

THE advocate

A Call to Men – Be the Change

Aviva was recently asked to help organise and host a South Island Hui aimed at creating connections and stimulating a movement of men who can be part of the solution to family violence.

The 'Be the Change' hui was the fourth in a series throughout the country supported by the It's Not Ok Campaign, and its focus was on taking the issue of family violence out to men in our community. Thirty-eight people attended the hui held at Tuahiwi Marae and all found it a very positive experience, particularly because of the safe and non-judgemental space in which men could share their experiences, develop their skills to change, or support other men on their journeys of change.

The South Island hui provided a lot of opportunity for local speakers to share and lead and, like the other hui throughout the country, it also featured It's Not Ok Champion Vic Tamati and Dr Michael Roguski's "Narratives of Change" research. Amongst the presenters were Aviva's Paul Scott, our male Peer Support Specialist, talking about the value of the peer relationship; and ReachOut Worker Darragh Fahy who presented the 'Healthy Relationship' youth

"It made me realise that if these men could change, so could I."

Hui attendee



Ready to Be the Change

programme Aviva has been developing with support from the Dublin St Trust. That programme received a lot of positive feedback from participants, including representatives of the It's Not Ok campaign, who are keen to access the programme's resources and see it extended to other regions.

"The myth is that men do not talk about issues like this. But put a group of men together with this type of issue and you can't shut them up!" said one participant. In acknowledgment of that apparent need, organisers and attendees have resolved to continue meeting and grow their representation and networks across the South Island.

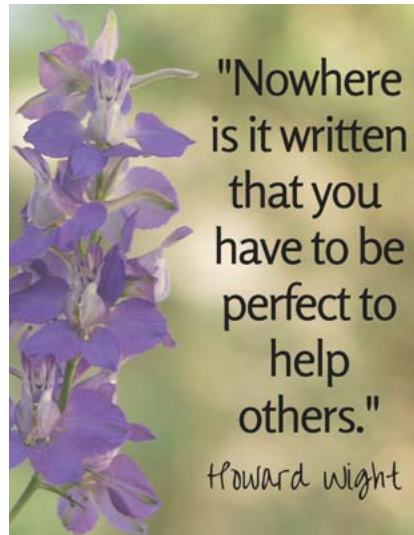
Volunteers Help the Healing for Sexual Assault Survivors

The Sexual Assault Support Service Canterbury (SASSC) has now been part of Aviva for a year and we have recently received funding to continue providing this vital service to Canterbury women, men and young people for another 12 months.

Originating from the Safecare service originally run by the Monarch Centre (now closed), SASSC provides 24/7 rape/sexual assault support and advocacy services; access to counselling; support for parents/whanau of children who have been sexually abused; and community education and resources.

Jen Sykes is Aviva's SASSC Co-ordinator and oversees the support team, all of whom are volunteers. Not only does Jen roster, support and train the volunteers, she also volunteers herself because she deeply values the personal interaction with clients and the opportunity to help people through such a time of crisis.

Some of this essential help was provided by SASSC volunteer Sarah* to Christie*, a young woman who had been in Christchurch only a short time. Her parents had arranged for her to stay in a homestay but, on the second night there, a man who lived at the house sexually assaulted her. Christie went to the Cambridge Clinic where she was informed of SASSC. Sarah arrived to sit with her throughout her medical examination, then arranged for funds from the Dove Trust provided to Aviva specifically for client emergencies to top up her phone to call home, and to buy food. Having access to those emergency funds



meant that Christie got the immediate additional help she needed as, because it was a public holiday, she was unable to access the Victim Support Grant which otherwise would have supported her. Sarah then organised Christie's accommodation in a local refuge and also liaised with her family to ensure her well-being because, with no family or friends in Christchurch, SASSC was Christie's only support.

Although SASSC clients are predominantly female, the service supports men too, such as Justin*, a young man who was the victim of a

drug-assisted attack. Justin went to the Cambridge Clinic where he too received support from a SASSC volunteer, and was later further supported to give his statement at the Police Station. Justin said he could not have gone to the Police Station without the support of SASSC.

SASSC volunteers don't just support people during examinations, at the Police station or in court; they provide initial phone support (people will later be referred to an appropriate counsellor); help them process what has happened to them; and help to contact family/friends. And the service doesn't only provide support immediately after a sexual attack – it provides support to deal with historic attacks too, and there are a growing number of such referrals coming via Police.

