



ON A MISSION

Your Generosity Changing Lives



Issue 2 2023



Kris and Sonny at Te Pā Pori on Tory Street

YOUR SUPPORT IN ACTION – TE PĀ PORI, SUPPORTED TRANSITIONAL HOUSING

Becoming the Man I Want to Be

I came to Te Pā Pori last September because I had nowhere else to go. Ever since then, I've been turning my life around.

I grew up in a dysfunctional environment and didn't have my own voice, so I was a bit of a follower. I left school at 13, made bad decisions, and spent most of my life in jail. Whenever I came out, I just didn't know how to live in the community. I had a negative mindset, a criminal record,

and no qualifications. I also have a mean gambling addiction. I have two kids with my ex-partner, but I was a selfish person, so my needs would always come first.

Last year I was living on the streets when I ran into an old friend who was at Te Pā, and he brought me in. There was no way I was expecting what I was offered here. I was overwhelmed by everything – the staff, kai, and rooms. Straight away I knew I was in the safest place I've ever been,

Sonny has embraced everything we offer at Te Pā, and become a leader for our manuhiri

Empowerment.Transformation.Fullness of Life.

and the support made me feel like the staff could see something worthwhile inside me.

My biggest priority became learning how to grow into the father my kids need. My older boy has spent heaps of time with me here, so it's been good to show him that I'm safe and on the right track, and that's really lifted his spirits. I think for people like me who want to change, you've got to get right with yourself first, so there are lots of programmes here that help with that. I meet with my counsellor every week, and if I'm ever feeling down I can talk to someone straight away. Our Whakaaro mō te Rā (Thought for the Day) gives us a good wake up, and puts a fresh thought in our mind for the day. One thing I've realised is that it's not about blaming the system, it's about sorting out my problems first. I've disengaged from my old friends and lifestyle, and I'm working on having a positive mindset.

What makes this place so special is the whanaungatanga (sense of connection) between everyone in our community. Having the backing of people around you helps you stay strong and keep heading forward. I really get into helping other manuhiri, and some of them even want to talk to me about their own stuff. I don't feel qualified to give them advice but I try to give them a bit of hope.

I really want to connect with people who have addictions, are living on the street, or are in jail, and reach young people before they get there. So this year I started studying to become a support worker. I'm doing a Level 4 NZ Certificate in Mental Health and Addiction Support through Whitireia. At first I didn't want to submit my work because I thought it wasn't going to be good enough, but for the first time I'm hearing that I'm doing well in education, and that I do bring something to the table.

My goal is to continue studying so I can eventually do one-on-one support, and to be a positive and consistent influence in my kids' lives. Sometimes I look at myself and think I don't deserve all this help, but with some more time here I will be confident that I can live independently and continue saying no to negative influences.

Thank you to all the people who support The Mission. The manuhiri here have never had something like this in our lives before, and you can see that Wellington is a way better place for everyone because of it!



A Place to Find Community and Purpose

Kris Gibb, Site Manager Te Pā Pori

Everyone who comes to our supported Transitional Housing Pā wants to grow and do something better for themselves. Whether they realise it or not, I think the main thing they are looking for is community. Having no one in your life who is there for you is devastating to the way you see yourself, and it can leave you without a purpose. We support our manuhiri to find what that purpose may be, by making sure they feel included and cared for, and providing stability.

When someone first walks in, we go through a process of listening to where they have come from, understanding what they are lacking in their life, and identifying what supports they need. From there we assign them a Kaiārahi, who becomes their advocate and supports them on their new journey to eventually find permanent housing.

We look to connect manuhiri with our Hauora Mental Health team, which includes our Alcohol & Other Drug counsellors and general counsellors. Other on-site services we provide include Financial Mentoring, literacy classes, art classes, Te Reo Māori classes, Wānanga where we learn about issues like addiction, and Poutama Men's Group.

For The Mission, I think our experience working in supported Transitional Housing has taught us the importance of offering manuhiri the opportunities to thrive while they're here, while also supporting them to gain the tools to live sustainably in the community.

I'm passionate about what we're doing because I can see the impact it's having. And it's actually simple. As humans we don't need a lot, we just need to be seen and loved. People can find that here, and then take that spirit with them when they move out to the wider community – knowing that our support is still here when they need it.

