

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

Charity Quiz Night

28th Sept 2020 - With reluctance we have cancelled our quiz fundraiser for 2020.

Whanau Gala

The Whanau Gala was cancelled due to Covid-19 lockdown. We plan to hold the Whanau Gala on the 20th of March 2021.



Keeping hope alive

Manager's Corner

Kia ora koutou,

The last few months have been a roller-coaster ride for the country and Catholic Family Support Services. The 25 March 2020, Alert Level 4, COVID-19 announcement introduced a new normal for the country and community agencies. COVID-19 saw Catholic Family Support Services staff working remotely with clients, whanau and families in order to "Keep Hope Alive" within our community.

18th May 2020 saw staff return to work under Alert Level 2. The office had undergone many changes to ensure the COVID-19 health and safety requirements were met, such as social distancing, contact tracing, protective screens and signage. The 8 June 2020 announcement saw the country move to Alert Level 1 with all restrictions lifted. Catholic Family Support Services is fully operational with face to face meetings, home-based visiting and Supervised Contact onsite sessions. While at the same time continuing to provide remote services to those clients and whanau who preferred this method of contact.

COVID-19 brought new stresses, financial hardship, health issues etc. for many. It also united many community agencies who collaborated and worked alongside each other for the betterment of our communities, individuals, whanau and families that were and still are struggling. New relationships, networks and initiative were formed, and many will remain moving forward.

Other positive changes are the introduction of new staff members, Patricia Robinson, Theresa Gierke, Maria Langenhoven and Sina Asomua-Bishop (who will introduce themselves later on in the edition), a warm welcome to them all into our team.

A new initiative has seen Catholic Family Support Services work and coordinate with both MPI and Kiwiharvest to distribute pork to the Hamilton Combined Christian Foodbank. The



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.

Foodbank then handed it out to the whanau and families of the different agencies we collaborate closely with. This was a government initiative, where pork was purchased at cost from wholesalers and distributed nationwide to foodbanks.

Catholic Family Support Services joined the Here to Help U community network which is supported by several Hamilton Community Service providers, volunteers and funders in providing hardship and social service support during and post COVID-19 lockdown. Between 24 April 2020-15 June 2020 CFSS has assisted 142 new families, with a total of 610 individuals. This is not including our existing clients. The assistance provided has ranged from food parcels, local general support, safe social connection and mental health support, personal hygiene packages and baby essentials.

Over the next few months, it is forecast that community services will see an increase of social and financial hardship numbers as the country and communities continue to navigate their way through the new normal of COVID-19. As we do this together, I am reminded of the Catholic social teaching principle of the preferential option for the poor - to put the needs of the poor and vulnerable people first.

May God Bless you all, be safe, take care and be kind. Together we will "Keep Hope Alive".

Noho ora mai

Renee Rewi

Charity Quiz Night - 25th September 2020



After much discussion and deliberation we have decided to cancel the Charity Quiz Night for 2020.

Several factors went into this decision. The difficulty in gaining sponsorship from businesses who are feeling their own financial pressure because of the oncoming Covid-19 related recession being a major one. As well as the uncertainty of large crowds in confined areas being appropriate being the main reasons leading us to this difficult decision.

The event was a major fundraiser for both Catholic Family Support Services and we look forward to a bigger and better event in 2021. Thank you to all that had offered support of our

event.

Catholic Family Support Services Community Support

The Ministry of Social Development confirmed Catholic Family Support Services Hamilton as an essential service during COVID-19 Alert Level 4. During levels 4,3 and 2 the team worked tirelessly to provide 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 provided advocacy, budgeting advice and support while our family support team provided intensive social work.



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

We have also been fortunate to receive further funding from Wel Energy Trust (Hamilton), and Hamilton City Council. The funding allows us to provide winter packages (clothing, blankets), care packages and cleaning packages to help our families and whanau through the next few months.



The generosity of the Greenlea Foundation has allowed us 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.

These are snapshots of the team working on the support packages to the community. Within three days, CFSS staff assisted 33 new families, with a total of 133 individuals. Many families consist of 4

to 11 members living in one home. This has become the new normal for many families and whanau we are helping. The assistance provided ranged from food parcels, local general support, safe social connection and mental health support, personal hygiene packages and baby essential packages. In an email from one of our grateful whanau in the community said: *"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 know we are **Keeping Hope Alive.**



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 142 whanau 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.

HERE TO HELP U: If you or people you know need some extra help during this time then check out the 'Here to Help U' website. There are various hardship and social service supports including free assistance with food parcels, prepared meals, collection of items service, mental health support, and safe social connection. Go to: www.heretohelpu.nz.



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 budgeting service does not only help clients who are receiving social support from the Government. We have many clients who are in paid full-time work; and for one reason or another, they find it challenging to manage on their income. One such client was left with a lot of debt after the breakdown of a relationship. He has shared custody of his children with their mother. Recently he moved to Kirikiriroa and had to cover the cost of setting up a new house and other tenancy expenses etc.

We have helped our client manage his debt by negotiating with his creditors and decreasing his repayments to an amount that is more manageable on his income. Also, we have facilitated an interest-free loan through Nga Tanagata Finance to clear high-interest finance (144%) he had; saving him hundreds of dollars in interest.

During his time with our service we have helped him pay for new school uniforms; school holiday and sports programmes for the children; petrol, vehicle repairs, among other expenses.

Our client is now more stable financially and is not worried about how to afford the most essential resources for his family. When families are not concerned with how to pay for food, rent, and power, they can focus on the more enjoyable aspects of their lives.

Meet the team

Theresa Gierke

I have recently started my role as Receptionist/Administrator at Catholic Family Support Services. I am originally from South Africa, we relocated to New Zealand 15 months ago. My career kicked off in the banking industry. After 14 years of service, I decided to broaden my horizons and accepted a position in the private sector; since 2006, I have been working in human resources and payroll.

I have a passion for the wellbeing of people; therefore, I am part of Aotearoa's Mission without Borders. My husband and I live in Morrinsville, and we have an eleven-year-old boy. In my spare time, we go biking and explore the lovely New Zealand scenery.



Maria Langenhoven



My name is Maria, and I am originally from South Africa. However, I have lived in New Zealand for most of my life and consider this beautiful country to be my home.

I am a registered social worker here at Catholic Family Support Services. Previously I was a Social Worker at Open Home Foundation where I worked alongside families to support them in keeping their families together.

I am a firm believer that everyone has a story to tell, and everyone's story must be heard. I look forward to hearing the stories of whanau in the Waikato and walking alongside them to help them reach any goal that they would like to achieve.

Trish Robinson

Hi, my name is Trish or Tricia.

I have come to the Catholic Family Support Services team with experience from working at a similar organisation in Western Australia. After 21 years in Geraldton, I returned home to Aotearoa and begun working as the Family Support Worker at Marian Catholic Primary School.

In the past, I have also worked as a teacher, a Missionary in Vanuatu, a Prison Chaplain, a Victim Support Counsellor and then went into Management as the Programmes Manager.

I am really enjoying part of the Catholic Family Support Services Team providing some of the Supervised Contact visits.



The best of- Covid-19 Memes

Me seeing my barber after the quarantine is over



me before quarantine me after quarantine



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

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