



# ON A MISSION

Your Generosity Changing Lives

## Your Kindness

## Has Helped Our Family

I'm a single parent to four kids, and our family has some significant challenges. My eldest is deafblind, my 14-year-old is one of a handful of kids in New Zealand with AUTS2 Syndrome, and my two youngest are autistic with ADHD and severe anxiety.

The complicated nature of their conditions means that I've been struggling for years to get the support they need – particularly with their health and education. We don't fit neatly into any boxes, so for as long as I can remember I've been bounced from place to place, and coming up against brick walls. I honestly felt like I was going insane because I was constantly repeating myself, and we just couldn't find any help.

As soon as I had Ruth, my Mission Social Worker by my side, things started changing. We began the Strengthening Families process, which brought all of the support agencies, schools and government departments together in one room for the first time. It finally became clear that our family really was slipping through the cracks and we could do something about it.

Unfortunately, just before Christmas last year, our home became extremely unsafe, and we had to leave immediately. We ended up in Emergency Housing, where the five of us lived in a two-bedroom motel for seven months. I was

constantly chasing up with housing providers, but there wasn't anything they could do. I felt like the worst parent in the world because I couldn't give my kids the one thing I'm supposed to give them, a home.

***I felt like a failure, and at my roughest times, I had to consider if my kids would be better off being cared for by the state.***

But through it all, Ruth walked alongside me. Having her there when I needed someone to share the mental load, she'd say "You're doing a great job, and it will get better!" this helped me stop that constant self-doubt, and take a breath.

I could think more clearly and have a little hope, and that gave me the boost I needed to keep going. The Mission started offering support in other areas too. Budget-wise, we don't have a lot to live on week to week, so having access to a place like the Social Supermarket takes so much pressure off, as there have been weeks where I wouldn't have been able to feed my kids without it.

And because we've got serious food allergies and textural sensitivities, being able to choose our own food means everything gets used.

One of our amazing mums, Kerryn, with her Mission Social Worker, Ruth



We're also very limited in options for rewarding activities like sports, so being able to access special grants (like Kete of Aroha, which I know is sponsored by a Mission donor), means my kids can take part in activities like Riding for Disabled. On top of that, being given things like passes to Zealandia and the zoo, allows us to get out as a family and feel normal.

At Christmas, I was even invited to shop at the free Christmas Toy Store, where I could pick out gifts like board games and puzzles to do together in the motel. Being able to provide my kids some treats was a big deal, because at that time, not only would they have just lost their home, their neighbourhood, and friends, they would have had no Christmas too. As much as it is about getting to spend time together, that's hard to understand as a four or eight-year-old.

***Kids shouldn't have to face adult problems, they should just be able to feel some of the magic of Christmas time, and they definitely did.***

Thankfully, earlier this year we found a private rental, so although it costs well over half of our weekly income, we have a home where we can lay down our roots and feel

like we belong to a community. We still have a lot of challenges ahead of us so we don't know what's going to happen, but I do know that we can find a solution to any problem. And importantly, I know that whatever happens my kids aren't going to go without food. With Christmas coming up, it's a huge relief knowing that The Mission is going to help make sure we can celebrate as a family too.

I do have moments where I can't believe I'm so low in life that I have to rely on charity to get by, but having dignity, respect, and choice is massive, and it does make a difference.

I would say to everyone who supports The Mission that the most important thing you can know is that you really are saving people's lives. When the world looks so bleak for so many, it's incredibly powerful to be able to reach out and get help because people have shared their kindness!

**During 2022/23, from our social work team  
164 People and families met their personal  
goals, and felt confident to move on without  
ongoing support from The Mission.**





## About The Mission's Social Work Service

People and families who work with The Mission have their own set of life experiences, challenges, and strengths. They may be struggling with the pressures of poor or unsafe housing, are unable to access vital healthcare services, or have other long-term personal challenges.

Our team of professional Social Workers are here to help, offering personal support, advocacy, and referrals to other Mission services and specialist agencies. Here, people and families in our community find the wrap-around support and opportunities they've been looking for to transform their lives.

