

The Advocate

Family Violence and Other Disasters

Welcome to the last Christchurch Women's Refuge newsletter for 2010. It's hard to believe the year is almost over, but after the trials of the last few months I am sure most of us are looking forward to a new year.

The 4 September earthquake is still very much on most Cantabrian's minds. Fortunately we at Christchurch Women's Refuge sustained only minor damage to our buildings, enabling us to continue offering crisis support services without pause. Our staff were great and pitched in to ensure that full service was available as soon as possible. We quickly adapted by transferring all community services to our Safe House site for two weeks so that our clients – and the many people who came to us for the first time – never lacked for the support they needed.

As an agency we also received some amazing support from our local community and as far afield as Nelson, Wellington, New Plymouth and Australia. Our genuine thanks go to everyone who thought of us, and the women and children who rely on us, following the earthquake.

Since moving back into our central community offices things have returned to 'normal', but what is different is that the earthquake has caused a significant rise in family violence incidents. Many people are surprised at this, assuming that families would be more protective and protected at such a time. Sadly, the opposite is true. The pressure caused by the loss of control over circumstances, a heightened sense of vulnerability, increased risk behaviours, financial stresses, house damage, social dislocation and a raft of other stressors compress on already fragile families. Based on other disasters we can expect family violence to stay at beyond 'normal' levels for up to two years.

And now comes Christmas. For Christchurch Women's Refuge the Christmas and school holidays herald one of the busiest times of the year.

Following a calming period pre-Christmas, as families try to keep peace during the holidays, late January and the following few months always bring a significant spike in calls for help and support.

We expect this Christmas will be extremely difficult for more Canterbury families than ever, and that many of those families will in turn need our support. Our 24-hour crisis services will continue to operate throughout the holidays, supplying support and information via our free 0800 1 REFUGE number, temporary emergency accommodation and the support of trained staff to ensure women and children remain safe.



CEO Annette Gillespie

But your help is still very much needed. Although we have all been through a great deal in the last few months, there are many families who have also suffered the additional trauma of family violence.

Any donation you make to Christchurch Women's Refuge enables you to make a real difference to those families, now more than ever.

On behalf of our clients and also our staff, I want to thank you for your interest in our work and the support you have given us this past year. Making all families in Canterbury safe is a 'team' effort, and we are all doing our part. I wish you and your families a safe and happy holiday season. And remember – if you have concerns about someone you know, we are here 24-hours a day, even at Christmas.

Annette Gillespie

Annette Gillespie
Chief Executive Officer



Photos: Martin Luff via Wikipedia



CWR Joins Post-Earthquake Support Team

The 4 September earthquake damaged more than buildings and infrastructure – it produced widespread emotional fallout that has been widely felt throughout Canterbury communities. An increased demand for general social service support became apparent in the days immediately after the earthquake. Within just two weeks, an Earthquake Co-ordinated Response Team (ECRT) was established and operational and will continue operating until Christmas 2010.

The Team has comprised senior practitioners from a variety of agencies affiliated to the Social Service Providers Association (SSPA) network, and was formed in association with Family and Community Services. Christchurch Women's Refuge has been part of this team, and our strong links throughout Canterbury have allowed us to offer support across a number of areas of concern, not only family violence.

A 0800 number (0800 777 846) was set up so that the Canterbury public could access any social service support they needed. On average 20 calls per day have been received at the government call centre, logged in a central database, then forwarded to members of the team to follow up from their own workplace. Outcomes are reported back to the central database.

The nature of the calls has varied, including advice on hardship grants, information about the Earthquake Commission process and requests for practical support such as food, financial assistance or housing. However, the vast majority of calls have related to the emotional impact of the earthquake and its aftershocks. For instance, children in some families have begun bedwetting, will no longer sleep in their own beds and are suffering sleep disturbances. General mental health and high anxiety for both children and adults have also been significant issues.

As it has become clear that more in-depth and face-to-face support is now required, the ECRT is being replaced by a network of 25 Recovery Support Service Co-ordinators, hosted at various social service providers throughout Canterbury. Christchurch Women's Refuge began hosting a full-time Co-ordinator on 1 December 2010.

If you or anyone you know needs advice or support of any kind as a consequence of the earthquake, please call 0800 777 846. You can be assured of receiving the support you need from experienced service practitioners who can advise you and help you to get life back to normal as soon as possible.

1,190 – the number of hours volunteered to Christchurch Women's Refuge (by staff and community members) in the last financial year – that's equivalent to 30 40-hour weeks!

