Presbyterian Support Northern

THE PSN POST

SPRING 2022

Thank you!

The generosity of caring New Zealanders has made a positive impact on families who are struggling.

These are difficult and challenging times, and community demand is high across our services of Family Works, Enliven, Shine and Lifeline. All our teams are committed to providing the best possible support to individuals, families and communities.

For many years we have been sharing Family Works updates and we plan to continue doing this. In response to feedback from our supporters, we have learnt that there is an interest in hearing about all our work across the whole of Presbyterian Support Northern. So going forward, we will be sharing more about our other services.

We will also be sharing stories about our innovative work, especially in the areas of older people and community development. For example, we will include news about our new EnlivenPlus service that supports people living with dementia and their families, and our brand new Communities Feeding Communities Initiative where we are working at the grass-roots level to empower communities to find their own ways to support each other.

Our mission is to enable 'a better life for everyone'. It is my pleasure to introduce our new newsletter *The PSN Post* – which is a great opportunity to show you, our community, how with the help of people like you, we are achieving our mission.

We hope you will enjoy and share this newsletter. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions at **supporter.relations@psn.org.nz**.

With warm regards,

Denise Cosgrove
Chief Executive – Presbyterian Support Northern

Communities Feeding Communities
INITIATIVE

For over 30 years our foodbank ran on traditional lines, where food – or money to purchase it – was donated, and the foodbank was open four days a week to distribute prepared parcels. The parcels solved people's immediate need to feed themselves for a few days.

During the height of the lockdown in 2020, our Community Relations Manager Anne Overton stepped in to run the foodbank. Anne began asking questions like: "*How can we give people in need more dignity and more security over food? And, how can we better meet their longer-term needs?*"

These questions coincided with other changes. The foodbank had been located in St David's Presbyterian Church in Grafton, but the church had been sold, so Presbyterian Support Northern was on the lookout for new premises.

This spurred Anne on to think of a different way that could be more than the 'ambulance at the bottom of the cliff' for people in need and their communities.

Partnering with the Presbyterian Church's Northern Presbytery, the PSN foodbank shifted location in mid-December 2021 to the former St Giles' Presbyterian Church site in Mt Roskill. But rather than reverting back to traditional lines, PSN and the Presbytery opted to pilot a new approach called the 'Communities Feeding Communities Initiative'. So instead of distributing food parcels, the new focus is on helping people achieve food security, including learning how to grow food.

It's about more than solely providing food for families.

It's about feeding people spiritually and ensuring relationships are valued and supported.

Anne says the Communities Feeding Communities Initiative approach is about feeding people spiritually and ensuring relationships are valued and supported.

The vision for the Communities Feeding Communities Initiative is to create a vibrant community space, establish a thriving community garden, grow fruit trees, run cooking lessons in a commercial kitchen, share ideas on how to cook food from the garden, and create a well-stocked pātaka kai (pantry or storehouse). The pātaka kai will be full of both fresh produce and dry goods like canned food, pasta and rice, that is accessible to all. People are welcome to take what they need and bring what they can in exchange, to help foster community participation.

Community Minister Fa'amanu Akeripa, Community Coordinator Grace Mua, and Kai Transitioner Amy Khyriem are on site to help strengthen relationships with the local community.

Much of the initial rapid success in growing community involvement at the space has been thanks to the connections of PSN's Social Workers in Schools.

Fundraiser Miranda McDermott at the Communities Feeding Communities Initiative site in Roskill South

Wonderful help was also given by Saint Kentigern Boys and Girls' schools. The schools donate food for the pātaka kai and have done a lot of work in setting up the community space.

Anne is on the lookout for more volunteers to work in the garden and help with the community food supply and distribution at the Communities Feeding Communities Initiative site at 1207 Dominion Road in Roskill South.

If you would like to volunteer with the Communities Feeding Communities Initiative, please contact:

Grace Mua – Community Coordinator
021 390 748 *or* grace.mua@psn.org.nz

"The Social Workers have been the gateway to building connections. The first phase of the Communities Feeding Communities Initiative was to set up a pātaka kai at May Road School, where we had a Social Worker on site. We set that up while quietly developing the site at 1207 Dominion Road, Mt Roskill, and in the process, we've been able to build trust and show integrity. As a result, relationships deepen and people get involved. People are really interested in what we are doing."

– Anne Overton, Community Relations Manager

CAN YOU HELP?