This is the Pathway Our People Need

As a volunteer at Te Pā Pori, I come and spend time with the manuhiri and staff here every Friday. I join the activity for the day, which could be baking or playing sport – it's usually something I'm woefully inadequate at! I'm also keen on books, so I've added to the library and lent specific books to people who are interested in them. Kris has said that's been received really positively, and it's something I want to follow up on more, perhaps with a book group.

I really enjoy nattering with manuhiri and staff, and getting to know everyone personally. I haven't come here to judge anyone, so the conversations you get into are really interesting, especially on some of the deeper issues like New Zealand history, government, and race relations. I talk to some of the guys that I've known for longer a fair bit. Although I mightn't play chess again with Sonny until I have done more practice as he recently beat me in three moves!

One thing that really stands out though, is the high degree of mutual respect between everyone. You don't see as much of that in your day-to-day life.

I really don't find the company here any different than other situations in life, and I don't have a sense that I'm doing anything special. I suppose being here consistently shows the guys that there are people from the wider community who are actually interested in who they are and how they're doing.

Len, with his growing library behind!

One thing that really stands out though, is the high degree of mutual respect between everyone. You don't see as much of that in your day-to-day life. I don't think people need much to feel respected, it's the lack of being disrespected more than anything.

I see Te Pā as giving people who are experiencing homelessness a pathway. It's setting them up so they can get into permanent housing, and take the opportunities they are actually entitled to. It's a very well-structured and supported pathway, where there's a belief from everyone involved that anyone can head in a new direction. That's important because I do think that over the last 30 years we've increased the sense that there are people who 'don't belong' in our society. Technology and processes have actually made it harder to access things people need, which has alienated many of our citizens and reduced their expectations of what they can do in life.

Organisations like The Mission play a huge part in standing up and saying that something is wrong, and then rocking the boat to make changes and fill the gaps. I can see that organisations like The Mission are going to be increasingly important in future, particularly as we have an ageing population which will need more support from public services. We will all need to be part of the solution, by getting stuck in, and we can move into a much richer society in that respect!

Financial Mentoring - Empowering People to Take Control of Their Money

Our Financial Mentoring programme's main goal is to empower our clients to become financially independent for life. We're also here for those who may always need some support, particularly due to mental health conditions or addictions, and who have no one who can help manage their finances.

We offer one-on-one budgeting advice and education, Total Money Management, advocacy, personal support, and referrals to other Mission services (like the Social Supermarket, Social Workers, and Sports Bank) as well as other community providers. We also have strong relationships with government agencies. This means we can connect someone with the opportunities that will make a difference in their life, and make progress where perhaps they were getting stuck.

Many people we work with have ended up in a cycle of debt, and they feel that they can't get out of it alone. So we deal with creditors and advocate for them with specialist providers, like Newtown Ethical Lending Trust, so they can finally break the debt cycle and achieve a more manageable budget.

Alongside meeting someone's immediate needs, we try to save any money we can for those unexpected vital expenses that pop up, such as a broken-down fridge, medical fees, or a high power bill. For many clients, this will be the first time they've ever had savings and that can create powerful feelings of relief and self-belief.



A Word from Carla – A Mission Financial Mentor

*Financial Mentor Carla, pictured
with a special food hamper!*

I think everyone who is brave enough to start on our Financial Mentoring programme should be super proud of themselves.

It's not easy to take that first step and ask for help with your money. Clients come to us carrying a lot of stress and frustration, because they can't see a light at the end of the tunnel. They simply don't know how they will deal with all of the pressures – especially from creditors. Some people even feel a lot of shame because they know they have been making mistakes, and they feel like they have failed. So when they come to their first budgeting meeting, just being there to see and hear them can bring huge relief. We are not here to judge, we are here to help.

The Mission can give people the opportunities they need, but the big changes come from the client's determination to change their lives. For me personally, seeing someone start in a very bad situation and then work incredibly hard over months or years to become financially independent is amazing. Despite all of the challenges in their life, they have made the decision to move forward, and that is an inspiring and empowering experience to be part of!