500,000 – number of children likely to witness or experience family violence each year in New Zealand.

How Disasters Impact on Family Violence

“I can't keep my family safe. I am so angry that I think I may hurt someone. I'm worried that it may be them.” Male caller to Refuge phone line following 4/9/10 earthquake.

Just days after the quake, Canterbury Police reported a provisional increase of 53% in reported family violence.

2006 Timaru snow storms – Women's refuges reported 100% increase in demand over the following 12 months

2004 Masterton Floods – Women's refuges reported 100% increase in demand over the following six months

2004 Whakatane Floods – Women's refuges and other support agencies reported 100-200% increase in family violence over following two years

1996 – Grand Forks floods, Canada. In the following year family violence crisis calls rose by 21%, counselling of on-going clients increased by 59% and 18% more Protection Orders were processed

1992 Hurricane Andrew, Miami USA – spousal abuse calls increased 50%

1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill, Alaska – 25% of community leaders responding to an open-ended question about the effect of the spill on family problems cited “increase in family violence” first

1989 Loma Prieta Earthquake, USA – Requests for temporary restraining orders rose 50% and reported sexual assault rose 300%

Thank you to Supporters and Funders

Christchurch Women's Refuge gives a special thank to the Trusts, Foundations and other agencies who have generously supported our work this year. We are extremely grateful to these funders, whose support enables us to keep offering our services to Canterbury families.

ANZ Staff Foundation
Air Rescue Services Ltd
COGS

Canterbury Community Trust
Christchurch Casino
Charitable Trust
Christchurch City Council
The Dove Charitable Trust
The Eureka Trust
George Sevicke Jones Trust
The Harcourts Foundation
The Hyman Marks Trust
The Jones Foundation

J and M Ferrier Charitable Trust
Keith Laugeson Charitable Trust
The Lion Foundation
Lottery Grants Board
The Maurice Carter
Charitable Trust
New Zealand Post
The Perry Foundation
Pub Charity
The Southern Trust
The Tindall Foundation
The Trusts Charitable Trust
The William Toomey Charitable Trust

We also wish to thank the many community groups, businesses and individuals who have supported us throughout the year with donations of money, goods and/or their time. By helping us, you are supporting Canterbury families live safely.

UPDATE

Please help us reduce costs by choosing to receive The Advocate by email. Contact julie@womensrefuge.co.nz or call (03) 353 7501.

53% – increase in reported family violence post-earthquake

Speaking up For Our Children

Christchurch Women's Refuge is pleased to welcome Angie Brott as our new North Canterbury Advocate for Children and Young People who witness Family Violence. Angie is based in our Rangiora office.



Angie Brott, North Canterbury Advocate for Children and Young People

Angie's role is part of a Ministry of Social Development initiative and this is the fourth year Christchurch Women's Refuge has hosted the North Canterbury Advocate. Her role, like those of all Advocates, is to educate the community about the need to address family violence as it relates to children. Children are known to be harmed even by seeing or hearing violence in the home and the results can be a range of negative social outcomes such as truancy, tagging, suicide, juvenile delinquency, young adult criminality and, of course, becoming an adult perpetrator or victim.

Family violence comprises 60% of New Zealand child abuse and approximately 75,000 children witnessed reported incidences of family violence in 2008. Frighteningly, Police say that only 15% of incidents are reported, meaning that once unreported incidents are included, the real number of child witnesses or victims is closer to half a million.

Angie has vast experience in the area of family violence, having spent ten years with Women's Refuge and the Sexual Assault Resource Centre in Marlborough, eight of those years as the manager. She also spent three years on the Care and Protection Panel at Child Youth and Family in Blenheim.

Following two years in Australia, where she worked as a caseworker in the foster care team at St Luke's and as manager of Women's and Children's Services at the Centre for Non Violence/EASE, Angie returned to New Zealand to be closer to family, and her elderly parents in particular.

All of this practical experience, as well as two years at the Police College in Porirua covering topics such as how to work effectively with victims of sexual abuse and rape, and how to work effectively with non-government agencies, has been perfect preparation for Angie in her role as Advocate for Children and Young People.

"I believe very strongly that family violence is particularly damaging to children and can set them up for difficulties in later life" Angie says of her decision to take up this position. "The aim of my role as Advocate is to put children's safety and interests at the centre of family violence prevention, inspiring individuals, organisations and communities to take responsibility and action to keep children safe, secure and care-free."

