



# Catholic Family Support

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## From the Manager

### Merry Christmas

*On behalf of all the staff we wish you all the blessings of this festive season. We hope you and your families and loved ones enjoy this day, and look forward to an exciting new year.*



*With all the materialism of today's world, it is refreshing to listen to the words of Pope Francis*

*"The power of this Child, Son of God and Son of Mary, is not the power of this world, based on might and wealth; it is the power of love. It is the power which created the heavens and the earth, which gives life to all creation: to minerals, plants and animals; it is the force which attracts man and woman, and makes them one flesh, one single existence; it is the power which gives new birth, pardons faults, reconciles enemies, and transforms evil into good. It is the power of God. This power of love led Jesus Christ to strip himself of his glory and become man; it led him to give his life on the cross and to rise from the dead. It is the power of service, which inaugurates in our world the Kingdom of God, a kingdom of justice and peace". Pope Francis—Urbi et Orbi*



Christmas is a wonderful time of year. It is one time where the spirit of joy is reflected throughout our community. Sometimes though it feels like the spirit has somewhat been stolen by commercial interests. For many people though Christmas is a difficult time as they struggle to find the joy, as they struggle to meet the expectations that they spend lots of money on presents food and the like.

But if we reflect on the birth of Christ we remember that Joseph and Mary themselves struggled at this time. They went from place to place looking for a room but there was nowhere.

If we fast forward 2017 years we have families in a similar plight. There is no room at the inn!!! Worse, our Foodbank is giving out record numbers of food parcels. We ask what is happening in our country where not so long ago we boasted we were the best place in the world to bring up children.

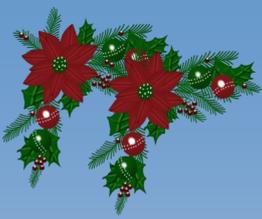
It is easy to become despondent about our situation, but I am very hopeful that things are going to get better. Mostly this is because the good people in our communities are concerned that things and are looking at how they can make a difference.

We are so lucky to have a Catholic community behind us, who support us in so many ways. People drop off clothing and other goods that we can distribute to those who need them.

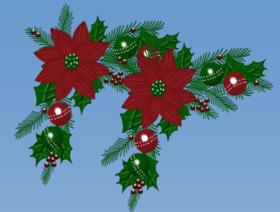
In Tauranga Moana we are developing a volunteer service (LINK Mentoring) which now has six volunteers and is growing. What a wonderful way for people to assist others.

In Hamilton I also want to pay tribute to the Greenlea Foundation which year after year has provided us with a fund to support people where there is no other avenue of support. This makes such a difference to the lives of people.

So while we should enjoy the Christmas season we should also spare a thought for the families that struggle this Christmas.



# Service Update



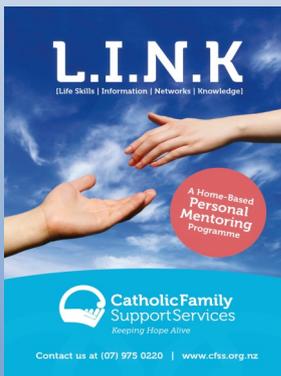
## Tauranga Moana

We are fast approaching our second Christmas offering social services in Tauranga Moana and are receiving a steady stream of referrals for our social work programme. A registered social worker provides intensive, home-based interventions for a range of problems faced by families and individuals - usually within a complex set of circumstances. This can require the worker to be alongside the family for anything from a few weeks to a year, in order to find solutions and address any risk that may be present for vulnerable individuals involved.

We undertook a Seasons for Growth grief and loss education programme at St Thomas More school in Term two and received very positive feedback from the participants, parents of the children, and the school. Seasons for Growth will continue to be alternately offered to St Thomas More and St Mary's primary schools throughout 2018.

The newest component of our Tauranga service is the LINK volunteer programme. It connects people in the community, who have a need for peer-level support, with a volunteer mentor. This programme, which we were able to start thanks to a grant from Bay Trust, was developed earlier in 2017 and will continue to be piloted for the next few months with the assistance of the six mentors we have recruited. We are delighted with the calibre of mentors and can already see the huge potential for this programme given the number of families and individuals in our community who want to increase their life skills and community networks, find specific information or receive advocacy.

In 2018 we will continue to find ways to grow and meet the needs of the parishes and the local communities.



## Financial Mentoring (Budgeting)

We were very pleased to be given a new contract this year to work with people who are experiencing many challenges which make managing money and making wise decisions extremely challenging.

Sharon Sewell agreed to take up this position, and we appointed Mututanga Davis to fill the hours left by Sharon. Mututanga is mostly doing Financial mentoring and Supervised contact work. Mututanga is a great asset to our agency, bringing her years of wisdom, experience and skill to our agency.

Sharon is doing some of her work based at Department of Corrections. We had been building a relationship with Corrections for a couple of years now, so they were happy to accept our offer to work with them to provide this service. The work is building up to the point where we probably have to think about extending our hours there. This is a very exciting initiative, and is part of our approach of working with people who are most in need.



## Family Support

It is very difficult for many families in our community. As any young parent will say, it is a struggle to provide these days. Added to this is that many of our clients have suffered childhood trauma of some kind when young (eg family violence, multiple foster homes) and they have grown up without good parental role models, so they struggle to parent themselves.

So our work is often to deal with the most immediate issue, which might be housing, debt, or some material need, then move on to try to help them make changes to their lives. It is very challenging but rewarding work. Sometimes there are amazing changes, but often the changes

are small, and we have to remember that sometimes we have to be patient and wait for the person to be ready to accept change is needed.

## Feedback

We do not get a lot of formal feedback from our clients. They usually thank us at some point, but we do not get many of our written feedback forms returned. So it was very humbling last week when a mother came in to donate some goods to us, saying that we had been such a help and she wanted to pay us back some how. We do not expect such kindness but it is very satisfying when this happens.

## Statistics

Since July we have worked with 102 family support clients and 156 financial mentoring clients. In addition we are running a Money Mates financial management programme at Anglican Action (4 people attended), and a Seasons for Growth Group at Nawton Primary at which seven children attend. So a total of around 270 people were helped over a five month period.

Most people we see have a range of issues that they need help with, but in 60% of Family Support cases, and all Financial mentoring cases, financial concerns are a major concern.

## Finally

Once again thanks to everyone who has supported us. Without this support, whether it be financial, donations of goods, or through prayer, we would struggle to provide our service.



For more information on services provided by our agency, please refer to our website: [www.cfss.org.nz](http://www.cfss.org.nz)