

PEOPLE

Helping People

The magazine of Presbyterian Support Upper South Island

ISSUE 1

SUMMER 2016-17



It's
Christmas!



Inside:

Is 80 the
new 20?

On the cover: The Uni Student Helping Struggling Tweens



No Fuss
Christmas
Cake

**A Fresh Start for
Teen Parents**

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Large and small group day activity programmes for older people and the memory impaired. Available weekdays. Transport and subsidies are available. www.enlivenuppersouth.org.nz

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What's new in the upper South Island?



A message from Presbyterian Support Upper South Island Chief Executive, Vaughan Milner.

Many people seek help from our organisation for issues like despair, anger, grief, anxiety, loneliness and a multi-nuanced poverty of relationships. These sorts of things need a working through, as they are the types of things that can't necessarily be fixed. They can be made bearable, more manageable, and a sense of restoration and fresh opportunity created.

The work done in tackling human problems relies on people having the courage to change. This search for renewal and transformation draws heavily on spiritual elements of faith and hope, the passage of time, and the grace of belonging. Given the complexity of some of the issues people have to deal with, some specialised knowledge and skills such as those provided by our staff also help.

From a Christian and a social service perspective, radical and transformative individual and social change relies on hope,

A Time for Hope & Community

on being able to see that there is a future, and wanting the meaning and purpose that that future offers. This sense of hope inevitably involves feeling connected or reconnected to those around you. Raymond Carver's poem Late Fragment which will be known to many of you catches the need for hope and belonging:

"And did you get what you wanted from this life, even so? I did. And what did you want? To call myself beloved, to feel myself beloved on this earth."

You will see when you read the 2015-16 Annual Report that at Presbyterian Support we don't claim to 'fix' people or their problems but we certainly claim to have helped people feel hopeful and helped them do things or gain skills that improve their situation and give them a stake in their futures.

The power of people helping people knits the fabric of community in many heart warming ways.

10 A Festive Tradition (Recipe)

How a simple cake brought three friends together.

11 A Place to Call Home

Our KINECT residences are the only facilities in the South Island to home very young parents and their babies.



Worth her weight



At 53 Deirdre Carroll went back to school. Having left almost forty years earlier at 14, it was an institution she had thought held nothing for her.

"I was working as a gold and silver trader for Cash Converters in Christchurch, when the head of CPIT came in," recalls Deirdre. "He watched me with my customers, many of whom were sad to be here and encouraged me to study Community Support Services."

"When I entered the main building of CPIT and saw the great Pou [a carved post to mark territory], it called to me and I knew that my life would change."

Deirdre came to PSUSI on placement as part of her Diploma course nine years ago and has been here ever since. As Kaiawhina Deirdre's role is to help build relationships between Maori and community services. "We identified that Maori were not coming to the services," says Deirdre. "I am a connector. My work colleagues have got the expertise in social work to support these families but there may be a cultural gap that I can bridge."

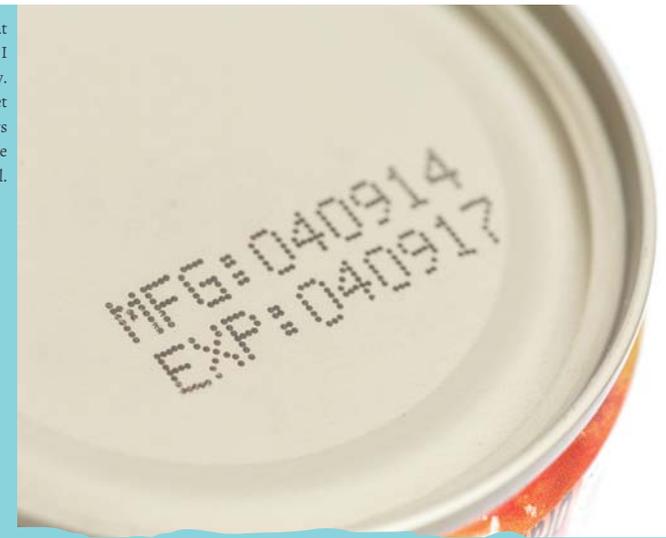
Deirdre receives referrals from GPs, hospitals and other organisations throughout Canterbury.

