

ON A MISSION

YOUR GENEROSITY CHANGES LIVES



YOU WERE THERE FOR US WHEN WE NEEDED IT



Siobhán (left), Catherine (middle), Ben (right)

THANKS TO YOUR SUPPORT,
THE SOCIAL SUPERMARKET WAS THERE FOR CATHERINE
AND HER FAMILY WHEN THEIR LIVES SUDDENLY CHANGED

A couple of years ago, my husband Ben and I had just got married. I was working as an administrator for a public service, and Ben was working in the medical field. Then we had our beautiful daughter Siobhán. Life was all going well for us, and we had a plan for our future, but one day something happened to me that changed our lives.

Back when Siobhán was born, I had planned to take six months of maternity leave while Ben worked full-time. But we soon decided it was best for me to stay at home with Siobhán for her first year – especially as we don't have a lot of family support here in Wellington. We could see that money was going to be tight, so we started working with Newtown Budgeting and Advocacy Service to create a professional budget, and we managed to muddle through the next six months.

I was excited when I started working again, but not even two weeks in I was rushed to hospital with a suspected stroke.

Empowerment. Transformation. Fullness of Life.



I was later diagnosed with a neurological condition where, at any time, I can become weak down my right side. Over the coming weeks and months I tried to get back to work as much as possible, but could often only manage a shift or two a fortnight. It also became clear that it wasn't safe to leave Siobhán with me when I was experiencing my condition. We were back to one income, while also paying for daycare and trying to navigate my new diagnosis. Ben was running himself absolutely ragged trying to be everything for our family. Compounding it all was that if Siobhán was with me and my condition flared up, Ben would have to suddenly leave work to look after us. We became reliant on him working as many weekend shifts as possible, and a lot of the time he'd go to work all day then come home to take care of us both. He was pushing himself to exhaustion, and at one point he was even rushed to the hospital with pneumonia. I felt completely useless. Ben was burning himself out, and I was barely contributing – a mum who couldn't even look after her own daughter.

It was obvious that we needed something else just to get by, so we were referred to The Mission's Social Supermarket. When we saw the choice, and the amount we could bring home each week, we knew it going to help us so much, especially with the expensive items like nappies. The pressure it lifted off our shoulders was just incredible. Groceries are the first thing you go without, so we knew that whatever happened that next week we would still have food in the house.

Importantly, there was no judgement from the Mission team. You're welcomed with warmth and kindness. They even had a trolley I could put Siobhán in so it felt like a normal supermarket! All that stuff matters because if you're in a position where you have to ask someone for help with food, you're at a real low point in your life. You feel tiny, so being treated with humanity and dignity in that situation makes you feel human again.

We were deeply grateful for everything, and we only needed around eight shops in total to get back on our feet, but it meant a lot knowing that The Mission was always there.

At Christmas time, I came across a mum who had just escaped a domestic violence situation and really needed some help, so I connected her with The Mission. She asked if I would shop at The Mission Toy Store on her behalf and, just like the Social Supermarket, the sheer amount of generosity you could see

from everything that had been donated was quite overwhelming. When she received their gifts and Mission food parcel at Christmas, she was so happy and thankful!

I'm very pleased to say that our family is now in the black with our budget, and we're moving forward again. I'm learning to manage my condition as best I can, and I have a lot more certainty around it, so I can think about what my career might look like and where we want Siobhán to go to school. We're also excited to be saving for a trip to Australia at Christmas time to be with family. We have a lot of hope for the future, and we know we're only able to look forward now because we were supported when we needed it.

To everyone who donates, I don't think you can truly realise the massive impact you're making on families like ours. For us, it meant knowing your little girl is fine because you're going to the Social Supermarket the next day. So thank you for your kindness. You just can't predict what might happen in your life, and in that moment, being able to reach out to people who genuinely just want to help is invaluable.



TK (middle) surrounded by his Mission support team, Leith and Halina

THE POWER OF FEELING CONNECTED

AFTER A LIFE OF IMMENSE CHALLENGES, TK HAS CREATED CONNECTION AND PURPOSE AT TE PĀ PORI

After years of abusing drugs, being a better dad for my kids is what gives me purpose. I'm now drug-free, living at Te Pā Pori, and I'm able to talk about my life.

