

# THE advocate

## From Fear to Freedom – Kim’s\* Story

“I clearly remember November 8 2010 – the day where I knew to stay would mean another night of being hurt, and this time he might not stop.

“Things had gone from bad to worse. He could not hide the lies anymore – even the outside world was starting to see that he was not the person he had claimed to be. I blamed his addiction to alcohol but I have learnt that we often use people’s addictions as an excuse for their behaviour, and it is simply not OK.

“I had been in a violent, controlling relationship for several years. Even a few months after I left him, when Jase\* was taking care of the children, he threatened that I would never see them again. The Police were called and, after he turned violent in front of them, he was arrested. I had my children safe, but to keep them safe, I had to find the strength to face this situation. I realised that I had to be truthful about it – to myself and others around me.

“In the eight years we had been together Jase had destroyed me as a person – destroyed my relationship with my family; taken and lost the money that I had worked for all my life; and destroyed my credibility, because people didn’t believe that I did not know about the things he had been doing in business. What they didn’t know is that I was too busy just trying to survive. One of the reasons I stayed is that he had stripped me of who I was. I remember thinking, ‘how on earth did I get here?’ I had no idea how to escape.

“The day after Jase’s arrest I was visited by the arresting officer; he suggested

that I contact Christchurch Women’s Refuge (now known as Aviva). From that day on my world changed. My Family Support Worker directed me to a lawyer and we arranged the parental care of my children and a Protection Order. To this day the Protection Order was the best thing that I ever could have done. It has helped show him that he cannot get away with trying to harm me – there are laws in place and the Police are there to protect us.

“The workers at Aviva then directed me to WINZ; I was humiliated. I had worked since I was 16 and at 40, here I was with nothing; two children, no husband and absolutely nothing. But I had to try and stay positive; at least I was alive and I was getting some help.

“Because of my Protection Order I was eligible to do the education course at Aviva, but I was not keen! I went to the interview thinking ‘I don’t need to do this. I will be OK.’ But I realised that I owed it to myself and my children to work out how we’d come to be in this situation, so that we never returned.

“What I learnt was invaluable. I learnt how to recognise the traits of someone who is controlling, manipulative and even violent – and they can be wearing a suit just as easily as a hoodie. And I learnt how to deal with my ex-husband, who continues to show those traits. I got so much information from Aviva and it is so important to realise that just



because you walk out their doors, it doesn’t mean they stop helping; they are always there.

“Three years ago I felt I had nothing at all and there was no way I could ever have a normal life again. But now I am working full-time in a job I love, my children are happy at school, I have an amazing, honest relationship with my family and, thanks to the support I got, we have a home that is safe. My family is safe.

“I have also used all the support available to help my children because, as children of a manipulative, controlling parent who is still in their lives, they will continue to experience this behaviour. I hope that by giving my children the tools they need for a happy adult life, I can make sure that the cycle is not repeated.”

**We have a home that is safe. My family is safe.**

(\*not their real names)

Another year is almost over and if yours has been anything like ours, it has been a whirlwind. We celebrated 40 years of supporting violence-free lives with clients, supporters and partners; renamed our agency after 40 years as Christchurch Women's Refuge; and put 'partnership' into practice by progressing plans to co-locate with five like-minded and like-hearted partner agencies.

Our ReachOut early intervention service for men has now been operating for over 18 months; men – and often their families – tell us it is really meeting a need. Specialist Peer Support is up and running and 19 women have graduated from the first two training courses. Shine safe@home exceeded all predicted targets in its first year, whilst No Interest Loans will be available for uptake in early 2014.

These services are already making a difference, so our team at Aviva sends our thanks to you – our family of volunteers, supporters and partners – for helping make them a reality. You are an essential part of the urgent action needed to bring about truly sustainable change.

