

ON A MISSION

Your Generosity Changes Lives

Issue 2 2024



Murray's Message - June 2024

At the time of writing these comments, our country has been awed by the amazing sights in our sky. The Aurora Australis that we've had the opportunity to witness is caused by a solar storm – the result of electrically-charged particles being fired out from spots on the sun.

As we see these sights, it is a spectacular reminder that as we live our lives on this earth, we are a part of a much bigger universe. Our planet is dwarfed by the sun, which is in turn tiny compared to many of the other stars in our sky. The enormity of our universe is mind-blowing, but it is something we are a part of, and we do belong here!

If we think of ourselves in the context of our universe, it's difficult not to consider ourselves to be insignificant. The awesome news is that we are all significant. Our role at the Wellington City Mission is to ensure that people are reminded how valuable and significant they really are. In this newsletter, we have some wonderful stories about

lives that have been changed with the timely support and encouragement of the team at The Mission. You'll hear from Nicky, Merio and Tony about life's challenges for them, as well as the difference an open door that welcomes, encourages, supports and enables, makes.

The Wellington City Mission walks alongside people in a way that is dignified, respectful and without judgement. In doing so, we remind them of their own significance, as they go on to be significant for others.

Every day at The Mission, we are reminded of the privilege we have in serving those who need some extra help to realise their own significance. In supporting this work, in whatever way you do, I hope that you also feel that privilege. You enable us to be better than we would otherwise be, and we couldn't do it without you.

Together, we are doing something of significance in our community, in our city, our nation, our world... and in our universe!



Ngā manaakitanga – blessings

Murray

Murray Edridge
Wellington City Missioner

A reminder too that we are all significant to God – we read in Luke 12:7 that God knows every hair on our heads. Be encouraged!



• Toni, left, and Nicky

Your support shows we're not alone

Nicky has brought stability and hope back to her life, with support from The Mission's services

My life used to look very different. I was working as a beautician at a very well-respected day spa, while also studying to be a nurse and raising my five children. One day in 2014, I was assaulted and suffered a serious brain injury. From there, everything started slipping out of my control and my life spiralled. I was getting confused, even passing out, and having panic attacks. I couldn't work like I used to. I was finding it impossible to keep on top of running our household, and I started losing track of bill payments. I kept studying while I tried to get us back on track, but as a sole parent with no one to turn to for help, we got more and more into debt. Our situation felt completely helpless.

Getting to the position where you need to ask for help is shattering when you've been successful in life. I went to several places, but I felt judged, or unsafe when I had my children in tow. One day, I saw a pamphlet about The Mission's Social Supermarket. It talked about how you're made to feel welcome, not embarrassed. I came in and met Toni, a Financial Mentor at The Mission. I was nervous, but she had a relaxed attitude and put me at ease quickly.

I did my first shop at the Social Supermarket that day. It was unlike anywhere I had been before.

From there, I started sewing my life back together. I agreed to have The Mission manage my budget through their Total Money Management service. I was scared about handing over control, but I was in such a bad position that I knew I had to. I trusted Toni too. She also had a lot of know-how and authority, so she was able to negotiate with my creditors in a way that I couldn't and she made arrangements for me to pay back my debts. My new budget didn't leave much spending money, but we slowly started making progress. It gave my mind a rest from all the overdue bills running around in my head, and I could sleep at night again.

Being able to regularly visit the Social Supermarket has really helped supplement our food bills too. We love it there. It's a safe place where my kids are always welcome,

and my youngest daughter loves getting to choose things from the shelves. As a mum, it's so good to know that they are getting all the nutrients they need.

Without The Mission, I don't know how we could have possibly survived these past couple of years, especially in winter when there's so much extra strain trying to keep my kids healthy. My girls have asthma which gets worse in the cold, and severe eczema that can easily become infected. In the Social Supermarket you can get speciality laundry powders, soaps and cleaning products that bring a lot of relief to them. We would never have been able to afford that stuff otherwise.