I grew up without a sense of belonging, and have always suffered from depression and feelings of abandonment. I lost my mum at a young age, and my old man was a big drinker so he wasn't really there for me at all. I started self-medicating at 14, and I was adopted out. I really latched onto my adoptive parents because they stuck by me, but they both passed away a few years later, and then my biological father did too.

From there, everything snowballed. I was using drugs for years, spent time in jail, and was a gang member. When you're in that sort of life you just go into survival mode. You don't realise the tunnel vision you have because you can't see the bigger picture. Even though I still had a lot of unresolved issues, I started a relationship with my now ex-partner, and for a long time it was pretty good. We had two children while living together and working, but I was stuck in that same path of depression. Then when we broke up, it really hit me. I started living in my car, and went back into using drugs heavily for around 18 months.

Eventually, that tunnel vision I'd had for so long started to break down, and more than anything I just wanted to be in my kids' lives. So I started rehab and began laying to rest the issues I had been carrying for so long. I made the most of my time, and became sober. To finish the programme, you need somewhere to go. The Mission's Te Pā Pori was a bit of a last resort for me, but I'd heard good things about it, and I appreciated how they opened up their doors to me when so many other places wouldn't. They support you really well here, but I quickly realised that it was up to me to take the opportunities and make

the changes for myself. I cut out any negative influences, and started AOD (Alcohol or Other Drugs) counselling with Leith. He has lived experience, and it's been a real breath of fresh air having somebody who understands that world first-hand. I've also got Halina for support, and she balances it with her knowledge and she's honestly the kindest person I've ever met. Together, they've helped me so much, and you know that they really do care about you.

The way they treat you here lets you start thinking outside the box. It's been a place of huge growth for me, and I've matured a heck of a lot. I've even moved to a room where I can have my kids, and I've been seeing them heaps, especially during the school holidays. I know what it's like having a father who's there, but isn't really there. Memories are more important than material stuff and I just want my kids to know that I love them, because that's something I don't have with my parents.

I've always dreaded coming into Christmas time, because it reminds me of how I've never had a family. But I know that this year is going to be different because I'm coming up to one year of not using any drugs. Life is a lot easier to manage, and my kids make Christmas better than it ever was. Doors that I thought were firmly shut have reopened, and I've been able to get back together with my wider family. This is the most connected I've ever felt with my whānau, and there's so much power in that. I'm looking forward to recreating what I have here in my own home next year.

I wish I could talk with everyone who supports The Mission, so they could feel how thankful I am for the opportunities I've been given. Getting to this point isn't something I could have done without everyone's help, and I'm proud to have made it all happen for myself too.



Pearly, with Valelia, Nurse Manager at Kemp Home and Hospital

I'M SO HAPPY HERE

EX-NURSE, PEARLY, FEELS THE LOVE AT KEMP HOME AND HOSPITAL

I moved to New Zealand with my husband and our two children back in 1988. New Zealand was very short of trained mental health nurses then, and I was one of 13 who were recruited from Malaysia by the Government. I started working at Kenepuru/Porirua Hospital, and the work was good for me. Unfortunately, after four years of being here, my husband passed away, so I worked seven days a week to support my children.

For most of my career I was working in the admission ward, where we treated elderly people who were referred from their homes. Many of the patients would end up going to rest homes, and lots of them came to Kemp Home & Hospital. Working with the elderly reminded me of the way I thought of my grandparents. I had so much respect for them, and everything they had done for me, so I liked being able to help other older people who now found themselves in a vulnerable situation.

After I retired, I moved in with my son and his family. I loved living with them, especially when we were all together, but during the day I was getting quite lonely. I'm not really a TV person, and there's only so much music



Pearly in her room at Kemp Home and Hospital

you can listen to! At some point, they were planning to go away on a long trip and didn't want me to be all alone in the house, so I came to Kemp for six weeks of respite care. I loved everything about it. There were activities throughout the day, and I found it all very inspiring. When I went home, I told my family that I wanted to live here. They were quite disappointed because they wanted me to stay at home, but they understood, and earlier this year I moved in.

