

# People

## HELPING PEOPLE

The magazine of Presbyterian Support  
Upper South Island

Autumn/Winter  
Ngahuru/Hōtoke

2023 | ISSUE 14



Fighting back  
against the  
internal  
monsters

Rebuilding  
for a happier  
future

Breaking  
the cycle  
of family  
dysfunction

Escaping the  
bubble and  
regaining  
independence

Preparing  
for an  
exceptional  
retirement

**Presbyterian Support** Upper South Island is a non-profit social service charity serving the West Coast, Mid and North Canterbury, Christchurch, Marlborough and Nelson.

Through our service groups, Family Works and Enliven, we support children, young people, whānau, families and older people to be safe, strong and connected. It is our vision for a just, compassionate and inclusive society.

To learn more visit [www.psuppersouth.org.nz](http://www.psuppersouth.org.nz) or follow us on Facebook.



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**People Helping People** is published twice a year. To subscribe for free go to [www.psuppersouth.org.nz](http://www.psuppersouth.org.nz).

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**Privacy**

\*Some names have been changed and stock imagery used to protect our client's privacy.



Our services



# Encouraging strength and resilience



Perhaps not surprising, following the events of recent years, in 2022 Stats NZ reported an increase in the need for mental health support for all age groups. Alongside the general anxiety brought on by the pandemic, social isolation and financial pressures have also taken their toll on mental wellbeing.

In this edition of People Helping People, we share some of the stories of individuals and families/whānau we have supported in their mental health journeys in recent months. One such story includes Ashton (page 2), a young boy suffering with obsessive compulsive disorder, or Esther's story (page 4), an older lady having to rebuild her life following domestic abuse.

Thanks to the generosity of our amazing donors and supporters, we have been able to assist many children/tamariki, families/whānau, and older people/kaumātua to build strength and resilience to overcome their struggles for a safer, stronger, and more connected future.

**Mā te huruhuru ka rere te manu.**

**Adorn the bird with feathers to enable it to fly.**

Ngā mihi

Barry Helem  
Chief Executive,  
Presbyterian Support  
Upper South Island





# FIGHTING BACK AGAINST THE INTERNAL MONSTERS



*After noticing that 10-year-old Ashton\* would repeatedly ask his parents who would be collecting him from school each day, his school principal realised there might be an issue. Ashton was experiencing symptoms of obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD).*

It all began when Ashton suffered a bout of travel sickness and things quickly spiralled out of control. He was terrified of being sick again and completely preoccupied with the idea. It became so severe that he was refusing to eat certain things. If bread or milk had been left out for even a short time, he would worry it would make him sick. He began compulsive handwashing, and his hands became red raw as a result.

At Ashton's school, a student was sick, and he refused to wear any of the clothes he had worn that day – or any clothes that had touched them, even after they had been washed. He also refused to eat the foods the student had eaten that day.

On a family outing in the car, Ashton became so frightened he was going to be sick that he tried to climb out of the window. He was screaming and shaking with terror. It took a full week for his parents to encourage him to travel in the car again.

All this was having a considerable detrimental impact on his quality of life. Ashton wrote a letter to his parents saying, **“I feel sad all day every day, I’m so terrified I’m going to be sick.”** He was severely distressed.

Ashton's parents knew they could not provide the support he needed, so they asked Ashton if he wanted to talk to someone. This is when Presbyterian Support was called in to help.

## HELP IS AT HAND

Ashton was referred to one of Presbyterian Support's Family Works Child and Family Psychologists, Sandra\*, who carried out an assessment and indicated OCD.

Sandra\* explained the cycles of OCD and that hand washing provides short-term relief, but this doesn't make the feelings go away. The anxiety remains and becomes worse in the long-term. She helped to externalise OCD, explaining that it is not part of Ashton and that he could fight back against it.

She put several strategies in place to help Ashton and his whānau – this included supplying flash cards and thought spinners to provide coping thoughts. She taught cognitive thought strategies and relapse prevention techniques. Ashton loves to express himself through drawing and he created a comic book using monsters to depict his OCD and named them The Bully Army.

