



"She's still my Mum"

Vicki*, once a warm and lively presence in her community, was known for her quick wit and love of conversation. But when her husband passed away, something in her shifted.

At first, her daughter Janine* thought it was grief, the sadness, the quiet moments of forgetfulness. But then things grew more worrying.

"Mum started mixing up names, losing track of conversations, and sometimes forgetting where she was," Janine recalls. "You could see it scared her. And that fear stayed with us, too."

Eventually, Vicki was diagnosed with dementia (mate wareware). The news hit hard. Once the anchor of her whānau, she became withdrawn, often too embarrassed to speak up or take part in things she used to love.

"There were days she'd cry, saying she didn't want to be a burden. It was heartbreaking to watch her slowly disappear in pieces." Janine shared.

Caring for Vicki at home became overwhelming. Janine juggled parenting, work, and being a carer, all while

carrying immense emotional weight. The diagnosis had changed everything. Her children also found it hard to understand the changes in their beloved grandma and why she no longer remembered the stories they had shared. It brought sadness and confusion into their everyday lives.

There were nights Janine lay awake wondering how much more they could cope with.

"I'd go from packing school lunches to helping Mum shower, and it all felt like too much. Watching her fade and trying to stay strong for my kids... I didn't know how long I could keep going."

With support from our social workers, Janine was able to explore options for help at home. They connected her with trained support staff who now visit the house, making Vicki's care more manageable. Several days a week, Vicki also attends the Enliven Harakeke Club, which brings structure, companionship, and a renewed sense of purpose to her week.

Harakeke is a day programme designed specifically for people living with dementia. Small groups of people are picked up from their homes and share time together at a calm, welcoming space where each person is treated with mana and warmth. ▶

our services



From the moment Vicki walks in, she is greeted with a smile, a familiar voice, and gentle encouragement. Activities are tailored to her needs and interests, whether it's singing, crafts, or simply enjoying a quiet moment in the garden watching the birds.

"Vicki is a joy to have with us," says Anne*, one of our Enliven support staff. "Even on the harder days, we see her strength. She's still herself, her humour, her kindness, her spark, and that's what we nurture." **"She lights up there. They see her for who she is, not just what she's lost," Janine shares. "She's still my Mum, and it's given us time to just be a family again."**

Harakeke has been a steadying hand in a time of chaos. For Vicki, it's a place where she feels like herself again. For her whānau, it's been a lifesaver. Their days aren't so full of worry now, instead, they're finding little moments of calm, connection, and hope, and Vicki's grandkids get to see their fun loving grandma again.

** Names and imagery have been changed to protect people's privacy.*



Help us bring warmth, care, and dignity to people like Vicki and the families who love them. Your gift can make all the difference.
Please scan the QR code to donate today.

**It means a lot when
the people we walk
beside share their
thoughts with us,
it helps remind us
why we do what
we do!**

"When you're on your own raising kids, you second-guess yourself a lot. You gave me the tools and the confidence to really connect with my teen and support them through the ups and downs. Thank you, I hope other parents can find this too!"

Fiona* - Parent and Tuning in to Teens™ participant.

Winter Reflections and Gratitude

As the colder months settle in, we know winter can be especially challenging for many in our community. It's a time when loneliness, financial stress, and mental health struggles can feel even heavier. That's why our winter campaign is focused on delivering practical help and warm support to those who need it most.

This season brings the rising of Matariki. It's a moment in our calendar that invites us to honour those who have gone before, reconnect with our whānau and communities, and look ahead with intention and hope.

We're reminded of this beautiful whakataukī - "Matariki tāpuapua –

Matariki of plentiful waters."

Thank you to everyone who contributed to our Autumn Appeal, which raised over \$15,000. Special thanks to everyone who also gifted their tax rebate, your generosity is helping people feel seen, valued, and supported through difficult times.

Each National Volunteer Week, we celebrate our amazing volunteers who are the beating heart of our work. With aroha, laughter, and countless hours of service, they bring so much joy to people we support. We thank each and every one of you for walking alongside us.

We also want to share something exciting, we've begun a rebranding

project to revitalise and clarify our identity. You'll get a glimpse of this in our next newsletter.