Some people only need a hand to get through a particularly difficult time, and others are with The Mission for years. Either way, we're here to listen without judgement, and walk alongside anyone for as long as they need. Often, we will work with individuals, parents and children in an environment where they feel comfortable, like their own home.

Many of those working with our Social Workers also feel comfortable accessing other Mission services that will support their new journey, such as Financial Mentoring, the Social Supermarket, and Tā te Manawa. We also offer education, through courses such as the Triple P Parenting Programme, so that people and families gain tools and confidence to live successfully within our community.

It's so humbling seeing people start to realise their incredible strengths, achieve their goals, and begin to look forward with hope – always knowing that The Mission is here should they need to feel the care of our incredible community again!

## It's A Blessing to Be Here - Ruth, Mission Social Worker

It's awesome seeing the love and dedication parents like Kerryn have for their kids. With all of the challenges they've gone through in life, the strength they have to get up each day and keep fighting is so inspiring.

It's not easy to ask for help, but once someone does, there are things that I think are really cool about the way The Mission can help.

***We're one of the few agencies that can support generally in many areas, and because a lot of***



***our funding comes from Mission donors, our support isn't limited to specific time periods or services. It makes it really easy for people to get the help they need when they need it.***

That could mean being here to help a person during a tricky time, right through to walking with them for a number of years. Someone might have a specific health or housing issue, and for others like Kerryn, there are more complicated challenges and gaps that exist. The Mission is one way our community can help someone to manage things. In the end though, we actually want to work ourselves out of a job, by empowering people and families to become confident in their own abilities.

Christmas is such a big tradition in New Zealand, so the weight of expectation can be really challenging for families who don't have much. Personally, my Christian faith means a lot for me at this time, but I also think of being with family and sharing kai together. For all of us, these moments help us build our most important relationships, and find meaning. Opportunities like our Toy Store and Christmas Day Hampers give people and families who might otherwise miss out a chance to join in on special times like this, which is so important to enhance their mana and feel a connection with our community.

***I think it's amazing seeing how everyone who supports The Mission believes that every person is valuable, and deserves to feel that someone cares about them. It really shows how that old perspective of 'if you have less, then you're worth less' is just so wrong.***

As a mum who was once where so many of our families are now, and having come out the other side, I think it's a real blessing being able to share what you have, and it does make a significant impact!





# Super Granddad!

Nathan, and his counsellor, Peter, at our place of Supported Transitional Housing, Te Pā Pori

Bringing up my family with my partner was the happiest time of my life. I loved going to work, putting food on the table, and reading the bedtime stories. But as our kids got older, I had a lot more time on my hands, and I started to stop at the bottle store on the way home more and more. It got to the point where I was drinking every day, and my family was introduced to a different me. I was no longer the caring father and partner I used to be.

My partner put up with it for years, but one day, after 28 years together, the love of my life wasn't there anymore. My drinking got worse, and I really wrecked myself. My health deteriorated, I lost my job, and I started selling everything I had to pay for juice. My two grown daughters who live locally had enough too, which meant I lost contact with my grandchildren.

***It was a desperate, terrible time, and eventually I realised I needed help to change.***

My GP told me about Te Pā Pori, and said it was a good place to be. At first when I got here, I ignored the services, the staff, and the other manuhiri. I couldn't wait to get out every morning so I could go and drink. It took me a month to go to my first group meeting. From there I started counselling with Peter every week, and we made plans to eliminate drinking and get healthier. He has been the biggest part of my recovery, and I can't say enough good things about him. He's the perfect guy for me to talk to – always understanding and kind, and I feel comfortable sharing some of the deeply personal stuff.

I'm still working towards my goals, and I haven't been drunk for a long time. I'm down to one or two beers a week, and

I'm a lot healthier overall. I'm slowly getting back into working too, by volunteering over at Kaibosh. I'm doing everything I can to get out there and live a normal life.

***The biggest thing is that I have got back together with my kids. A few months in, my daughters saw a change in me and they invited me for dinner. A month later, I was babysitting. Being trusted with that responsibility was so special, I've made a promise to them, and to myself, that I will never lose them again.***

It was incredible to be with them for Christmas dinner again last year, and sober too. I even showed up with a sack full of primo presents from The Toy Store for my grandkids! I was Super Granddad last year, and I'm grateful for being given the chance to feel that way for one day. This Christmas, we've made plans to bring everyone together from far and wide, and we're hoping that Mum can come back from Australia too. It's going to be a special one, and I'm very much looking forward to it.