SASSC is currently looking to recruit more volunteers; could you be one of those special people who provide such vital support to others? Full training is provided following which volunteers are given a Buddy (an experienced volunteer) to accompany them on their first few call outs, or more if needed. These call-outs can be any time of day or night, although there tends to be more call-outs at the end of the week. If you're interested in finding out more about being a SASSC volunteer, please email jen@avivafamilies.org.nz

*Not their real names

Purposeful Peer Support Training

If you – or someone you know – has successfully overcome family violence and are now leading a fulfilling life, free from violence, you may be interested in Purposeful Peer Support training.

This 28-hour (spread over eight weeks) training programme is for women and men who want to gain skills as peers to support others in their community who are on a similar journey. Our next

workshop is planned for October 2015. For more information please visit www.avivafamilies.org.nz or contact Beryl on 378 3832.





Team Foodie – Jax, Liz and Jen – show Richie, Billy, and Mark the trophies they missed out on!

Simply Scrummy – Putting the Fun into Fundraising

Thanks to everyone who attended our recent fundraiser Simply Scrummy, and the many generous businesses and individuals who donated some truly wonderful items for the auction or goodie bags.

Team Rugby (Billy Guyton, Richie Mo'unga and Mark Ranby) squared off against Team Foodie (Aviva ambassador Jax Hamilton, supported by attendees Liz and Jen) to cook a main and a dessert under pressure and the glaring scrutiny of 115 people. Alas, there could be only one winner and, whilst Team Rugby's venison rivalled Team Foodie's lamb, Jax's team's dessert won the judges' over.

A fun evening was certainly had by all and everyone's generosity helped to raise just over \$11,000 to support children, women and men overcome the effects of family violence. Thanks!

Txt2Give – Donating Made Easy

Thanks to Fundraise Online and Vodafone, you can now make small donations to support Aviva via text.

This option is available to Vodafone users only at present, but maybe your Vodafone friend can make a donation for you in return for a coffee! Just text 'AVIVA' to:

7003 to donate \$3

7005 to donate \$5

7010 to donate \$10

Fundraise Online issues receipts for \$5 & \$10 donations. It's that easy!

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TANZANIAN PROVERB

All Aboard for the Bus Stop Tour

In recent weeks, 15 Canterbury High Schools have experienced the 'Bus Stop Tour'. The event featured a show by performing arts group No Limits, which focussed on the topics of family violence, drugs and alcohol, suicide and bullying using a powerful combination of hugely moving content, musical brilliance and some surprisingly light notes which provided comic relief.

The Bus Stop Tour was a collaborative effort between No Limits; the Youth and Prevention Work Streams of the Canterbury Family Violence Collaboration; Aviva; He Waka Tapu; and CPIT, and its goal was to put a human face to services that offer help to young people, and thereby encourage them to make use of that support when they need it. Students also received a custom-made wallet card which included tips to help others; agencies that can help; and warning signs that somebody is unsafe.

Darragh from Aviva took up the challenge to co-ordinate the programme for the event at Catholic Cathedral College. Speakers included professionals from 298 Youth, who discussed suicide and mental health; the SPCA, who talked about the link between abuse of animals and violence in later life; and Aviva, who discussed family violence using material from our Youth Programme.



No Limits on the help available to Canterbury's young people.

The Tour proved to be a very effective way to connect with many young people in our community who needed support. "In each session we had one or two kids who had concerns and wanted to talk more about their experiences" says Darragh. "We made sure we had additional staff on hand to

allow them to leave the room and talk privately and we then linked them with the school counsellors to ensure they got ongoing support."

Overall, the students rated their experience of the tour very highly – 95% of students gave it an 'awesome' ranking!

Update on the 'Irresistible Proposition'

In our previous newsletters we've introduced you to the new project that Aviva, Barnardos and Family Help Trust are working on to create a centre for health and wellbeing services in Christchurch's eastern suburbs. We've been working hard on making our vision a reality and, thanks to the support of many people, we're making great progress.

A major milestone was achieved recently when Aviva, on behalf of the co-locating partners, signed the Agreement to Lease approximately 1,000sqm of shared space on the top floor of Eastgate Shopping Centre. The leased space will be highly accessible, facilitate access to a broad range of child and family-services, and provide a high quality environment for clients and staff. It will also be located adjacent to an integrated family health centre led by Better Health, where a comprehensive range of primary care services such as community nursing, general practice and physiotherapy will be situated. The signing of the lease

means we can now move into the next phase of the project – the physical construction of our new home.

As we move forward from this significant achievement, we will soon finalise a design for the space that will be welcoming, innovative, cost-effective and highly conducive to a good therapeutic and work environment.

