



# Catholic Social Services

people helping people *āwhina tātou*

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*... no one knows the issues facing any community better than the community itself ...*

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## Kotahitanga Appeal

### *Kotahitanga: Unity, Togetherness, Collective Action*

Our inaugural Kotahitanga Appeal was an invitation to our parishes to join with Catholic Social Services to build capacity in our local communities. We believe that no one knows the issues facing any community better than the community itself. Catholic Social Services' new Community Partnerships Model is an extensive cooperative effort.

In this new model facilitators and social workers team up with parishes, social agencies, community groups, businesses and organisations to identify community needs. Together we will define solutions and co-design strategies that will make a meaningful difference in the lives of the people in those communities.

Change requires us to dare greatly. The \$17,000 raised through the 2020 Kotahitanga Annual demonstrates to us the trust and faith you have placed in our new strategic focus. **Thank you!** We believe that together is better. Together, with your ongoing support we can and will make a difference in the lives of the many who live in desperate need of kindness and care.

If you would like more information about Catholic Social Services Community partnership model we would welcome your interest. If you would like to make a contribution to our work you can do so using our donation slip in this newsletter.

## CSS and Deaf Community Engage on Benefit Advocacy

Catholic Social Services' continued work in communities resulted in a first meeting in September 2020 between CSS, the Wellington & Palmerston North Diocesan Chaplain for the Deaf and Deaf Aotearoa in Palmerston North.

The focus of the meeting was to explore a Benefit Impact event for the Deaf community in Horowhenua. Paramount is offering attendees free benefit advocacy to ensure they are receiving their correct entitlement.

Fundamental to this service is Hutt Valley BEST (Benefit Education Service Trust), a trust specialising in benefit entitlements.

BEST provide specialist training for benefit advocates. They will accompany both the person on the benefit and their dedicated advocate to a pre-arranged appointment at the closest WINZ office to determine and act on any shortfall in benefit entitlement.

In the case of the Deaf community, this also includes determining the right disability-based benefits are in the mix.

Deaf Chaplain David Loving-Molloy (pictured right) and Deaf Aotearoa Facilitator, Annette Hansen will be trained by BEST and act as benefit advocates. Both are very proficient at NZ sign language but agree interpreters will be on hand for all discussions and WINZ appointments involving the Deaf community.



"This is a unique opportunity for people with hearing challenges to check they are receiving fair benefit entitlements. It is undertaken in a setting where they are supported, encouraged to explain their circumstances in a fully confidential environment and be accompanied by both an advocate and interpreter when they meet with WINZ", noted CSS Community Facilitator Paul Alsford.

The benefit impact for the Deaf community will be held in Levin in May 2021.

## Seasons for Growth - at the 'Peripheries'



The 2017 Synod called us to 'Go, ... you are sent to the peripheries of society' and Seasons for Growth has heeded this call.

What are the peripheries? In the large area of our Archdiocese, we not only try to bridge geographical distance but also to link to socio economic fringes and those in confinement. Last year, the lockdown situation created new situations of captivity and confinement.

Geographically, Seasons for Growth is truly covering distances: Trainer/Coordinator Katrin Eickhorst's current activities reach from Blenheim via Nelson to the Hutt Valley and Horowhenua:

In July, she trained 15 new companions for the Children and Young People's programme and re-trained three companions due for refresher training. Consequently we have 18 additional companions, newly endorsed to work with children in Northern Wellington, Porirua, the Hutt Valley, Wainuiomata and Horowhenua.

In response to COVID-19, Good Grief Australia released internationally conducted research about children's lockdown response compared to other pandemics, endemics, natural and personal crises. Katrin offered this to schools and social agencies, and gave a presentation in August in Lower Hutt.

Another often forgotten periphery is the confinement experienced in residential homes, especially at times of lockdown. As a companion, Katrin is visiting a group of

disabled adults in a residential home, who are deeply appreciative of the gentle process of working through grief and of the special bonding, their group is experiencing.

Katrin is communicating with parishes about needs and opportunities for grief ministries. The seminar programme "Understanding Change, Loss and Grief" was well received in the parish of St Francis of Assisi, Ōhāriu, where the leadership team has begun formalising a bereavement and grief ministry.

Katrin also visited the parishes of "Our Lady of the Bays" (Richmond, Motueka, Takaka) and "Star of the Sea" in the Blenheim centre.

Much is happening in Levin, where 12 new companions were trained in December. In collaboration with Levin Uniting Church, we are establishing a new role of a regional coordinator in the area.

*Pictured above: Parish of St Francis of Assisi, Ōhāriu attendees at their "Understanding Change, Loss and Grief" seminar.*

*Pictured below: Challenge 2000 staff and Father Raymond Soriano at their Companion training in 2020.*



## A Hospital Chaplain reflects ...

Every day I meet extraordinary people. Chaplaincy it seems to me, is about seeing people, witnessing what they are experiencing in the present moment, and honouring their health and wellbeing. It's like a dance, to hold their pain, anxiety, fear, regret, disappointment, frustration, just bear witness to the feelings; and also to guess what they may be needing in this moment – empathy, or hope, social connection or prayer, or maybe the choice not to see me. To tune into their experience of the Divine, the spark of Life, and share our Catholic resources of Prayer, Scripture and Holy Communion, if they choose. Encounters can be tender, it can be brutal.

