



Presbyterian Support  
Northern



EASTER 2024

## Warm Easter Wishes from PSN!

We trust our first 2024 edition of The PSN Post finds you in good health and spirits.

As Easter approaches, it offers us a beautiful reminder of the hope and happiness we strive to cultivate within our communities. This year, we're excited to share even more uplifting stories, all made possible by individuals like you who generously support our mission.



A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has contributed to PSN's endeavors over the past year. Your dedication enables our people and programmes to make a huge impact for kiwis in need.

## WIN A \$100 PREZZY CARD WITH OUR EASTER EGG HUNT

**Ready for a challenge?** Count how many Easter eggs are in this PSN Post, and go in the draw to win!

### TO ENTER:

1. Read the PSN Post.
2. Count the Easter eggs hidden in it.
3. Email your answer to:  
**miranda.mcdermott@psn.org.nz**

*Winner announced on May 31st 2024. Happy hunting!*



# THE PSN POST



# FROM PSN CEO, DR. BONNIE ROBINSON



## Big birthdays and a big vision for positive change in 2024

This November we will be celebrating 140 years of service. We are busy planning how to mark this very significant birthday for PSN – and there will be more information to come as the year unfolds.

You may not be aware that also this year one of our services, Lifeline, will be 60 years old. This is another amazing milestone – that one service supporting people who are anxious, lonely, mentally distressed and suicidal has been helping people for such a long time. We will be holding some events to celebrate this wonderful heritage as well.

These birthdays got me thinking. At the start of every year people often make New Year resolutions, but what keeps people inspired to keep focused on their goals year after year? It is easy to do something for a short time, but what keeps us going when we know that there is a long road ahead?

Having a vision of where you want to be helps, I think. Right from the beginning, PSN knew that the levels of hardship, loneliness, family dysfunction and homelessness among people in our region were not inevitable and that we could, and should, do something about them. Gathering stories of change, where our services have made a difference, is also motivating – which is why we share them with all our supporters. While there is much to do, we know that we are having some success in reaching our goal of creating a better life for everyone.

Having studied church history, I personally also take motivation from people who have gone before me. One of my historical heroes is William Wilberforce (1759–1833). Best known for his work to end slavery, he worked on many other causes as well. One of the things that most impresses me is his tenacity. He just kept at it, for decades,

knowing that one day he and others would succeed in making the positive change required.

William Wilberforce was an orator and so is very quotable. My favourite quote, which is currently on my office door so I read it every morning, is:

*“To live our lives and miss that great purpose we were designed to accomplish is truly a sin. It is inconceivable that we could be bored in a world with so much wrong to tackle, so much ignorance to reach and so much misery we could alleviate.”*



While the language is of its time, the ideas the words contain are still fresh. They are a reminder that we all have a part to play. All of our efforts are needed – be they in person, through our prayers, our donations or our actions. Together we can make a better life for everyone.

The year 2024 has begun – it’s time to roll up our sleeves and get going once again.

Bonnie



## LIFELINE CONNECT COMMUNITY WELLBEING INITIATIVE

**Lifeline Connect offers professional training programmes and continuous support services that empower employees, team leaders and community professionals by enhancing participants’ confidence and skills in addressing distress, stress or crisis among colleagues, clients or the public. The aim is to improve the emotional wellbeing and social resilience in communities and workplaces all over Aotearoa New Zealand.**

Over the past year, Lifeline Connect has worked with the Presbyterian Church across our region to deliver its innovative Community Wellbeing Initiative programme (CWI Programme).



*Lifeline Connect article continued...*

Lifeline Connect also has a corporate programme that delivers wellbeing and mental-health training to benefit large corporates such as Air New Zealand, Avanti Finance and Contact Energy.

The Lifeline CWI Programme has been developed for people who are 'natural connectors'; those who already play an active role in community-facing activities within or beyond the church and/or provide pastoral care to their congregation.

It offers participants skills, tools and resources to look after their own wellbeing as well as be able to support others safely within their church and the wider community during times of stress or distress.

The programme is a mix of online learning, two in-person workshops, a dedicated participant helpline run by experienced Lifeline counsellors and two online group-learning follow-up sessions. These are all supported by PSN's clinically-trained staff and experienced educational facilitators.