Anything we as an agency have accomplished this year could not have been achieved without your support and it has never been more important to us and the families we serve. This financial year, more children, women and men (1,498 people in total) than ever received our support; that's 14% up on the previous year. Our team has been stretched to the limits yet they have managed to keep up their excellent service because they know that, with your support, they are supporting people towards better, safer futures. We are very privileged that we get to walk alongside so many people on that journey.

But with more people than ever needing support, we have to ask



Nicola Woodward CEO

directly for yours. It has become increasingly difficult to find the resources needed to offer sustainable, effective services to the many children, women and men seeking violence-free lives. If you are able to, please lend your support to help 1,500 more people begin to move away from violence to safety.

Lastly, on behalf of our team, I wish you all a safe and happy holiday with your friends, family and loved ones. We look forward to working with you to support even more individuals and families to become free from violence in 2014.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nicola" with a horizontal line underneath.

## White Ribbon Welcomes a New Ambassador

The White Ribbon campaign has a new South Island Ambassador! Andy Moscrop-Giblin, Aviva's ReachOut Service Development Manager, was appointed as an Ambassador just days before the White Ribbon campaign launched on 11 November.

White Ribbon is an international movement that condemns men's violence towards women and is celebrated on 25 November, White Ribbon Day. Ambassadors are chosen for their willingness to challenge the behaviour of abusive men and to model and spread the campaign messages and values within their own communities.

Challenging men's behaviours and supporting them to become violence-free is something Andy knows a lot about. Andy has worked as a mental health practitioner and counsellor for many years and in the last eight years has worked intensively with men who have used, or are using, violence.

"Having worked with men who use violence for so long, the White Ribbon Campaign is a refreshing way to engage with men in a positive way. I've been

involved with White Ribbon since it started in New Zealand in 2004, because it encourages people to take action. This year I took part in the march from the Central Police Station to the Hospital, two organisations which, like ours, see all too often how big the problem of violence against women really is."

"Of course, most men aren't violent and not all violence is committed by men, but the majority of serious violence against women certainly is. It's important that as men, we acknowledge our part of the problem and think about what we can do to change it – men are a big part of the solution. I think it's also important that some ambassadors are working with men who are using abusive behaviours. I can use the reality that I see of men overcoming violence to engage with other men and motivate

them toward change. I can also challenge men to reflect on behaviours that they may not even realise are actually abusive or manipulative – behaviours that for many have become normalised through family life and socialisation."

Congratulations Andy on your appointment as a new Ambassador – only the fourth for the South Island. We know you will be a great champion for the campaign.

Please join Andy and thousands of other men and women who have pledged to never commit, condone or tolerate violence against women at [www.whiteribbon.org.nz](http://www.whiteribbon.org.nz)



Andy proudly wears his White Ribbon throughout the year

# Thank You for Caring

Our offices are already filling up with Christmas love from you, our great family of supporters, and we're thrilled to be able to play Santa Claus on your behalf – thanks so much!!

As always we are very grateful to all of the funders, trusts, community groups, businesses and individuals who have supported the children, women and men we work with throughout the year. Thank you for supporting others towards safer lives. As always, we can't name everyone who has helped in recent months but please know that your support is crucial in enabling families and communities to become stronger and safer.

We'd like to thank the following funders for their particularly generous support:

- The Canterbury Community Trust
- The Catholic Diocese of Christchurch
- Christchurch City Council
- Clyde Graham Charitable Trust
- COGS
- J & M Ferrier Charitable Trust
- The Lion Foundation
- Maurice Carter Charitable Trust

And we'd like to acknowledge some of the supporters who have contributed time, money or goods to support families to overcome violence:

- The Twigger Women's Refuge Endowment Fund and PPTHE Tasman Charitable Trust
- Liquid Sports and McPhail Sports Ltd, for new shoes and handbags
- Max Fashions & Suzanne Grae stores, for new women's clothing
- Tania Domett, St Cuthbert's College, staff of The Press and CDHB, for fundraising for Aviva
- Siobhan Grimshaw, for donating proceeds of Quakes & Ladders
- Z stations throughout Christchurch for promoting and selling Quakes & Ladders
- Zonta Christchurch/Canterbury and Amberley Women's Institute, for generous donations of toiletries.