Ngā mihi mahana,

Barry Helem - Tumu Whakarae
Tauwiwi / Co-CEO & Kim Manahi -
Tumu Whakarae Māori / Co-CEO





HomeShare Pilot Strengthens Community Connections

Over the past year, our Dementia Mate Wareware HomeShare programme has flourished across the South Island, with 17 weekly gatherings in places like Reefton, Hokitika, Havelock, and Golden Bay. These small groups bring joy and connection through shared kai, music, games, and conversation.

Recently, our HomeShare Coordinators met in person for the first time - sharing stories, support, and fresh energy for the journey ahead. A highlight was hearing

from Doctor Matthew Croucher, who reinforced the value of person and whānau-led care at the heart of the programme.

Thanks to strong partnerships with Alzheimers NZ, Dementia Canterbury, and other local agencies, we've also expanded the pilot to support younger-onset dementia and marae-based groups for kaumātua. This ensures our care is inclusive, responsive, and led by the people we serve.

If you would like to learn more about Dementia HomeShare, please visit our website - <https://bit.ly/DMWHomeShareGroup>



Standing Strong with our Youth

Youth Week and Pink Shirt Day in May were powerful reminders of the pressures young people face today, and just how important it is that they have someone in their corner, backing them all the way.

One young person we've been walking alongside had really lost their way. After being picked on at school for how they looked and talked, they stopped showing up all together. Their confidence took a massive knock. They didn't feel like they belonged anywhere.

That's when one of our youth coaches stepped in. It started small, just showing up, going for a walk, kicking

a ball, or playing a game of cards. No pressure, just someone turning up who cared. Over time, their trust grew. Our youth coach helped them set small goals and work through the tough stuff. Together, they came up with a plan to get back to school bit by bit.

One day, after a walk, the young person said quietly, "I didn't think anyone would actually stick with me. I thought I was too much." That moment stayed with our youth coach who shared, "it reminded me how many young people feel that way, and how important it is that we don't give up on them."

Now the young person is back at school part-time and beginning to feel good about who they are. One relationship, one safe space, one caring adult at a time, helping young people find their spark again.



Celebrating *our local volunteer legends*

Each June, National Volunteer Week gives us the opportunity to pause and celebrate the incredible generosity of our volunteers - over 200 strong - who share their time, energy and compassion to support children, youth, whānau, and older people across our communities.



22,740 hours of volunteering gifted in the last year!



1,921 hours gifted to support families and youth in tough times.



20,339 hours gifted to support and assist older people.

Giving Back and Growing Together

Recently, a group of our volunteers spent a day at Tuahiwi Marae in North Canterbury - a special experience made possible through a grant from the Department of Internal Affairs' Community and Volunteer Capability Fund. It was a day of learning, connection, and deepening ties to the local community - an experience that will stay with many for a long time.

The visit helped our volunteers better understand the history and responsibilities we all share through Te Tiriti o Waitangi. It also gave them a chance to listen, reflect, and experience something meaningful alongside others.

Taine, one of our volunteers, told us afterwards, "It was such a blast. I want to do more." Jackie, who's currently studying towards her Certificate in Health and Wellbeing, said, "It meant so much to be welcomed like that. Sharing stories over a meal with new friends was really special."

To all our amazing volunteers, a massive thank you. Your kindness and willingness to show up, learn, and give back makes a real difference every day!



A Day in the Life with Malcolm

Twice a week, I start my morning with a full tank of petrol and a full heart. I volunteer as a van driver for the Enliven day programme, usually about three hours each day.

My first stop is picking up some of the regulars, familiar faces now, who rely on the van to get to the centre. There's always a smile, a wave, and often a good story or two shared on the ride in. Some folks live alone, so just that little bit of connection in the morning can mean a lot.

Once everyone's safely dropped off, I help out where I can, lifting bags, checking in with the staff, making sure things are running smoothly. Then, later in the day, I'm back behind the wheel to take everyone home again. There's usually a bit more laughter on the way back, a sign of a day well spent!

For me, volunteering gives me purpose, and the joy of giving back. I might just be driving, but I know it helps people stay connected and feel cared for. That's more than enough reason to keep turning up.

Interested in volunteering your time?
Phone 0800 477 874 or
email Ronij@psusi.org.nz





A New Dawn at Matariki

A time to pause, remember, and look ahead.