We're currently seeking funding to purchase:

- Small water tank for the community garden
- Garden fence and gate for the community garden
- Large water tank for future gardens
- Fit-out and equipment for a commercial kitchen
- Seats/benches/outdoor tables
- Commercial-size refrigerator and freezer
- Flowering plants for shade garden
- Basketball hoop and half-court
- Oven and hot-water cylinder
- Portable speaker system
- Outdoor gas pizza oven
- Garden shed
- Greenhouse.

In early September we started planting out the community garden. We'd love people with a passion for gardening to participate in our working bees and/or volunteer on a regular basis to ensure we have a productive garden.

We always enjoy meeting the local community and a great way to build reciprocal relationships is through people coming to volunteer to make up food parcels, help us stock our pātaka kai and participate in our regular 'Soup 'n' Buns' event.

Over the next few months, we will be developing our sensory nature play area and we would love input from children as to how to make this area a child-rich community space.

We are excited to see all of this begin to develop and would welcome donations to help us on this journey. We look forward to sharing more updates and advancements in the near future!

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT OUR PLANNED GIVING PROGRAMME?

My name is Vivienne Riddell and I am the Planned Giving Coordinator for PSN.

Planned giving is an excellent way to make a lasting contribution to your loved charity or charities. Sometimes it is referred to as a bequest, or legacy giving.

This form of planned giving has enabled PSN to provide important services in our communities. One example is how we were able to design innovative new programmes to help school children with behavioural difficulties.

After providing for your family, you might consider allocating a portion or percentage of your estate to PSN to help the work continue well into the future.

Talk to your solicitor or lawyer to organise your will and advise your family of your decision (to avoid surprises). You can make arrangements for planned giving anonymously or if you choose to let us know, we can thank you for your generosity and stay in touch. It's important for us to understand if you have a programme or service you'd like to designate for your bequest.

I would love to have a confidential conversation with you about our planned giving programme, and answer any questions you might have.

I can be contacted by phone at **09 520 8628** or by email to **Vivienne.riddell@psn.org.nz**

Some words from one of our inspiring bequesters...

"I've worked for Presbyterian Support Northern as a volunteer, and give money regularly. That's because they work with people in a practical and personal way—they don't just give you so-called'good advice', or hand out money and forget about you. They get to know you personally, and they're professionally trained. They help people of all ages, and from all backgrounds—people with physical difficulties or challenges with money, and people who are lonely, or afraid, or want to give up. That strikes me as really worthwhile.

I've helped my children get established in life, but they're independent now. So as well as providing something for them in my will, I've made a bequest to Presbyterian Support Northern, with their agreement. I like to think that what I've saved will go on helping people for years into the future."

Social Workers in Early Childhood Education Update

At Easter we shared news of the Family Works Northern Social Workers in Early Childhood Education programme with our donors. We're happy to report that thanks to all the generous support, we're able to make a great start towards funding further development of this project.

Social Workers in Early Childhood Education (ECE) are trained professionals who work in partnership with families and ECE centres. They provide a range of support for preschool-aged children and their whānau (parents, grandparents and caregivers).

Each Social Worker works to help children learn, grow and thrive. Success is achieved by supporting children and whānau to strengthen their skills, environment, resources and connection with their local community. PSN, through its charitable investment, is funding these roles as the programme doesn't receive any government funding. Our sincere hope is that, with generous help we can grow the team and increase the impact of Social Workers in ECE.

We are happy to share a quick update on the Social Workers in ECE programme with you. Below are some stories and testimonials for you to enjoy.

John's story

One of our Social Workers in ECE team members, Analise*, has been helping a family of four children who have been placed in care with their grandfather, John*, for wellbeing reasons. The family had been receiving considerably less income assistance than they should from WINZ. As a result, John has been finding things really tough with four grandchildren to support.

Analise helped arrange appointments and followed up with WINZ, which resulted in a large amount of backpay awarded to the struggling family. You can imagine how much of a huge relief this was for John, who had been struggling for eight months since the children came into his care.

Analise was also able to organise additional referrals to community agencies for support with bedding and to ensure the home was up to healthy homes standards. She organised funding and accessed support from Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (a programme specially designed to help empower grandparents with grandchildren in their full-time care).

John never usually reaches out for support and has always made the best of what he has. It wasn't until the kids' kindergarten checked in and offered the Social Worker in ECE services that he agreed for us to get involved. He is now able to let go of some of the financial stress, so that he can continue to be the awesome papa he is to his grandchildren. The children's future is looking much brighter thanks to the help from Social Workers in ECE.

