

# ON A MISSION

ISSUE 2, WINTER 2026

wellingtoncitymission

HEI WHAKAMARU O TE KOROWAI  
O TE PANEPANE O TE IKA A MAUI



## A Light After the Dark

**After a life of living on the street, addictions, and time in jail, Bindy now supports others who are experiencing homelessness in our city. She has a real understanding of the reality of the issues our community is facing.**

We had a hard life growing up in Hastings. I was the third oldest of eight children, and mum loved us kids. We didn't see my dad. He was a shearer, and his life was working and alcohol. None of the money he earned made it back to us. We had nothing, not even shoes on our feet. As little kids, we started working with Mum in the orchards and paddocks to help put kai on the table.

I felt lost and lonely, especially seeing my mates with their dads. I started retaliating by doing crime at around primary age. I hated the world because I hated my dad. No one could tell me what to do, and I started getting into the court system. I remember a judge calling me a menace to society, so I acted like one. At the age of 10 I was taken from my mum by social welfare, to live in different girls' homes. I became a survivor of sexual abuse. I was hollow inside, and I started sniffing petrol and glue.

I moved to Wellington for a relationship in the early 80s when I was just a young girl, and ended up living on the streets. We were street kids and street lifers. All of us came from dysfunctional homes, and were lost in the big wide world. Back then, the community wanted us out because of our behaviours and addictions, so the police had a plan to move us into shipping containers in the suburbs. But it didn't work because the people who lived out there didn't want us either, so we just ended up back in the city.

Living on the streets you get anxious, and winter is the hardest time. You can't really sleep, and you have to keep yourself warm to survive because it's blimmin' cold. You're always on edge, and it feels like you're taking your last breath all the time because you don't know what's coming for you next. And then you've got some of the public being hard on you too. That's when you see people using drugs and alcohol to keep warm, and keep their minds off their reality.

I used to go to the Mission when it was in Newtown. They served soup and sandwiches, and it was a good place for us to be. But deep down I was always missing something bigger. I hated the world and I took it out on myself. I was still a little girl inside, but all you saw of me was the drugs, and I ended up in and out of jail throughout my life.

As I got older I started getting a bit wiser, and realised I needed to take better care of myself. I gave up the drugs and stopped offending, but I was still living on the street and it was hard to find a place to live with my criminal record. A couple of years ago, two ladies from an accommodation hostel gave me a chance. That

chance gave me hope, and I've been living there ever since.

Since Whakamaru opened, it has also brought a new light to my life. I love coming here every day. The aroha is very strong. You can see the care when they give someone a towel for a shower, the compassion when they do someone's laundry, and the love in the kai they serve. It makes us feel 'normal', because everywhere else we go we feel different and unwanted.

Whakamaru is bringing hope to people who think they have nothing, and you can see it in the smiles. It's not just homeless either, a lot of people come here for company, especially our kaumātua who don't want to be alone. This is a place where anyone can come and feel safe, and know they won't be judged. It's a very homely environment for people who don't have a home.

You can get involved with group activities too. I didn't know I could play music, but I started joining the weekly ukulele group, Te Whānau Nui, with Arthur. That has given me a new strength. Now when I'm playing and singing I feel confident and proud of myself, that's something you would have never heard me say before! I'm coming up to 60 this year, and being here has given me the chance I needed to go from a person who thought they were nothing to being someone. I know other homeless people can do that too, so every day I try to give others hope with my story, smiles, and encouragement.

Homelessness really should have been fixed when I was young, but the big issues were swept under the rug and it's only got worse. Now people haven't got a choice. They have serious addiction and mental health problems. They have no homes to go to, and they think they don't matter. We even have our children and elders on the streets, and that's just sad.

Society is going more individual, and this problem is only going to get worse if we keep going in the same direction. This is Aotearoa! We're meant to be a beautiful country, and I know you'll see changes when people have hope. We need to have compassion now – not just to give out fines or chuck people in jail because that affects how the homeless see themselves in society. We don't want to fight, we want help. Knowing somebody cares about you helps you start breathing again. I hear every day how much the Mission's support is helping. So I say come in and see the happiness when you feed us, when you shower us, and when you care for us.



● Bindy in Craig & Gail's Café

I'd like to thank organisations like the Mission and everyone who donates. Thank you very much for opening your hearts to the lost, and thank you for accepting us. You're giving us another chance.

Tātou katoa, we are one! Let's stand together as one to fix the people, and give our next generation a life.