Deirdre's thirst for knowledge continues. She recently received a Diploma in Hauora (Maori Health), thanks to funding from the CDHB and support from PSUSI.

Use by: is 80 the new 20?

At 80 years young, Dot Mitchell works four days a week, keeps fit and has an active social life. One of her favourite gifts on her recent birthday was her Bose Bluetooth headphones. A great gift for tech-savvy Dot because her ears are, quite possibly, the only part of her that are in any way 'acting their age'.

"I'm glad that I'm 80. I'm glad I know what I know. I don't regret anything," says PSUSI employee Dot Mitchell.



According to Statistics NZ, New Zealand's population could be 5.5 million within a decade and well over seven million within 30. In that time, the number of people aged 85 years and older will more than triple – from 83,000 today to around 320,000. The number of over-65 year olds is projected to be between 1.3 – 1.5 million by 2046.

As our population ages, we asked Dot "What is Age?"

Age is an Attitude

"Age is an attitude", believes Dot, "a societal issue and in the west in particular, a negative one, that assigns a group of people a use by date." "What is old?" she asks. "Oldies', 'older people', 'the elderly'. Who sets those rules and says those words? I don't have a use by date!"

"How I feel at 80 is the same as ever. My joie de vivre is stronger than ever. My energy is great. But people see white hair and wrinkles and, momentarily, their attitude changes because I look 'old'."

Dot believes that people need to be treated as individuals. "In western culture there's this sense of being a burden to being older.

There's an implication that you're past learning, that you're taking younger peoples' jobs. That's rubbish! Some jobs need years, likewise some jobs are better suited to the young. There is a place for everyone."

PSUSI Chief Executive Vaughan Milner mirrors Dot's comments: "Older staff bring a knowledge of life that is valuable to clients but also to younger staff, who benefit from the peer-to-peer relationships." He says that can be particularly helpful with some of the complex emotional and loss issues that staff at PSUSI have to work through.

Perhaps Dot is lucky. As a nurse and someone who has worked in social services for over 30 years, her industry is more respectful than others. But that is starting to change. Recruiters have realised that flexibility, maturity and attitude are life-learned skills. Mature workers also reflect a growing customer base and are a stabilising influence on the workforce.

Age is irrelevant

"As a nurse wellbeing has always been uppermost in my mind, regardless of a person's age," says Dot. "To me, age is absolutely

continued on page 4...

continued from page 3...

irrelevant as far as your value as a human being goes. What matters is wellbeing.”

“Keeping up and maintaining an interest in what’s going on around you is also important,” says Dot. “I know how to get myself out of trouble on a computer. I like technology – it gives me access to the outside world.”

The value of years

Dot believes that there is much that being 80 brings to her life and to her role at PSUSI.

“The first thing that I bring my clients is my years. As an Earthquake Support Co-ordinator I work mainly with elders. There is immediate relief for my clients to see my years. They KNOW. They know that I know and that they don’t need to explain, be misunderstood, and condescended to. There is immediate trust and yes, at times, joy!”

