

ON A MISSION

Your Generosity Changing Lives

A Message from Murray – February 2023

The start of a New Year comes in the middle of the New Zealand summer which is typically a time of newness, growth, warmth and renewal.

It is easy therefore to start the year full of energy and enthusiasm for what lies ahead ...

This is really important for us, particularly given the experiences we have all shared in recent years with the challenges of COVID-19 and the subsequent social and economic difficulties that have eventuated. I am sure we all hoped for a better year than the last few.

Sadly however, the beginning of 2023 has been difficult for many, especially our whānau and friends in the northern regions of New Zealand that have faced some incredible weather challenges and the damages, loss and stress that has occurred. We think too of those that have suffered so much as a consequence of the earthquakes in Turkey and Syria!

I have also been anxious about what lies ahead for many in our communities who are struggling to cope with the current economic pressures and worried about how they are going to survive. We have heard numerous reports that some people in our community, because of their circumstances, are losing hope and this impacts on their resilience, their relationships, and their physical and mental wellbeing.

For many people, I think 2023 will be the most difficult year they have faced for a long time!

It might be hard for many of us to fully understand how this feels for people who are impacted so much, and to understand how this came about.

In his latest book, *"The Whole Language: The Power of Extravagant Tenderness"*, Father Gregory Boyle explains it in this way:

"It's true enough that we were all caught in the same coronavirus storm, but we soon saw that some were weathering it in ocean liners and some in inner tubes. Some, even, clinging barely to a piece of driftwood. We are in different-size vessels, facing the same storm."

It seems that whatever the dilemma; Covid-related, natural disaster, or whatever; those who have the least, struggle the most, and these circumstances accentuate their disadvantage.

So... what to do about it?

One of the values held by the Wellington City Mission is Tūmanako which means hope. One of the most important things we can do for others who are doing life tough is to help them have hope and to see a way through whatever challenges they are currently facing. We do that by walking alongside people at the time when they need us most!

This newsletter contains some wonderful stories of restoring hope – through the provision of belonging in Tā Te Manawa and through the skills and capabilities that come from the PPP Parenting Programme.

Enjoy these stories and the encouragement that they offer, knowing that through your ongoing support, we are offering hope to so many, in so many different ways. **Thank you!**

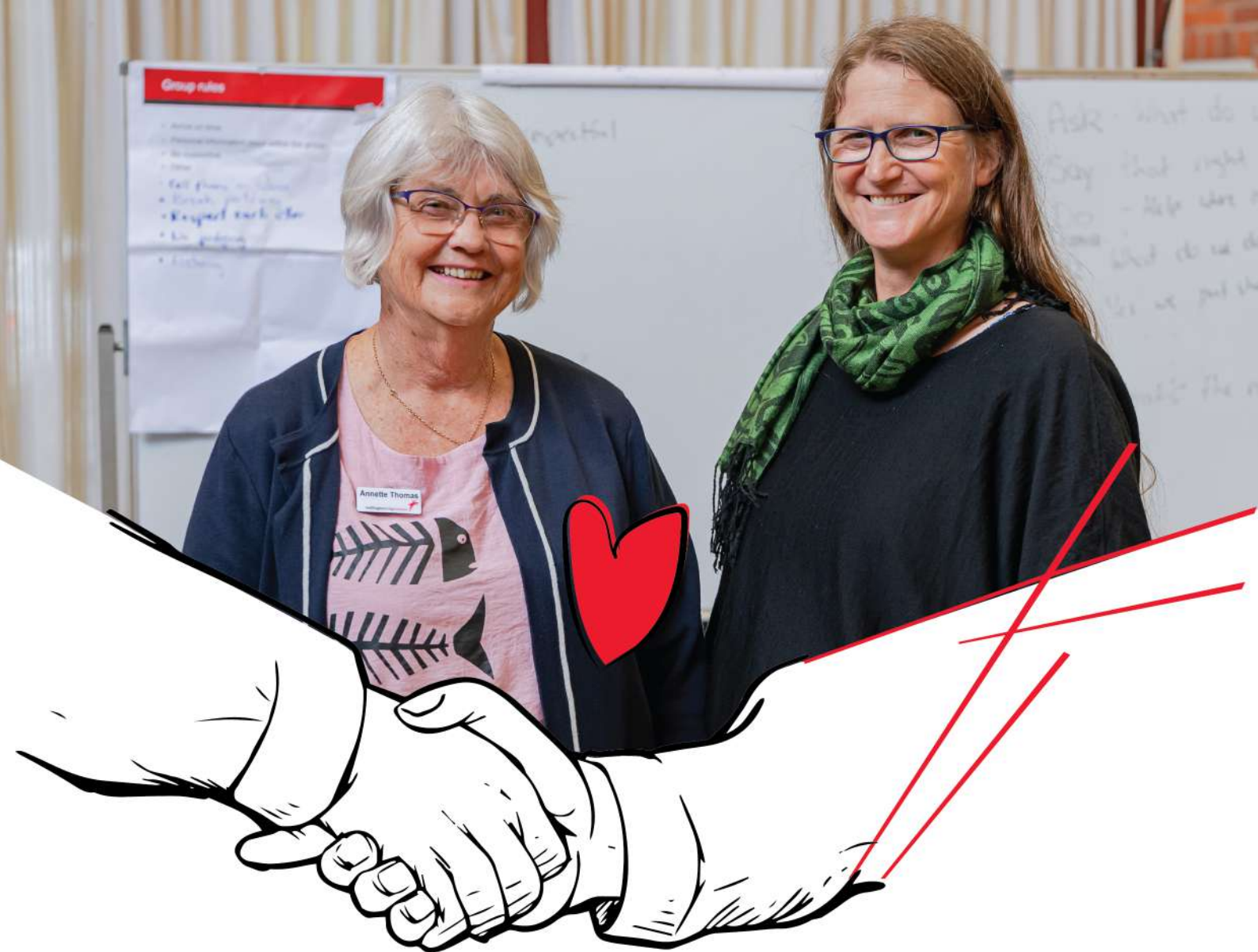
Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