● Bindy performing with Te Whānau Nui

# IN WELLINGTON, WE DON'T LOOK AWAY. WE LOOK AFTER EACH OTHER.

**DONATE TODAY**

## Help us bring people in from the cold this winter.

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HEI WHAKAMARU O TE KOROWAI  
O TE PANEPANE O TE IKA A MAUI

As the colder months settle in, our compassion and care for others is more important than ever.

Winter can be incredibly tough for people already doing it hard, with the colder nights meaning rising costs and increased pressure on everyday essentials. But it's also a time when our community can step up in making sure no one is left behind.

Your support today helps provide warm meals, hot showers, shops through our Social Supermarket, and financial advocacy for people across our city who need it most.

Together, as a community, we can make sure nobody in our community has to face a tough winter alone.



**SCAN  
TO DONATE**

Empowerment. Transformation. Fullness of Life.



# You Have Brought Us Peace

● Filo and Leauma in front of their Porirua home with Carla

**Filo and Leauma left Tuvalu looking for a brighter future, but struggled to afford rent, and ended up in hostels for years. Now they have a beautiful home, and are loving life!**

We first came to New Zealand for a holiday in 2008. We are from Tuvalu, where Filo was a midwife, and Leauma was an accountant. Our son and daughter had left home and were studying at university.

We liked it here, and we thought we should try to stay because there are big problems in Tuvalu. The tide is rising, and it was already affecting our home. In 50 years or so, lots of our country will be underwater. We wanted to start a better life, and thought maybe our children could move here in future too.

We started staying with family in Porirua, and got work permits. Filo worked as a carer for people with brain injuries, and Leauma worked as a cleaner. We started trying to become Permanent Residents too. Even though we were working, and very good at budgeting, rent was so expensive that we couldn't find a house. So we moved into a hostel. We had one small bedroom, and everything else was shared. At night we would cook on an electric frying pan and eat dinner on our bed. We did that for about five years. There were times when we felt so hopeless that we thought about giving up on our dream and going back to Tuvalu, but we had strong hearts and faith, so we continued to believe and pray for an answer.

When the owner of the hostel wanted to renovate, we had to leave. We went to Work and Income for help,

and they found emergency accommodation in a lodge while we waited for permanent social housing and we kept looking for a place we could afford. We ended up staying in the lodge for two years.

Then our case manager at Work and Income introduced us to a Mission Community Support Worker, Maara, to help us get into a better position. We were so glad when she came and visited us – she was very good! We were thankful to have her by our side because we always knew she was trying her very best to help us, and she always followed up with everything she said she would.

And in two months of being with her, she found us a great house! She helped us get set up, by supplying furniture and bedding. We felt so lucky. But after a few months, they decided to demolish the building. We had finally settled down, and we had to find another house. So we told Maara and she started working with Kāinga Ora again, and only two weeks later we had a brand new house to move into! We were so excited and thankful. In July last year, we moved into our home here. It's perfect for us, close to our family, church, and GP, and we have nice neighbours.

We also started working with a Mission Financial Mentor, Jane. She was very good too, and she supported us with lots of things, including helping us to receive our entitled benefits. She also helped us get booked into the Social Supermarket when we really needed it.

Now Filo is retired, and Leauma still works part-time. We can manage our bills and we are good at living on what we have. Even coming into winter now, we don't have to be worried. Our house is warm and comfortable, and we can always contact the Mission if we need anything. So that's our life now. After really struggling for nearly 20

years, we have no more stress and are so joyful! The continuous support the Mission gives makes us believe there are people who always care about us. We are so grateful, and we all need these kinds of people in our community – this is how God works!

To everyone who is supporting the Mission, you are really helping those like us who are trying their best but just can't do it alone. You have given us peace, and we really appreciate you. Please do continue supporting because this work is benefiting people's lives!



**291**  
people

supported with  
Financial Mentoring in  
the past 12 months.



## Carla Ceppi

Service Delivery Team Leader,  
Financial Mentoring Service

Many of the individuals and families who come to our service are in crisis. They often have power disconnection notices or eviction letters. Lots of our clients are also working with other Mission services, like our Supported Transitional Housing facilities.

There are many things that can lead to someone needing help with money. It could be a bad decision made in the moment, like taking out a high-interest loan to buy something urgent, or suddenly losing a job. And of course the cost of living is making it hard to pay for the basics like rent, food, warm clothing and heating. People's incomes can't keep up with the increases in prices of everything, and in winter we always see more people coming to the Mission.

We have a range of different ways we can help someone – always with the goal of building their financial capability and independence if possible. Some people just need one-off support, and we can make a big difference straight away. For example if they're in arrears, we can advocate with the company or government agency to set up a payment plan. Having this come from the Mission means creditors are much more likely to help someone get into a better position as well. On the other side, we have clients who are with us longer term. Usually that's because they have an overwhelming amount of debt. So while

they are with us we will teach them budgeting skills to gradually take full control of their finances.