**Thank you for supporting others towards safer lives.**



## 100 Families Now Safer at Home

Over 100 families have become safer while remaining in their own homes, thanks to generous community and government support for Shine safe@home in Canterbury.

From September 2012 – October 2013, the physical security of 113 local homes was significantly upgraded, meaning that 113 women and 182 children became safer; that couldn't have happened without the generous support we've received for Shine safe@home from local community groups and businesses.

Shine safe@home physically enhances a house's security so that children and women at greatest risk of repeat violence can remain in their own home, more safely. They are also connected to Aviva's other support services, and/or those of other agencies, so that they can continue their journey towards fulfilled, violence-free lives.

Most of the women who receive the service have a Protection Order in place, legally preventing the violent person from entering the home. Shine safe@home then secures the home, dramatically reducing that person's ability to break in again. Women have the choice to stay in their own communities, children are able to remain at their regular school, and they avoid the dislocation of moving to a Safe House or trying to find another home. That is particularly important in a post-quake environment where alternative, affordable accommodation is almost impossible to find. The result? Less fear and anxiety, more social and emotional stability.

### **113 women and 182 children became safer.**

Post-service assessments to date from women with children show that, since receiving the service:

- No child had witnessed or been present at an assault
- The number of children showing aggression reduced by 79%
- The number of children experiencing sleep problems reduced by 75%
- The number of children having problems at school reduced by 89%

Need for the service in Canterbury has far exceeded targets (Aviva was funded by the Ministry of Justice to secure 60 homes over 24 months). With demand so far beyond expectations, a significant funding shortfall has meant asking for community support. On average the Shine safe@home service costs \$3,700 – an investment that not only provides enhanced physical security for a family, but support for their journey towards improved mental and emotional wellbeing. If you'd like to support a family through Shine safe@home, please use the donation slip on the back of this newsletter or visit [www.avivafamilies.org.nz](http://www.avivafamilies.org.nz)

# Christmas Time; Crisis Time?

At this time of year, individuals and families living with violence need your support more than ever. Christmas and school holidays lead to increased stress and that is reflected in the use of our crisis services which, every year, continue to be more and more needed. These crisis response services, so essential to the safety of children and women, are largely unfunded by government; only your generosity keeps them running.

Between July 2012 – June 2013, 3,605 people called our 24-hour, free Support and Information Line (0800 AVIVA NOW) for advice, support and encouragement. That is a 5% increase on the previous year and a huge 53% rise from the pre-quake year of July 2009 – June 2010. People dealing with violence in their lives continue to struggle more than ever because, like many of us, they are still trying to overcome the physical, emotional, financial and psychological damage that the earthquakes have left in their wake.

Police forwarded 2,168 reports of family violence ('POLs') to us. We used those POLs' to contact 1,817 women who, along with their children, had experienced violence that had brought Police to their homes, and 351 men (through ReachOut) who had been named on Police reports as having acted violently to their families. We reached out to them by telephone, text and/or post, offering support and our range of services. Approximately 25% of our almost 1,500 clients took up the offer of longer-term support this way.

Our Safe House – the Christchurch Women's Refuge – provided a safe space for 53 women and 42 children for an average stay of 17.4 nights each; pre-quake average stays were closer to seven nights. From December 2012

onwards the Safe House has been consistently full and we have even arranged motel accommodation for children and women when necessary. Again, this has been at our own expense. It is unusual to have the Safe House full for so long but this trend reflects the extremely difficult housing situation in Canterbury, and the fact that people are struggling to find safe, affordable accommodation to move on to.

Fiona\* knows all too well how hard that is, and how essential these services are. Fiona is in her early 60s and had experienced sexual and psychological abuse for most of her 40+-year marriage. Her husband isolated her through fear and controlled the finances to such a degree that she had absolutely no money – she had not even purchased groceries for years. Fiona had very low self-esteem, significant health problems, and believed the obstacles she faced were just too great to overcome.