### The workshops cover:

**Module One – Connect with Self:** Developing the skills to look after our own mental health and wellbeing.

**Module Two – Connect with Others:** Developing the skills to reach out and support others in need.

In collaboration with Presbyterian Church congregations, eight programmes were held during 2023. With 92 participants, this initiative has made a significant impact to the mental health and wellbeing of our community.

Led by experienced trainers from the Lifeline Connect Team, the Community Wellbeing Initiative aims to increase participant awareness regarding mental health and overall wellbeing, and to create a ripple effect of positive change extending beyond those taking part in the programme.

The Presbyterian Church has well-developed community connections and a mission-focus to provide pastoral care to those in need.



#### TESTIMONIAL:

*"A huge thanks for the two excellent workshops. This is truly a valuable course and I'm grateful for having had the opportunity to take part. The interactive aspects made it a much richer experience than many other good mental health trainings. So, in my view it really is very well designed in both content and format."*

- Carrie



By working with Lifeline Connect, PSN is hoping to grow the capacity of the church and wider community to notice and safely respond to people experiencing stress or distress. This will benefit the church families and community.



Looking for mental wellbeing training in your workplace?  
Call Stephen!

**Stephen Bell** – Lifeline Connect Manager

Office: (09) 909 8751 or 0508 266328 | Mob: 021 0756 883

Email: [stephen.bell@lifeline.org.nz](mailto:stephen.bell@lifeline.org.nz)

[www.lifeline.org.nz/services/lifeline-connect/](http://www.lifeline.org.nz/services/lifeline-connect/)



# A STORY OF RESILIENCE AND COMMUNITY CARE



By Pascal Gillies  
CFC Community Co-ordinator

Recently, a grandfather approached the Communities Feeding Communities (CFC) team in need of a food parcel. He was feeling a lot of disappointment and shame. Struggling with health conditions that meant he was unable to work, he had been trying to support his daughter, who was entangled in a tumultuous and violent on-off relationship. Despite grappling with limited financial resources, he had steadfastly taken care of his grandchildren and provided refuge for his daughter. However, he found working out how to support his daughter effectively and not push her away challenging.

Our Kai Transitioner engaged in a brief discussion with the man, following which I had the privilege of meeting with him. Equipped with the necessary skills and insights acquired through the Shine DVFREE workplace training, I was able to have a meaningful conversation, provide support, and connect him with Shine's expert team, ensuring he received essential guidance and help.

During our conversation, we delved into the emotional turmoil of witnessing a loved one endure such hardship, emphasising the crucial role of seeking guidance and support from organisations like Shine.

Shine's role extends beyond aiding individuals directly affected by family violence to also provide help and guidance to people who are supporting their loved ones through such challenges, even if their loved one may not be prepared or ready to seek help themselves.

Recognising that the grandfather faced an ongoing struggle, we also connected him with a Family Works financial mentor. This enabled him to receive continuous support and referrals at CFC for emergency food assistance as he navigated this difficult period. As well as the distressing experience of having to

collect food parcels to fill an empty pantry, fridge, and freezer, he faced the additional responsibility of providing for his grandchildren, which meant he also had to purchase clothing for them.

I found the Shine DVFREE workplace training proved to be invaluable, as within just 24 hours of completing the training, some of our volunteers courageously opened up about their own experiences with family violence. This sort of workplace training reaffirms the importance of fostering a culture of empathy, understanding, and proactive intervention to create a safer and more supportive environment for those in need.

This year we will be moving from the St Giles Church Hall to the refurbished Victoria Hall at Communities Feeding Communities (CFC), where we will be working with the Shine training and education team to provide community violence training.

## MORE INFORMATION

You can find out more about Shine by visiting [www.zshine.org.nz](http://www.zshine.org.nz).

To find out more about DVFREE, please visiting [www.dvfree.org.nz](http://www.dvfree.org.nz)



Communities  
Feeding  
Communities  
INITIATIVE



You are invited to the  
opening celebration  
of Victoria Hall

Saturday April 6th

4pm - 6pm

at

CFC, 1207 Dominion Rd,  
Mt Roskill

Please RSVP to attend or enquire about the community family violence training by emailing [cfc@psn.org.nz](mailto:cfc@psn.org.nz)

Follow our Facebook page for more information and updates:  
[www.facebook.com/CommunitiesFeedingCommunities](https://www.facebook.com/CommunitiesFeedingCommunities).