We still have some challenges ahead, but I'm ecstatic to have paid off \$16,000 of debt, and in the next couple of weeks I'll be completely debt-free. Toni has taught me so much about managing my own budget. I've picked up my studies again, and after such a positive experience with



Our Financial Mentors helped people pay off

\$26,478.39

of debt between January - March

The Mission, my goal is to now become a social worker. My aspiration is to one day work with The Mission helping other people when they need it, like Toni did for me. It's been a long road, but I finally feel like I'm going to get my life back to normal again. I think it's all going to make me a better social worker!

I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who supports The Mission. **It means so much to know that people out there do care about us, and that whatever happens, we've got The Mission's support.**



Merio working with one of her Financial Mentoring clients



Merio reads her City Mission newsletter interview from 2015

All of us can make a difference

In 2000, Merio walked through The Mission's doors and asked for help. Now she helps others, working with us as a Financial Mentor.

In 2000, I was a single mum to three young boys, and we were living in my car. My youngest wasn't even a year old, but we had no other options because I had a very large amount of debt. I was too ashamed to tell people what was going on for us, and after scraping at the bottom of the food chain for so long, my mental health was really bad. But what kept me going was wanting to see my boys grow up to be successful.

It took some bravery to first walk through The Mission's doors and ask for help, but I wasn't prepared to keep going down the path we were on. I had to break the cycle. The first thing I did was start working with a Financial Mentor to get my budget under control, so we could make sure we had some stability and begin to lift ourselves out of our situation. I decided to sign up for Total Money Management, which saw The Mission manage all of my money directly. That allowed me to focus on my children and find a home.

The years that followed were tough, but I found strength in always knowing that my finances were going to be OK. I found a home, and slowly made progress on my debts. Eventually, with help from my Financial Mentor, I started budgeting training. I achieved a Certificate in Money Management, began managing my own budget, and became debt-free. After finishing up with The Mission, I began working as a budgeting advisor myself. Last year, I came back to work at The Mission as a Financial Mentor!

I get to meet so many wonderful people in my role. I enjoy getting to understand their financial goals and working together to achieve them. I teach budgeting skills and help them feel more confident. **Our services maintain someone's dignity and it's rewarding seeing them go from being extremely stressed out and shut off when they first come in, to slowly opening up, looking well, and smiling.**

As much as the last 20 years have been a real challenge, I had to walk that path to understand how to help people in the community now. Over time, I've learned that money

isn't the most important thing because you're never going to get enough to have everything you want in this life. What matters is loving those close to you and doing as much good as you can each day.

My days are full. I work, care for my kids, am a caregiver for other people, and I support my community. Outside of work, the community is part of our whānau, and we literally have community sitting at our dinner table! Every Christmas, I buy a Mission star on the waterfront too. Our star acknowledges our family's support of The Mission, and recognises our humble beginnings, as well as how blessed we are to be in a position to help others. I'm glad to see those qualities in my children. They are non-judgmental and always extend help to those around them.

"When I was young, I was ashamed of being around The Mission, but being older, I see it helped us stay afloat. Tough times never last, only tough people last, like our mum!"

Storm - Merio's son



Merio with her three oldest boys, Zaccari, Storm and Layke

The sad reality is that so many people are struggling right now. Everyone is feeling the rising cost of living, even those who are working. There's a growing group of New Zealanders who can't overcome these challenges without help from our community, whether that's because of mental or physical issues, personal tragedy, or generational disadvantage.

The Mission's work touches all our lives, so supporting it is important. As we head into a cold winter, many are struggling or even homeless. That lifestyle is inhumane, especially for kids. I hope there will be an outpouring of love and support for those finding it hardest. **It's the kindness of Mission donors that makes our services possible.**



• Tony, at the entrance to Tā te Manawa

I'm thankful to have a place like this

Tony has been a regular at our community lounge, Tā te Manawa, for 14 years.

I've been coming to Tā te Manawa for 14 years now. It all started when a mate of mine said I could come here for a good meal, and sure enough, I started visiting regularly. I liked getting to meet new people and it helped me stretch my budget. Every few months or so I do a shop at the Social Supermarket too, just to help me out when my cupboards get bare.

A lot of my own family have passed away now. **I see the people here as being like family.** I know how important that is, especially because four years ago I had a heart attack and three days later I had a stroke. I was a pretty sick cookie for a while, then last Christmas I was admitted to Intensive Care, and I stayed in hospital for 51 days.