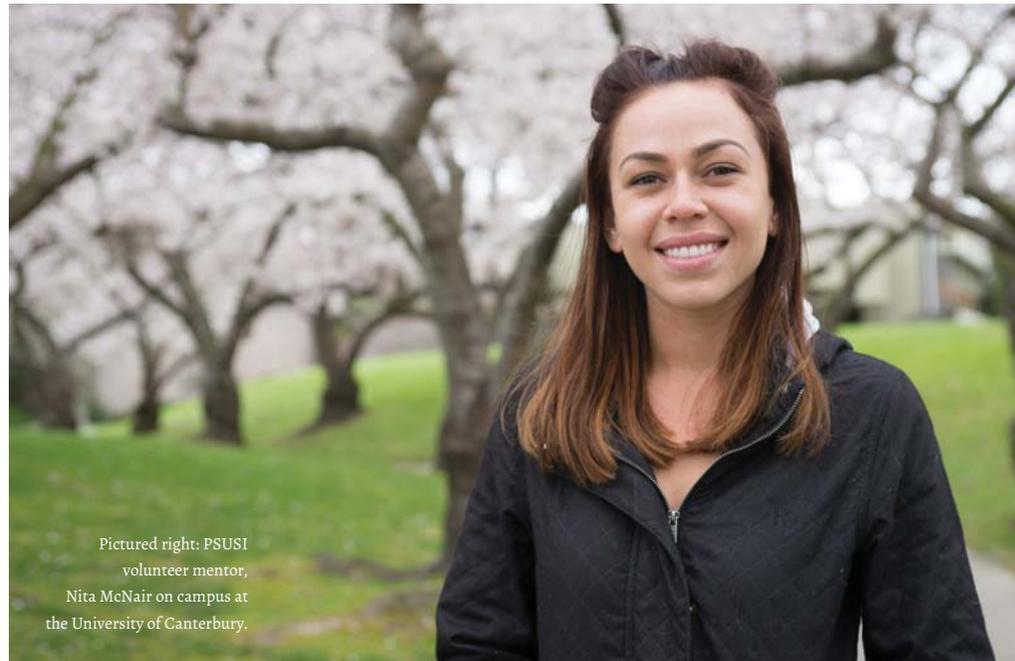
“The next thing I bring is knowledge. And finally – I listen. I appreciate people. I understand that everyone has something to offer - everyone.”

Don’t stay young – stay well!

Dot has no time for people’s fixation on youth. “I’m glad that I’m 80. I’m glad I know what I know. I don’t regret anything.

“I’ve realised now that I can stand up and say what I believe. I enjoy things so much more than I used to because I have this wonderful sense of freedom.”

She cautions other elders against being caught up in a sense of burden. “It’s a construct – a societal thing. Elders are people to value. You have worth. There is a place for you.”



Pictured right: PSUSI volunteer mentor, Nita McNair on campus at the University of Canterbury.

lives, an awareness that she now carries with her into all of her relationships. “As a mentor you really have to think about what you say and do because it will have an effect on these young people and their experience of life.” Sometimes, that means holding your tongue or being in situations that make you uncomfortable. You know you are dealing with a young kid, sometimes you will find yourself in awkward situations, and as a young person myself, I don’t really always know what I’m supposed to do, or how I am supposed to act, but I guess it is about just dissociating how you feel and focusing on what the person you are mentoring needs in that moment,” she says.

Nita is one of a number of university student mentors in the Presbyterian Support programme. “I do think that age has something to do with it [her decision to become a mentor],” she says. “This is the age I guess you still (haha) feel like you can change the world! You want to contribute in whatever way you can.”

And her advice to anyone of any age who may be considering mentoring: “Just do it! As with life there is good and bad to it, but the good most definitely outweighs the bad on this one!

“Besides, if you’re not experiencing and giving something back to this world then what are you doing?”

Notes:

Presbyterian Support provides ongoing training and support to all volunteers in its mentoring programmes.

If you can set aside time every week to support a young person please get in touch today:

psuppersouth.org.nz/get-involved



5 Tips For a Long Life

So, how do you stay well and receive Bluetooth headsets on your eightieth Birthday?

- 1 Value your health as your biggest treasure.
- 2 Eat well and stay active.
- 3 Stay ‘your age’. “Who wants to stay young!”
- 4 Stay social. “This is vital. I have friends far and wide and I make an effort to stay in touch.”
- 5 Be curious!

A Hand Up

Teenage didn’t come easy for Nita McNair. Warm and articulate, with empathy that belies her age, it’s difficult to imagine that the third year university student once struggled to find direction.

It’s those difficult teenage years that spurred Nita on to becoming a volunteer mentor two years ago.