Sandra\* worked with Ashton on a 'Fear Hierarchy' – where he rated his fear levels for various tasks. He was asked to perform a task without washing his hands and tracked his anxiety on a graph – this visual representation helped him to realise his anxiety can only reach so high before falling again.

## FIGHTING BACK

Thanks to Sandra's guidance, Ashton can now use the strategies he has learnt to recognise his negative thoughts and ignore them without becoming distressed – he is fighting back! He has improved immensely. He now needs less reassurance, he is eating regularly, and no longer avoids triggering situations.

Testament to this, Ashton was challenged in a different way when a bereavement in the family transformed his OCD symptoms from hand washing to heavy breathing and threatened to derail his progress – but Ashton knew how to stand up to The Bully Army and won the battle.

Ashton will not be able to stop the thoughts from coming, but he can use the strategies he has learnt to turn things around and continue to stand up to The Bully Army. Sandra says she is so proud of Ashton, **“He does not listen to The Bully Army any longer and it does not scare him anymore.”**

Ashton's parents were so thankful to receive help for their son, **“It’s so nice to have our smiley boy back and to know he has the skills and confidence to help himself when he needs it. You guys do an amazing job!”**

Six months later, things are still looking positive. Ashton's Mum says, **“Ashton is doing really well and has grown into such a confident boy who is managing himself really well (with all your help!)”**



## Family Works counselling for children

If there are concerns about a child's behaviour, or emotional wellbeing, and the child is struggling, our confidential counselling and social support services are here to help.

The Family Works team includes trained counsellors, psychologists and social workers who work with children/tamariki and families/whānau on a range of issues that may be impacting their enjoyment of life, such as:

Anxiety, phobias, and panic attacks

Grief, loss, and depression

Sleeping and eating problems

Anger, violence, and effects of abuse

Behavioural issues

Relationship issues



For more information, contact us on **0800 477 874**, or email **ps@psusi.org.nz**



# Rebuilding for a happier future



Esther\* is a 72-year-old woman, who was married for 47 years. Unfortunately, the relationship became increasingly controlling and abusive, to the point where Esther was granted a permanent protection order for her safety. Managing to escape the marriage, she left her home behind and moved to a different city with the support of family. Whilst her current housing situation is now secure, she has significant mobility issues, thought to be partly due to the domestic violence.

Following her move, Esther attended a 'Living free from Violence' course through Aviva, and from there was referred to Presbyterian Support. When Counsellor, Helen\* first started working with Esther, she could see she was facing numerous issues in addition to her mobility, including low moods, low self-esteem, and a lack of self-confidence. Helen began by identifying Esther's personal strengths and values and then together they created strategies for improving her mental health and general wellbeing. Helen also focussed on regaining Esther's trust in herself and provided support in managing healthy family relationships. With the help of a social worker, Esther was able to access various forms of disability support, which will further help to rebuild her life.

Esther is now making wonderful progress. She says,

***"Being able to access free counselling has made a huge difference to my wellbeing and enjoyment of life."***

Esther has been able to regain some of her self-esteem and confidence and she says she can finally,

***"Get on and enjoy life."***

## BREAKING THE CYCLE OF FAMILY DYSFUNCTION



Referred to Presbyterian Support by Oranga Tamariki, 20-year-old Ari\* is a young man who has experienced many traumas and challenges throughout his early years.

Through no fault of his own, Ari found himself in the care of Oranga Tamariki, separated from his siblings, due to extensive family harm. As a child, he was surrounded by abuse, violence, gangs, drugs, and resulting police involvement.

Ari now lives with his partner and their two young children. One of his children has a disability and requires ongoing support. Ari has been unable to work due to mental and physical health issues and day-to-day life has been hard, juggling a household, budgeting, and being a good father and partner - at times it has been extremely stressful, but Ari has been proactive in breaking the cycle of family harm that he witnessed as a child.

The family has had to live in emergency housing and are currently boarding, a situation which could change at any time. Due to their location, with no public transport, it has been difficult for the family to get to appointments, or to the supermarket. Also, Ari's Grandmother lives in a different town and is terminally ill - so sadly, the family has been unable to visit her for some time due to the cost of travel.

