



Community Connect

AUTUMN 2020

1 March 2020

Dear <Salutation>,

Because of You... Families are Stronger

For many of the families we support, the reality of financial hardship, poor mental health, harmful relationships, drug and alcohol issues contribute to a breakdown in social, health and whānau wellbeing. A poverty of spirit. A loss of hope. And we are often charged with intervening in the chaos and helping to shape an alternative future with families. Our staff, volunteers, facilitators and caregivers work with such passion, commitment and professionalism to meet the demand. They do not shirk the hard stuff. They are advocates for change and for social justice. They repeatedly turn challenges into successes with the whānau that engage with our service.

The end of last year saw a spike of supportive activity from our community, beginning with our street appeal in Dunedin and Balclutha at the end of November. This event highlighted the selfless spirit of our community partners, St Hilda's Collegiate, Cathedral Life, St Mark's Anglican Church Balclutha and the team at Ray White Dunedin, who volunteered their time to help collect for us. On the day the weather was on our side, which contributed to a steady collection of small change amounting to \$3,500 from donations and calendar sales.

This was just the start of a busy end to 2019. Poverty doesn't stop at Christmas, and many families we support struggle to provide the basics for their children throughout the year.

However, the additional stress of providing the perfect Christmas only contributes to their stress. I must acknowledge and extend my sincere appreciation to the many businesses and community groups who donated toys and Christmas hampers for the families we support. Below are some examples of the range of giving that came from our community:

- Ray White – gifted 5 mountain bikes to 5 children, together with a boot-load of children's toys through their Little Ray of Giving programme, which has been operating for 10 years
- H & J Smith – organised the Secret Santa trees promotion so that over 70 families in our Family Start programme received Christmas gifts for their children
- PKF Bredin McCormack Rewcastle – donated food and gift hampers to two families in need
- United Machinists – dropped by and filled up our reception area with children's toys for us to distribute to families.



It was a collaborative effort from a wide range of individuals, parishes and community groups that made a positive difference to so many families throughout Otago, who without this level of support and thoughtfulness, would have otherwise endured a bleak Christmas.

Our people, without a doubt, are our most valuable asset. In December we held our agency days and were grateful to facilitators Mere Montgomery and Hine Forsyth who provided their cultural expertise and delivered a workshop to help us take the first steps in building our own cultural framework. We also enjoyed the opportunity to share some of our success stories from throughout 2019 amongst ourselves, and reflect on the incredible work of our practice staff.

Going forward the challenges are real; our waiting lists remain long, highlighting the ever-increasing needs of vulnerable families living in Otago. It is a common misconception that our clients are exclusively from lower socio-economic communities but in fact, trauma and mental health challenges can impact anyone at any time. Early intervention is a huge component to our work, as we aim to improve early childhood and school achievement, reduce youth crime and re-offending, and reduce the impact of mental health and other health and welfare issues. Over the last 12 months, we have helped to strengthen over 2,000 families so that they have the right tools to find solutions to help them on their parenting journey. Our Vision in action - strong, connected and thriving whānau and tamariki.

We now have five regional offices throughout Otago, located in Dunedin, North Otago, South Otago, Central Otago. With thanks to a grant from The Callis Trust, we are grateful to have an opportunity to lease an office space in the new Wanaka Community Hub. Collectively we have an integral role in enhancing wellbeing in our communities.

Finally THANK YOU to our supporters; your contributions make such a positive difference and help to bridge the funding gap between our government funding and our associated operational costs, so we can continue to work together with Otago whānau to make positive and enduring change.

Sincerely



Mike Williams
General Manager

PS: Inland Revenue has now made it easier for you to claim your donation tax credit online. The recent improvements mean you can now claim your donation tax credit and upload electronic receipts online at any time. This means at the end of the tax year you won't have to complete a paper form, for more information visit ird.govt.nz/donations

Thank You

We are extremely grateful for the funding we receive from our dedicated donors, supporters, and community partners; including tangible items such as knitting, toys, and clothing for the children and families we support.

We would especially like to thank:

- Tindall Foundation
- Anglican Diocese of Dunedin
- Dunedin Casino Charitable Trust
- Callis Trust
- Leslie Groves Hospital
- Mercy Hospital
- Les Mills Dunedin