

Northern NOTES

Foodbank – much more than a tin of beans ...see over



Schools stand up to bullying

Hundreds of school children took a stand against bullying on Pink Shirt Day in May. Family Works social workers in schools organised 'pink' events in 31 schools across the region, with balloons, stickers, wristbands, colouring contests, and t-shirt design competitions.

Two Te Puke Intermediate boys won iPods sponsored by Pink®Batts® for their colouring and t-shirt logo designs. Special Pink Shirt Day ambassadors visited lucky children in the Waikato, South Auckland and Te Puke.

Pink Shirt Day celebrates diversity and promotes positive social relationships as a way to reduce bullying. One Family Works social worker in schools said, "It was really rewarding to carry out the anti-bullying campaign within our school and to hear the voices of the students themselves regarding an issue which is very real for so many of our communities."

Above: Children enjoyed a day of games and fun activities organised by Family Works Waikato.

106 not out

When Tauranga resident Ida Hamilton celebrated her 106th birthday, Enliven was there to help her party in style. Family, friends and the support worker coordinators of the Conversation Café Ida attends organised a harbour cruise for her and about 20 others.

Up until very recently, Ida was still living in her own home with support from Enliven. Support workers visited three times a day to help with personal care, meal preparation, medications and housework.

Ida has always been a social person, enjoying regular visits from her sons (now in their 80s themselves) and five generations of her family. She also plays bridge once a week and is an active member of the Cherrywood Conversation Café where there is lots of discussion and singing.

Asked what it's like to be 106, Ida said, "No different from being 70." And the secret of her long life?

"I haven't got one. But I don't worry about anything. What's the good of worrying? It never was worthwhile," she said.



Ida Hamilton, aged 106, blows out the candles on her cake before heading out on a two-hour harbour cruise. Photo supplied by SunLive.co.nz.

Social life essential to health

Both Ida and Jean demonstrate the benefits of an active social life in maintaining health and wellbeing. Yvonne Hartwell agrees that being with others is vital for older people. As Service Coordinator with Enliven Tauranga for nearly 10 years, Yvonne helped develop the pool programme, day club and conversation cafés as well as training support workers for home based services.

"It's important to keep socialising. At our conversation cafés we do lots of activities to stimulate the mind and body with games, exercises and discussion, but we're also reducing the risk of social isolation," she said.

Enliven Tauranga runs two conversation cafés in partnership with local Presbyterian churches. A third is due to start this month at Bethlehem Community Church, with a focus on older people from rural areas.

Never say can't

Jean Benson was brought up never to say "can't", in spite of a lifetime of pain and disability. At age six she contracted scarlet fever which affected her hearing and led to bone infections. Now aged 82, Jean is profoundly deaf and has osteoarthritis in all her joints.

Her limited mobility has not stopped her leading a full life, with support from Enliven. Support workers come early every morning to help get her up and dressed, returning at night to help her to bed. Describing herself as "fiercely independent", Jean makes her own meals, shops, and has an active social life, getting about in her electric wheelchair.

Keen to try out Auckland's new electric trains, Jean recently travelled on her own from her home in Avondale to the Enliven office in Onehunga to meet some of the staff. "It was a challenge, but a nice outing," she said.

Enliven's support makes a big difference to Jean's quality of life. "I couldn't do without it. My support workers' encouragement and practical care gives me the energy to get on with living. I try to make the most of every day and every moment," she said.



Jean travelled by train to meet Resource Coordinators Effie Smallridge and Joelle Luisi at Enliven's office in Onehunga.

One good turn deserves another

Our Foodbank helps feed thousands of needy children and families each year through emergency food parcels. It's also a place where kindness flourishes as one person helps another who then "pays it forward" to someone else.

These stories from the Foodbank demonstrate that our services often have a long term impact that goes beyond simply handing out a tin of beans or a packet of rice.



Sgt Canny is lonely...
can you help build
his battalion of
canned items?

With winter upon us, the Foodbank urgently needs your financial donations so we can continue to provide emergency food parcels. Vulnerable families face extra costs in winter and requests for food parcels have increased. Financial donations mean we can make use of bulk discounts for the specific items we're missing from the Foodbank shelves. The Foodbank also needs canned goods, especially soups, vegetables (including tomatoes) and fruit.

To find out more, please contact Suzanne Ward, Donor Coordinator, 09520 8628 or 027 222 5595, email suzanne.ward@psn.org.nz

Thank you!

Serving each other

A car accident put an end to Marjorie Sheat's years of faithful service, delivering groceries every month from her church to the Foodbank. But it didn't end her relationship with Damian Colgan, whom she'd met at the Foodbank when he was in charge there for a few months some time ago.

Recently, Marjorie happened to meet Damian and his partner Jeanie in a café. When she told them about her accident and that she no longer owned a car, Jeanie offered to help the 79-year-old every week with her shopping. Now the two of them go to New Lynn most Fridays (with Jeanie's baby in tow).

Marjorie continues to be one of the Foodbank's most avid supporters. She encourages other members at Avondale Union Parish to donate groceries and has worked out another strategy to get them to the Foodbank. "I don't like to prevail on people, but I'm passionate about it," she says.

For his part, Damian admires the woman who has been part of his own journey to a new way of life through our Foodbank and Budgeting services. "She is extremely independent... an amazingly energetic woman with courage a mile wide."



They share freely and give generously to those in need.
Their good deeds will be remembered forever.
They will have influence and honour. **Psalm 112:9**

Inspired to serve

Each fortnight a group of Year 8 students from Saint Kentigern Boys' School visits the Foodbank to deliver food items collected from the school and to learn about the service first-hand. On a recent trip, the boys created a chain gang to fill the fridge with cottage cheese from Fonterra before stacking the shelves with donated items.

Chaplain Reuben Hardie says the trips are a good opportunity for the boys to see how their donations are used. "By the time the boys leave the centre, they have learned a little more about those whose needs are far greater than their own. The boys are inspired to think of other ways that they could be of service," he said. One result was their decision to donate \$1,500 to the Foodbank from their chapel offerings.



When there's no food on the table...

Poverty affects more than a quarter of New Zealand children, according to a recently published book by researchers Jonathan Boston and Simon Chapple.

Child Poverty in New Zealand discusses an issue which is relevant, not just to the Foodbank but to all our family workers and social workers in schools. Child poverty is not just about hungry kids. It's also about missing out on schooling because your family can't afford the rent and has to move... again. It creates the kind of stress which can lead to violence and abuse. Children who have grown up poor are more likely to suffer ill-health, be involved in crime and become dependent on welfare as adults, thus perpetuating the cycle.

Since January this year, the Presbyterian Support Northern Foodbank has helped 640 families and 193 individuals who struggle to make ends meet. That's just scratching the surface of the real cost of child poverty in New Zealand, but for each family or individual, the Foodbank's practical support can change lives.