

The Advocate

We're Rebuilding Canterbury Families – Can You Help?

It's been a difficult time lately, hasn't it?

We all know how it feels to be shaken up and scared, unable to control even basic things in life. Maybe you've been frightened to be in your home because it just doesn't feel safe anymore. Perhaps things have been smashed and broken. Most of us just want things to be 'normal', like 'they used to be'.

That's been the reality for many of us since the earthquakes, but family violence victims feel like that **every day**.

But you can do something that will help. You can join other people who care about family violence and making it stop by supporting Christchurch Women's Refuge Annual Appeal, Monday 18 July until Sunday 24 July. Take part in our street appeal for just two small hours (Friday 22 and Saturday 23 July), or support one of the other events ('**Look Good, Feel Good, Do Good**' and our '**Sow a Seedling of Hope**' campaign – see page 3 for more information).

You won't simply be collecting or raising funds for Christchurch Women's Refuge – you will be providing a Safe House that allows a mother to keep her children safe; you will be helping a child live with less fear; you will be helping women and children to understand that they are worth more than abuse and fear; you will be supporting a family to start a new phase of their life with the possibility of a happy future.



This is **your** chance to help and it's so easy to do. Recruit your friends, your colleagues and your families to collect, take part in an event or undertake your own fundraising activity for families living with domestic violence.

Please join us and the many people who care about making and keeping women, children and families safe, so that together we can break the cycle of violence and rebuild damaged families.

What your fundraising can provide:

- **\$10** helps provide resources for children's groups
- **\$20** helps fund our driving service (to collect children for group and return them to school)
- **\$50** will help resource our 24-hour crisis line
- **\$75** will help provide food, nappies, baby food and toiletries for the Safe House
- **\$110** covers all Safe House residents' rent for one week
- **\$500** provides electricity to keep families in the Safe House warm for one winter month
- **\$1150** pays for a woman to undertake a life-changing 10-week education programme
- **\$1275** pays for a child to undertake a life-changing 10-week education programme



Introducing our New CEO ...

Christchurch Women's Refuge is pleased to announce the appointment of Nicola Woodward as our new Chief Executive Officer.

Nicola commenced her new role on 1 June 2011, bringing with her extensive experience of the health and social service sectors in the United Kingdom and in New Zealand. Nicola has held a variety of roles including practitioner, service manager, planner and funder, strategist and researcher at community, regional and national levels within the fields of social policy, health, dependency and addiction.

"It's been a conscious choice in my career to always work with communities who are in some way marginalised, isolated or experiencing social discrimination" says Nicola. Through her work with people living with HIV and AIDS, mental ill health and substance misuse problems she has developed relationships and understandings which have also supported women, children and young people living with the effects of violence. This places her in an excellent position to guide and enhance the work of Christchurch Women's Refuge.

"I am absolutely passionate about... participation; families and communities as drivers of change."

Nicola moved to New Zealand from the United Kingdom five years ago and, having settled in Christchurch with her New Zealand partner and two stepdaughters, commuted each week to undertake work with the Counties Manukau District Health Board. While there, she provided strategic leadership to the development of specialist and consumer-led substance misuse services and facilitated the development of the school based Stand Up! Programme for vulnerable young people.

Consumer and community participation and leadership are central to Nicola's vision for meaningful change. "I am a firm believer that effective service development only happens when affected communities lead change. I am absolutely passionate about that – about citizenship and participation, and families and communities as drivers of change."

"Having lived in Christchurch for five years, I am very excited about now having the opportunity to contribute personally and professionally to the wellbeing of local people and local families" Nicola says. "I have joined a team that is committed and passionate and I am very excited about what we'll achieve together, with and for Canterbury families over the coming years. Christchurch Women's Refuge has done such amazing work throughout its almost 40 years of local service and we're now perfectly positioned to creatively build upon this legacy."

Nicola's experience and appointment promises new opportunities not only for Christchurch Women's Refuge, but for family violence victims and the health and social service sectors in Canterbury as a whole. "I am looking forward to working in partnership with the full range of agencies that have their own important part to play in preventing and responding to the impact of family violence" says Nicola. "I believe it is crucial that we all look beyond our usual boundaries towards creating new models of partnership, service and workforce, underpinned and informed by family centred research and policy."



New CEO Nicola Woodward

"He told me if I ever left him he'd take the kids. Then he'd kill them and leave me alive." Rachel, a past client

... In Our New Premises

Finally, after several false starts, Christchurch Women's Refuge is glad to announce we have (again) signed new premises for our Community Services and will move mid-June.