Every morning, I get up at 6:30 looking forward to the day ahead. I get straight into the shower, ready for breakfast, then we have our indoor exercises and short quiz before morning tea time. Then we do different activities like word puzzles until lunch. After that, we play housie or indoor bowls and hockey, then we're free to mix and mingle until tea time. It's a lot of fun.

The residents all get along very well too. We're never lonely, and I like being able to chat with everyone. My career as a nurse has become very useful - I'm quick to help someone who is a bit sick or coughing. I'm always tempted to pat their back or get my Vicks to rub on their temples - a bit like a mother does for her child!

I can see that the nurses here are very dedicated. They're always looking out for you, which makes you feel safe. For my birthday, they even made a cake, and everyone joined together to sing for me. They do that for all of us, and it's very special.

It's also important that this is a place of faith because most of us residents are looking for God. If we want to go to the chapel to reflect or pray for our loved ones we can, and that makes me happy.

I still see my family very often, and my son brings my grandson in to see me every week. Sadly, earlier this year my daughter passed away at 51, but I go and stay with her daughter when she has time off work - she's a nurse now too. I'm really looking forward to spending Christmas with my family, and celebrating with my friends here at Kemp!

Thank you to everyone who donates to make sure Kemp is doing so much good for us. Being part of the Kemp family is lovely, and it makes me feel that my time is being very well spent.



VOLUNTEER PROFILE: GANESH

WE'RE ALL PART OF THIS COMMUNITY

I knew a fair bit about the Wellington City Mission from my previous role at Business and Economic Research Limited (BERL). There, we took a people-orientated perspective of economic development which was about providing opportunities for the future. As part of that work, we heard about The Mission's vision for Whakamaru; of bringing various community services together, putting The Mission out there for more people, and creating a place where there's 'no us and them'. And that very much gelled with my personal values.

In the back of my mind, I always saw volunteering as an opportunity for me to give back, because unfortunately the economic system that continues to be followed slants policy decisions in favour of some, and tends to leave many people behind. So earlier this year, when I had a bit more time available, I started regularly volunteering in the Social Supermarket, which has brought me back almost full circle to growing up stocking shelves in my parent's shop in Upper Hutt! It was a bit of an unknown stepping into the world of volunteering, but the staff are very welcoming, as are the shoppers, and any time you can give is valued here. It's a positive environment to be a part of, and it feels great to be in a place where I can do some good.

It's nice to see people's eyes light up when they first come through the Social Supermarket doors too, and

shoppers often comment on the wide range of food and products they can choose from. Having to come somewhere like The Mission to ask for help does carry the potential to feel whakamā (shame), but there's none of that. The model of being provided points to spend allows people to experience a sense of control, and that's important because they are in a circumstance where the power of choice has been taken away. It's very common at checkout to hear, "It's really good that we get to choose what we want!" Some people find that being able to pick anything can actually be quite intimidating, so the staff will guide them through that.

I think being part of The Mission is a great way for anyone to contribute, whether it's through donating funds or food, volunteering, or even just visiting Whakamaru every now and again to interact with people you might not otherwise. We're all part of this community and we shouldn't take that for granted, because the strength of our community comes from all of us playing a role if we can. All of us have benefitted from being part of our community in some way too, whether that's from having access to certain opportunities or just knowing there would be a safety net if we ever needed it. I'm glad to now be helping continue that safety net for others.

Messages from our manuhiri

To all the people involved with the City Mission – I am so grateful and appreciative for all you have done and helped me with so far. You have blessed me with the greatest opportunities and possibilities and have opened my eyes to bigger and better things for myself.

The Mission has given me:

Brotherhood	Hope	Positivity
Strength	Happiness	Empathy
		Options

Words cannot express how grateful I am for this opportunity. The support and help offered here can change lives and I plan to utilize this service to turn my life around. This service has gone above and beyond for me, and I am forever grateful. I know the road is going to be tough, but with the support of this service I feel confident to live a life free of addiction and prison. Thank you so much!

