



WINTER 2025

THE PSN POST

Warming Hearts Through the Coldest Season

As the chill of winter sets in, it often brings more than just colder days – it can deepen the challenges many families in our communities already face.



What might begin as a single hardship can quickly snowball into something far greater, with financial pressures, housing concerns, and emotional strain all layering on at once.

That's why our Family Works Winter Appeal is so important. This season, we're focusing on how these challenges can escalate in winter, and how critical wraparound support helps families weather the storm – from food and bedding to counselling, parenting support and budgeting advice.

The needs in our community are great, and PSN is here to help people not only get through hard times, but ultimately to also thrive. This simply wouldn't be possible without the incredible generosity of our donors. Your kindness helps families find strength and stability again.

I'm a person who likes to be out in the community, experiencing all Aotearoa New Zealand has to offer. From outdoor concerts and theatre, to picnics, beach days and walks – all are quite possible in spring, summer and autumn. But the cold, dark and rain of winter makes it harder to 'connect' and 'be active' – two of the Five Ways to Well-being. This is why I intentionally seek winter pastimes that enable me to stay socially active. I love board-game nights with friends. I like wrapping up in a blanket while watching the latest TV show. I enjoy going to the cinema. So, while winter is many peoples least favourite season, it's important to do what we can to support each other.



Thank you for being part of this journey with us.
Wishing you and your loved ones a warm and safe winter.

With gratitude,

Shaun Greaves

– Chief Executive Officer, Presbyterian Support Northern

Weathering the Winter Storm

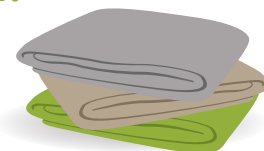
 Familyworks



Help a family feel warm, safe and cared for this winter.

Your donation to the Family Works Winter Appeal can provide vital support to families doing it tough this season.

Give today: familyworksnorthern.org.nz/donate



For many families, hardship doesn't come as a single problem – it arrives as a cascade of stressors, each one compounding the last, until it becomes almost impossible to cope without support.

Winter often brings more than just a chill in the air – it can intensify the struggles that families face every day. When the cold sets in, small challenges like needing winter clothes or dealing with a broken-down car can mount up, piling stress upon stress. It's in these times that families often find themselves at breaking point, overwhelmed by what might seem like a storm of hardship. That's when a helping hand can make all the difference.

Family Works are here to provide that support. Whether it's supporting children at school, offering budgeting advice, providing food parcels, connecting families with the right type of counselling, or simply offering a listening ear – our wraparound services are designed to support families in every area of their lives. We're here to ensure that no one has to face these challenges alone.

Take the Hicks family, for example. Their story is a reminder of how quickly things can snowball, and how the right support can help families weather the storm.

More than just an empty fridge: one whānau's story of strength and support

When our Family Works Social Worker in Schools (SWiS), Aaron*, first met the Hicks* whānau, they were in crisis – but hesitant to engage. Like many families facing overwhelming challenges, they were unsure about opening up, unsure if they could trust someone with the deeply personal struggles they were carrying. As is often the case, it can be hard for people to ask for help, especially when stress, grief and shame are all in the mix.

But trust was gently built over time. Through regular visits, Aaron could see they were doing everything they could to hold things together. The house was spotless; the children were clearly very loved. This was a case of people doing their absolute best but unfortunately still struggling, through no fault of their own.

The family were grieving the unexpected and tragic death of their grandfather - a central figure in their lives. Mum and Dad were not only trying to manage



their own grief, but also help their children navigate theirs.

On top of this, an unseen impact of this loss was that they were facing possible eviction as the home they were renting was in his name. The whānau didn't have a car and affordable rentals in their area were scarce. The children's school was within walking distance and if they had to move further away would have to face changing schools. Given how well the children were doing at the school, and the support the school provided, this would have a major impact on them, particularly as they were already going through so much.

Continued...

However, as is so often the case, the struggles ran deeper. For many families, hardship doesn't come as a single problem – it arrives as a cascade of stressors, each one compounding the last, until it becomes almost impossible to cope without support.