Since Boxing Day we have been operating our Community Services (support, education groups, administration etc – everything except Residential Services) from our Safe House.

You can now find us in new premises at 90 Fitzgerald Ave, a building easy to find (it's bright purple!) and which – despite not offering disability access – does allow us to accommodate all of our staff and operations on one floor.

Please feel free to visit us and meet our staff.



Annual Appeal Activities 18-24 July

Our Annual Appeal Week is fast approaching – 18-24 July – and it is a great opportunity for us to really spread the message about family violence in Canterbury, and for you to do something to help. Family violence is everyone’s problem – it affects our children, families and communities but you can help families to live without fear by getting involved. Here’s how:

Christchurch Women’s Refuge Street Appeal

By joining us for just two hours between 9am and 5pm on Friday 22 or Saturday 23 July (or Thursday 21 July in Merivale Mall only) you can make change.

Our supporters will be collecting throughout Christchurch, Kaiapoi, Rolleston and Rangiora, because there are families everywhere in Canterbury who need support and help, from us and from you. All the money our fantastic volunteers collect from our street appeal stays here in Canterbury to support local women and children. Call 353 7400 or visit womensrefuge.co.nz to register as a collector.



Volunteer Jo and CWR member Julie brave the cold at Riccarton market, 2010.

“He tried to suffocate me. If I’d stayed with him, he would’ve killed me.” Kay, a past client

Sow a Seedling of Hope

Since 2000 approximately 300 women, children and men have been killed by family members – their own parents, partners, siblings or children. They deserve to be remembered.



To represent these lost lives we have 300 native seedlings from Trees for Canterbury and we want your help to turn this ‘dark forest’ of family violence into symbols of hope, opportunity and possibility.

You can purchase a seedling for a minimum of \$10 each (the maximum is up to you). Choose the seedling that best suits you, plant and nurture it at your school, home or business, or offer it back to a community planting of a ‘Family Violence’ garden area within a local reserve.

By purchasing one of these seedlings you are acknowledging the impact of family violence in our communities. You are also honouring a victim of family violence and showing that hope and change can come from tragedy. Visit womensrefuge.co.nz for more information or to place your order.

Look Good, Feel Good, Do Good

Ladies, mark out 5:30-8:00pm on Thursday 21 July for a fabulous evening! It includes fashion, hair and makeup advice; wine and canapés; mingling, chatting and networking; and last but not least – shopping! And it’s all for a good reason – helping women and children break free of the trauma of family violence.

At this interactive event styling and fashion expert Angela Stone from Style You; makeup wiz Callie Sandford; and hair professional extraordinaire Vicki O’Fee from V For Hair will provide tips on how to pamper yourself and bring out your best in easy ways, and at low cost – because we all want to look good and we all need to feel good. Plus, by bidding on some wonderful silent auction items you will be doing good, as all funds from the night support Christchurch Women’s Refuge services for local families. What better way to spend a grim winter evening?!

The cost is \$40 and the venue is Elevate.

Contact julie@womensrefuge.co.nz or phone 353 7400 to book now (and spread the word!)

Melissa – a Family Violence Survivor

Melissa had known her (now ex) husband for many years before marrying him. He was a friend of her brother's and "everybody loved him. I thought I had found the perfect man. There were no alarm bells at all" Melissa says.

But things quickly changed. Within only one month of marriage Melissa received her first bleeding nose. "I was in complete shock" she says. "I confronted him about it the next day but he said it was an accident, he had tripped and lost his footing." A month later, the same thing happened again.