Hebrews 10:23



Murray

Murray Edridge
Wellington City Missioner



TRIPLE P – PARENTS FINDING A NEW PATH FOR THEIR FAMILY

Annette & Rachel, Mission Social Workers and Triple P Facilitators

Last year, we started offering the 'Triple P Positive Parenting Programme' for parents with children up to age 12. It was developed by The University of Queensland, and is now backed by around 40 years of ongoing research and used in 35+ countries. It's an eight-week programme made up of one-to-one and group sessions, and facilitated by our social workers.

Parents who join the course may be having a few challenges and want to improve their skills, or their kids have specific behavioural issues that need to be addressed. Together we make plans about what they each want to change, and teach Triple P techniques. After graduating from the course, we also follow up with parents to celebrate the wins and discuss any new changes that will help the family move forward positively.

One of our facilitators, Mission social worker Annette, explains:

"It's an interactive and dynamic course that's designed to give parents more confidence at home. It gives them tools for their kete like quiet times, incidental learning opportunities, ask-say-do, and lots more. As much as possible, as facilitators we don't answer all the questions, we encourage discussion so the group works together. Learning with other parents who may have similar struggles also helps them feel more connected and shows them they're not alone."

Parents have shared great feedback on how transformational the course has been and the impact it's had on their children and family as a whole, particularly around communication skills. For example, parents have told us that they now have more realistic expectations of their kids, are more patient, are better at giving praise, and prioritise more one-on-one time. These positives have led to their children being more settled, and both parents and children feeling more heard and valued.

Triple P also aims to remove any stigma about going to parenting classes, and to normalise it in a similar way to antenatal classes.

Another facilitator and Mission social worker, Rachel, explains:

"From a social work perspective, we all have our own parenting styles – often we either do the same as our parents or the complete opposite. Either way, there's very little guidance and we are just expected to know what to do. Everyone makes mistakes, so putting yourself out there and coming to a course like this is a really brave thing to do. The bottom line is that if we can create healthier families, we're going to have a healthier society."



We've now run successful programmes in Wellington and the Hutt. Currently, the programme is for families Mission social workers already are working with, but we are considering how we can run the programme for more parents in our region.



Barbara, a Mission Donor Who Funded the Programme!

A couple of years ago, a friend invited me to The Mission's art auction and I really loved hearing Murray's enthusiasm for their work. Of course as a Wellingtonian I knew about The Mission, but I'd never been involved. I asked if there was a project that The Mission would like to do but didn't have funding for. They suggested a number of options, and I chose two. One was a translation service which was close to my heart as an ESOL teacher, and the bigger project was Triple P.