Thank you for the opportunity to live here. It has given me direction in my life and has helped me to pay off bills, and to manage my addiction with everybody's support at Te Pā Pori. I'm not good with words, so once again, thank you for helping me find direction in my life.

Thank you for this service and those who donate towards it. Being here has helped me a lot. Counselling and mental health support is something I need in order to be well. Having this onsite is something I am extremely grateful for.

Thank you for helping me to move forward. You have given me ideas to help me find a better home, and tools to live a better life. I know that I am not alone in this world. I see a new beginning and that I am needed. I see that there is light at the end of the tunnel, new friendships and understanding.

Murray's Message

It is hard to comprehend that the conclusion of 2024 is drawing near. How incredibly fast this year has gone, and what a challenging and confronting year it has been – in so many ways for so many people.

We are now rapidly moving into our Christmas preparations. Once again, we are hopeful that the joy of the season can be spread throughout our community, so that everyone has something to celebrate this Christmas.

Do you remember the excitement of a long-awaited Christmas present, and the joy and delight of finding it is even better than you could possibly have hoped for when you open it? So it is for us with Whakamaru!

We have been working on Whakamaru for six years. That's six years of dreaming, planning, designing, and building. Over the last few weeks, we have blessed and officially opened the building, moved in, and are delivering our support to the community from this wonderful place.

Whakamaru is more than just a building. It's a way of thinking about what the communities of Wellington most need from the Wellington City Mission, and what they will need from us over the years and decades to come.

In the 120th year of the Wellington City Mission, Whakamaru represents a different way of thinking about what our communities need and how we respond to that need. Whakamaru has been designed to support the community to learn how to care for itself by blending us all together. We call that building a community where there is "no us and them".

What hasn't changed is our commitment to walking alongside people who are doing life hard, to ensure they can see a way into a brighter future. The stories in this

edition of On A Mission, featuring Catherine, TK, and Pearly, show clearly the difference it makes to have people around you who believe in you, and support you at the time when you most need it.

All of these people know, as we do, that we couldn't do this without the generous support of so many people. Thank you for believing in us, and helping us make the difference that is so necessary in the lives of those we serve.

So, there is lots of excitement in the Wellington City Mission, especially as we start to better understand the difference Whakamaru will make, and as we organise ourselves for the busyness and joy of the Christmas season.

May you have a blessed and joyous Christmas in 2024 with your whānau and friends, knowing that you made such a difference for others this year, and also ensured that their Christmas time will be better as a result.

Thank you so much.



Ngā manaakitanga – blessings

Murray

Murray Edridge
Wellington City Missioner

**If you remain in me and my words remain in you,
ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.**

John 15:7 (NIV)

Give a Gift That Changes Lives This Christmas



You can be part of The Mission's life-changing work this Christmas!

By supporting our Christmas Appeal, you'll be here for whānau during a time that can remind many of what they *don't* have. You can help to make Christmas a special time for as many people as possible in our region.

And we would love you to visit The Mission's new home, Whakamaru. This is a transformational space that now belongs to you and our whole community. Here, you can see first-hand how your support is helping people create the change they hope for in their lives. Everyone is welcome – to form cherished connections, and to break down social barriers – all within a beautiful facility built through our community's generosity.

With your support this Christmas, we can provide supported housing, food support through our Supermarket, professional social work support, free laundry and shower facilities, and a place of belonging for anyone who needs a helping hand.

Please join with The Mission whānau and donate today. Your gift truly can change someone's life this Christmas!



WHAKAMARU IS OPEN!

Come and join us at Craig and Gail's Café from Monday November 18
4-8 Oxford Terrace, Mount Cook

FIND US

Street Address:
4-8 Oxford Terrace, Mount Cook,
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



SIGN UP

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



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
July – September 2024:



8,460

meals

provided for manuhiri
living in our Supported
Transitional Housing
accommodation



185

whānau and
individuals

supported with
Financial Mentoring



937

whānau and
individuals

supported through our Registered
Community Practitioner Team



1,307

shoppers

supported
through our
Social Supermarket



6,000

manuhiri

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