We also offer Total Money Management (TMM) for clients who are unable to manage their money. This is often due to mental health challenges, or having so much debt that it's better for us to manage their payments. At the moment we have around 40 clients on TMM. People really need this service, and we are the only organisation in Wellington that offers it.

Being in Whakamaru has enabled us to better help anyone who is in a financial crisis. When someone comes in, they will get some support straight away, whether that's through a Peer Support Worker, the Social Supermarket, or one of our Financial Mentors. And that is such a relief, because most of the time people have been feeling very alone and have little family or friends.

It's super cool seeing people who never thought they could have savings actually doing it and feeling proud of themselves. Being able to live in your own home and look after yourself is a dream come true for a lot of our clients.

The support from Mission donors is making a huge difference for people's lives. Without it, so many people would be stuck in their situations, and they would just be more dependent on support. Financial Mentoring is definitely helping to break that cycle. We can empower someone to get into a better position, know how to manage their own money, and live within their means – always knowing they can talk to us before getting into a difficult position again.

# Focused on My Future

**After intense challenges throughout his life, and eventually ending up homeless, Shane has gone from staying in our transitional housing, to working with us!**



● Shane doing what he loves, in Te Pā Pori!

What brought me to the Mission was the life I've had. From the age of 13, there was a lot of violence in our home. I saw my mother being physically abused by her partner. That really affected me. I started running away from home, getting into trouble, and staying on the streets. I had low self-esteem and anger issues, and I had a very difficult relationship with my family which caused a lot of false accusations and legal troubles.

After I finished school, people didn't want to hire me because of my background, but eventually I found my first job as a cleaner. It was really good to start my career, and I was working in a crew of people cleaning places like offices and picture theatres.

During Covid, the company I'd worked with for 10 years lost most of its sites, and I went from working 60 hours a week to losing my job. From there my life went downhill. It started with me not being able to keep up with my bills and debts anymore, and I had no choice but to declare insolvency. I also lost my relationship with my partner because I wasn't able to support her anymore, which was devastating for me personally. It took a huge toll on me - I'd lost everything I had going for myself.

I ended up living on the streets, and was sleeping in bus shelters. It wasn't easy, and my mental and physical health really deteriorated. Around a year ago, I decided I needed to turn for help through my GPs, and they put a referral in for Supported Transitional Housing care from the Mission.

When I moved into Te Pā Pori, it took me a few weeks to adjust to everything because I'd never been in a living situation like this before and I still had a lot of grieving to do. But over the 12 months I was here, I got the help I needed.

It really is a community here, and I got a lot out of things like the morning programme which gives you a lift and focus for the day. The biggest one was the counselling I did with Peter. It was hard for me to open up at first, but I started talking about all the things I've been through in my life, and that helped me begin moving on from the past. All the support I received really pulled me through, and my health is a lot better. The staff have noticed a huge difference in me as well.

I started wanting to help out by using my cleaning skills, so I took on some duties around the place. Then one day, the manager, Kris, told me they had noticed my work was of a very high standard. He asked if I would like to be part of the team as a cleaner. That was a big moment for me after everything that had happened since I last worked.

Now I do about 20 hours a week at Te Pā Pori and Te Pā Maru, cleaning rooms and common areas. I have a list of tasks to get on with independently, and I really enjoy it. The staff also helped me find my own apartment, which is really good, and it's a ten-minute walk to work.

I try not to look back on my past. Instead, I'm focusing on the positives of what I'm doing now, and looking forward to the future. Everything I need is in place, and I'm achieving my goals. It feels great to be back on track.

I reckon that the people who are willing to donate to the Mission are supporting a good cause, and are doing a fantastic job. If it wasn't for you I don't know where I would be, but I would have ended up in ICU or worse. I definitely wouldn't be as uplifted as I am today!

# Wellington Flood Relief

## Absolutely Positively Wellington City Council

Me Heke Ki Pōneke

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In the immediate aftermath of the recent flooding, Whakamaru was opened as an emergency evacuation centre. We provided temporary accommodation, warm kai and drinks, as well as a place for people to come together and find support during a deeply unsettling time. We've also been working closely with Wellington City Council, who have been on site carrying out welfare needs assessments to ensure people receive the right support as quickly as possible.

Thanks to the generosity of our community, the Flood Relief Fund has enabled us to respond quickly to meet immediate needs, while also helping people and whānau navigate the more complex challenges that can follow an event like this.