Coming to Te Pā Pori has been the best thing I've done to become a better person. Everything you need to change your life is here, you just need to be ready to accept the help. You're never short of someone who is willing to go above and beyond for you, and there are a few people wearing halos around here I reckon!

It's important for all The Mission staff and donors to know that what you are doing is needed, is appreciated, and it works. Some of us out there need some help, and I don't know what to say other than thank you.





## I've Found Life at The Mission

*Diana, manuhiri and volunteer at Tā te Manawa, says she has so much life to live!*

Throughout my life I've struggled with mental health issues, so I haven't always kept well. I lived with my grandma for 18 years, then I started living independently in a boarding house. It wasn't good there, and I was pretty isolated because I've never felt like I fit in anywhere. Then when my grandma passed away, my mental health got worse.

***I started hurting myself, and had some really dark times. I was living week to week, and I couldn't really look forward to anything. I didn't really want to be here.***

I first came to The Mission to get Financial Mentoring, and I met with a Social Worker too. Then I started coming into Tā te Manawa to supplement my benefit with a free meal and barista coffee. I found it was a nice place with warm company, and I could spend time with people from all walks of life. I liked how when I felt down, the staff weren't there to try and cheer me up, they were there just to be with me. I finally felt like I fit in, and that I was someone. I started having a purpose for each day.

Now I feel more hopeful, and I've got the energy to have dreams and ambitions. I rent a flat with my mum, and I have a kitten who I love. She's named Perse after my grandma Persephone, and Financial Mentoring helps me make sure I can pay for everything she needs. I'm not sure yet what I'm going to do this Christmas, but I'm looking forward to it. In previous years I've actually had a Christmas Hamper from The Mission, which has been really cool – especially because everything out there shuts down. It really is like a box of joy!

I've also started volunteering here, taking coffee orders and working in the kitchen. I never saw myself being able to do that, so I love having that opportunity. But also, I want to give back and I like being able to help out anyways.

***My challenge now is figuring out what I can fit into my day. Sometimes I end up overdoing it because I'm trying to make up for lost time. I just want to live so much!***

## Your Kindness at Christmas Time - Sharing Dignity and Hope



Christmas time at The Mission is very special! It starts in October: Workplaces order their Christmas Star Boxes, The Toy Store is being planned out, the Pack the Bus timetable is set, volunteer teams are assembled, Tā te Manawa organises its Christmas programme, and social workers start planning with people and families they work with to have a successful holiday season.

It's a time when everyone here gets to see the best of the Wellington community. People from all walks of life, and all ages, come together to share something of themselves. Whether that's through giving food or gifts, their time, or donations, everyone wants to touch someone else's life for a moment – even though they may never meet them or hear their story. That's so powerful to see, and it really is an incredible privilege to be able to direct our community's strength and generosity to those who need it most!



*Share Your Christmas*

Find out more in our Christmas insert included, or visit:  
[lightupchristmas.wellingtoncitymission.org.nz](http://lightupchristmas.wellingtoncitymission.org.nz)



## Te Pā Maru - The First of Its Kind!



After being gifted the Wellington Men's Night Shelter building in 2020, we undertook a comprehensive review to uncover and address the most pressing unmet needs within our region. We found that many people who can't or won't stop drinking have nowhere to live, and this was an opportunity to respond to that.

What followed was comprehensive research into evidence-based models and innovations from around the world, an extensive building renovation, and the formation of a new model of care. On 28 September, Hon Grant Robertson unveiled an 'almost new' building, which will provide a residential alcohol harm reduction facility – the first of its kind in New Zealand.

Named 'Te Pā Maru', which means 'shelter and protection', this facility prioritises the dignity and care of those who experience alcohol dependence and will seek to lessen harm. Residents, known as 'kainoho', will be encouraged to reduce alcohol consumption and develop safer ways of living, by allowing controlled drinking, addressing health issues, and supporting healthier and more stable lifestyles.