“I saw a poster up in the psych department at uni,” she recalls. “Mentoring seemed like such a fit for me because, I can honestly say, if it weren’t for a single mentor-figure who helped me through my adolescence, I wouldn’t be here doing what I’m doing today.”

‘Doing what I’m doing’ is a double degree in Law and Psychology at the University of Canterbury – a long way from the Los Angeles of her adolescence but a homecoming of sorts as Nita spent her early years in the garden city.

While her youth may have been the catalyst to explore mentoring, Nita has many reasons for remaining in Presbyterian Support’s volunteer mentors’ programme.

“I wanted to integrate what I was learning in class with real life,” says Nita. “Mentoring really brought me face to face with some of the ugly truths of this world, but it has also enriched my life beyond measure.”

Nita currently mentors a pre-teen female whose situation puts her at greater risk of losing her way in life and who may benefit from a strong female role model. Nita also helps to run a girls’ ‘Journey of Hope’ programme alongside a Presbyterian Support social worker.

Nita explains: “These are kids. More often than not they’ve been in situations they shouldn’t have been in. That’s a hard truth. It makes me grateful to be able to be there so that they have someone to depend on. It has made me more dependable.”

Being a mentor has made Nita very aware of her place in other people’s

Shaping Young Futures

Angela Wilcox is a hands-on person. Living in the United States in the 1990s, she and her partner ran their own restaurant. Back in New Zealand they are in the process of carefully restoring an early 1900's villa and its gardens. The need to see practical results led Angela to train as a social worker five years ago.

"I spent four years volunteering for Lifeline," she recalls. "Listening to people's stories, hearing their need for practical support and not being able to offer that at the end of a phone was difficult," she recalls.

After working at Child Youth and Family and then Pillars Angela came to work as a Social Worker in Schools for Presbyterian Support. With a degree in psychology and a Masters in Education Angela says the role is a perfect fit. "It combines everything I love to do," she says. And importantly, it gives Angela a sense of practical contribution.

Social Workers in Schools, are based in low decile schools. They work with children and their families who may self-refer or be referred by other agencies or school staff. The reason for referral can be varied – social and behavioural concerns, risk of isolation (for immigrant families for example).

"My role differs from client to client," says Angela. "I may work with the entire family, a parent or a child one on one. A lot of the time it's about linking-in families to services that they might not know about, applying for funding for things like after school activities and advocating for them when they

do seek support. Very often, my job is about supporting people to make change. Change is so often frightening and it's difficult to make when you are afraid or depressed."

Angela's focus is on creating an atmosphere of trust. From there she can begin to break down the misperceptions that lead to some of the anxiety her clients' experience. "Many clients are fearful of agencies, they may see asking for help as evidence of failure. I spend a lot of time encouraging them to change their world view, to see that attending a parenting course or taking some budgeting advice is actually adding to their toolkit, and not an indication that they have failed in some way.

Angela also runs boys' and girls' groups at each of the schools with the aim of building resilience for participants. The

first sessions focus on building group cohesion and developing self awareness and then we move on to other topics such as bullying, how to work as a team, how to make good decisions and managing our emotions.

Angela believes that learning runs both ways: "One parent explained she uses putting macaroni in a jar as a reward system. It's now a tool that I share with other families. A young boy I worked with showed me how he'd scribbled figure eights around and around when he was angry. Around he'd go until his touch got lighter and he had calmed himself down."



Family Leave is small time-increment parcels of leave for staff to use specifically to spend with family members or to foster relationships within the community.



In 2007, as part of research into community connection, Sue Quinn inadvertently created a powerful staff retention tool.

"Organisationally, our focus has always been on helping people to feel safe, strong and connected within their communities," says Sue, who is now PSUSI Business Development Manager. "During our community research we discovered that that fatigue, stress and a sense of isolation was preventing parents in particular, from forming meaningful connections with important individuals and institutions. After digging a little deeper we identified that a lack of time and work stress were creating significant challenges for many local households.