I like that the programme empowers parents, particularly because parenting is a difficult gig that most of us have to learn on the fly. It gives parents more skills and tools to deal with challenges, and it can improve the whole family dynamic. I think that a strong connection between parent and child is fundamental, as it's the starting point for every other connection we make in our lives.

I also believe that joining, sticking with, and then graduating from a course like this, while dealing with the stressful situations you're in, is really important. It lets you see yourself as a successful learner, which can give you new self-belief and really open you up to learning other things.

The staff at The Mission have made me feel very involved in the whole process, and I feel part of the whānau. Giving to a cause has only ever enriched my life, and I can see that The Mission is an agency with integrity, so as a donor you can have full confidence that your money is going where it's needed. I also think there's a place for every level of giving. I'm in no way doing huge philanthropic projects, but I like to be involved with community projects where you feel like you're contributing. Even if it's just a small outcome, if we all do our own little part the big things will happen!

TĀ TE MANAWA- YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION

Tā Te Manawa (Meaning 'Where the Heart Breathes'), really is one way The Mission lives out our Vision of 'People and communities empowered, transformed, experiencing fullness of life.'

It's a place where there truly is no us and them, where people from all walks of life come together to share food, drink, and pieces of themselves. It gives all of us an opportunity to gain a different perspective on life, expand our hearts, and connect with our beautiful community – all so we can move forward stronger, together.

Meet Some of Our Tā Te Manawa Whānau!

Fareşa – Manuhiri

I developed a drug addiction, which led me to become homeless. I first came to Tā Te Manawa a few months ago because I heard you could have a proper coffee here, and I used to be a big latte drinker. It was special to know that people had contributed so someone like me could enjoy a luxury like that.

Aside from the food and drinks, the support I found here is absolutely unreal. All the staff and volunteers are awesome, they genuinely care, and they just want to help us out. Something as simple as having another person ask, 'How are you?', and then listening to you is huge. I remember once coming here when I was having a really bad day. They let me fall asleep and left me be, with no judgement. It was just what I needed, and it showed a lot about how they treat people. Even being able to charge my phone here is something I never take for granted because it means I'm contactable for important stuff. The other manuhiri are so friendly and respectful too, and for me at 45 years old, it means a lot to be around people who I see as elders and who smile when I walk in the room.

I'm actually not sure that everyone at The Mission really understands what their support has meant to my life. Without them, I don't know where I'd be. They have kept me out of jail or forensic mental health services, and I'm safe. I've been able to recover personally and get better control over my addictions.

I will be forever grateful and in debt to the people from The Mission, and it's been a real blessing to have found this beautiful place. I have somewhere to be, and I have a purpose during the day – other than out on the street trying to feed my addictions.

I feel accepted for the first time, and I finally feel at home.

Frank – Volunteer



Connection is a big part of Tā Te Manawa. Our manuhiri connect over food, and are part of a social community where they are surrounded by friends.

This is a safe and supportive space. It's just genuinely here for people, and there's nothing expected of anyone. It's one tangible way we can help each other out, even in ways that seem small like making a cup of coffee or lunch, and it feels like a personal way to show a manuhiri that they are cared for.

As volunteers, we feel like there's no pressure on us to be something we're not. Everyone is here because they enjoy being here, which reflects in a very chilled-out environment!



Molly – Concierge



I think Tā Te Manawa offers something very unique to the community, and a lot of our manuhiri see it as an essential. People come here for different reasons, some just because they want some fruit or a coffee every day, others because they live alone or they want to be surrounded by positive influences.

A lot of people who come here don't have positive social support systems, like family and friends, so it's really useful for establishing relationships between people in completely different sectors of our community. It also means they can continue those relationships outside, and people need that type of connection for their entire wellbeing. For anyone who might also be looking for further support, it also establishes a level of trust so they are more confident to connect with Mission Financial Mentors and Social Workers.

Manuhiri



I've actually been coming here on and off for the last 13 years because there's a mental healthcare provider nearby. The lounge is somewhere you can always come to relax, and it's always getting better and better. It's welcoming, and you're free to be yourself because no one's judgemental. You get cared for with food and drink made with love, and they cater to your dietary needs. If you need a bit more help like advocacy you can talk to Mission staff and they can help you – they are really supportive and friendly.

