited 234 people



# 108

Our Pā provided 108 manuhiri with supported Transitional Housing



## Volunteer Profile - Suzanne & Grant

As cafe owners, being able to serve free barista coffees in The Mission's Tā te Manawa Community Lounge is a great way for us to volunteer. It's safe to say that you definitely get back more than what you give! People really appreciate being served a proper coffee because it's a little luxury that they might not have the chance to enjoy otherwise. Something small like that can make someone feel human – like they are cared for, and part of our community.

We like how Tā te Manawa is about much more than just feeding people. It's about giving everyone an opportunity to make friends, through conversations and fun activities. It's so important to have a place where people who tend to feel alone and unsupported can feel welcome. And you quickly find out that people don't come here for a hand out. They are looking for a place where they can leave their struggles outside, and just be themselves.

## Donor Profile - Alexis

When I organised a food drive at Scots College for The Mission, I really wanted to do something that would help respond to the uncertainties caused by Covid. But also, I know that at Scots we belong to a really tight-knit community, so if any of us needs help we can rely on each other. And actually, having that behind us gives us an opportunity to share that with others outside of our group who don't have that same level of support.

We know that The Mission is making sure our donations are going to someone who appreciates it, and we're making someone's life that little bit better when they're going through something. I think it's really important that anyone who feels alone can see that there are people out there who care about them, and want to make a difference in their lives. Knowing that you can do something to help someone deserving is really amazing!

## About Us

The Wellington City Mission's three key areas of focus are responding to the housing shortage, offering food support, and mobilising volunteering. People and families are finding the opportunities they need to transform their lives through our supported Transitional Housing facilities, Social Supermarket, Community Lounge, social worker support, and much more. Together with our supporters, The Mission is creating the change we all want to see in our community!

## Be Part of the Change, Become a ChangeGiver

We all long for the day when The Mission isn't needed – but right now that isn't a reality. We need to have a long-term vision and we need long-term support to enable the delivery of that vision. Would you consider becoming a regular giver? It's easy to set up your gift, and make an immeasurable difference in people's lives. You can set up a monthly gift by choosing the monthly option on our website donation page, or email [vivienne@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:vivienne@wgtncitymission.org.nz). Thank you!



**ChangeGivers**  
Regular Giving Programme

### FIND US

Street Address:  
19 Gordon Place, Newtown,  
Wellington

### CONTACT US

Phone number: (04) 245 0900  
Email: [enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz)  
Postal Address: PO Box 7200, Newtown,  
Wellington 6242

### JOIN US

Website: [wellingtncitymission.org.nz](http://wellingtncitymission.org.nz)  
Phone: (04) 245 0845 to make a donation.

Internet Banking:  
To our Bank account 03 0547 0296036 17  
Email [donations@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:donations@wgtncitymission.org.nz)  
with details if you wish to receive a receipt.

### FOLLOW US



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### SIGN UP

To sign up to our quarterly e-newsletter:  
Please email your details to  
[enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@wgtncitymission.org.nz)  
or call (04) 245 0845.