

TŪMANAKO TE ORA

Catholic Family Support Services

Our mission and values

Catholic Family Support Services is the Social Service agency for the Diocese of Hamilton. Our services are home-based and provide the support necessary for people to make fundamental changes to their lives. The ultimate goal is to empower families and individuals to regain control of their own lives. Our commitment is to foster independence and confidence. It is not about a "hand-out" but a "hand-up". We welcome people whatever their beliefs.

Events

Whanau Gala

The Whanau Gala was cancelled due to Covid-19 lockdown. We plan to hold the Whanau Gala in the summer of 2021.

Charity Quiz Night

28th Sept 2020 - Charity Quiz Night at Hamilton Gardens.
6:00pm.



Keeping hope alive

Manager's Corner

Kia ora koutou,

It is a dawn of a new era for many in the community and having to do what we once took for granted differently. We have become more creative in how we plan our day to day operations and have adapted quickly. Like many individuals, whanau and families in the community these are very unprecedented times. Many have existing struggles, and now new hardships because of COVID-19.

In Pope Francis daily message (Easter Vigil, 11 April 2020) he said: *Sister, brother, even if you buried hope in your heart, don't give up! God is greater. Darkness and death don't have the last word. Courage, with God, nothing is lost.*

The team at Catholic Family Support Services have continued to **"Keep Hope Alive"** within our community. We were recognised by the Ministry of Social Development early into COVID-19 Alert Level 4 as an essential service. The team has been working remotely with our clients, via phone, zoom and other communication sources. We are providing our wrap-around services to individuals, whanau and families struggling with the day to day pressures of family life, financial hardship, emotional and mental stresses. The financial mentoring team has provided advocacy, budgeting advice and support while our family support team has provided intensive family social work.

With the announcement from our Government that New Zealand will move from alert level 3, to alert level 2 and our office will be open again to the public. We will be operating in accordance with Covid-19 regulations for the safety of our CFSS team and our clients.

The team has also worked hard preparing food parcels, personal hygiene packages, essential baby packages and cleaning packages for many of our families and whanau in the community. This has been made possible because of funding from the Ministry of Social Development Awareness and



Services

Family Support

Social work services for families who require some support to manage the challenges they face.

Children's Team

We are active members of The Hamiltons Children's team, with a Lead Professional and members of the Children's Action Network on our team.

Financial Mentoring

Our staff can work with you to help people struggling to achieve their financial goals.

BFC + Kabukura

It is a holistic approach to building financial resilience that acknowledges financial issues are not in isolation of an individual's wider social needs.

Provision of basic resources

We can access food, clothing and other basics for people who are struggling.

Supervised Contact

We provide a safe environment where children can have contact with their parents.

Preparedness Grant.

I would like to share a snapshot of the work being undertaken by the team: within a period of 3 days (20 April-23 April 2020), CFSS staff assisted 33 new families, with a total of 133 individuals. This did not include any of our existing clients. The assistance provided ranged from food parcels, local general support, safe social connection and mental health support, personal hygiene packages and baby essential packages. The team does not expect anything in return, which is why we are grateful to have received an email from one our thankful people in the community: *"Hi CFSS staff thank you so much for the food parcel, it is with so much gratitude that I receive this wonderful koha. Thank you so much and keep up the wonderful mahi."* It is moments like this that we now we are **"Keeping Hope Alive"**. We are also working closely with the Hamilton Combined Christian Foodbank team, who have helped to provide many food parcels for our vulnerable families and whanau.

As our people in the communities move into winter the team at Catholic Family Support Service will be preparing winter packages (clothing, blankets and other essentials) to help our families and whanau through the next few months.

Catholic Family Support Services has been fortunate to be able to provide some financial relief to whanau and families, by contributing or paying for essential items and expenses for individuals, whanau and families in Hamilton. This has been made possible because of the generosity of the Greenlea Foundation.

To all the services out in the community that have worked hard and continue too, thank you for your amazing work. To the funders who have come on board to help during this time you are wonderful and thank you.

To my team, you are amazing and thank you for your continued support, work in the community and **"Keeping Hope Alive"**.

May God Bless you all, Be safe, Take Care and Be kind. Together we will get through this.

Nga mihi nui,

Renee Rewi

Noho ora mai

Renee Rewi

Catholic Family Support Services at Level 3

Under Alert Level 3 (as of Tuesday 28th April 2020 Catholic Family Support Services BFC, BFC Plus (Financial Mentoring) and Family Support teams will continue to provide services for our clients and new clients, via, phone, zoom and other communication sources.

Because the lockdown means social workers can work from home we are still having contact with those who we support. What we are finding is that 'social connection' is vital for people - especially with schools not back and parents at home in their bubble 24/7. We have been thinking about what that means on the ground - if you are interested in possibly volunteering your time in some way, please let us know (email graeme@cfss.org.nz).