Angie and husband Roger are both originally from North Canterbury and also have friends and family in the area. They are looking forward to purchasing their next home in North Canterbury and exercising their passion for renovation and creating gardens. Roger and Angie share four adult children and three grandchildren, love fishing for trout and salmon and spend a lot of spare time camping and fishing in the back blocks. Angie is also into all things equestrian and is an RAS horse judge.

Can You Give Some Joy to Local Families?



Many of the families who seek our support are struggling financially, or may even be forced out of their homes during the holiday period. If you wish to support them, we are always grateful for donations of the following:

- Food – non-perishables, including Christmas related goods
- Christmas (or birthday) gifts – for women, children and young people (including young men up to 17 years of age). We prefer gifts to be unwrapped, although you may choose to supply wrapping paper. This allows families to choose gifts for each other and enjoy the experience of wrapping them.
- Financial donations to support our services to clients
- Toys – new and in boxes preferred for use as gifts
- Toiletries and toilet bags – these are given to every resident at the Safe House
- Family entertainment passes for the families who have to stay in Safe House accommodation over the holiday period
- Cleaning products
- Toilet paper and sanitary products
- Petrol and grocery vouchers

Thank you for making a difference to local families in need these holidays.

Christmas Hours



Christchurch Women's Refuge's Crisis Services (08001 REFUGE support line and the Safe House temporary accommodation) will remain available 24 hours a day throughout the holiday period. Community services will also operate from the Safe House during our community office closedown (5pm Friday 24 December until 17 January 2011).

“It’s All About Me!” on 12 February 2011

Life can be stressful – earthquakes, Christmas, school holidays, life in general – so it’s time to treat yourself ladies!

Christchurch Women’s Refuge, in conjunction with local stylist Angela Stone of ‘Style You’, is arranging It’s All About Me!, an opportunity for Canterbury women to treat themselves a little on the afternoon of Saturday 12 February 2011 (location to be confirmed).

The aim of the day is to get as many women along as possible together to treat themselves to some clothing and lingerie kindly donated by Undercover Wear, (at no cost, all new and in a wide range of sizes!), see some styling makeovers, get fun advice and ideas about hair, makeup, style etc, and generally give themselves a bit of a treat. Entry is a \$5 donation to Christchurch Women’s Refuge and there will be raffles and refreshments during the event as well.

Our special thanks to Penny Short, a Nelson consultant for Undercover Wear. Penny arranged for the donation of all-new clothes and lingerie to cheer Canterbury women up after the earthquake, when so many families had to leave home with little or nothing. Penny and some of her colleagues will also be on-hand on the day to give fitting advice.



Photo: mawebcenters.com

So write in your diary now – “It’s All About Me” on 12 February 2011 – and email julie@womensrefuge.co.nz or watch our website for more information!

‘Quaky Cat’ Fundraising for Canterbury

A wonderful new book is a must for Christmas littlies this year, and birthdays afterwards. ‘Quaky Cat’, written by Diana Noonan and illustrated by Gavin Bishop, is a story all about one furry friend’s experience of the earthquake and proceeds are being donated to the Canterbury Earthquake Relief Fund. Diana has very generously offered to specifically gift her royalties to Christchurch Women’s Refuge.

‘Quaky Cat’ has been produced entirely by Christchurch businesses, from design through to printing and distribution. A copy is also being gifted to each Year 1 and Year 2 child in the affected areas of Canterbury.

Here’s a taste of ‘Quaky Cat’:

*On a cold Christchurch morning, while the city was sleeping,
before the birds roused him with twitters and cheeping,
curled up on the end of his friend Emma’s bed,
Tiger woke with a start ... and a feeling of dread ...*

To read more and to support Christchurch Women’s Refuge and the Canterbury recovery effort, order your copy from scholastic.co.nz

Join the journey to a violence free society



Charities Commission Number CC 30026

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

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Please add me to the email distribution list.

Please post to:

Christchurch Women’s Refuge Inc., PO Box 32 034, Christchurch 8147

Here is my donation of \$25 \$75 \$150 \$200

Other amount (please enter) \$ _____

Cheque payable to Christchurch Women’s Refuge

Or charge my Visa MasterCard Expiry date ____ / ____

Card No.

Name on Card _____

Please send me information about making a gift to Christchurch Women’s Refuge in my will.

If you wish to discuss a donation or make automatic payments please contact Julie on (03) 353 7501, at julie@womensrefuge.co.nz or visit www.womensrefuge.co.nz

Thank you! We will send you a receipt