After looking for support online, Fiona called Aviva's 0800 Support and Information line, and her life began to change. After gaining support by phone Fiona then began weekly education and safety planning sessions, and her self-confidence grew to the point that she decided to leave her husband. She

**“Sometimes women aren't in the right space to pick up that phone themselves, but when we phone them, it just takes away a barrier. They know there is support at the end of the phone if they want it; it can just be such a relief for them.”**

## Kate

Aviva Family Support Worker

came into our Safe House before Christmas and spent the holidays there with other women and children; with strangers, yet safe.

Once Fiona was safe and feeling stronger, the time came to move out of the Safe House – but she had nowhere to go. Temporary alternative accommodation such as the YWCA or City Mission was not suitable for Fiona, so she stayed on in the Safe House for a further three months. “The staff at the Safe House were all wonderful and very helpful, something I really appreciated” she says.

After a lot of advocacy with a regional Council, a Council flat was arranged for Fiona and, thanks to your generosity, furniture and household goods were secured for her too. Fiona was able to move back to her local community in safety. Her self-confidence has continued to grow, and she now dresses beautifully in lots of colour – a big change for her. Fiona loves her new home, her freedom and the renewed relationship she has with her children and grandchildren as an independent woman.

Women like Fiona and their families need your support now. You can help ensure that help is available 24-hours a day at the end of a free-phone line. You can help reach out to women and children who've experienced violence so bad that Police have had to come to their home. You can provide a safe bed and food in a Safe House or – when that is full (and it will be) – in a motel. These often life-saving front-line services can save lives. Please use the slip on the back of this newsletter to help others get the support they need to become safer these holidays.





## You Can Change (and Maybe Save) Lives

“Dave didn’t do anything with the children – he never kicked a ball, built a hut, took them out, took them on family holidays. He would sit on the couch watching violent adult movies, and yell at the kids for not sitting still. They were five and seven. He manhandled the children and called it ‘discipline’. He’d smack Jack and stand over him yelling ‘You f\*\*k’n little wuss, you never listen.’ Jack often carried bruises on his skinny little arms from Dave’s overbearing grip.”

(\*not their real names)

A 2011 survey\* found that two thirds of children interviewed reported having witnessed physical violence against other children; a quarter reported witnessing violence against adults; and 63% reported having directly experienced physical violence at some point in their lives. On average eight of those children (along with 14 women and seven men) will be killed by a member of their family each year.

Ironically, the Christmas holiday period that many of us look forward to so much is a time when family violence increases. Financial pressure escalates and families may be together for long periods and the stress can get out of control. The number of children, women and men who need support – maybe your neighbours, friends, families and colleagues – is already higher than ever before. It will rise even further these holidays.

But together we can help. Jack’s mum now says “My son did the programme for children; it was a real turning point for him. He realised that he had not done anything wrong to make Daddy mad and he met other kids who shared the same emotions. He has gone from

a kid who hung his head and wouldn’t look anyone in the eye, to a boy who is really starting to fly.”

Although Jack is safe now, thousands of other children aren’t; can you support them and their families to become safer these holidays?

### How your donation can help:

- \$20 helps fund our driving service to collect children for their weekly group programme and return them to school
- \$50 will ensure the 24-hour phone line is answered all throughout the night
- \$75 will provide a family’s food and necessities for a week in the Safe House
- \$150 provides a safe motel room when the Safe House is full
- \$500 can provide five weeks of family violence education for men who are overcoming violence
- \$1,415 pays for a child to undertake a life-changing 10-week education programme
- \$1,490 pays for a woman to undertake a life-changing 10-week education programme