Join us in championing the impactful work of CFC by making a difference today. Your support fuels our ongoing initiatives. Visit [www.psn.org.nz/donate](http://www.psn.org.nz/donate) or scan the QR code to contribute.

Together, let's forge a path towards positive community change.



Enliven provides health and disability services for older people and those with disabilities or injuries in a home or community setting, including those with dementia. Dementia is different for every person, so how do you know the difference between what is normal and what is dementia?

**We all have lapses in memory such as where we put our car keys, or forgetting to go to an appointment, but when should we start to worry about our memory?**

The golden rule is if your memory loss is interfering with your ability to successfully live your day-to-day life, then it's time to see your doctor about testing for dementia. For example, you find your car keys but then can't remember what they're for or how to use them.

It's normal to sometimes lose your train of thought in a conversation, or have the occasional difficulty in finding the right words. However, if you've noticed you frequently pause in a conversation because you can't find the right word, or you are substituting one word for another, and are having trouble following the conversation, it could be a sign that dementia may be affecting you.

Sometimes we aren't aware of the changes that are taking place, but if our family, whānau and friends are worried about our memory, and are encouraging you to see your doctor, this is another indication that something is going amiss.

Getting a diagnosis can be frightening, but it's better to know and have the right support, than not know and struggle on without appropriate support and guidance.

Enliven can help. We focus on enabling clients living in the northern region to live in their own homes, engage socially with others, and ultimately stay healthy for longer.

Enliven Day Services cater for people mostly over 65 and offer a range of activities and support services that encourage socialisation and promote physical, emotional and mental well-being. Our Auckland Day Service caters specifically for people with dementia and the people who attend it have a lot of fun doing things like crafts, exercise programmes, outings, music, singing and dance activities, table-top activities, memory games and cognitive stimulation therapy. Enliven has seven Day Services throughout the region in Auckland, Manukau, Coromandel, Waikato, Tauranga and Whakatāne.

Enliven services are funded by Te Whatu Ora Health New Zealand. We also rely on support from people like you to allow us to go above and beyond what is publicly funded for our clients

We also offer EnlivenPlus in the Bay of Plenty region offers personally tailored one-on-one support for people living with dementia and their caregivers as well as Active Respite Care and Transition to Care services for those with or without dementia. These are privately-paid services. Your contribution could help us provide services for people who are unable to fund it for themselves.



To find out more about Enliven, visit [www.enliven.org.nz](http://www.enliven.org.nz) or phone **0800 ENLIVEN (0800 365 4836)**.

Or for Home-based Support Services or for Enliven Day Services phone **0800 373 654** for Enliven Day Services.

*\*A Needs Assessment and Service Coordination service assessment and referral are required.*

## MAKE YOUR TAX REFUND DO MORE GOOD



**PSN is an accredited charitable organization, which means you are able to claim back 33.33 cents for each dollar donated to us over the previous financial year.**

Why not contemplate redirecting this refund towards making an even more substantial impact on the lives of others?

Explore further details at [www.ird.govt.nz/donations](http://www.ird.govt.nz/donations).



# TEACHING PRISONERS HOW TO DAD IS LIGHTING CHANGE

This article was penned by Lynne Fairs and published in The Herald on August 15th, 2023. Lynne Fairs has worked in child protection for 26 years. She leads parenting services for Presbyterian Support Northern in the Waikato region and is a senior advisor at a national level.



## It was like a lightbulb going on.

One of the dads on the parenting course in prison couldn't believe the difference it made. He spoke about having a visit from his family the previous weekend and was surprised to find the conversations he had with his children were interesting and positive.

This man now thinks all men in prison should go through a parenting course.

Presbyterian Support Northern, a 140-year-old social services provider that runs Family Works, has just completed delivering four parenting courses aimed at helping men in the justice system.

Often, the people we're seeing have not had great parenting themselves. They don't know how to do it.

One guy said he used to get bashed as a child, and it didn't do him any harm. But he's saying this as he sits in prison.

When we talk about their upbringing, they talk about getting hurt, and how they felt at home. Critically, all the guys who take the course talk about how they don't want their kids to end up in prison like them.

Parenting doesn't have to be perfect but there are simple tools to make it better.

We teach these men techniques, such as how to play with their children. For example, we play snakes and ladders. It's a board game of chance and luck. You don't have to be skillful to win, and families of mixed abilities and ages can play together. It's a way of dads to get to know their children and learn about their personalities.