It's important to have this place because it gives everyone a place where they are accepted into the community, and can feel like human beings.

Adrian and Olivia – Volunteers



It's a really cool atmosphere. There are all sorts of different people who know each other and it's nice to see the singing and dancing. We love volunteering here because we get to serve up different foods for people who come in every day. It's good to be here helping the community, and working hard with all of our friends at The Mission!

Natalie – Concierge



Tā Te Manawa gives our manuhiri a safe environment, away from spaces that might be harmful, where they can do something good for themselves. Here, they can engage with others who may be on a similar path and can relate to them.

Manuhiri who come here regularly get a sense of ownership in the place – they know they belong here and can grow here. Being around our staff and volunteers regularly helps form trusting relationships, and bridges the gap between 'us and them'. I also think seeing how all of our team share the same values and actually want to be here is inspiring for manuhiri.

We're not here to judge, we're here to support – whatever stage of life someone's at. Having Mission services available also gets rid of a barrier to someone transforming their life, because it destigmatises the idea that asking for help makes you 'weak'. Our services are not meant to make someone more dependent, they are meant to give them a step up and empower them to navigate their way within our community.

I'm really looking forward to seeing our community grow, especially when we move to Whakamaru. Another group of people from all walks of life will join us there, and we want to make it as inclusive and transformational as possible.




Tanoa – Volunteer



This is just a good place where everyone can get together and chill out, and the staff and volunteers are here for anything the manuhiri want or need.

There are a lot of people here who don't want to be alone, and Tā Te Manawa helps them to keep that human connection. You can be whoever you want when you're here, some want to mingle and others want to stick to themselves. Either way, no one feels out of place or pressured, they just feel comfortable. That's cool, and sometimes the social connection is even more important than the food!

Tā Te Manawa is the Community Lounge operated by WCM in Newtown. It is open from Monday to Thursday from 9:30am – 3:30pm, and on Friday from 10.30am – 3.30pm. We warmly encourage you to come and visit us, to see and feel your support in action! 



A BETTER FUTURE FOR OUR FAMILY

Rhea – mum and Triple P graduate

A few years ago, I lost care of my three children due to addiction. It was a huge wake-up call for me. I moved back to Wellington and started life from scratch.

Coming off an addiction on top of losing my kids was extremely hard, but thankfully I kicked it. My youngest son was then diagnosed with cancer and life got turned upside down again. It was a mind-rattling and stressful time. I was about six months clean and standing on my own feet trying not to crumble. So I reached out, and The Mission was there to help keep me strong.

I knew they could help me in all avenues of my life. Financially I was completely broken, so they helped with groceries from the Social Supermarket, clothing, transport costs for the hospital, and lots more, which all made a big difference. But the best part was the moral support. Having a Mission social worker is the best help you could ever have. They are like your counsellor, parent, and advocate. I could release a lot of the personal foes that I had bottled up, like my husband passing away some years earlier, and it was uplifting to have someone relate to what I was going through. I felt heard, appreciated and inspired, and I found the strength to keep pushing forward. My son battled it out and got into remission, and all three of my babies were able to come home with me, thank goodness!

I joined Triple P because all of us coming back together was causing a lot of clashing. My oldest has autism and my youngest has ADHD, and I knew the change had to start with me. The course gave me new tools to make a happy home, and changed my whole outlook on how I react to my children. I used to get upset quickly, but I have learnt to listen properly, let them get it out, answer their questions, take a break, and then reply. Showing that I'm listening better and staying calm has made a big impact, and they've all jumped on board. We communicate a lot better and there's way less frustration in our house. We've got a better relationship and we are striving together as a family.

It's an awesome course for parents who are struggling, because as much as it's about your kids it works for adults too. If we're not good at communicating, then we can't expect our kids to be. I've also got insights that I can teach other people I know who have similar issues. It's also made me appreciate my family more, and I've realised they are the most important thing in my life.

I think without The Mission, so many Wellingtonians of all different backgrounds would be lost. The network of people who keep The Mission going are awesome. I don't know what to say other than thank you!

OUR CHRISTMAS WRAP UP

Celebrating Your Generosity

In the lead-up to Christmas, The Mission sees both the harshness of what people are going through and the greatest acts of kindness.

