



# Angel news

AUTUMN 2014 + For donors, staff, volunteers and other supporters of Family Works

## The cupboard is bare...

A small bowl of jelly,  
half a loaf of bread and  
some peanut butter...  
hardly enough to feed  
one small child,  
let alone two.

That was the only food family worker Jacque McCallum found in the house of one Northland family. There was also a small packet of meat but that was for bait to catch eels. Sometimes Hazel\*, the mother, hitchhikes for hours to the beach to collect shellfish or forages in the bush for food.

The family has struggled to survive ever since the father was imprisoned nine months ago. With no car, it's difficult for Hazel to meet her WINZ appointments in Whangarei. Her 6-year-old daughter sometimes stays home from school with the 4-year-old because there is no food. Three other children are being cared for by family members elsewhere.

"I've just started working with this family," says Jacque, "so I'm still finding out how she got into such a predicament. She became isolated and withdrew because of embarrassment, and at first she was very closed off and reserved but as the story is slowly coming out, she's beginning to trust me more."



Jacque immediately provided the family with a food parcel and vouchers. She has also found some clothing and furniture for them. The next step will be to refer Hazel to Strengthening Families, which brings together various agencies to work out the best way to support the family.

Jacque says she knows several families in the same predicament, with children going hungry and parents struggling to provide basic care.

"If I see a need I will do whatever I can to support them. As a Family Works team, we have a huge caseload. We try to do as much as we can but we are short on resources."

\*Name changed and stock images used to protect identity.

Thank you for your Guardian Angel support,  
which helps us help families like Hazel's every day.

# Bridge to a new world

Coral\* was introduced to alcohol at the age of 12 by a family member. By the time she was in her mid 30s she was an alcoholic and living in a chaotic, violent relationship with the father of her three children.

With no one to turn to she moved into a women's refuge, barely surviving from day to day. The refuge referred her to a Family Works family worker who helped her find a home for herself and her children and gave her the resources she needed to construct a better life for her family.

"The family worker encouraged me to continue walking forward. Because of my upbringing, I had to discover a new way of living. My family worker was that bridge to a new world," Coral said.

Coral now enjoys a more positive relationship with the father of her children and is happy to be a 24/7 Mum. She recently also took on the care of two younger siblings.



"I want them to have the opportunity to experience a quiet, ordinary life – something I didn't have in my upbringing. I didn't have the tools before to be the kind of mum and sister I wanted to be, but I do now because of the help I've received. Serving others keeps me strong," she said.

\*Name changed and stock image used to protect identity.

## Celebrating Children's Day

To celebrate Children's Day (2 March) we invited people to share their messages of praise and encouragement to pass on to the children and families we work alongside through Family Works. Here are some of the messages we received:

*"Kia kaha - Stay strong."*

*"There's only one of you in the whole world. That makes you extra special!"*

*"May God bring you blessing and peace."*

*"Congratulations - you never give up."*

*"You're not alone - we'll always be there for you."*

*"Keep smiling - things will improve!"*



### Thank you!

**Every year we receive feedback from those who have benefitted from Family Works' services you are supporting. This is what that support meant to one single mother of two:**

*"My family worker helped me when I was at the worst place in my life. She was like sunshine. I get teary when I think about her love and support. She helped me identify strengths within myself and to know what I needed; to trust what I was feeling, articulate my needs, and walk towards the help, knowing that the answer would be there for me."*

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