Jenny's story

Family Works Social Worker Leonie began working with a mum called Jenny*, who had a child attending an ECE centre. When Leonie met her, Jenny had been with her current partner for around a year. Leonie picked up on a few concerning signs that indicated Jenny may be experiencing some form of family violence. Jenny was denying that there was any abuse happening, or that she felt unsafe around her partner.

As Leonie worked to build more rapport and trust, Jenny opened up and shared some of the complex trauma she had experienced throughout her life.

On hearing this, Leonie recommended some counselling, but Jenny was resistant due to some strong views and stigma she held around counselling – so the process to get her to consider support was slow and tricky.

Leonie worked with her over several months to gently chip away at these beliefs. One day, Jenny bravely agreed to accept the counselling referral.

Leonie connected Jenny to a local family violence counselling service. She also worked closely with Jenny to teach her about red flags to watch out for in relationships. Jenny learnt about what makes up a healthy, safe and respectful relationship, so that she can break her pattern of toxic, unsafe relationships, and identify healthy ones.

After several months of counselling, Jenny built up the courage to end the relationship she was in – and revealed that it had indeed been abusive.

Jenny says the counselling has totally changed her life, and that the whole experience was very positive and therapeutic.

Jenny's engagement with the Social Workers in ECE programme was instrumental in her journey to exit her unsafe relationship. It helped empower her to be strong and make the decision to move her life forwards so she could keep herself and her children safe. Her life and her children's lives are truly changed for the better.

* Names changed to protect identity.

Here is some of the positive, encouraging feedback we have received from kindergarten staff and clients of the Social Workers in ECE programme:

"Thank you for all your work for supporting our whānau – there is so much value in just having someone to be able to connect whānau with, who can then support them or connect them with the right supports in the community."
– Head Teacher

"...you have made such a difference to the work our teachers are doing in kindergartens. I know that they place high value on the support you have given and just yesterday I was out at a Kindergarten and Tania the Head Teacher said without prompting that you have done so much for their families." – Northland Kindergarten Association Operations Manager

"It was such a relief to chat with you on the phone when I was feeling overwhelmed and then having you with us in that appointment with Oranga Tamariki [Ministry for Children] to feel that there was someone else who could keep them in check if needed. I had researched about Oranga Tamariki and was really scared about what might happen to my children, but understanding the process and having someone to support us through it – I can't express how much that means to me... to be able to access other support as well is so good [Manawa Ora/Healthy Homes Initiative referral, support with WINZ, connecting with a parenting programme]." – Client

Since Easter this year, we have been able to employ a Social Worker to work with ECE centres in the Te Puke area. Within two weeks of starting, our Social Worker received numerous referrals, reflecting the demand for support that whānau have in the region. We look forward to sharing outcomes of the work we are doing in Te Puke with you in our upcoming communications.

There are several other areas across our region where we have identified the need for a Social Worker in Schools position. One of the most pressing is Rotorua, where access to affordable housing continues to be a huge issue for whānau. Because of the lack of affordable housing, many families are forced into emergency accommodation, which includes a huge number of preschool children.

One report in August last year suggests that the number of children in emergency accommodation in Rotorua has risen by 62%. This is certainly something our Family Works staff are seeing.

Tamariki (children) are telling us that they feel unsafe in emergency accommodation. They are often exposed to family violence, gang fights and gang influences, and drug and alcohol use.

Whānau tell us that living in emergency accommodation is incredibly hard, as they cannot shield their children from being exposed to these issues. However, trying to get out of emergency accommodation is very difficult. One recent report suggests that one third of all family harm reports in Rotorua are located at emergency accommodation locations.

Presbyterian Support Northern has a number of Social Workers in Schools team members in the Rotorua region working alongside many of these whānau, but there is little support for the youngest of these tamariki.

Donors make a huge difference to families in need. Help get more Social Workers in schools and donate today!

School Start First Impressions project

Too often children are starting school without a school bag or school uniform, which can negatively impact their feelings of belonging and sense of self with their peers. It can also drastically affect their attitude towards the rest of their schooling.

Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN) and School Start First Impressions (SSFI) have recently entered a partnership to help children turning five in the wider Whangārei area.

Four kindergartens were selected and the children in need who were about to turn five years old were identified. Referrals were made to SSFI, who provide school bags filled with goodies as they start primary school. This is a celebration of the child as they go through the rite of passage of starting school in the best way that they can.

One mother was unable to buy her daughter a school bag or stationery and had been worried about her starting her first week at school without them. When her daughter was given the school bag, she was so excited to start 'big school' and walked confidently into class on her first day with her bag and everything she needed. She even saw her friend from kindergarten at school who had also received a school bag. They were so excited to see each other outside the school and walked proudly into their classroom together. She has been enthusiastic about going to school each day ever since!