Te Pā Maru offers housing and on-site support for up to 18 kainoho, with no set limits on their length of stay. The service prioritises a secure and supported housing solution for many people who have been excluded from other housing options, and offers access to counselling services through our on-site mental health team to focus on the deeper trauma and issues which can result in addiction.

***Te Pā Maru aims to be a haven for those seeking safety, support, and a better path forward.***

## Whakamaru Progress Update



We're excited to report that Whakamaru's structural components are now complete, with the recent pouring of the last concrete floor.

The installation of cross-laminated timber (CLT) flooring has also been a resounding success, and the facade on the front of the building is taking shape, with joinery now in place at the front of the Café. The facade programme, including curtain wall cladding, is on track for completion before the Christmas shutdown.

The installation of the roof purlins has now begun, and in the next few months the full building's form will really take shape!

### Key Partnerships:

We are thrilled that we now have two new and pivotal partnerships for Whakamaru.

A well-established general practice medical clinic is relocating to Whakamaru, and will be situated on the first floor. We will also be partnering with an experienced hospitality and event catering company. They will assist with setting up the Café, which will be at the heart of Whakamaru's activities, and oversee its operations once open.

***We want to say thank you for being a part of this transformative journey! Everyone who has donated and partnered with us so far is bringing Whakamaru closer to fulfilling our vision of creating a community where there is 'no us and them' for the Wellington community.***





Murray, with long-time Te Pā Maru supporter, Hon Grant Robertson

***"Te Pā Maru is a great step towards making sure Wellington is indeed the opposite of loneliness."***

*Hon Grant Robertson*

## Quarterly Newsletter – October 2023

### Murray's Message

At the time of writing these thoughts, we have just had a General Election that heralded a change of Government for our country, and we celebrated the success of the All Blacks over Ireland in the quarter finals of the Rugby World Cup.

In the coming weeks we will come to know the final shape of our Government for the next three years and we will also know if New Zealand can win the Rugby World Cup for a record fourth time!

Arguably both of these competitions (to be the Government and to win the RWC) are hard-fought battles in highly combative arenas. The spoils of these competitions will accrue to those who can achieve higher and better than their competitors.

This sounds remarkably like a metaphor for life. Most of us are aspiring to live the best life we can; to contribute to our communities, to achieve in our chosen forms of endeavour, to provide for ourselves and our families, and to see our children and grandchildren succeed.

Inevitably though, life is not a "fair" contest, and we don't all start from the same starting line!

So many in our communities have challenging backgrounds and personal obstacles that impede their success in life, in so many ways. For many, the factors that most of us would consider as most desirable; including success, wellness, and quality of relationships, are elusive goals!

At the Wellington City Mission, we have the privilege to walk alongside those that are doing life hard. Whatever the reason for their circumstances, when they come to the Mission they are treated with dignity, respect and without

judgement. In walking alongside them, hopefully we can encourage and guide them as they recover something of what life has stripped away, and make good decisions and positive steps for their futures.

In this edition of On A Mission, you can get a very personal glimpse into the life journeys of Kerryn, Nathan and Diana; and get to meet Ruth, one of our amazing Social Workers.

2023 has been a year of incredible challenges and difficulties in our communities and I hope that as you read their stories you will feel the joy and satisfaction of knowing that because of your support, together we are able to make a real and tangible difference in the lives of some of those who are struggling the most.

Given how challenging this year has been, and as we look forward to the fast-approaching Christmas season, I trust the encouragement in this publication to "Share your Christmas" resonates with you also!

Hopefully we can end this year with the Government we would wish for, a new Rugby World Cup, and a community where each and every one of us receives the care and support we need!

Blessings



*Murray*

Murray Edridge  
Wellington City Missioner

**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.**

**Philippians 2:3-4**

# THE CHANGE YOU ENABLE

During the months of July – September, together we...



Provided

**6,738**

meals for manuhiri living in our Supported Transitional Housing accommodation



Supported

**164**

whānau and individuals with Financial Mentoring support



Supported

**187**

whānau and individuals with one-on-one Social Work support



Supported

**1,605**

people through our Social Supermarket



Welcomed

**2,880**

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

Thank you! Your support enables us to be better than we would otherwise be.



**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 significant 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 account.

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

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

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