Ongoing rising food costs meant they were never quite sure where the next meal was coming from. The family also didn't have enough beds and two of the children were sleeping on air mattresses. There simply wasn't enough bedding or money to go around.

Aaron assisted with various modes of wraparound support – recognising that the family didn't just need one thing, they needed help to tackle a few issues. He wrote a letter of support, advocating for their ability to continue the tenancy. He helped source and deliver beds for the children, ensuring they had a warm and comfortable place to sleep just in time for winter. Aaron also connected them with a budgeting advisor and appropriate counselling to support them through the emotional challenges they were facing.

As things began to settle, Mum started exploring job options so she could return to work, while Dad and Grandma continued caring for the young children and running the household day-to-day.

Despite the barrage of challenges they were facing, the children spoke with pride and love about their parents, who were doing a beautiful job raising them.

One of their children continues to receive one-to-one support to help with behavioural issues, and with the right support now in place, the future looks much brighter. The progress they've made so far gives hope that, with ongoing care, they can overcome the challenges they've faced and thrive.

Often, it's not just one thing that pushes families to the brink. As illustrated through the Hicks' family story – it was a ripple effect of grief, financial pressure, housing challenges, the demands of parenting multiple children (including one with behavioural issues), no transport, and the sheer exhaustion of trying to hold everything together. It all piled on at once, making it hard to breathe, let alone bounce back, especially with the extra strain in winter.

This story reminds us that the struggles some face don't always have a singular root cause, and can be a symptom of many, seemingly manageable issues on the face of it, occurring at once. And that's where Family Works steps in – with practical help, emotional support, and an unwavering belief in people's potential.

Sometimes what families need most is someone to believe in them – and walk beside them. But thanks to the services Family Works provide, families like the Hicks don't have to weather these storms alone. Together, we can help them navigate these difficult times and ensure they have the support they need to rebuild and thrive.

Unfortunately, the struggles faced by the Hicks family are far from unique – with pressures of life, weight of personal challenges, housing instability, the strain of trying to provide for the family all stacking up. Without the right support it can feel hard to see a way through.

This winter, PSN's team will see a growing number of situations like that of the Hicks whānau and will do everything within their power to help. As the costs of heating homes increases, food prices rise, and the need for resources increases – so does the need for our counselling services, food support, school interventions, budget mentoring, parenting programmes, and more.

** Family name changed to protect privacy.*

Thank you for sharing warmth this winter

A heartfelt thank you to the churches who have helped share *The PSN Post* more widely by including it in their order of service – your support helps bring our stories to life and connect more people with the work we do in our communities. If your church would like to be involved in future distributions, we'd love to hear from you. Please email sam.vonmelville@psn.org.nz

We're also deeply grateful to the churches who go even further by donating funds or essential goods – your generosity helps meet real needs and makes a meaningful difference.

To our generous donors – thank you. Your kindness and compassion make our work possible. Because of you, families facing hardship can find care, support and hope throughout the winter and beyond.





Pumpkins, People and Purpose:

Harvest Festival at CFC



Communities
Feeding
Communities
INITIATIVE

On a sunny Saturday in April, the 2025 Harvest Festival brought colour, connection and celebration to the CFC community garden.

Held on 12 April and organised in partnership with Gardens4Health Diabetes Foundation Aotearoa, the event marked the changing of the seasons with a joyful showcase of the hard work of community gardeners from across the city. Garden plots overflowed with late summer bounty, and stallholders shared knowledge, stories and kai with whānau and visitors alike.

The festival featured:

- Gardeners from across Auckland displaying their home-grown efforts
- Stalls from community gardens from across Tāmaki Makaurau
- Hands-on workshops on tool maintenance, bokashi composting, and even soil microscopy
- A vibrant line-up of local food vendors, live music, and face painting
- Spot prizes from generous local sponsors
- Craft activities and fun for all ages

A highlight of the day was the CFC Rescued Raffle. The raffle baskets were full of donated and rescued treasures – favourite foods, plants, handmade goodies – and all proceeds went back to support the mahi of CFC.