Each school bag includes:

- A themed backpack
- School supplies – stationery, reading book, alphabet cards
- Lunch box and water bottle
- School uniform and shoes (or mufti clothes if a non-uniform school)
- Socks and underwear
- Yo-yo, board game, stickers, skipping rope, bubble maker and a balloon
- Swim bag – togs, towel and goggles.

As we move ahead with this initiative, we are looking to involve the Church and other volunteers to pack these bags and provide different items that can also be gifted to a child.

Supporting those living with dementia to live their best life

Currently **70,000 New Zealanders** are living with dementia, but this number is expected to triple as New Zealand's population ages over the next 30 years. For each person diagnosed with dementia, at least another two or three people are impacted by the diagnosis.

In response to these alarming numbers, PSN is excited to launch EnlivenPlus – a new personalised in-home service for people living with dementia and for families struggling to cope with caring for loved ones.

EnlivenPlus offers one-to-one support for those with dementia throughout their journey, starting from their initial diagnosis. It is the first service of its type available in New Zealand and its primary goal is to enable people to remain in the comfort of their own homes for as long as possible while supporting improved quality of life for them.

"One of the biggest frustrations New Zealanders living with dementia have is that decisions are made for them, but not by them," says Wendy Hoskin, PSN General Manager Health and Disability.

"EnlivenPlus puts the person living with dementia, their partner and their whānau at the heart of decision-making and everything we do. We help them navigate New Zealand's complex health systems to get the support they need while enabling them to live a purpose-driven, stimulating and future-focused life."

Dementia is an umbrella term used to describe a group of symptoms that interfere with brain function. The most common cause of dementia is Alzheimer's disease, which accounts for 60 to 80% of cases. It is estimated around 1 million hours of unpaid support is provided each week in NZ by partners and family.

Wendy said that the 'hidden' cost of dementia is enormous. EnlivenPlus aims to offer tailored support, including regular daytime respite, enabling people living with dementia to remain in their own homes for longer. Wendy says:

"Helping people living with dementia live their best life starts by working with the person and their partner and whānau to acknowledge, but not be defined by, the diagnosis, and to truly listen to the person with dementia so nothing happens without their input."

An important part of the service is enabling every individual living with dementia to remain living a purposeful, fulfilling and connected life, continuing to do the things they love. At the same time, we are looking to reduce stress and anxiety with associated crises. This is done through our EnlivenPlus care teams, who become the person's dementia champions, made up of healthcare professionals who specialise in, or are trained in, dementia care.

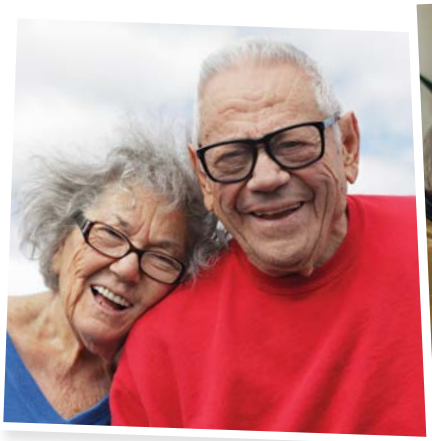
EnlivenPlus is a relationship-based service with each client supported by a range of services which could include cognitively stimulating activities that can slow the progression of dementia, participating in meaningful activities based on their goals and aspirations, and a 'This is Me' portfolio that is developed with the person living with dementia and their whānau to capture their life story.

EnlivenPlus clients also receive a Kitcal, which is an easy-to-use, dementia-specific simplified tablet device that enables them to easily stay in touch with family and friends and reminds them of their appointments.

The cost of dementia in NZ was estimated to be $2.46 b in 2020, rising to $6 b by 2050. Half of all money is spent on aged residential care, yet 90% of people wish to remain in the familiar surroundings of their home for longer.

It is acknowledged we need to keep people in the community where possible, although current funding is inadequate.

The dementia economic impact report estimates that every day saved in residential care could potentially pay for seven hours of community support.

We are passionate about demonstrating how a change in care can not only keep people independent at home, but can also lead to better quality of lives for those with dementia and their families.

Currently EnlivenPlus is a demonstration programme starting in Tauranga but is soon to be expanded to further regions. By necessity the EnlivenPlus programme is starting off as a privately paid service with the aim of demonstrating better outcomes for people living with dementia.