While I was there, a group of Mission staff visited me. It really took me up a step because I was excited to see them all. They even brought me a card signed by everyone from Tā te Manawa. That was heartening, and I actually got a bit emotional. People come to Tā te Manawa for lots of different reasons. Some don't have a lot of money, others can't cook, have addictions, or live alone and want some company.

There are characters from all walks of life, and everyone is welcome. New faces come in all the time too, and there's no judgement from anyone here.

A lot of people rely on this place. You can get help with

anything you could need; budgeting, food, companionship – whatever. **The Mission is a great backstop.** It gives you a bit of security, knowing that if you've got any problems at least you'll have the right person to talk to, or you can get steered in the right direction. You'll often get 50 or more people in here, and that's a sign of the times. But there's always enough for everyone. Without a place like this, there'd be a lot of desperate people trying to figure out how they're going to get by, and I'd say it's saving a few people from prison. For me, I'm very thankful to just be alive, because you just don't know what's going to happen and you've just got to take life as it comes.

Things are tough out there, especially in winter when it's cold, but Tā te Manawa is a happy place. You walk in and it's warm, you can enjoy good food, a nice hot drink and share stories. **The warmth from being with everyone lifts you up a notch.** I know that Mission donors and volunteers keep this place going, and I think it's a great place to support if you can, because our community really needs it – now more than ever. It's magic, really!



Manuhiri like Tony have been involved and informed as we design our new community space at **Whakamaru**



Opening the door to *brighter days*

Together we can make winter a little brighter for everyone.

Winter can be tough for all of us, but for those who are already struggling it can become a hopeless time. People and families in Wellington are unable to heat their homes, feed their children, or connect with friends and family. Life becomes smaller, and they become more isolated. They can feel like more and more doors are closing for them.

However, our community is here for anyone who feels alone in winter. With your support, The Mission is here to welcome everyone through our doors without judgement, offering free services someone can use to transform their lives.

People come to our Tā te Manawa community lounge for a hot meal and companionship, our Social Supermarket to ensure they have enough food for the week, and our supported Transitional Housing Pā for a safe home.

All of these opportunities are also offered alongside services that will make a difference longer-term, like professional budgeting, and social work.

We've all felt the effects of the cost-of-living crisis, but if you can, please donate to our Winter Appeal. Your support now ensures that The Mission can continue opening doors to people this winter, and providing the safety and warmth someone needs to restore stability and hope in their lives.

Your Whakamaru update



A construction update – with an exclusive insight into our new public café space, Craig & Gail's.

Whakamaru continues to progress well, with a significant focus now on internal works and the closure of the remaining exterior facade. The front of the building is now free of scaffolding, showing off the design features of the Insol window screen panels.

Exciting recent developments have seen the arrival of our solar panels and installation of commercial kitchen gear. Looking ahead, we're starting to look at the internal details. The sacred space is coming together, the Social Supermarket is being painted, the lifts are in construction, and final touches are being added to the café ceiling. Inside the apartments, we're busy installing shower trays and joinery.

When the building process ends, we start building connection in a place where there is no 'us and them'. Stay tuned for more updates as we get closer to the big reveal!

Craig & Gail's Public Café

When you walk through the doors to Whakamaru, you'll be greeted with our pay-what-you-choose public café, Craig and Gail's.

Like Newtown's Tā te Manawa, Craig & Gail's will be a warm, inviting, and inclusive space for everyone within the Wellington community.

As well as enjoying good food and coffee at prices of their choice, we want people to feel welcome and encouraged to chat, or listen, to their fellow Wellingtonians. We want everyone within our city to feel as if they belong here.

The café's name represents significant people in your life. We envision people saying, "Let's go to Craig and Gail's for lunch", or "We'll meet you at Craig and Gail's." The name could easily be mistaken for a close friend or family member's home, because that's what it is - a place where everyone is welcomed and belongs. Craig and Gail are names that represent all of us.



• Sandra in Tā te Manawa

We're all here for each other

Sandra and her husband John volunteer together at Tā te Manawa.