One of the most anticipated prizes was the “Gourd-geous Giant” award, given to the heaviest paukena (pumpkin) grown. The top entry weighed in at a whopping 14.76kg, and the winner walked away with a trailer-load of pre-loved composted seed-raising and potting mix, kindly donated by our friends at Living Herbs – the perfect feed for another season of big, beautiful veggies.

The Harvest Festival was a chance for the community to come together, learn from each other, and celebrate the growing season that was. It was attended by many in our community who we are actively supporting, as well as people from across the city.

Community gardens play a vital role in our neighbourhoods – especially as one in four New Zealanders faces food insecurity. These shared spaces are more than just places to grow food: they’re places where people connect, build relationships, share culture and knowledge, and experience the well-being that comes from being part of something bigger. Events like the Harvest Festival enhance this social cohesion – the glue that holds Aotearoa New Zealand together.

As winter rolls in, the energy from this day of warmth, generosity and connection carries us forward.



As we head into the colder months, the need for food support rises sharply. For many whānau, the added cost of heating, higher grocery prices, and seasonal illness make it harder to keep up. Your support of our winter appeal helps us provide vital support during this time.

You can donate online at: familyworksnorthern.org.nz/donate



Common Myths About Bequests



What is a bequest and how do I go about creating one?

A bequest is a gift of money, property or other assets left to a person, organisation or charity in a Will. It allows individuals to allocate part of their estate to causes they care about after their passing. The process of setting up a bequest can be straightforward, especially with legal guidance or online tools for simple estates.

MYTH No.1: *Bequests are only for the wealthy.*

Anyone can leave a bequest, regardless of wealth. Every gift, no matter the size, can significantly support the long-term work of your chosen beneficiary.

MYTH No.2: *If I leave a bequest for PSN, my family will be left without support.*

Bequests can be structured to care for family first, with the remainder supporting causes close to your heart.

MYTH No.3: *Bequests are only for older donors.*

Everyone, regardless of age, should have a Will because it ensures that your wishes are respected, your loved ones cared for and your money is distributed as you want it to.

MYTH No.4: *Current circumstances mean I cannot afford to continue donating at the moment, which means I can't leave a bequest.*

Not at all. Even if you need to reduce or stop your charitable giving due to limited funds or a set income, you may consider leaving a bequest in your Will as a meaningful way to make a lasting impact.

MYTH No.5: *All my money will be placed in a Trust, and the trustees will determine the beneficiaries.*

You can specify in the Trust document who you want to receive gifts of money, assets or other benefits. If you would like to mention PSN, or one of our support services, we recommend consulting with a lawyer to ensure your preferences are clearly outlined.

Why bequests are hard to talk about

MYTH: *Discussing my Will, and my intentions to include a bequest, will offend my loved ones.*

Concerns over family reactions can hinder discussions about charitable bequests. We encourage open communication with your loved ones, explaining that charitable giving doesn't necessarily take away from family inheritance. Even a very small percentage of an estate can make a meaningful impact without compromising family support, while also allowing you to leave a legacy of generosity and kindness.

MYTH: *Making a Will and including bequests means I won't be following protocol for the whānau/iwi/hapū.*

For some individuals, cultural expectations around the distribution of assets, particularly within whānau, iwi or hapū, can create hesitation around bequests. For example, Māori land ownership is subject to specific laws and traditions, and individuals cannot gift their share of Māori land to those outside the hapū. It's a good idea to speak with whānau, iwi or hapū, as well as legal or cultural advisors, to aid with this. Charitable giving often aligns with cultural values, such as manaakitanga (generosity) and kotahitanga (unity).

Interested in leaving a legacy gift in your Will? Contact our Planned Giving Coordinator, Vivienne Riddell, for more information: **09 520 8628** or **021 329 938** or email vivienne.riddell@psn.org.nz



Friendship, Fun, and Support:

The Blokes Club Makes a Big Impact

Enliven

Every Thursday at St Andrews in Hamilton, a cheerful buzz fills the space as a group of men come together over shared laughter, stories, activities and a hearty meal. It's *Blokes Club* day – a weekly gathering run by Enliven's Day Services for men living with dementia.