During Level 3 we'll still be working in much the same way, the office will remain closed to the public. However, our main focus remains on helping families reconnecting in their communities - we are also supporting Community Waikato's *Here to Help U* initiative - for more information visit www.heretohelpu.nz



Catholic Family Support Services will continue to take referrals during this time. You can download referral forms from our website www.cfss.org.nz. Please send family support referrals to referrals@cfss.org.nz, and budgeting referrals to admin@cfss.org.nz

Covid-19 & Technology

The lockdown has been a challenge for everyone. However, it has also highlighted how, as a community, we can work together to help the most vulnerable.

We understand the COVID-19 pandemic will bring unprecedented challenges with broad impacts on our communities. We have put plans in place to minimise disruption. Please keep checking our social media for updates.

It has also been impressive how quickly organisations, including ours, can change the way they operate so that they can provide their services online, or from a safe social distance.

Our team has been working from home, ensuring that those in need in our community receive the social support that they need. They have adapted to working from home using technology such as Zoom, Google duo, Messenger, FaceTime, mobile phone etc. to make the experience as seamless as possible. We are still offering Budget Advice, and Family Support you in dealing with chronic debt. We are happy to chat with anyone who has concerns about their finances before and after they exit lockdown.

We're with you for the long haul.





Reflections from The Bubble - Dianne Le Bas

We were all following progress on the Covid-19 pandemic as it stretched across our world. Even though we took measures to sanitise, wore gloves and found masks, we only realised when our Government activated Covid-19 level 3 on Tuesday, 24 March 2020 and we were given instructions to work from home that this was very serious. I quickly gathered up my laptop, some files, folders and any other information I thought I might need to work at home and exited the office.

It was 24 hours later that our Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern announced that our country was in Covid-19 level 4 - total lockdown. I had to learn to work quite differently and was lucky that the staff and I were equipped with a laptop, a printer at home and a mobile phone, so we could connect with clients.

My first days were spent sending out emails to clients, making phone calls to see how my clients were. They were grateful for contact of any kind, and I felt good that I was able to continue to work. It was not until about four days later that I had a really bad day. I cannot really put my finger on it, but I felt useless and perhaps a little depressed that I did not seem to, from my perspective, make a difference for my clients. I took some time out to mull over how I was feeling so I left work early and just did nothing. The next day, after a good nights sleep, I felt much better and adjusted my thinking patterns and was able to work better. Since then, I have had no episodes and have been dealing with between three and four clients each day, as well as undertaking phone calls from people, this is making a difference I am sure.

Just to hear someone say, "thank you for your weekly call, it is certainly making a difference to me and thank you for listening", means a great deal.

I think that for the foreseeable future, life in "my bubble" which is expanding slightly, will be my world for now, and I am happy with that as I know I am making a difference.

I am looking forward to new adventures outside my bubble.



Zoom - working together..apart

Much like other organisations, we have had to quickly update our skills and software so that we can continue to provide social services to our clients. We have had some laughs during this learning journey ,and I have to admit that yes, my cat has featured at times during zoom meetings.

This new (virtual) reality means we're all adjusting to the idea of existing as small, pixelated, likely double-chinned versions of ourselves. Even worse, Zoom coldly reflects that vision back at us, to haunt our every waking, or at least working, moment.

So in the spirit life-long-learning and sharing, below are five of the best things I have learned about Zoom so far.

1. If your workspace at home isn't quite so tidy, you can apply a background to virtually clean up the real clutter. It's like being a news anchor sitting in front of a green screen. Zoom's selection of landscapes can add a bit of whimsy to your meetings too.
2. Even though you may not have access to a projector, you can still make presentations and show meeting attendees what's on your screen. You can start a screen sharing by hitting the Alt+S keyboard shortcut, which will cut from your webcam feed to displaying to all meeting participants what you're seeing on your screen.
3. In your video settings you can tell Zoom to upgrade your appearance. Because you may not be a newscaster on the evening news, but you'll still want to look your best during your virtual meetings with colleagues.
4. By default, Zoom will show you whoever's actively speaking. However, with a single click, you can view everyone on the call by clicking "Gallery View" in the upper-right corner of an active meeting. Once clicked, it'll show you a grid of all the call's participants up to a maximum of 49 per page.
5. Some great ideas come out of meetings, but not everyone can be on the call in real-time. Or maybe you're doing a webinar, and you want to record it to use it as an on-demand asset later. Whatever the case, Zoom makes recording calls pretty easy. First, in the Zoom settings menu, before you start your call, under the Recording section, make sure 'Optimise for 3rd party video editor' is checked. That'll give you an MP4 video file that's easy to work with when using editing software.