We talk a lot about the idea of 'community caring for community', and we were extremely fortunate to see it on a daily basis, as Wellingtonians from all walks of life came together to ensure everyone in our region was cared for. We're always deeply humbled by how you care for people you may never get to know. Our community continues rising together, and supporting each other through the toughest times.

Thank You!

We saw so many acts of kindness and generosity that we could never list them all! However, we'd like to thank everyone who kindly donated money to help us purchase presents, food, and to pay for our skilled social workers to be here for people and families. Thank you to everyone who donated gifts that filled our free Toy Store, so that every parent could give a special present to their child at Christmas. And thank you to all of the volunteers and corporate groups who sorted food and toy donations, set up and stocked shelves in the free Toy Store, packed hampers, and much more.

The Mission can truly only be here for our community because of all of you!

We'd also like to thank...

Kapura who supplied and served our hearty Christmas lunch for everyone who came to Tā te Manawa.

Fine Touch Catering who supplied a beautiful Christmas lunch for manuhiri in our residential housing.

KĀPURA
mediaworks.



Mediaworks, and everyone who took part in Pack the Bus. The initiative is run by Mediaworks and collects gifts for our free Toy Store from businesses and schools all over the Wellington region.



BOXES FILLED WITH JOY

655

This year a whopping **655 Christmas boxes** were filled by businesses around Wellington! These helped to fill our Toy Store and our Christmas hampers!

SHARING THE LOVE AT THE WATERFRONT



This year we lined the waterfront with hearts, each with the name of a supporter, a loved one who's passed on, a business that loves its community, and even photos of people's pets!

Thank you to everyone who shared the love by buying a heart!

WHAT IT MEANS



Sonny, a manuhiri at our supported Transitional Housing Pā, shared a bit about his experience with The Mission at Christmas!

Getting to shop for my kids at the Toy Store was just a really good experience. It's something you'd never imagine could happen – not just for myself but for everyone who goes there. Giving them to my young kids was overwhelming for all of us,

especially because I've never been able to give them anything.

I also really enjoyed our special Christmas dinner at the Pā. It had a good vibe and restaurant-quality kai. Everyone was happy, and that carried on for a few days afterwards because we still had lots of leftovers!

I ended up helping with Pack The Bus for four days as well. I loved it because it gave me the opportunity to give back to The Mission a little bit, and that's what I'm into. I just think what The Mission does is awesome, and I wouldn't be in the position I'm in now without them!

You can read more about Sonny's journey with The Mission in our next newsletter!

THE SILENT NIGHT

A CHRISTMAS FUNDRAISING EVENT THAT NO-ONE GOES TO

By not attending, 100% of ticket sales go to the Wellington City Mission.

21 DECEMBER 2022

37,109 SEATS WERE SOLD,
RAISING \$330,114 OF VITAL FUNDS!

Last year, a group of very talented people from Special Group came into The Mission eager to share a first-of-its-kind idea for how we could raise extra funds this Christmas. That idea is one that The Mission, and our whole community, will now never forget.

The idea was The Silent Night; a fundraising event with the very ambitious aim of selling out Sky Stadium for an event that no one goes to – all so that proceeds could go directly to The Mission's work...

Well you bought a ticket, and together we did it! We sold out every seat in the stadium and more. People even continued to buy tickets into the new year. In total, 37,109 seats were purchased, raising a staggering \$330,114 to go toward helping Wellingtonians through the toughest time of their lives.

On the night, we live-streamed local singer Phoebe Rose Osborne's captivating rendition of Silent Night, playing to a completely empty stadium. Knowing that every seat represented someone's generosity and care was a powerful visual display of what makes our community so special.

So, thank you Wellington. Thank you to everyone who bought a ticket! And thank you to the extremely talented people at Special Group. Thank you also to Special PR, Sky Stadium, Sky, Ticketek NZ, Lowe & Co, and OMD New Zealand.

Some messages from ticket holders that made us chuckle!

"Great idea, got my ticket, won't see you there!"

"I'll be out of town that day, so I bought my ticket."

"Got tickets for me and the family, I hope it rains."

Supported
1,431

families and individuals with food & toys through external agencies

Supported
250

families through the toy store

Supported
205

families and individuals with special Christmas hampers

Supported
167

families and individuals with Christmas food bags

Supported
1,170

manuhiri in the community lounge

Supported
300

manuhiri with Christmas lunch

In total we ...

Supported
3,523

manuhiri throughout the Wellington region

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