It's a chilly winter morning in Christchurch. The Ngata whānau - Mum, Dad, and their kids Amiria, Wiremu, and Niko are up early, wrapped in jackets and beanies. They head up the hill near their place to watch the stars rise and welcome Matariki.

They sip hot chocolate from a thermos, eyes on the sky. "There it is," Mum points out. "Seven stars or nine if you squint," Wiremu says, grinning.

(grandfather) name to the stars. He passed away last year. For them, Matariki is about more than just stargazing, it's a time to remember the people that aren't here anymore.

Back home, the kids help make a star mobile out of sticks, string, and coloured paper. Each star has a name and a meaning—hope, health, food, remembrance, and they hang it up in the lounge to remind them what matters.

Later, they share a potluck dinner with neighbours. A delicious soup from the veggie garden, rewena (sourdough) bread, and warm company. With the lights low, Dad tells the kids about the stars, and how each one connects to different parts of life. "It's a time to slow down," he says. "To remember, to be grateful, and to look ahead." For the Ngata whānau, Matariki is about coming together, honouring those they've lost, being present, and dreaming big.

Supporter spotlight - Meet Meg

Meg's been a big supporter of our work and kindly donated to our Christmas Appeal. What a legend!

What inspired you to support us?

Your forward-thinking support for neurodivergent tamariki and whānau lit me up. As someone with ADHD, I relate to kids often misjudged as "lazy" or "stupid." Your mahi is vital, and I'm proud to back our unique fabulousness!

If you had a magic wand to solve one challenge in the world, what would it be? I'd end education discrimination. Education should be a right, not a privilege for a few. When it's withheld, we all lose.

What's something that always makes you smile or feel good about?

Watching my niece and nephew grow up so fast. Being an aunty is the best!

What's your favourite way to unwind after a long day? A dose of Nancy Sinatra. Her boots and her tunes -

were made for walking!

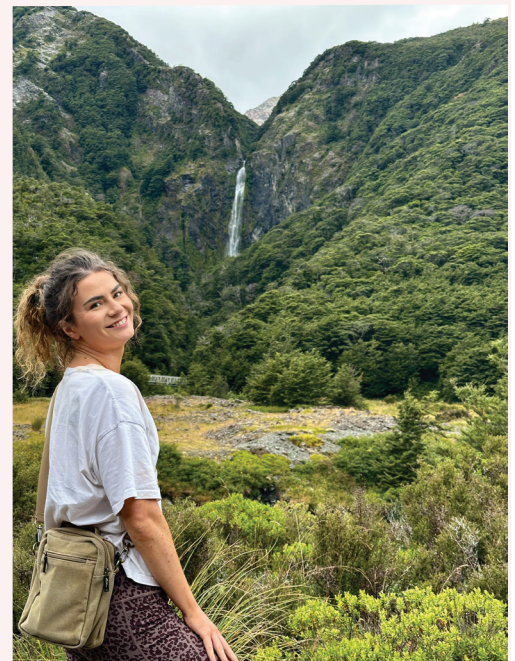
What's a small act of kindness that's made a big impact on you?

My friends and I love to catch up for trivia nights! After four eye surgeries to repair a twice-torn retina and cataract, my eyesight isn't too stellar. They read out the zany trivia questions on the projection screen to me - it means a lot to have that small, yet impactful help from them!

If you could spend a day volunteering, where would it be and what would you do?

With local expertise and collaboration, I'd love to volunteer in translation services, and community integration efforts!

For me, I'm not choosy about where I volunteer, however it's crucial to research which organisation you're volunteering with, to ensure your efforts durably sustain those who need it!



Thank you for sharing your kindness with our community!



Yes, I would like to help

Lives are impacted every day. Your donation ensures people don't face hardship and mental health struggles alone.



\$20

supports a young person with an essential pack of basic toiletries.

\$50

supports costs for transport, lunch and social activities for an older person.

\$100

supports a child, suffering from grief and trauma, to have counselling.

\$

The amount I can give with love.

"I like coming here [Harakeke Club]. It gives me something to do, and the people are really kind. I feel like I belong."
- Vicki, Enliven member.

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