However, with the ongoing support of Presbyterian Support and Youth Transition Worker, Adele\* the young family has a much more positive outlook. Adele has been working with Ari on his mental and physical health, so he is better equipped to look for work. She has supported him in connecting with ACC counselling and male mentors, as well as parenting skills courses. She has helped with food security and advocating for him in terms of housing and has helped him to access the financial support he requires.

Adele has also helped Ari to obtain his driver's licence and in finding suitable options for him to purchase a vehicle. He has recently completed a first aid course and is now considering opportunities for further training.

Adele has built a strong relationship with Ari, being there for him when he needed support and guidance, and being an advocate for him as he has become more independent. She says, *"It makes me incredibly proud and honoured to witness how this young man is working hard to break the cycle of family harm. He is a very hands-on and loving father who is working hard to build a better future for himself and his family."*

## Youth Transition to Adulthood Service

Presbyterian Support, in partnership with Oranga Tamariki, provides young people from the age of 15 with a gradual and supported transition from care, giving them a helping hand into the next stage of their lives. Young adults can request advice and assistance until they reach 25 years of age.

The team assists young people in the development of skills and knowledge and supports them to develop and learn from their experiences, with a focus on building and strengthening their support network. It is a youth-led approach allowing the young person to have more say and increasing responsibility.



For further information on the Youth Transition to Adulthood service, visit [www.bit.ly/OrangaTamariki-Care-to-Adulthood](http://www.bit.ly/OrangaTamariki-Care-to-Adulthood)



# Be my Valentine



Emily, 82, and Harold, 89, met at Presbyterian Support's Enliven Tōtara Club in Rangiora early last year. Their story began when Harold asked Emily one day if she liked going to the movies. Harold was taking another friend from Tōtara club but invited Emily to join them. She accepted and told her daughter she was going to the movies with two men!

After the other Tōtara club member did not show, Emily and Harold were left to enjoy the film alone, and their romance

blossomed from there. They continued meeting regularly at the Club, going to the movies, and enjoying each other's company over cups of tea.

Less than 12 months later, during Christmas 2022, Harold proposed to Emily.

The wedding day was set for Valentine's Day 2023 and when the day arrived, they were married at their local church, St John the Baptist Anglican Church in Rangiora.

Emily's daughter said of the relationship,

**"It has given mum a new lease on life."**

## Enliven Tōtara Club

Being socially active is essential for health and wellbeing, and Presbyterian Support's Enliven Tōtara Club helps to make this more accessible for older people/kaumātua.

The Club provides day activity programmes for over 65's in a safe, warm, and friendly environment. It supports people to stay connected within their community by meeting others and sharing activities and experiences.

For more information, please visit our website: [www.psuppersouth.org.nz/totara-club](http://www.psuppersouth.org.nz/totara-club).

# Escaping the **bubble** and regaining independence

Problems began for 9-year-old Max\* following COVID-19 lockdown, when 'bubbles' became the only way to safely connect with others. He was separated from all his friends at school and really struggled to cope - being unable to play with them or enjoy their usual bike rides together.

Max became troubled by disagreements happening with those outside of his bubble and would ask to be constantly updated on whether things were alright. He was catastrophising every situation. If he said or did the wrong thing, he would replay his worries repeatedly in his head. This anxiety would keep him awake all hours of the night, so he was losing valuable sleep. His anxieties escalated to a point where his parents would have to convince him to leave the house. Max was distraught and not in a positive head space.

His parents were not sure what action to take next, but Max's school referred him to Presbyterian Support's Mana Ake Service where kaimahi Kelly\* became involved.

Kelly provided various tools and strategies to help manage Max's worries, including using a workbook - Starving the Anxiety Gremlin, which he particularly enjoyed completing together with his parents. She provided mindfulness activities, such as grounding techniques, and worked with Max to develop his confidence and independence, using growth mindset and strength-based activities.

Thanks to Kelly's support, Max's parents and teacher reported huge improvements in his ability to recognise and verbalise his emotions. They also said he had been using the tools he had learnt to manage his anxiety in situations where he would normally become distressed.

Max also noticed the difference saying, "My class was doing a performance and I told myself, I can do this!" Something he would have certainly struggled with beforehand. His Mum's feedback has been extremely positive - she now tells all the other parents at Max's school about the Mana Ake Service and sings its praises!