"Conversely we discovered that institutions such as schools felt they were compromised when parents they wanted to see simply weren't available to talk."

Keen to put her research to practical use, Sue started looking for solutions. "We took a narrow focus initially," she recalls. "We asked

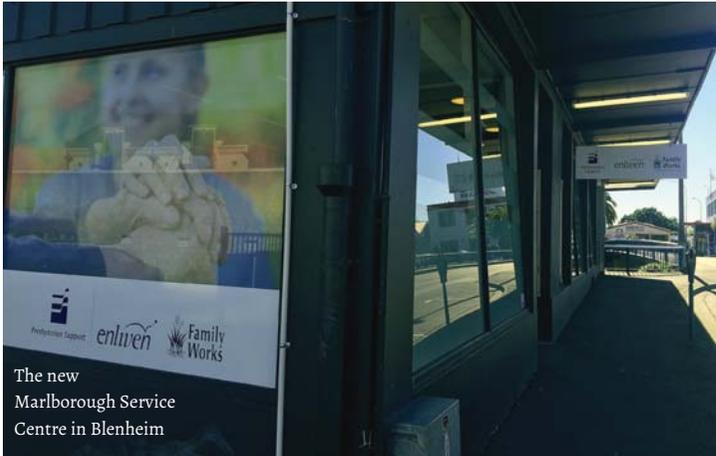
ourselves: what can we do to foster stronger relationships between parent and school?"

The solution became Family Leave: small time-increment parcels of leave for staff to use specifically to spend with family members or to foster relationships within the community.

"Initially the intent was to encourage other organisations to take up the idea," says Sue. "But then we decided to walk the talk and introduced the concept here."

After eight years, Family Leave is now an entrenched part of PSUSI culture. "All staff have access to 20-28 hours (pro-rata) of Family Leave each year," says Chief Executive Vaughan Milner. Annual uptake sits at around 80% or 2,200 hours.

Staff use their leave for a range of activities, including: attending appointments and school activities; providing parent help; taking care of elderly parents and helping family members. "One staff member used his hours to finish early one day per week in winter so that he could coach his daughter's hockey team," says Sue.



The new Marlborough Service Centre in Blenheim

A New Home in Blenheim

Ashburton Builds Financial Capability

Presbyterian Support's new premises at 22 Alfred Street in Blenheim provides a much-needed physical presence for the organisation.

"We do a huge amount of work in the Marlborough community yet the wider public really knows little about us," says Enliven Services Manager – Marlborough, Sally Crawford. "In Alfred Street, we not only have a great new facility, we're easy to find, easy to access and conveniently located opposite Work and Income and near to the Community centre."

Alfred Street hosts Family Works and Enliven staff and is the new home of Totara Club Bleheim. It was officially opened on Thursday 27 October by PSUSI Chair, John McKean.

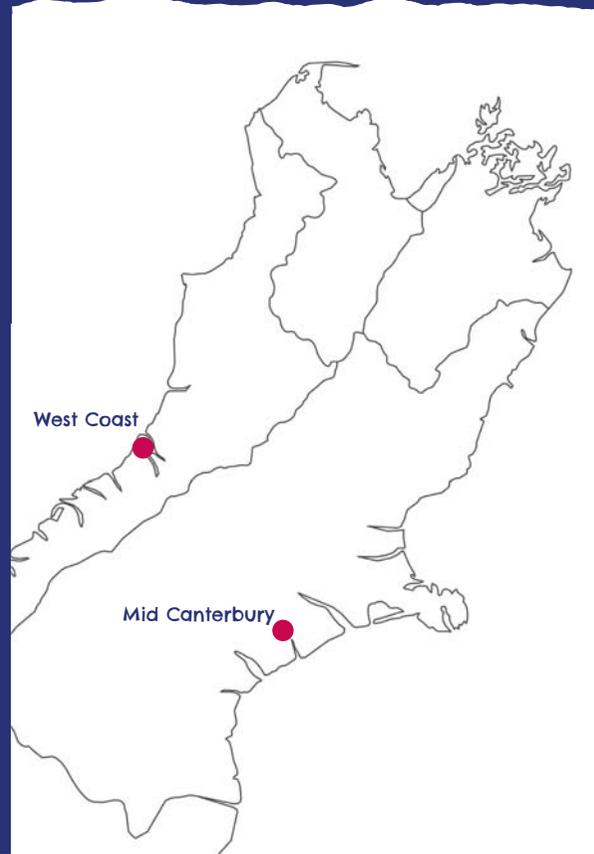
Marlborough Services: Totara Club; HomeShare community-based activity programmes; HomeCare; Enliven Volunteer Support for older people; Family Works Youth mentoring; SWiS (Social Workers in Schools); Youth Service.