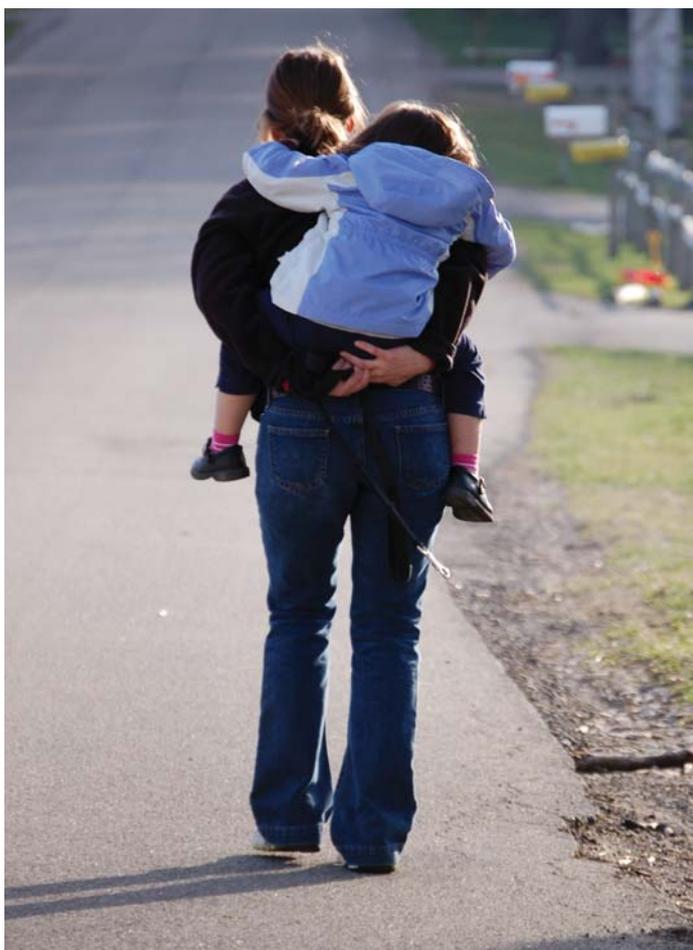


Image library photo

Melissa and the children lived with constant psychological abuse and an air of violence. "He loved animals but used to hurt and even torture them. We had two ducks and he deliberately shot them and threw them in the rubbish in front of the children. He punched and kicked holes in doors and walls and put his foot through the glass table. If I asked him to dry the dishes he'd just smash them.

"He'd even pushed one guy at work against a wall and threatened to kill him. The guys who worked with him knew he was angry. Friends knew too. Once he smashed plates and the kids' stuff in front of my mother and his mate. His mate was shocked and took off."

As his drinking escalated, her husband became even more controlling. When Melissa was seven months pregnant he threw her on the ground in a drunken rage. "I thought 'he's going to kill me. He's not going to stop'" she says. And it wasn't the only time she feared for her life. Once he tried to suffocate her. "I was less than a minute away from death, just seconds away from permanent brain damage. He got a \$600 fine." When he put a knife to her throat while their children watched, screaming, she again called the police. He served only three weeks of a three months' sentence because of a legal technicality.

"My husband would frighten most people away, but now my house is full of people and I love it."

Melissa finally summoned the courage to leave almost five years ago, after her boss asked her about a black eye. But leaving wasn't the end of her ordeal. "All those years I had not dealt with what had happened" says Melissa. "I would put the kids to bed and cry until morning. The kids were messed up because of him, even though they functioned as normal kids on the surface. I wanted them to do the Christchurch Women's Refuge course but I never thought I needed to do one. It was the kids who encouraged me to do it and it was the best thing I've ever done.

"I'm happier in a lot of ways now" Melissa says. "My husband would frighten most people away, but now my house is full of people and I love it."

But she is still not fully free of the consequences – or the fear. "He's still controlling me. I went through a stage of believing that he would show up and kill me. He's obsessed with guns and told me a lock wouldn't keep him out. I sometimes still wonder if it will happen."

Like us on Facebook



Christchurch Women's Refuge finally have a Facebook presence! Check us out and 'Like' us to keep up to date on what we are doing and to share your thoughts with us.

Receive *The Advocate* by Email

Please help us reduce costs by choosing to receive *The Advocate* by email. Contact julie@womensrefuge.co.nz or call (03) 353 7400

"I needed to do this on my own, but not alone. Now I have this blank page. I am happy, I know who I am. I never thought I'd be here." Molly, a past client

‘I’m Not Sure I Could Do your Job ...’

Social work is not for everyone and dealing with complex personal and family problems is not high on everyone’s wish list for a daily job.

For a long time that was also true for Vimbayi Nathan, our Group and Family Violence Inter-Agency Response (FVIARs) Co-ordinator.

“I wanted to ‘help people’ but I didn’t know what that looked like for me” says Vimbayi. “I’ve always been passionate about advancing the place and rights of women and children. At home in Zimbabwe I’d helped a friend set up an agency that sponsored school fees for girls and vocational studies for young women. I’d studied and planned a career in business, possibly evolving into community development, but a friendship with a social worker in the UK opened my eyes to social work.”

“Children are the nameless and powerless victims in family violence”

While retraining in social work Vimbayi undertook a placement at Christchurch Women’s Refuge and has now worked here one year. Her role is to co-ordinate and facilitate the education group programmes and to action and follow up on the highest risk Police family violence referrals.

“Our group clients come here because they want to be helped, they want change and they’re willing to do what it takes. Both women and children can come here and get the support and information they need.”