When Max first started working with Kelly, he was very shy and would hardly say three words. Now, Kelly says,

**"Max is a whole different child. He has made such fantastic progress and finally has his independence back."**

## Mana Ake Service

Presbyterian Support partners with Mana Ake to provide mental health and wellbeing support to children in primary school years 1-8 across Canterbury.

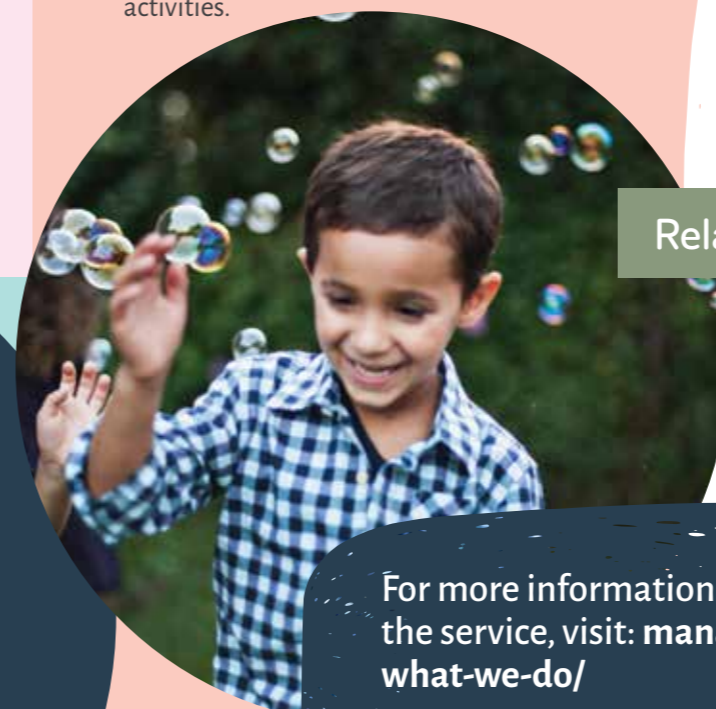
Mana Ake kaimahi include psychologists, social workers, and counsellors who help support schools and whānau when children are experiencing issues such as:

Relationships and bullying

Managing emotions

Grief and loss

Parental separation



For more information on the service, visit: [manaake.health.nz/what-we-do/](http://manaake.health.nz/what-we-do/)

# An introduction to our Māori Board members

Presbyterian Support Upper South Island (PSUSI) is on a cultural journey to honour its responsibilities to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. A crucial element in upholding that commitment, is ensuring we have appropriate Māori representation at Board level. Our current Board includes two Māori members – Sharyn Roberts and Joseph Tyro, and we are privileged to introduce them to you.

## Career background

Sharyn, our Deputy Chair, is a registered Social Worker, and her mahi for the past 20 years has been in supporting Māori aspiration and leadership. She is Pou Ārahi at Te Ora Hou Ōtautahi and is President of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers. She says her greatest influence has been her mother – one of the first Māori Plunket nurses in Aotearoa, and a staunch advocate for wāhine and whānau.

Joseph has worked as a registered Social Worker, and in the health sector for the past 23 years. His current role is Investment and Infrastructure Lead for Te Aka Whai Ora. He says his inspiration to pursue a career in the health sector came from his grandmother who had worked as a kaumātua/health promoter for cervical screening for Māori.

## Why PSUSI?

“Whānau, hapū and iwi is everything,” says Sharyn. “When I stand, I do not stand alone. I stand supported, knowing who I am, who I represent, and my why is very clear.”

Her motivation to join the PSUSI Board eight years ago, as the first Māori Board member, was driven by the realisation that whānau, hapū and iwi transformation is done collectively, by Kaupapa Māori, Iwi and Tauīwi organisations together. She adds, “PSUSI needed me, and I needed PSUSI so that whānau transformation and aspiration would be realised.”

There were many factors which motivated Joseph to join the Board. He says, “I am so impressed of the whakapapa of the organisation and the current leadership throughout the organisation from the Board Chair, the CEO, Kaiārahi, tangata whenua, Pasifika, board members, and the amazing staff that serve

our community. I really believe in the purpose of the organisation through its mission statement and organisational values, and I am grateful and humbled for the opportunity.”