With its relaxed atmosphere, creative activities, and a bit of friendly competition – the club has become so popular it's often booked to capacity. Designed for up to 12 members, the Blokes Club is one of two specialist dementia programmes offered by Enliven in Hamilton, alongside the *Women's Circle*.

"We've seen how early support and advice can make a huge difference for someone diagnosed with dementia," says Enliven General Manager Wendy Hoskin.

"It helps reduce stress for both the individual and their family, and it can help people stay in their own homes longer, with a better quality of life."

The Blokes Club meet in the afternoons, and members are picked up from home and dropped off in the evening. Afternoon tea and a hot, home-cooked meal are always part of the day, but the activities change depending on what the group feel like doing. That could mean a friendly game of mini-golf, tenpin bowling, or croquet – or something more creative like crafts, card-making or photography.

Outings are a highlight too, with members enjoying strolls near the Waikato River, fish and chips at Hamilton Lake, or an ice-cream stop during a van ride.

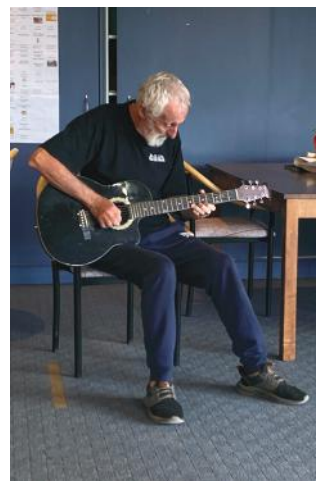
"The friendships that form are incredible," says Wendy.

"Many of the men also attend our Day Services, and over time, their partners have built their own supportive community as well."



The *Women's Circle* runs during the day and includes a broader range of outings, like trips to Hamilton Gardens or the museum. While they also enjoy games and walks, there's often more focus on painting, crafting, and helping with lunch prep.

Both programmes are free for those with a dementia diagnosis and a referral from a Needs Assessment and Service Coordination (NASC) team. Private-paying clients are also welcome too.



Thanks to the generosity of our wonderful donors, Enliven can keep offering these much-loved services that bring connection, joy and support to clients and their families.



If you'd like to learn more about the **Blokes Club**, **Women's Circle** or **Enliven's Day Services** in Waikato and Coromandel, we'd love to hear from you – just give us a call on **0800 373 654**.

When ‘Love’ Turns Dangerous – Nola’s Story



*“I used to think women who stayed with abusive men were weak. Now I understand. Sometimes, leaving isn’t safe.” – Nola**

When Nola* met Jake*, he seemed like her dream man – charismatic, romantic, attentive. He flooded her with love, messages, gifts and promises. “You’re my soulmate,” he’d say. They went on to have children together, building a life that, at first, felt full of promise.

But it wasn’t love. It was control.

At first, Jake just wanted her time. Then came the comments about her clothes, her friends, her phone calls. He said it was love – but then one evening, after a small disagreement, he grabbed her wrist hard enough to frighten her. He apologised. Promised it wouldn’t happen again. She believed him.

But things got worse.

Jake isolated Nola from her family, convincing her they were toxic. He monitored her phone and movements, demanded receipts for grocery trips. He took over her bank account and pressured her to quit work. “He said he’d take care of everything,” Nola recalls. “But then I had to beg for money for food, deodorant, school trips.”

Nola couldn’t wear what she wanted, eat what she liked, or speak freely. Jake monitored her weight, accused her of seeking attention, and flew into rages if she talked to other men. “If you really loved me, you’d do this,” he’d say. She walked on eggshells to avoid conflict for her children’s sake.

Sometimes, his threats were subtle, other times, terrifying. A fist slamming into the wall beside her... “*Be glad it’s the wall and not your face.*” Hands tightening around her throat...

Eventually, Nola left. She took the kids and stayed with a friend. But Jake lured her back with promises of change. “He was kind for a few weeks, then his abusiveness would increase – worse than ever.” He warned her: “*If you leave me, I’ll take the kids. I’ll kill the dog. No one will believe you.*”

She had no money, no job, no lawyer. “I was trapped for years, believing I had no choice.”