We've made great progress towards achieving our funding target, but we're not there yet and will continue to work hard over the coming months to secure the remaining funds we need to ensure the centre reaches its fullest potential for clients and staff. We'd like to thank

the Working Together More Fund; New Zealand Red Cross, Christchurch City Council Earthquake Mayoral Relief Fund, Ministry of Social Development, the Wayne Francis Trust and Sysdoc for their financial support. Thanks also to Sysdoc for gifting professional project management expertise.

The 'Irresistible Proposition' team, based at Aviva, will drive work forward across a range of activities over the coming months. Based on current timelines, we plan to open the doors of our new service centre in mid-2016.

If you have any questions about the project, please do not hesitate to contact us via ipvision@avivafamilies.org.nz

Looking Forward to a Brighter Future

'You can't guarantee that if you do nothing, things still won't get worse'.

Melanie* found that out the hard way.

She had been married to Brian* for 14 years, but in the last two years, Brian's behaviour had gotten out of control. Her husband had become emotionally and psychologically abusive, treated the family home as a 'hotel' and spent money on what he enjoyed – motor bikes, dirt bikes and tools that he never used – whilst the family did without. "Then Brian abandoned his job. He threatened to burn the house down, and to kill me and our son – the relationship was toxic, but I was just trying not to make it worse. I felt so isolated and scared. I didn't know where to go, how to manage it. But when he started to talk like this in front of Carl*, our six-year old – that tipped me over the edge." Melanie finally decided that she couldn't live that way anymore; more to the point, she wouldn't let their son live that way.

Melanie called the Police, and Brian left the property. Yet even after he'd left, he'd break back into the house to take items to sell. "I finally called the Police and decided to make a statement, which I hadn't done before; then it all changed. I got a lawyer, a Protection Order**; Occupancy, Furniture and Parenting Orders. It was the best thing I ever did; when I got those things in place, it got a lot better. Things suddenly got real and serious for him and he got a clear and repeated message from the Police, the courts and lawyers.

"And because we were classed by Police as high risk, they put me in touch with Carol (Aviva's Shine safe@home Co-ordinator). Brian had kicked and punched holes in the doors and walls and windows, and the house was physically unsafe and unsecure; he could come and go as he pleased." As part of the Shine safe@home security assessment Carol gave Melanie a personal alarm; installed locks on the doors and windows; and got the fire service to install smoke alarms. Carol also created a safe room in the house, so that if Brian did manage to break in again, Melanie and her son would be safe long enough for Police to arrive. "It was the first night in a long time I slept" says Melanie.



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

Melanie then undertook Aviva's 10-week women's education programme. "You feel stupid and wonder, 'how did I get here'? Friends say 'why don't you just leave'? – as if it's that easy. You're so invested in your life, and things had just built up over time; and I wanted a dad for my son. But the programme gave me lots of clarity" she says. "It (the cycle of tension building/incident/reconciliation/calm) was just the way they described it. There is power and knowledge from sharing too, and you see things in a different light. When you are open to it, you get everything you need. That education and knowledge has helped me to make informed decisions and to stay strong."

For Melanie, "one of the hardest things was the judge's comment that my son had been so affected – that was very hard to see in black and white; it was a bit of a wake-up call." In the last 12 months Carl has done Aviva's Tamariki programme and has a male mentor through his school. Melanie says the change is dramatic. "He couldn't believe the arguments and angry outbursts weren't his fault" she says, "but to have someone else say that, then he could start to believe it. He is also more open now; he says 'I love you' and he can just be a little boy. I look back and see that his bad behaviour was really just the symptom of a very unhappy boy. Now I am doing everything I can to ensure he has access to as many resources as I

can so that he doesn't become an angry young man."

"It has been bloody hard, but I see a future for myself now. I'd say to other women who are going through what I went through, reach out with both hands and grab the support that is out there. I won't be dragged down now. I can see a better life for me and my son."

** In many instances, leaving the relationship, and/or the issuing of a Protection Order, can be the most dangerous times in an abusive relationship. This is why many people experiencing violence are reluctant to take this step.

From September 2012 until the end of June 2015, Aviva's Shine safe@home service has made 490 children and 362 adults experiencing family violence safer in their own homes.

*Not their real names

Thank You to Our Supporters

Thanks to our awesome supporters over the last few months, in particular:

- First Sovereign Trust Limited – contributing to wages of our Family Support and Safe@Home workers
- NZ Federation of Graduate Women
- Long-time supporters Roy and Shirley Fear
- The Creek Trust
- Hugs All Round for the amazing handmade cot and bed quilts
- Denis Kelliher – not only does he run marathons, he runs music quizzes!
- Pumpkin Patch Northlands for donations of new baby clothes
- Zonta Club of Christchurch North, for making up personal care packs
- Smith City, for supplying us with a new dishwasher



Handmade love for the children using Aviva's services

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