Key Financial Mentoring Numbers, January - March 2023



DEBT PAID ON BEHALF OF
TOTAL MONEY MANAGEMENT CLIENTS

\$ 27,313.32

TOTAL WELFARE TRANSACTIONS

\$ 217,496.50



Rachel has worked hard to completely change her life through budgeting

The Fresh Start I Desperately Needed

A couple of years ago, my finances were in a terrible state. I'd had a bad accident, and needed 12 operations over that year.

Eventually I lost my job, and I crashed. Spending money became a way to cope with my emotions, and I got drawn in by loan sharks. As I got deeper into debt, they made it so easy to borrow more money. Everything spiralled out of control. I reached a point where I was behind on rent and power, and I couldn't buy food and medications or pay back the interest on my loans. My parents propped me up for a while, but the whole thing strained my family relationships. I was embarrassed, and didn't want anyone to know what was going on, so I stopped keeping up with my friends.

My money problems were all-consuming. I was terrified. I never felt safe, even at home, and I couldn't see a way out. For the first time, I was mentally preparing myself to potentially live on the streets for a while.

I thought I would never pay off my debts, but in September I'll be completely debt-free.

One day I had a moment of clarity and thought, "I just cannot do this anymore!" and I got in touch with The Mission. I felt guilty that there were probably other people who were more deserving, but somehow I knew this was my only shot. Being able to unload to my Financial Mentor, Carla, was such a relief. She just believed me, and being accepted like that meant the world to me. It felt like I had been walking through a jungle, and now I had someone to help clear away the trees. I found a lot of dignity in how my journey was up to me, and it was

OK to make mistakes along the way. I had a glimmer of hope, and I was determined to make our plan work.

The first thing she did was ring my creditors to negotiate lesser payments, and even get some interest taken off. Little things like changing power and phone plans to the best deals all added up. I put myself on a strict budget, and seeing progress added to my determination – especially when I started saving money. I remember once talking to Carla about needing new glasses, and she said to me "Well you can just buy them!" It was such an odd feeling, but I felt really good about how far I'd come.

I thought I would never pay off my debts, but in September I'll be completely debt-free. Now that I'm in control of my finances I don't live in fear of losing everything, and I feel human again. I've reconnected with friends, and my relationship with my family is a lot better. I love buying small presents for my nieces and nephews too!

I've just graduated from Financial Mentoring, and I feel confident to go forward independently. As soon as I'm back to full health I'll be back out looking for a job. Thank you to everyone who is part of The Mission. You're making sure people won't stay trapped, and allowing them to be the person they want to be!

Our City Missioner Ordained!

On Sunday 29 January, Murray Edridge was ordained as a Minister! The Commissioning service was led by Bishop Justin Duckworth at The Wellington Cathedral of St Paul.

Our new Board Chair, John Maurice, shared his thoughts about the significance of the occasion.

I think everyone who's part of the Mission community knows that we're very fortunate to have Murray as our City Missioner.

All of us know that we have found an energetic and visionary Missioner in Murray. Throughout my time with The Mission, I've seen how Murray always leads from the front, with backing from The Mission's very capable and passionate team of staff and volunteers.

His appointment in 2018 was unique, as he was the first-ever non-ordained minister to serve as Wellington City Missioner in our nearly 120-year history. However, after four years in the role, Murray saw this opportunity to better serve everyone who wants to find a new way forward with support from The Mission.

By further strengthening and integrating the work of The Mission with the wider Anglican Church team, we can reach further into the communities of the wider Wellington region, and meet the needs of anyone who is struggling.

His ordination service to become a Minister drew a large crowd of people from completely different walks of life. In the cathedral, you could feel the sense of a united community, which illustrated the 'no us and them' vision that Murray has championed so well in his time with us. The Bishop of Wellington, Justin Duckworth, also celebrated Murray's outstanding leadership, and spoke about his special journey to becoming ordained.

You'll now see our Murray, as our Wellington City Missioner, occasionally wearing his 'clerical collar' around the city and beyond. I really do encourage you to say hello when you see him, to talk anything Mission-related or anything else that's on your mind!

Ngā mihi nui

John Maurice
Wellington City Mission Board Chair



A Message from Murray May 2023

Murray Edridge
Wellington City Missioner

I hope this newsletter finds you well despite the challenges of life at the moment, with people in our communities struggling with many issues around financial and social wellbeing.