My husband John and I enjoy volunteering. We have a passion for helping people through food. We do breakfasts in schools, and with a group of Christian friends, we started a Street Kai Missionaries group. Together, on Monday evenings, we provide a hot meal to families that are struggling to put food on the table. We serve families, solo parents and people living on the streets, in vehicles or tents. Food is prepared, cooked and served into containers at the Baptist Trinity Church kitchen in Titahi Bay, before being delivered to various places around the Porirua region.

In that work, we saw that there are so many families out there who are struggling, and the numbers of people needing help are increasing. We wanted to do a bit more, and so we got involved with Tā te Manawa.

In Tā te Manawa, you see the love that staff and volunteers show towards everyone who comes here. We really enjoy getting to know the people who come in. Even if someone is feeling highly strung or is having a hard time relating to people, I try to step in and say, "Hi, how are you?" to help them feel welcome and at ease. It's important for our manuhiri to know that they are welcome here, and they aren't being judged.

It's very important that we're here. **Those who are living on the streets, or are alone and have no other connections, know that they always have a place to come.** They can

relax, be with friends, and have a healthy meal and a hot coffee. I like hearing everyone chatting together – it's like listening to the birds in the morning! I think it's a relief for people to get out of their homes and have a meeting place to talk together, especially when the weather is so cold!

Volunteering is really awesome. There's something out there for everyone, so I'd say it's worth a go! **Getting by in society is very challenging for some people, so it's important to let everyone know that we've got each other's backs and that we're all here to help if someone needs it.**



A warm winter meal being served in Tā te Manawa •



80-100 people

are welcomed into Tā te Manawa every day

Te Pā Maru welcomes its first residents

Te Pā Maru, The Mission's new alcohol harm-reduction facility, recently celebrated a significant milestone as its first whānau (our residents) moved into their new home.

The Te Pā Maru team has been working hard for the last few months, alongside our whānau, to help co-design the programme. These efforts are in the hopes of working towards an approach that's not only effective, but reflective of the diverse experiences and needs within our community.



Introducing Te Ō – Wellington's newest community

In early April we held the official opening of Te Ō, our Rolleston Street site.

Te Ō is a new Kāinga Ora housing complex supported by Wellington City Mission, with 24/7 on-site wraparound support for residents. Before the arrival of its first residents, the local community was invited to tour the complex during two consecutive community opening days.

The Single Site Supported Housing model provides a stable and supportive community with the offering of on-site assistance if it's needed.

The name Te Ō was gifted by Mana Whenua, Te Ātiawa. It symbolises the provision for a journey, which is fitting for a housing complex that will provide support and care for the Te Ō kainoho (tenants) to embark on a journey of wellbeing and connectedness.



Giving from Family to Family!

The Foodstuffs Family2Family appeal returned in April for its fifth consecutive year. The initiative, which runs in New World stores across New Zealand, encourages people to contribute non-perishable food items and key household products through their local store. Every year, the campaign ignites a wave of generosity across the community – and this year was no different. Hundreds of bags full of essential goods have now been delivered to our Social Supermarket, ensuring our shoppers continue to have access to the products they need.



Corporate Partnerships Manager, Catherine, helps unpack the bags



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 showcasing the positive impact you're 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, 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.

THE CHANGE YOU ENABLE

During the months of January – March 2024:



7,575

meals

provided for manuhiri living in our Supported Transitional Housing accommodation



148

whānau and individuals

supported with Financial Mentoring



235

whānau and individuals

supported with one-on-one Social Work



1,586

shoppers

supported through our Social Supermarket



2,000

manuhiri

welcomed 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.

FIND US

Street Address:
19 Gordon Place, Newtown,
Wellington

CONTACT US

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

DONATE TO US

Website: wellingtoncitymission.org.nz
Phone: (04) 245 0843

Internet Banking:

To our Bank account 03 0547 0296036 17
Email donations@wcm.org.nz
with details if you wish to receive a receipt.

FOLLOW US



The Wellington City Mission



@wellingtoncitymission



The Wellington City Mission

SIGN UP

To sign up to our quarterly e-newsletter:
Please email your details to enquiries@wcm.org.nz
or call (04) 245 0843.