Diagram of Zoom Meeting Attention Span

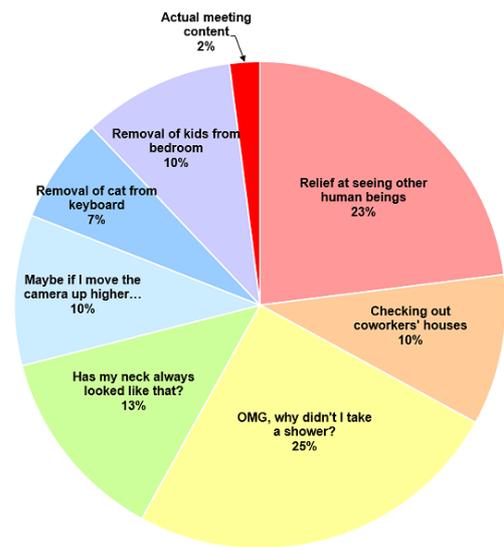


Image of the CFSS team working together/apart from their individual bubbles.



Here to Help U

'Here to help u' is a community initiative supported by Hamilton community service providers, volunteers and funders to provide hardship and social service support to locals during COVID-19.



Hardship and social service support include free assistance with food parcels, prepared meals, collection of items service, mental health support, and safe social connection.

'Here to help u' has now been launched in Hamilton, with plans to expand across the Waikato as soon as possible.

Catholic Family Support Service is one of the community service providers involved in Here to Help U, and to date, we have helped over 130 people during Level-4 of the Covid-19 lockdown.

To access this support, you go to www.heretohelpu.nz at any time and submit a request for help. A support line staff member will respond to your request.

Financial mentoring Success Stories

Our financial mentors help clients with a range of income and debt issues. Sometimes finances are often so scarce that one single event in their lives can tip the balance and plunge their finances into crises. The following is an example of how we have helped one such client.

Our client was living with extended family after the breakdown of a relationship. The Client's son was 12 months old at the time and the client was receiving a benefit. They were desperate, and asked us for some support with their difficult financial situation.

Our client has a great deal of debt through banks, finance companies, MSD, and payday lenders etc. Since joining our service, our client has entered another relationship, and they are due to have their first baby. We have supported our client in their application for an insolvency procedure which will allow our client and her young family a fresh start.

During our time working with this client they were finally able to move into a rental home of their own. Our support allowed our client to catch up on two utility bills, and paying for two ambulance trips to Waikato Hospital by St John's Ambulance Service. We also arranged food parcels for our client.

Being able to imagine a light at the end of the tunnel has allowed her the opportunity to enjoy preparing for the birth of her daughter. During a recent appointment, it was discovered that while they were mostly prepared for the birth of their baby but did not have a bassinet or cot. So, we successfully applied for a grant to buy a new cot and mattress, and our client collected the new cot from just prior to the Covid-19 lockdown.

The last time I spoke to them, our client was at home with her family during the Covid-19 lockdown and she was happily ensconced in her family home, spending stress-free family time awaiting the birth of her daughter. They are extremely grateful for the help they have received from the agency and their financial mentor, and no longer has the stress and anxiety that accompanies such financial crises.



Charity Quiz Night - 25th September 2020

With all the social distancing we have experienced this year so far, we are very much looking forward to our next social event. We are thinking positive, and are going ahead with the planning of our Annual Quiz Night. We will not know for sure if there will be a Government imposed limit to how many can attend, so

please follow our social media for updates.

This year the event will be held at the Exhibition Hall and Central Court at Hamilton Gardens. Also different from last year, we will be organising a professional Quiz Master to host the quiz, and a licensed bar facility will also be available. Cater Plus Catering Services is catering the event, and just like last year we will have a large number of raffles and auctions.

QUIZ THEME: Mad Hatter - a costume is not compulsory to enter the quiz, but there MAY be extra prizes available to those who make an effort.

Please register for the quiz by emailing events@cfss.org.nz. If you are willing to help us with our quiz in any way, please make contact with Janinne 027 603 5033.

Financial Mentoring

Do you need support with your budget? Are you finding it hard to make ends meet?

Our Financial Mentors can help you to deal with debt, support you in speaking to other agencies and organisations about your debt.

CFSS CAN HELP YOU!!!

Financial Mentoring Team at Catholic Family Support Services is here to HELP YOU. We will work with you to remove some of your financial pressures.

Call us on 07 856 3760 or text us on 021 755 753 or email us at admin@cfss.org.nz or message us.

Family Support

Intensive, home-based social work services are provided by a registered social worker to assist families and individuals who are struggling with personal, family or social issues.

Social work services are for families who require some support to manage the challenges they face.

CFSS CAN HELP YOU!!!

Call us on 07 856 3760 or email any referrals to referrals@cfss.org.nz.

Social Media

Many of you may have seen our Facebook page, but now we also have an Instagram page, so please follow our pages to keep up to date with our events and other hopefully interesting posts.



Contact

p: (07) 856-3760

e: admin@cfss.org.nz

Te Ara Hou Village

100 Morrinsville Road

PO Box 24010