## Hopes and aspirations for the future of PSUSI

Sharyn and Joseph's hopes for the future are shared – that PSUSI's strategic journey continues to give life to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and promotes a growing understanding of Mātauranga Māori and Te Ao Māori. There is also the desire to build genuine relationships with mana whenua and our Māori communities.

Joseph says, “We will create a pathway to a better future for our children and mokopuna. Allowing them to access a service that is culturally safe and free from racism.”



## Sharyn Roberts

Tēnā koutou katoa. Ko Sharyn Roberts tōku ingoa. He uri nō Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha, Ngāti Kahungunu ki te Wairoa.

I was born in Invercargill and have lived most of my life in Te Waipounamu and whakapapa to Kāi Tahu, Kāti Māmoe, Waitaha through my father however, I was raised by my Ngāti Kahungunu mother and it is the whenua of Ngamotu, Kihitu Pā and Te Rauhina marae nō Wairoa where my bones are from.



## Joseph Tyro

Tēnā tatou katoa. He uri ahau nō Ngāi Tahu rātou ko Te Atihaunui-A-Pāpārangi ko Ngāti Rangī ngā Iwi. E tipu ake au ki Ohinehou, ko Joseph Tyro tōku ingoa. Tēnā koutou katoa. I was born in Christchurch and raised in Lyttelton, close to my grandfather's hapū Ngāti Wheke and Rāpaki marae.

I was fortunate to have been raised in a community 'village' by my father Graham Tyro, mother Pani Zaitsev and my grandparents Hori Briggs (Tau) and Mekura Tuatini-Taiaroa.

## Rēwena bread

Rēwena bread is a traditional Māori sourdough bread, leavened with potato. It is perfect with meals or on its own.



### Ingredients

RĒWENA BUG	RĒWENA BREAD
1 medium sized potato sliced	5 cups flour
2-3 cups water	6 tbsp sugar
2 cups flour	1 tsp salt
1 tsp sugar	Rēwena bug, approx 500g
Warm water	350mls water

### Method:

- | RĒWENA BUG   | RĒWENA BREAD   |
|--|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cook the potato in the water, then set pot aside until the water is lukewarm</li> <li>2. Mash the potato with the sugar and plain flour until a gluey texture forms</li> <li>3. Transfer the mixture into a large glass jar and cover</li> <li>4. Leave in a warm place until the mixture forms bubbles and doubles in size</li> </ol> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once the bug is ready, combine the first lot of flour, sugar and salt into a large mixing bowl</li> <li>2. Make a well in the centre and add the bug</li> <li>3. Add water to the mixture in two lots, combining the water thoroughly each time</li> <li>4. Gently knead the dough on a floured surface for no more than 10 minutes</li> <li>5. Place the dough into a greased bowl, cover and leave in a warm place to prove (2-3 hours)</li> <li>6. Remove the dough from the bowl, and punch it to remove any air bubbles, then gently knead for a further two minutes</li> <li>7. Cut the dough in half and place into two greased loaf tins</li> <li>8. Cover and allow to prove for a second time (45-90 minutes)</li> <li>9. Once the doughs double their sizes, make cuts across the top of the bread, and place into a preheated oven at 180 degrees</li> <li>10. Bake for approximately 35-45 minutes then allow to cool before slicing</li> </ol> |



# GROWING MIGHTY MINDS



## What is Mighty Minds?

Mighty Minds is a new initiative created by Presbyterian Support's Child & Family Psychologists, Gabby Begg, and Jillisa Wainwright. It is a six-week programme for children aged 12-14 in Christchurch who are referred to Presbyterian Support, or are currently on the waiting list for individual therapy services. The sessions teach strategies for dealing with thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, and are a quick access resource to support children waiting for individual therapy.



Group sessions are held once a week, with limited numbers and age range, so that the sessions can be specially tailored to the group's needs. The content has been developed using detailed research and specialist knowledge of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, ensuring it is evidence based.



Before the sessions begin, each child is introduced to the facilitators, so they know what to expect, and are familiar with their surroundings. The first three sessions are for teaching and activities, and include strategies such as thinking traps, how to recognise thoughts in the moment and coping thoughts which are unique to the individual. The final three sessions delve into the children's personal feelings, where they also have chance to hear the struggles of the other children in the group.