Often these issues seem so overwhelmingly large and challenging that we just don't know what to do. Hopefully this newsletter brings you a sense of hope and optimism about what is possible, despite the challenges.

We have just celebrated Easter which is a time in our Christian experience of remembrance and gratitude that God loved us so much that he offered his son as a sacrifice in our place.

And as I write these thoughts on the cusp of Anzac Day 2023 we reflect again on the extraordinary contribution of so many brave New Zealanders who gave everything they had to protect us and ensure our futures were secure.

Both Easter and Anzac Day remind us of sacrifices made to enable others to live into life in all its fullness. Fullness of Life is one of the Wellington City Mission's visions for our community.

Hopefully, as you read this issue of On A Mission, you will be inspired by the extraordinary work done by the team at the Wellington City Mission and get a renewed sense of what is possible if the right support is wrapped around people, at the right time and in the right way!

Thank you for the part that you play in ensuring the Wellington City Mission can continue to support those in our community who are struggling, to live into fullness of life for themselves.

"Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."

Hebrews 13:16

Did you see our Family2Family food drive recently?

Running between 24 April – 7 May, it's one of our biggest annual food drives, in partnership with New World Supermarkets across the Wellington region.

Thank you to everyone who took part! Our community showed just how much we care for others who are doing it tough, by donating grocery items at their local New World.

All of your donations are now helping to stock our Social Supermarket shelves and replenish our supplies.

This support is crucial for us to continue being here for people and families who are struggling to make ends meet – especially those who are finding themselves at the very sharp end of the cost-of-living crisis.



See you at the Food Show!

We're delighted to have been named as the charity partner for the Wellington Food Show again this year!

On the weekend of 26 – 28 May, Sky Stadium will be transformed into a vibrant community event – packed with cooking classes, tastings, prizes, and even a cooking theatre. It's well worth a visit, so we encourage you to head along and get behind our hospitality industry!



Championing Our Incredible Volunteers

With National Volunteering Week coming up from 18 – 24 June, we want to do an early shout-out to our amazing volunteer force.

We currently have 116 absolute superstars who help deliver our services on the ground and behind the scenes. In our Social Supermarket and Tā te Manawa Community Lounge, and assisting during special appeals like Family2Family and Christmas time, volunteers are vital. A strong volunteer force will also be critical in living out our vision for The Mission's new building, Whakamaru.

To our awesome volunteers, for offering your time, skills, and hearts to care for our community, thank you for everything you do. We wouldn't be able to give so many of our people the opportunities they need without you!



You make a difference.

In the last three months, with your help, we:



Supported

1,087

people through our Social Supermarket



Provided

27,000

meals for manuhiri living in our supported Transitional Housing accommodation



Welcomed

31,500

manuhiri into Tā te Manawa, our community lounge, where we served home cooked meals and great barista coffee



Supported

205

whanau and individuals with one-on-one social work support

Whakamaru on the up and up

Progress with the Whakamaru build continues to be excellent and it's been exciting to watch the building 'grow' before our eyes, literally. The installation of the steel structure sees the building really taking shape and allows us to better picture how the completed building will look and we're excited!

We've now completed the concrete works for the basement car park, the ground floor and the exterior block walls have been installed, and we're powered up with our transformer fully installed. Another key and very visible addition on-site has been the installation of the tower crane standing proud above the skyline.

Key next steps include laying the cross-laminate timber flooring and the continuation of the exterior walls and Naylor Love are making great progress.

We appreciate all your wonderful support as we watch our vision grow into a reality and if you'd like to help us, please see the "Donate to us" details below.



ChangeGivers
Regular Giving Programme

The wonderful gift that creates change.

ChangeGivers are a group of special supporters who give a regular monthly donation. This is not only a powerful combined gift but also provides the security of regular donations Wellington City Mission can count on throughout the year.

If you'd like to be a ChangeGiver, we are inviting you to join this amazing group of people. As a ChangeGiver, you will receive regular updates showing the positive impact you are having. You can choose the amount that fits into your monthly budget, and it can automatically be deducted from your credit card or account.

To sign up, you can simply contact Carthi Gnanam, on (04) 245 0843 or carthi@wcm.org.nz

If you ever want to make changes to your regular giving, just give us a call.

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