One father told me he had asked his partner to visit the \$3 shop to buy a snakes and ladders game for him to play with his family when he gets out of prison.

Another exercise involves working as a group to make a card for every father's child. Some of them have never done this before and they love it. It doesn't

matter if they can't write perfectly – it's from mum and dad.

In these courses, they are learning about the importance of communication, how to talk to children, and how that lays the foundation for trust.

When dads and kids are together, children need to trust they won't be judged harshly if they make a mistake. We talk about how mistakes are good and part of learning. Parenting is not about discipline or punishment or fighting.

I believe you should never argue with a teenager because, if you do, it means someone will win and someone will lose. What you're looking for is a change in behaviour and coming up with a solution.

There are ways to get around fighting, such as cooling-down time. It's not only for the child, it's also for the parent.

We also talk about love languages. If you don't understand your partner or child's love language, you are going to miss important information.

I remember going to visit a mum who had just given birth. I could hear the baby's father banging away on the roof making lots of noise, and I could see she wasn't happy. She thought he didn't care because he was outside, leaving her alone inside. But that was his love language: acts of service.

I can't agree more with a dad who wrote that all men in the justice system should have a chance to do a parenting course.

Working in child protection for nearly three decades, I'm a problem solver. All the statistics and my experience show family violence is a big issue.

Social workers often talk about plans of safety to protect mothers and children. Fathers, however, seem to be forgotten about or a tag-on, always perceived as the perpetrator.

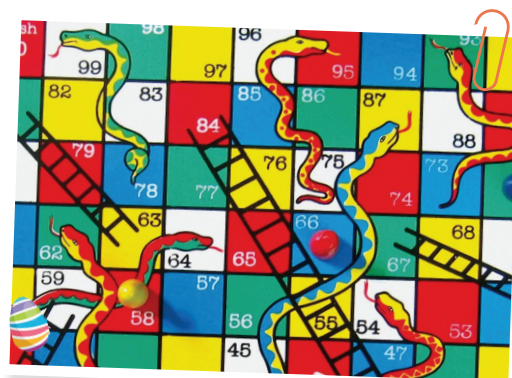
As a key to good relationships, we need to talk more to men about families. Most women want their partners in the child's life. Most kids want their dad in their lives.

Helping this group understand the value of parenting, and how that can support their children, is so important. These men are going to parent the next generation.

Childhood is such a small amount of time compared to the rest of life. It can often finish at 14.

That's a pretty small window for children to be set on the path that will help them make good choices.

Every time we run a course, we can see one or two dads in each group for whom the lightbulb flickers on, and we can be confident we've made a real difference to that family.



Donations help make this possible. Please contribute by visiting [www.psn.org.nz/donate](http://www.psn.org.nz/donate) or by scanning this QR code



**LET'S CREATE POSITIVE CHANGE.**

# CELEBRATING AN AUCKLAND BAKER 113 YEARS ON

In November this year, we celebrate PSN's 140 years of service and it seems only fitting to explore PSN's rich history, particularly how our services today have been enabled by a bequest made long ago.



## The Leslie Family's Enduring Impact on New Zealand's Vulnerable Children

In 1911, a compassionate gesture of Auckland baker, James Leslie and his wife Jessie Leslie, laid the foundation for a legacy of care and support for vulnerable children in New Zealand. The Leslies made a bequest that led to the establishment of the Leslie Presbyterian Orphanage, a source of hope for countless children in need of a nurturing home at the time.

The Leslie's bequest also paved the way for several other Presbyterian children's homes to be established in the Auckland region.

The impact of the Leslies' bequest extends beyond the walls of the orphanage into the lives of many generations of children and families who found solace and support during their time of need.

For many years, institutionalised care was the norm, but in the 1970s, family centres began replacing residential care for children. In the 1980s, the Leslie Family Centre

gained a strong reputation for supporting parents with their children's behavioural challenges, particularly through innovative parenting programmes.

In 1990, the Leslie Centre relocated to Greenlane, and focused on family counselling and helping children with behavioural issues and who had experienced sexual abuse. It moved to Mt Roskill in 2002 to bring it closer to the community it serves, specialising in early intervention with "at risk" families and working to break the cycles of poverty, social alienation, and violence.