Takeaways are provided with reminders of the strategies they have learnt, which can be used to help the children in real life scenarios outside of the group setting.



## A positive outcome

Blake\* was struggling with building friendships and socialising, due to his mental health disorder, and was on the waitlist for individual therapy. He was invited to join the Mighty Minds programme whilst he waited for a place to become available.



Blake suffered from severe anxiety when approaching and making friends, and when taking part in sports – this was making his life extremely challenging. However, thanks to the Mighty Minds programme and the various strategies he learnt, at the end of the six sessions, Blake's confidence and self-esteem had flourished.

Blake was surveyed at the start of the sessions, and again after the final session and showed a significant reduction in his initial symptoms, such as low mood. Now, he has greater awareness of himself, his thoughts and how they can impact him. He is also comfortable taking part in sports again and making new friends.



## The future

The sessions have received wonderful feedback, with one attendee saying, **"I want to do this again and again. I wish it was 27 sessions!"**

The hope is that going forward we can continue to offer the programme and broaden the scope to cover children aged 15-17, and those living outside of Christchurch.



For more information about Mighty Minds, contact Gabby or Jillisa on **0800 477 874**.

# Preparing for an exceptional retirement

While retiring can be a reward for years of hard work, it is also a time of significant change. Many of us nearing the milestone will start to wonder what retirement might look like. It is essential to take the time to understand the process and plan for this important life journey. This is where Presbyterian Support's Retirement Preparation Hui is set to make a difference.

With the support of Age Friendly Aotearoa New Zealand, Office for Seniors, Marlborough District Council, and Tricia Dawson, Enliven Team Leader, Blenheim - the retirement programme will soon be available to people in the Blenheim and Marlborough region who are approaching retirement. Tricia says, "I have been very pleased by the positive response we have received from the Marlborough community to this new initiative. People want to feel like they are proactively preparing for this stage in their lives and employers want to feel like they have contributed to their staff's retirement."

The intention for the Retirement Preparation Hui is to provide vital tips to help soon-to-be retirees to understand the potential challenges, find new purpose, and thrive in their upcoming retirement, for a full, rich, and rewarding life.

Each hui will take place over six weeks, with attendees set to:

- Learn the various stages of retirement
- Receive the tools to help prepare for and navigate this life change
- Develop and implement a retirement plan based on individual needs
- Learn 'top tips' from those who have already experienced retirement
- Hear from a range of experts across a variety of topics including health, finance, employment, and community engagement
- Develop friendships through this shared experience
- Confirm "What does my retirement look like me for me?"



So far, the project has secured \$10,000 in funding to run for an initial 12 months, with three separate groups attending during that time. The first cohort is due to begin the programme on 1 June, followed by the second in August and third in November.

For more information on the Retirement Preparation Hui – contact Tricia Dawson on **027 389 4305/03 265 4240** or email **triciad@psusi.org.nz**



# Tuning Into Kids™ for deeper connections

Tuning Into Kids™ (TIK) is a parenting programme which helps parents teach their children/tamariki how to understand and regulate their emotions, and how to communicate how they feel. It is a globally recognised programme which Presbyterian Support's Family Works Service offers.

Research has shown that having emotionally competent tamariki leads to increased self-confidence, greater physical health, better performance in school, and healthier social relationships, with fewer behavioural difficulties. This shows just how invaluable it is to teach the skills for emotional intelligence.

TIK takes place over six weeks and uses group discussions and exercises, videos, role playing, and home activities to teach parents:

- Awareness and regulation of their own and their tamariki's emotions
- To use their tamariki's emotional experiences as an opportunity for closeness and teaching
- How to guide tamariki's behaviour with appropriate limits
- Skills to assist tamariki to verbally label and manage their emotions, and problem solve

For more information on Tuning Into Kids™, call us on **0800 477 874**, or email **ps@psusi.org.nz**



## Revitalising relationships

Carol Daw, a kaimahi in Presbyterian Support's Mana Ake team in Christchurch, says she enjoys running the programme because,

***“It is about relationship building. It moves right away from the punishment models of the past.”***

And the skills are not just for the parent and child relationship, “The skills are equally useful for other connections too.” Carol explains.