The breaking point came when Jake strangled her again – longer this time. “I thought, *he’s going to kill me; if not now, then next time.*”

That terrifying realisation made Nola decide to risk leaving. She knew this wasn’t just about her anymore – it was about her children, too. She couldn’t risk them being left motherless... or in his care.

But leaving an abusive partner isn’t as simple as walking out the door. That’s where Shine came in.

With Shine’s support, Nola was able to get out safely.

Shine helped Nola create a personalised safety plan. They found emergency accommodation for her and her children so they could escape immediately and connected her with a Shine advocate – someone who understood the impact of the abuse she had endured, and who walked beside her every step of the way.

Legal help was arranged to protect her and her kids, and specialised counselling helped give them a pathway to heal. Shine’s wraparound support gave Nola what she’d been denied for so long: freedom, hope and choices.

Today, Nola and her children are safe. They’re rebuilding their lives – one peaceful day at a time.

“I can breathe again. I’m making decisions for myself. My children are laughing again – they’re not afraid in their own home anymore. Shine helped us believe in a future beyond fear.”

What Jake gave wasn’t love. It was abuse.

Every day, women like Nola take that brave first step, and when they do, Shine is there to help. Shine’s expert support services mean that women can escape control and abuse, find safety, and start over.

* Name changed to protect privacy.

Belron Raises Over \$50,000 for Lifeline

Lifeline

We are so thrilled that Smith&Smith®, Laser® and Exceed®, as part of Belron NZ, have reaffirmed their commitment to supporting Lifeline Aotearoa as their national charity partner for the next three years.

“Lifeline helplines receive no government funding so support like this is vital to enable us to be there for New Zealanders 24/7 every day of the year. Belron NZ staff have supported Lifeline for several years, with the partnership becoming official in 2021. Since then, Belron NZ has raised more than \$190,000. This can help Lifeline answer over 5,000 calls and reduce distress and save lives.

“In 2024 alone, Belron NZ raised an incredible \$50,000. This achievement is even more remarkable given that many people are tightening their belts in the challenging economic climate,” says PSN GM Fundraising and Social Enterprise, Lisa Rudolphe.

Throughout the year, the Belron NZ team spearheaded numerous initiatives and activities across New Zealand, engaging suppliers, customers, business connections, family and friends. From raffles and auctions, to barbecues, bake sales, soup sales and collections, the Belron NZ team proved themselves to be absolutely outstanding fundraisers.



Pictured from left: Belron NZ (Smith&Smith, Laser and Exceed) People and Leadership Director Megan Trust and Lifeline Senior Fundraiser Kate Dalders.

“We extend our deepest gratitude to the Belron NZ Giving Back Committee and the passionate staff at Smith&Smith, Laser and Exceed. Their energy and commitment are embedded in their organisation, creating a partnership that delivers real meaning and tangible impact,” says Lisa Rudolphe.

It is partnerships like these that truly demonstrate the kindness and generosity of our community, and PSN wouldn’t be able to provide the vital services that we do without the support of kind-hearted people in the wider PSN community of supporters.

I would like to donate to PSN!

First and Last Name: _____

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Please return this form to us in the post to: PSN, PO Box 99890, Newmarket, Auckland 1149, or take a photo and email: sam.vonmelville@psn.org.nz

Please accept my gift of \$ _____ *All donations for \$5 or more are tax deductible.*

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Please debit my monthly gift on the _____ of each month (or the next working day).

My authorisation to regularly debit the specified amount from my credit card account will continue after the expiry date of the credit card and with the issuance of a new card until further notice. I may terminate this authority at any time by giving written notice to Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN) at least 5 days before any due date. My payment will be processed through the Flo2Cash payment gateway and PSN will not disclose the above credit card information to any other party or use it for any other purpose without my consent. PSN aims to preserve the confidentiality of all personal information it holds in accordance with the NZ Privacy Act 2020. Personal card details will only be used for the purposes of this donation.