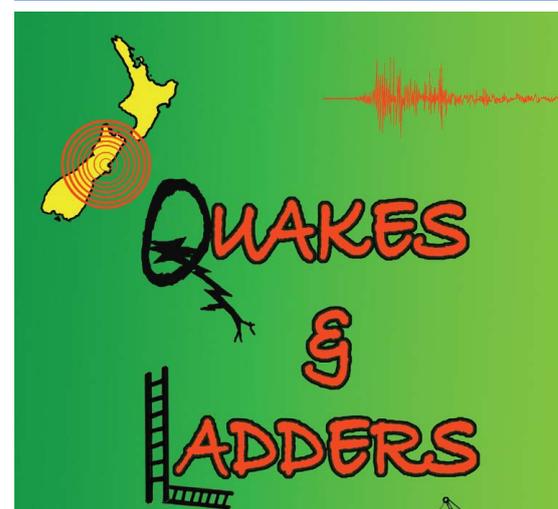
## Shaking up Christmas!

‘Quakes and Ladders’ is back on the shelves at Z stations in Christchurch and every game sold supports families living with violence.

Quakes & Ladders was developed in 2012 by Siobhan Grimshaw after her own battles with insurance and house rebuilding in the wake of the Canterbury quakes. The family game injects fun and satirical humour into the earthquake recovery process. Players go up ladders and down quakes, mimicking the emotional journey of many home-owners and tenants in the real life game of earthquake recovery.

Production costs of the game have been generously supported by several Christchurch businesses (Fotocopy in Ferrymead, Office Max in Hornby and Blacks Fasteners in Sydenham) so that every cent of the purchase price goes to charity.

Check out your local Z station or go online ([www.quakesandladders.co.nz](http://www.quakesandladders.co.nz)) to buy your copy of the game – only \$15 this Christmas. They are great for holiday drives and are so lightweight to post – the ideal Christmas gift!



**“Thank you for all the help and support you gave me at a time in my life when I most needed it. My life has taken a turn for the better.”**

Karen\*

\*Children’s Perceptions of Violence, by J. Carroll-Lind, J Chapman and J Raskauskas, published in the Social Policy Journal of New Zealand, Issue 37, (2011), 6.

# ReachOut Turns One

Aviva's ReachOut early intervention men's service completed its pilot year in June. So, has it made a difference? In an external evaluation of the service, men who received the service said yes.

The service was initially developed to offer support to men named on North Canterbury Police Incident Reports of family violence as having been violent to their family, or likely to become so. ReachOut contacts the men and offers support – information about options and choices; someone to talk to and work things through with; and practical ideas to improve close relationships. Key to the service is the spirit in which it is offered – men have their potential as people who can change acknowledged and encouraged.

The evaluation reinforced that the service is working – men's ability to effectively manage crisis situations improved, thereby reducing the risk of harm to themselves and others, and the majority of men made progress along the stages of change continuum.

Just as importantly, ReachOut contributed to the effectiveness of safety planning with women and children, and the existence of the service relieved women of the responsibility many felt to support their male partners.

Other social service and government agencies are also supportive of the service, which has now been extended to Christchurch and Selwyn through a predominantly self-referral pathway. Other Policing districts have also expressed interest in ReachOut.

ReachOut always seemed like a service that 'made sense', but it wouldn't have existed without community support. It was only through the combined generosity of many community-based and

**“Every day is a new day and new issues arise, but now I deal with them better. It's amazing the difference that has made. I'm handling things differently.”**

**Mike\***

government funders that ReachOut came into existence – once again we thank our community for your support and commitment to families living with, and overcoming, family violence. Together we can support local men to improve their lives and their relationships with those they love most.

(\*not his real name)

## Receive the Advocate by Email

Please help us reduce costs by choosing to receive The Advocate by email. Contact [julie@avivafamilies.org.nz](mailto:julie@avivafamilies.org.nz) or call (03) 378 3847

## Like us on Facebook

Aviva Families and Reach-Out Canterbury have Facebook pages. Check us out and 'Like' us to keep up to date on what each service area is doing and to share your thoughts with us.



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## Join the journey to a violence free society

Charities Commission Number CC 30026

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**Thank you! We will send you a receipt.**