Family Works recently won the contract to deliver the Ministry of Social Development's new-look 'Building Financial Capabilities' service in Mid Canterbury and Selwyn districts.

"We are delighted to be able to continue to help families and individuals in Mid Canterbury to improve their financial acumen," says Presbyterian Support Mid Canterbury Regional Manger, Jackie Girvan.

"Budgeting is only one part of being financially capable," she says. "For families and individuals facing hardship, there are often multiple and complex factors at play. Having the flexibility to address these in tandem makes sense and is an approach that Family Works has championed since 2014.

Under the Financial Capabilities Service model, clients will have access to Financial Mentors and to small group 'MoneyMates' education and support.



Greymouth, West Coast.

Image: mychillybin/ awcnz62

Walking With West Coast Teens

Teenagers who drop out of formal education face a bleak future, one that is sadly almost certain to include a lifelong dependency on government and charitable benefits.

It can be easy to dismiss these young people for the poor choices that they make. In reality, young teens who disengage or who have never fully engaged in education may have experienced a childhood more complex than many of us could comprehend.

The NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) programme is a Ministry of Social development initiative aimed at halting the journey to welfare dependency. PSUSI Youth Coach, Teri-anne Bergin started working with young West Coasters in the programme in August.

Under NEET, teenagers are supported by a Youth Coach for up to two years. "Many young people face significant barriers to achieving good education and employment opportunities. It is the Youth Coach's role

to help these young people overcome those barriers," says Teri-anne. "We help them to understand that they have options and that it's worthwhile returning to education and/or finding a job. Then we support them while they make those transitions."

The Youth Coach remains an advocate even once their client is employed. "Many entry-level jobs are casual which creates uncertainty," says PSUSI Business Development Manager, Sue Quinn.

"Additionally, starting work may require a significant change in routine and there will be a period of adaptation. Staying alongside a young person during their early months increases the likelihood that they will remain employed."

"The intent of NEET is to change the life trajectory of young people so that they see value in connecting with their communities in positive ways," says Sue. "We're supporting them to lead a life with more options and a greater chance of improved happiness and wellbeing."



Deb's Christmas cake is simple and moreish. There's no soaking of fruit or steeping in alcohol, simply a cake to be enjoyed with lashings of goodwill and humour!



Below: Deb's masterpiece. Bottom: Natlie and Deb Tooby, both staff at PSUSI Christchurch.

A Festive Tradition

This year, Deb Tooby is letting daughter Natalie in on a longstanding Christmas tradition. For years now, Deb and two girlfriends have come together to make their Christmas cakes, baking them in Kahikatea/White pine boxes.

"Kahikatea was used originally in the 1880's for butter boxes as it doesn't taint the food," says Deb.

Ingredients:

225g butter
225g sugar
340g flour
1 tsp spice
1 tsp cinnamon
1.375kg mixed fruit
6 eggs
1/2 cup golden syrup

Instructions:

Set oven to standard (not fan) bake and heat to 120 degrees.

- Line a white pine baking box or cake tin with several layers of newspaper and one layer of baking paper.
- Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Stir in the golden syrup.
- Add in the eggs, mixing well after each addition.
- Sift flour into the mixed fruit. Stir into the creamed mixture together with the spices.
- Pour batter into cake tin or box and slow cook for 6-8 hours.
- Leave to cool completely in the oven.