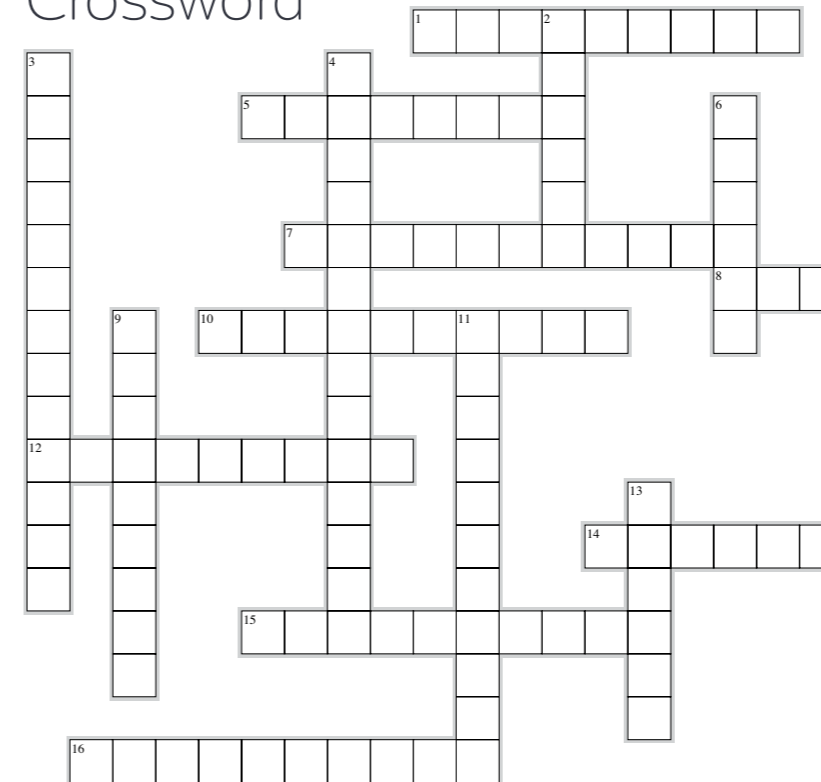
***“I love seeing the light bulb moments.” Says Carol, “Parents may have been struggling for the first couple of weeks, but after putting their learning into practice, they are so excited to share with the group the difference it has made.”***

This is certainly true for Dad, Tim\* who attended the programme.

Following Tim's recovery from a serious medical incident, he would often clash with his daughter, Jessie\* and this would lead to arguments. Tim signed up to TIK and after just a couple of sessions, he reported to the group how his relationship with his daughter had completely transformed.

Tim said that after applying what he learned through emotion coaching during the sessions, Jessie now talked to him about her problems, so he could offer his full support, rather than turn to arguments like they had done previously.

## Crossword



EclipseCrossword.com

Answers on page 16

### ACROSS

1. Being alone
5. Māori word meaning elder
7. Not depending on another
8. Disorder with repetitive behaviours
10. A life change usually occurring at age 65
12. Reaching maturity
14. A way of introducing yourself in Māori
15. Recovering quickly from difficulties
16. A day for displaying aroha

### DOWN

2. Cause to rise by adding a raising agent
3. Life-saving equipment for cardiac arrest
4. Parenting programme teaching emotional intelligence (6,4,4)
6. A buddy volunteer
9. Someone who freely offers their time
11. A programme for children (6,5)
13. Traditional Māori bread

## Volunteer lands permanent youth coach role

Sarah Campbell has been a volunteer mentor with Presbyterian Support since December 2021. With a study background in psychology, she had been searching for a suitable volunteering role related to her studies for some time - ideally working with children in social services. This is when she found out Presbyterian Support were looking for mentors.

Sarah says the benefits of mentoring are numerous. She particularly enjoys seeing the child's progress, especially their growth and positive behavioural changes. And from the child's perspective, *“It teaches you new things and takes you to new places,”* says Sarah's current mentee.

