



# Catholic Family Support Services

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## From the Manager

Over the past few years Pope Francis has inspired and given us the vision we need for our work. I feel I have been so lucky to have lead Catholic Family Support Services over the time of his pontificate. He has clearly enunciated a vision for the Church and ourselves for working with the most vulnerable people in our community.

We are doubly blessed in that we also have in Bishop Steve a leader who also has this vision, and so we have had great encouragement to do our work.

I was recently reading GAUDETE ET EXULTATE -the Apostolic Exhortation from Pope Francis when I read what I think is a good description of the way Catholic Family Support Services works.

“Christ says: “Learn from me; for I am gentle and humble of heart, and you will find rest for your souls” (Mt 11:29). If we are constantly upset and impatient with others, we will end up drained and weary. But if we regard the faults and limitations of others with tenderness and meekness, without an air of superiority, we can actually help them and stop wasting our energy on useless complaining. Saint Thérèse of Lisieux tells us that “perfect charity consists in putting up with others’ mistakes, and not being scandalised by their faults”.

It is our place to walk alongside the people we see, not judging or placing our expectations on them, but rather accepting them for what they are. It is true that many of the people we see do or say things that we don’t always agree with, but they are still God’s creation, and we show respect to them for this.

As I have said many times before, Catholic Family Support Services is a wonderful organisation, and a great example of the Church in action. While not all staff are Catholic they all share the belief in the innate goodness of others. Its been a privilege to have been part of this team.

Thanks

*It is with much sadness that I have decided it is time for me to retire. After nearly six years in this position, I think it is time for someone new to take on the challenges and move Catholic Family Support services to the next phase in its development.*

*It has been such a privilege to have worked for the Church in this role, and one of the highlights has been the wonderful support we receive from all those who support us, either as members of Club 1000, or those who drop off clothing and other goods, or who keep us in their prayers.*

*We are also so privileged to have the support of the Greenlea Foundation. Their generosity has been extremely humbling.*

*We are so privileged to have this support. What it has meant for us is that when people come to us in crisis we are often able to provide the help that they need. Not all social service agencies can do that.*

*It has made me realise that we do indeed live in a caring society, despite things that are said to the contrary in the media. The reality is that people really do care, and are so willing to do what they can to help.*

*So I will be very sorry to leave Catholic Family Support services, but I know it is time for someone else to bring their energy to the job. For me, it is time to hang up my boots, as they say. Having said that I know I will continue to be active within our community in one form or the other.*

# Service Update

## WHAT IS FINANCIAL MENTORING

(Dianne LeBas)

Eighteen months ago, MSD introduced Building Financial Capability through "Financial Mentoring". The focus is on the client and what they want to achieve, not what we think they may need, (which was often how the old budgeting service worked) and how they are going to achieve their goals. The Financial Mentor is here to guide our clients to achieve financial independence. We are now paid by Session. Each session is 3 hours - so there is time for the appointment, contacting creditors, phone calls, note taking and report writing. If a client does not attend an appointment we charge half Session which is 90 minutes.

The clients have a financial plan that they work on - and this should be done in their words, and I guess a little prompting from the Financial Mentor. We walk alongside the client to guide them in the right direction to achieve what they have set for themselves. Sometimes, we are still the "ambulance at the bottom of the cliff", and will act on behalf of the client with creditors to achieve a quick result.



We see clients at our offices in the Te Ara Hou Village Monday to Friday, from 8.00am to 4.00pm. Two of our staff also see clients at the St Vincent de Paul shop and Corrections.

We also deliver "Money Mates", and Dianne LeBas is the facilitator for this project. Money Mates encompasses ten modules, and covers topics such as: Money - what type of money personality are you?; Needs and wants; Goal setting; Tracking your money (spending diaries, creating a budget); Paying off your debt (what is debt, and managing debt); Borrowing sensibly (credit cards/contracts); Save (how to save, Kiwisaver); Getting your fair share (taxes, entitlements, community) support; and the last session is "Pay it forward" (ways to share what we have learned).

## New Faces on Catholic Family Support Services Board

Towards the end of 2017 we received the resignation from our Board of Alison Williams. Alison had been a Board member for many years now, and it was with great sadness that we bid her farewell.

We decided to advertise through the parish newsletters for a replacement, and we had around six well qualified people apply which was very encouraging. In the end, it was decided to appoint three new Board members - John Searle from Mt Maunganui, and Niall Baker and Sister Philip-pa from Hamilton. We are thrilled to have people of such calibre join our board and look forward to their contribution to the development of our service.

At around the same time, Jane Prenter decided to step down from the role of Chairperson, and Daniel Shore was appointed in her place. Jane has done a wonderful job chairing our Board over the past six years, and although we will miss her as Chair, she is remaining on as Board member.

In Jane's place, we welcome Daniel as our new Chair. Daniel was educated at St Johns College, Hamilton, Copenhagen Law School and the University of Waikato. He graduated with a Bachelor of Laws and a Bachelor of Management Studies in 2006. So he brings a different perspective to the Board which already has made a difference.

## Supervised Contact Services

We provided a service for around 20 families last year, organising and supervising visits so the child could see their parent in a safe environment. All up this took around 700 hours of our time doing this. So it is quite a time intensive service, with each family having multiple visits (usually weekly or fortnightly). While some of these visits do not end in happy outcomes, in that it is decided that the child cannot be safely returned to the family, in many cases there is a reunification of child and parent, and it gives us a great thrill to be part of this process.

## Seasons for Growth

This is a wonderful programme that supports people going through grief or who have experienced a loss of some kind. Our staff are trained as Companions (facilitators) for Children's groups. We usually run two or three groups for children each year. This year we are planning a couple of groups in term three. Seasons for Growth is not a therapy group - rather it is an education and support group which helps children understand the changes they are experiencing because of their loss. We work closely with Gabrielle Daly-Fong who is our local trainer.

*"No family drops down from heaven perfectly formed; families need constantly to grow and mature in the ability to love. ... May we never lose heart because of our limitations or ever stop seeking that fullness of love and communion which God holds out before us." (Pope Francis -*

## Statistics

The majority of Family Support clients are fairly evenly split between Maori (40%) and Pakeha (35%). 3% are of Pasifika descent. This year we had a small increase in the number of other migrants including refugees using our services (around 5%) .

For Financial mentoring it's a little different -59% are Maori and 31% Pakeha. 5% are of Pasifika descent.

## 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)