Women’s education groups are a favourite part of Vimbayi’s job. “I love watching the women make changes – their courage and resilience is really inspiring. And I love seeing how the group process works. That’s the beauty of women – they get together over a cup of tea and a cohesion forms. They support each other and empathise and understand. Magic just happens.”

Vimbayi also facilitates the children’s groups. “Children are the nameless and powerless victims in family violence” Vimbayi notes. “They are not always good at articulating how they feel – sometimes I wonder if they really get it. But then you talk to their mum and she’ll tell me how they handled something and I can then see that they did get it. They just change at differing paces and in more subtle or gradual ways than women. You have to have a keener eye and ear to see the changes.



Vimbayi Nathan, Group & Family Violence Inter-Agency Response (FVIARs) Co-ordinator

“One of the best things is watching them practice talking. So often they haven’t been able to talk about what is happening to them to their families, and at school or with friends they don’t want to be different, but in group they get used to talking about it.”

Since the earthquakes in particular the volume of high risk clients referred by Police has been a real challenge for the Inter Agency Response group (Police and Refuge), and that has been exacerbated by an escalation in the violence seen. Vimbayi also notes a trend to see both younger offenders and victims coming through on Police reports.

Dealing with the darker side of life can be draining, but there is more upside than down says Vimbayi. “I get to work with clients long enough to actually see change happen and the courage and resilience I see is genuinely energising and inspiring. I honestly love my job.”

Major Changes to Family Violence Funding

A major change to the way domestic violence services are funded was announced recently, with the withdrawal of significant funds from family violence prevention and a redirection of funding to families in crisis.

In March the government announced much of the funding would be withdrawn from the community activation “It’s Not Ok” campaign, the axing of the Te Rito initiative (which focussed on community development and cross-agency collaboration) and the cessation of Advocates for Child Witnesses of Family Violence. For five years Christchurch Women’s Refuge hosted the North Canterbury advocate, whose role was to represent the needs and concerns of children and young people, with a focus on prevention of family violence.

While much funding has been withdrawn, the remaining funding has been shifted to “frontline services” which focus on supporting families already in crisis to restore their wellbeing and prevent violence from reoccurring.

As an agency committed to creating long-term social change in attitude and tolerance of family violence, Christchurch Women’s Refuge is



committed to early intervention programmes and prevention strategies to ensure families do not end up in crisis at all. New Zealand has a poor record regarding family violence, child abuse and children’s rights, as a recent United Nations report pointed out. How removing prevention based initiatives and advocates who provided voices for some of our most abused children will improve that situation remains to be seen.

Thank You for Supporting Us

A huge thanks to our wonderful supporters! Many individuals, community groups and companies have supported us since the February earthquake. We can't possibly mention you all, but you know who you are! A special thanks to Blakely Pacific Ltd, Resene and Fonterra, as well as the Riccarton Lions and Lioness clubs, Christchurch Rotary and Altrusa.

Thanks also to the Keith Laugeson, Four Winds, William Toomey Trusts and New Zealand Lotteries – their grants are directly providing opportunities for women and children to undertake education programmes and to receive the specialist support that can enable them to create new futures.

We also want to thank Diana Noonan, author of Quaky Cat. Diana's generosity in donating her royalties from Quaky Cat sales have resulted in a \$25,000 donation to Christchurch Women's Refuge from sales so far. If you haven't got your copy yet, visit scholastic.co.nz

What Your Donations Can Do:

Here's some of the ways your support is making a difference to families:

You have provided six ten-week education programmes for women and children in Christchurch and Rangiora in the first two terms of this year. Women must have a Protection Order in order to receive funding for them and their children to undertake an education programme. Funding from donations and grants covers those costs for women and children without a Protection Order.

You have supported victims of family violence assaults by enabling us to phone every woman named on a Police report referred to us. This will often lead to women seeking medium to long-term support for themselves and/or their children. Since the earthquake the severity of violence noted on Police reports has increased dramatically.

You have provided a free, locally answered crisis line (0800 1 REFUGE), which is available 24 hours a day. This is the main way many women begin their journey away from a violent home and towards a violence free life. It is also an important support for friends, families and other service agencies who have concerns about someone they know.

You have helped address the dramatic increase in reported family violence incidents in North Canterbury through the recruitment of



an additional Family Support Worker. Since the February earthquake the move of population out of Christchurch and into rural areas has resulted in a change in family violence demographics and this has been accompanied by a frightening escalation in the severity of violence there.



Join the journey to a violence free society

Charities Commission Number CC 30026

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

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 7400, at julie@womensrefuge.co.nz or visit www.womensrefuge.co.nz

Thank you! We will send you a receipt