We will provide an update on the fund once it has been finalised and distributed.



## Quarterly Newsletter - Winter 2026 Murray's Message

Imagine if your life changed without warning and you found yourself faced with challenges and difficulties that you could never have imagined (or wished for).

Just a few weeks ago, a number in our community ended up in exactly that position.

In the early hours of Monday 20 April 2026, the southern suburbs received rainfall that was unprecedented, and many in those communities woke to find their homes flooded, their families at risk, and many, if not all of their possessions, damaged or destroyed.

This catastrophic event changed their lives, potentially forever, but as so often happens, left most of us unaffected.

It was a privilege for the Wellington City Mission to stand up when we were needed, as we have done so often before. Whakamaru was declared the emergency response centre for the city, and over the days thereafter we provided support and assistance to both those suffering loss and displacement from the flooding, and those living rough who needed shelter during the storms.

We are incredibly grateful to the Wellington City Council, the Government, and to the people of Wellington for their generous support of the Mayoral Flood Relief fund and the wonderful donations of household goods and appliances. As has happened so often before, when it gets tough going in Wellington, Wellingtonians come to help. Thank you Wellington!

The experiences of the April floods are even more poignant by acknowledging as we go to print, the third anniversary of the tragedy of the Loafers Lodge fire.

What these events remind us, is that there is always need

that we as a community are called upon to respond to. Whether the impact is on a few of us, many of us, or all of us, I know we can rely on Wellington to stand up and show compassion and support for those who are struggling.

To quote Richard Randerson in a service of remembrance following the tsunami tragedy in Indonesia in December 2004: "Don't look for God in the disaster, look for God in the people that come to help!"

In this edition of On A Mission newsletter, we get to meet Bindy, Filo & Leuma, and Shane. They all have stories of challenges and adversity, of turns and disadvantages in life that they hadn't anticipated. But these are also wonderful stories of hope!

They are each living proof that if the right support and encouragements are made available, in the right way, at the right time, people's lives can be changed for the better.

As they each acknowledge in their stories, this can only happen with the support and generosity of those who come to help. You enable us to do what we do, so to all of you - thank you!

**Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.**

**Hebrews 11:1**

Ngā manaakitanga - blessings

Murray Edridge -  
Wellington City Missioner, He Manu Taupua



## Every Gift Changes Lives . . . . .

At The Mission, every gift – whether it’s a single donation or a regular monthly contribution – plays a vital role in changing lives. We are so appreciative of the generosity of all our supporters, whose kindness fuels the hope and transformation we see every day.

Becoming a ChangeGiver is a different way to make an impact. Monthly giving provides The Mission with reliable and consistent income that allows us to plan, sustain vital programmes, and respond quickly to the needs of our community. It ensures families can shop with dignity at our Social Supermarket, individuals have access to stable

transitional housing, and those facing challenges receive ongoing, tailored support to rebuild their lives.

By choosing to give regularly, you can amplify that impact and be there every step of the way for those in need. No matter how you choose to give, your support changes lives, transforms futures, and brings hope to our community.

*Thank you* 

**If you'd like to learn more about becoming a ChangeGiver, contact Juan Madriaga on (04) 245 0843 or email [juan@wcm.org.nz](mailto:juan@wcm.org.nz)**

### The Change You Enabled – February - April 2026



**7,131**

**Meals**

provided for manuhiri in our Supported Transitional Housing Accommodation



**3,039**

**People**

supported through our Community Services and Financial Mentoring



**1,509**

**Shoppers**

supported through our Social Supermarket



**207**

manuhiri presentations at Kua Mākona i Whakamaru (Crisis Café)



**1,736**

showers & laundry users at Whakamaru



**11,204**

hot meals served at Craig & Gail's Café



## Gifts in Wills

Leaving a Gift in Your Will

### What if your impact lasted forever?

Leaving a gift in your Will is a lasting act of compassion that supports the Mission to serve Wellingtonians in need for generations to come.

Even a small gift can make a big impact. Your kindness today becomes part of securing a future where community cares for community, and there is no us and them.



**Visit our website to find out how to leave your legacy or contact Shontay at [shontay@wcm.org.nz](mailto:shontay@wcm.org.nz)**

#### FIND US

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



Contact us on (04) 245 0843 or [donations@wcm.org.nz](mailto:donations@wcm.org.nz)

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


#### DONATE TO US

Website: [wellingtoncitymission.org.nz](http://wellingtoncitymission.org.nz)  
Phone: (04) 245 0843

##### Internet Banking:

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

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Please email your details to [enquiries@wcm.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@wcm.org.nz) or call (04) 245 0843.

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