A Place to Call Home

In May, PSUSI restructured its residential facility for young people, shifting the focus solely to young parents (aged between 14 and 24 years) who have asked to be there.

It is a move that will see the organisation fund more than half of the cost of the facility from its own purse but, after seven years of providing intensive parenting assessment for young people, is one that Chief Executive Vaughan Milner believes will see KINECT best serve the individuals it is designed for.

"In the past, we have taken in young people with or without young children. They had age in common but their circumstance and needs may have differed greatly and very often, they did not want to be here," says Chief Executive Vaughan Milner.

"The move to intensive support for young parents gives us greater autonomy to work with those for whom we believe residential care can have the most positive impact."

"We believe that it is the best chance that many of these young parents – particularly young mothers, have to assert themselves as primary caregivers, to learn good parenting behaviours and to gain the confidence to return to the community," says KINECT Practice Leader, Cheryl Yusaf.

Residential facilities provide a home-like environment but are staffed by qualified social workers with the help of parent support workers.

"We want to get young parents back into education and back onto a more positive trajectory," says Cheryl. "Once in residence, we work with them to fulfil their benefit obligations so that they can achieve their maximum entitlements. Then we look at the milestones they might want to achieve before they head to Faith House, our community transition house, into a Ministry of Housing property or back to family in the community if the environment or the support networks are appropriate."

Cheryl cautions that the aim of staff is not to create perfect parents. "These young people, by virtue of their own upbringings are not a pretty group. The chances of them becoming fit parents if left in the community is slim to none because their environmental influences are too negative."

Under the new model, PUSIS is no longer obliged to take Child Youth and Family referrals if staff do not believe that the referral is a good fit. Instead, KINECT will look increasingly to its Youth Service for residents.

"By using our Youth Service referral network we know that our coaches and social workers have already had eyes on the young person or couple. They have usually seen where and how they live and will have described the KINECT service so that there is a level of understanding about the purpose of choosing to come here," says Cheryl.

KINECT currently has ten adult beds in its residential facilities. Five are filled as part of a national contract with the Ministry of Social Development. The remaining five are open to self-referrals or referrals from other agencies provided they meet revised criteria.

Due to their high cost, the KINECT houses are the only facilities of their kind in the South Island.



The KINECT residential facilities are suburban homes, set up to cater for very young parents and their babies.



Nelson's Handymen

Harakeke Club in Nelson is fortunate to have a group of keen DIY-ers among its membership. The men enjoy helping out around the Club and recently lent a hand to volunteer Bob Neill (wearing the hat) to put together some kitset furniture that had arrived for the garden.

"It's lucky they could help me," said Bob. "Putting it together [the furniture] was trickier than it looks!"

Tablets Increase Face Time

Twenty-three new Samsung Galaxy Tablets are helping our Family Works teams to make real-time connections with their clients.

"The shift to tablets from ageing desktop devices represents a significant time saving for our staff," says Chief Executive Vaughan Milner. "Much of our reporting obligations with funders is web-based and having tablets will free up staff to complete their reporting in real time. Any time saving here will translate to face time with clients. In a service that is over subscribed, the impact of that will be considerable."

Family Works staff often need to go online during or in preparation for client sessions. They access support materials, educational tools and research, or work in-session with clients to job hunt and review course options.

Thank you to the Southern Trust who provided the funding for the laptops.

HomeShare Support Continues

Thanks to the Lotteries Grants Board for continuing to support the development of Enliven's unique HomeShare service.

HomeShare enables older people to share interests and find companionship locally. People come together over shared interests in the comfort of a host's private home or suitable community facility. They will share a home cooked meal and conversation, as well as enjoy activities decided on by the group.

The service started in Ashburton in 2006 where it continues to today. HomeShare groups also run in Christchurch, Marlborough, North Canterbury, Selwyn and on the West Coast.



Our Major Supporters



Thank you!



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