The Leslie's original act of kindness so many years ago sowed seeds of hope and security for thousands of people in the years that followed. It created a long-term legacy of care and compassion, which continues to echo through the lives of those who have benefited from the care and support of the

Leslie Centre, embodying the spirit of kindness and empathy that remains at the heart of PSN's endeavours.



DINING ROOM.—LESLIE PRESBYTERIAN ORPHANAGE, AUCKLAND, N.Z.

Thank you James and Jessie Leslie for your gift to PSN 113 years ago.

*Your generosity endures!*



Caroline Boggs (Family Works Administrator, Family Works Waitakere) and Fuji Kato (Social Services Operations Manager).

**Please consider leaving a lasting legacy of support by including PSN in your Will.**

Your bequest can make a profound difference in the lives of vulnerable individuals and families, ensuring that vital services and compassionate care continue for generations to come.

For further information on leaving a legacy gift in your Will, we invite you to reach out to our Planned Giving Coordinator, **Vivienne Riddell**, at **09 520 8628** or **021 329 938**, or via email at **vivienne.riddell@psn.org.nz**. Vivienne is happy to address any questions you may have about how your gift will support PSN's mission.



# TRANSFORMING LIVES WITH KIDSHINE



**Most brain development happens in the first three years of life, and these formative years affect the way children think, act and feel for the rest of their lives.**

Early exposure to violence and abuse can severely impact brain development. A child does not have to be hit to be hurt – if they witness yelling, fighting, pushing, hitting and the smashing of objects they form unhealthy brain connections, and experience toxic stress hormones that hinder growth.

The Shine KIDshine programme has been designed specifically to support children who have been exposed to, or have experienced, family violence.

## Children who grow up in a violent environment can develop:

- Learning difficulties
- Problems with controlling anger and emotions
- A tendency towards criminal activities
- Mental-health issues
- Abusive relationships
- An addiction to drugs and alcohol
- Suicidal thoughts.



## From fear to freedom

Imagine being eight years old and carrying the weight of a secret that no child should bear. This is the reality that twins Mark and Yasmine\* faced – but their story isn't just one of darkness: it's a story of hope, resilience and the incredible impact of proper support.

Following a referral from Family Works, KIDshine stepped in to support a mother and her twins. Despite a shared custody arrangement following the parents' separation, the twins endured ongoing physical abuse from their father. However, their bravery shone through as they courageously confided in their mother about their experiences. Worried for her children, she sought tools and support to help them navigate the emotional and physical challenges they were confronting.

Initially, Oranga Tamariki's involvement temporarily kept the twins from their dad. However, KIDshine was able to collaborate with the family to ensure their long-term emotional and physical safety.

### Strength in Unity

Mark and Yasmine were given specialised safety programme support in a group setting together. The sessions were designed to work on safety planning – exploring feelings and strategies on how to deal with difficult feelings; support with healthy friendships; learning how to help each other; and how to be there for each other more often.

Thanks to the support of compassionate individuals like you, the twins received crucial tools to navigate their

challenging circumstances and develop a safety plan – empowering them to protect themselves. They were guided in understanding the complexities of their situation and provided reassurance that they were not at fault for the violence they had endured.

The group sessions brought about wonderful progress, and as the twins were the same age, they were able to encourage each other and keep each other engaged and validated, through their shared experiences.

Mark shared, "We like doing things together normally. We are like best friends so I really wanted to be with my sister for this." And Yasmine added: "I like being with my brother, because we can have some fun together while we talk with the counsellor."

Their mother agreed also – highlighting the effectiveness and efficiency of the group setting: "It helped save time, especially with a new-born baby to care for. Not having to keep one out while the other participated helped too."

This story is a testament to the life-changing work we do at KIDshine. Mark and Yasmine are shining examples of how, with the right support, children can heal, find strength in one another and look forward to a more hopeful tomorrow.

### WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Find out more about the KIDshine programme:  
[www.zshine.org.nz/how-shine-helps/kidshine](http://www.zshine.org.nz/how-shine-helps/kidshine),  
or email [Briannac@zshine.org.nz](mailto:Briannac@zshine.org.nz).

### LIGHT IT ORANGE!

Shine's annual fundraising appeal. See website for great fundraising ideas and inspiration:  
[www.lightitorange.org.nz](http://www.lightitorange.org.nz).

\* Names have been changed to protect identity