Her advice to other would-be mentors is to, *“Persevere! Take the time to build the relationship and it will pay off. At the beginning, the mentee might not be sure you'll stick around, but it's worth the time.”* Once the relationship has had time to grow, the child often feels safer opening up to you.

Sarah currently commits 2-3 hours per week to volunteering, but this is soon to change - not because she no longer wants to volunteer, but because she has recently secured a full-time role as a youth coach in Presbyterian Support's Youth Service team.



Applying for a permanent role was always her next step, so when she saw the opportunity, and was encouraged to apply by her mentor coordinator, she took it. Her volunteer role has been especially useful for the transition – as she sees many familiar faces and has already made plenty of lasting connections.

Sarah says she chose Presbyterian Support because, *“She really liked how the staff talked about the services in a positive way and how the staff were treated – I wanted to work in a supportive workplace.”*

Sarah's new role will involve supporting young people with budgeting, parenting, housing, and education assistance to ensure they receive the Government funding they are eligible for.





# Around the Region



## MARLBOROUGH

### *A community garden*

We have recently been allocated space in our local community garden in Blenheim – and there are big plans for it!

Our mentors are hoping to teach their young people how to garden, whilst our youth coaches have earmarked it as a quiet space to meet with clients. Meanwhile green fingered Tōtara Club members were keen to offer their tips on suitable plants – with some also happy to ‘get their hands dirty’.

Everyone is especially excited to taste the delicious meals our cook prepares using the fresh produce.

## NELSON

### *Celebrating St Patricks Day*

Our Enliven teams in Nelson brought the fun for St Patricks Day. Throughout the week there were plenty of activities provided for Club members, including Irish bowls – where potatoes replaced the usual bowls, and a swede was used for the kitty! Staff and clients came dressed to impress, and to top things off, they were beautifully serenaded by an Irish band.

#### Photos:

Day Programme Coordinator, Donna with volunteers Shane and Mary / Club members Gordon and Kelvin.



#### Photo:

Ashburton AMP Show - prize draw winner, Loraine Nolan



## MID CANTERBURY - ASHBURTON

### *Community connection*

Local rural community events are a perfect opportunity for us to connect and support people. During the summer months, the Ashburton team attended several events including: the Positive Ageing Expo, Selwyn, the Living Wise Budget Expo, and the Ashburton AMP Show, some of which allowed us to join forces with staff from other regions.

The events helped to showcase our service support and we provided lots of activities and prize draws to engage with the community.

## CHRISTCHURCH

### *Therapy bears*

Just before Christmas, the Mana Ake team dedicated a morning to making weighted teddy bears to add to their therapeutic kete.

Several gorgeous soft toys were purchased from second hand shops and thoroughly washed, before the team re-stuffed them with a special weighted product, and carefully stitched them back together.

The weighted toys provide a deep pressure touch stimulation on the skin, that releases both serotonin and dopamine - substances that help improve mood and sleep, reduce anxiety and stress, and promote a feeling of calmness.

It was a fun activity for the team and will provide comfort to many of our clients.



## WEST COAST

### *A life saver*

In December, the Greymouth office received funding from the New Zealand Community Trust to purchase a defibrillator.

It was installed in February this year, and will provide peace of mind for staff, clients, and their families/ whānau by improving the chances of survival if someone were to suffer a cardiac arrest. We are so grateful that we are now able to offer this life-saving equipment.

Photo: Jill Watson, Strengthening Families Coordinator



## NORTH CANTERBURY

### *Culinary delights*

The Rangiora Tōtara club is trialling cooking client lunches once a week. Team Leader, Joanne Fraser came up with the idea and offered to step up to the plate as cook, alongside Volunteer, Ashleigh.

So far, the client feedback has been fantastic, and it just happens to be saving money too.

Some of the Club members bring their own heirloom recipes in to share, and everyone has enjoyed guessing what is cooking by using the smells, and sometimes the noises, coming from the kitchen.











Volunteers  
Needed!

*Help*

us make a  
difference in the  
lives of others!

A regular, small amount of your time each week could make a huge difference to the people we care for. Volunteer to support our Enliven programmes or become a Family Works Mentor.

Visit: [psuppersouth.org.nz/get-involved](http://psuppersouth.org.nz/get-involved)

*enliven*



**FamilyWorks**