Chaplaincy challenges me to be non-judgemental, compassionate and always respectful in my interactions. When someone is vulnerable, it seems the only response. In that way it's a training ground for life, my ego more often than not is screaming for attention, and here in chaplaincy, the role is to be present to the other person, unconditionally. I know that it's God's work, to enable respectful interactions, to be open to any interchange that happens.

Then there's the dance of letting go; consciously hand over to the Divine this person and their journey. There's a time to smile, listen, chat, joke, ask questions, be with people in their fears, hold someone's hand, pray; bless the dying and their family, bless the one

who is having life support discontinued. Leave the room, leave the person and their family in God's care. When to hold and when to let go is a current question. Along with cultural guidance, and learning about end of life support. Supervision is essential; as well as ongoing monitoring if I am being triggered by the chaplaincy experiences. I am understanding in deeper ways the age old maxim, charity begins at home. Attending to my own needs really does increase my capacity to be present to others. Today my image of chaplaincy is a channel; a channel of God's grace. I feel very fortunate to practise every working day. Maybe, just maybe, my practice might influence all my other daily interactions and tasks. So in that sense, chaplaincy is like an internship.

My journey towards this role is through my parents, Des and Freda Sanders of Upper Hutt. Their faith was devout and always serving. I'm grateful they allowed us to nurse them at the end of their lives. I have worked in residential social work, community development with the Mercy Sisters in Christchurch, studied theology at Otago, worked in parishes in Levin and Palmerston North. Travelled overseas, and with my husband raised 3 children, now adults.

I feel very fortunate to be working with the Chaplaincy Team at Wellington Hospital. It's less about tasks than a way of being.

*Kate Sanders O'Connor  
Wellington Archdiocese Hospital Chaplain*

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## Prison Chaplain Ministry - meeting Jesus in the outcasts

*“... the personal relationship with the paihere, even if difficult to build, is important: it becomes, for the paihere, a relationship with freedom.”*

As a prison chaplain my role is to meet the spiritual needs of everyone I encounter inside “Rimutaka and Arohata City”, my paihere community.

Chaplaincy is an experience of suffering, with tears to dry and hope to give back. Chaplaincy is meeting Jesus in the outcasts, knowing how to identify, live and share the stories of the other, approaching each person as brothers and sisters, without a searching gaze, with friendship. Only in this way, once the ice

is broken and trust is gained, can a reflection be opened, a rethinking of the choices made.

The role of the prison chaplain is complex and requires a willingness to spend time behind bars to meet, talk and get to know the paihere. But the presence of the chaplain is not only linked to the “proclamation of Christ”, but also has a human dimension, moral comfort and a personal relationship with the paihere. It can be said that the chaplain's work is essentially sharing the punishment, the error committed and the suffering of prison. In this perspective, the personal relationship with the paihere, even if difficult to build, is important: it becomes, for

*(Continues on page 3)*

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## Thank You to our Funders

Catholic Social Services wishes to thank all our funders for their wonderful support!

In particular we would like to thank the following:

- The Archdiocese of Wellington
- The Catholic Foundation
- David Daily Charitable Trust
- Gaynor Charitable Nominees
- Donovan Family Charitable Trust
- Hutt Mana Charitable Trust 2020
- New Zealand Lottery Grants Board
- Knights of the Southern Cross
- Wellington Community Trust
- Tindall Foundation
- J K Baxter Trust
- Winton & Margaret Bear Charitable Trust
- Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children
- Ministry for Social Development

Thank you to our **1000 Club members** and donors to our inaugural **Kotahitanga Appeal**.

Your support assists us to help the most vulnerable in our community.

### Prison Chaplaincy (cont'd from page 3)

the paihere, a relationship with freedom. It is precisely this relationship, this constant presence alongside the paihere that allows the chaplain to become the promoter and defender of the rights of paihere.

The chaplain ensures access to religious traditions and worship, including celebration of mass and the sacraments. By chaplains and volunteers working together, it is sometimes possible to provide for the

concrete needs of paihere through the collection and distribution of clothing, and modest financial aid to their families.

The closed and oppressive environment of the prison and the slow passing of time, favours reflection and remorse. Religious faith, constantly solicited and encouraged, can therefore appear as the path to a new life. Therefore the role of the chaplain in prisons is profoundly essential to restore peace in the hearts of these brothers and sisters of ours.

- *Falefou Sio, Wellington Archdiocese Prison Chaplain*

### CSS Volunteers

Caroline Campbell and Brooke Werp (pictured left to right) just before Brooke returned to the USA in November 2020. We thoroughly enjoyed having Brooke here and her contribution to our comms and social media projects. Caroline continues to assist with our other projects, including house setups for former refugees which will resume some time this year. A big thank you from all of us at CSS!



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Note cheques can be accepted until discontinued by banks in June 2021.

I wish to advise that I have remembered Catholic Social Services in my will.

Please send information about remembering Catholic Social Services in my will.