

The Advocate

New Year Brings New Challenges

Welcome to our first newsletter of the year. We know that many of you will have experienced loss in varying degrees in the last few months and Christchurch Women's Refuge extends our sincere sympathy and support to you all.



Safe House pantry after 6.3 shake.

It seems that 2011 will be another year of challenges – and opportunities, we hope. Our first challenge – as for many of you in the CBD – was the Boxing Day aftershock, which resulted in our Cashel Mall offices being 'red stickered'. We moved operations to our Safe House, where service continued largely uninterrupted from bedroom 'offices'.

It was not an ideal situation, given that demand for our services increased significantly post-New Year and was accompanied by

a frightening escalation in the severity of violence noted on referrals. However, we were fortunate to secure new central city premises within

a week. We were even more fortunate that our moving date was 28 February and so we avoided the horror of being in the CBD on 22 February. For the foreseeable future our community operations will continue from our Safe House – which, as it turns out, has proven just how safe it really is.

Throughout the earthquake and its aftermath we maintained 24-hour telephone support and our amazing clinical staff literally drove the crisis phone to each other to ensure the line was always available. We had all services fully operational again within just a few days.

We are very grateful for all the support we have received during the last few weeks – it has been truly wonderful – and sincerely thank all the people who have thought about us.

Meanwhile, be assured that the families we support and our commitment to providing the best and most appropriate family violence prevention service to Canterbury continues to be our first priority, no matter where we are based.



A Safe House bedroom/office after the big shake.

... and New Beginnings

Our second major change occurred mid-January when Annette Gillespie, our Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of ten years, left the agency.

The Board had reluctantly accepted Annette's resignation – prompted by ongoing health concerns of family in Melbourne – in late December 2010.

Annette had been with Christchurch Women's Refuge for 15 years and during her time as Manager/CEO the agency's profile grew considerably. It increased in size, added new services, extended its operations to North Canterbury, moved from a collective to a business model and became a highly regarded and visible advocate for women and children experiencing family violence.

Annette was also instrumental in bringing Christchurch Women's Refuge and the issue of family violence out from the fringe. Her departure will

be a loss not only for the agency, but for the wider Canterbury social services scene and the campaign to acknowledge and address family violence throughout New Zealand, an issue she has long and actively championed. We sincerely thank Annette for her contribution to Christchurch Women's Refuge and the wider community over the last 15 years and wish her and her family the very best for the new chapter they are beginning.

Lyn Boyd – herself much respected and one of our long-serving staff members – is currently Acting CEO until a permanent new appointment is made.



Departing CEO Annette Gillespie

Quakes Shake up the Family Violence Picture

The recent earthquakes have changed not only our physical landscape, but the family violence landscape as well. Just as in the weeks following the September earthquake, people focussed initially on their immediate needs – food, shelter, warmth etc – and other concerns were secondary. Police reports of family violence increased sharply, but calls for ongoing support did not follow straight away.

However, a few weeks on and that picture began to change. Our 0800 1 REFUGE number has been ringing steadily and our Family Support Workers have been consistently busy with clients and group work. We know the number of people needing support will continue to increase in coming months, but just why this is can be hard to understand.

In some instances there will be families that may have experienced friction, but who now transition into family violence as they struggle with the added pressures of severely altered living or economic situations. A lack of control over basic circumstances can also lead to a slackening of boundaries regarding expectations of acceptable, respectful behaviour.

But much family violence will not be new. Abusive behaviours which were well hidden in some families will now be more exposed as living conditions change and communities are thrust together. Couples who had been separated due to family violence issues often come back together in these crises, driven by a sense of familiarity and security – even though this is accompanied by its own risks – or because the victim needs their ex-partner's practical support. There is also significant

pressure from traumatised children to have access to both parents, even though one may be abusive.

Looking ahead we can already see where additional support will be required. We know that after September there was an increase in young women clients who were in abusive relationships, perhaps indicative of a lack of alternative support as family attended to their own quake-related needs.

An already apparent lack of alternative, affordable housing means women will be more reluctant to move out of their homes, even though their domestic environment may not be safe, and so finding ways to keep them safe in their homes will be imperative. Children who have experienced family violence will also require additional support, as even the supposed strength and security of a house can no longer be relied upon.

We also expect that the exodus of people from Christchurch into rural and satellite townships will change the geographic pattern of local family violence, requiring extra support and resourcing for rural communities.

Remember, if you have concerns about someone you know, you can call 0800 1 REFUGE toll free, 24-hours a day to get support.



Family Violence is a choice – natural disasters aren't.

Police received 39% more family violence calls in the weeks following the 22 February earthquake.

Thank you to Supporters and Funders

Christchurch Women's Refuge wishes to give a special thanks to the Trusts, Foundations and other agencies that have generously supported our work in the past few months. We are extremely grateful to these funders, whose support enables us to keep offering our services to Canterbury families.

- The Blogg Charitable Trust – supporting our children's education groups by providing the children with resources
- Christchurch Casino Charitable Trust – helping cover essential and ongoing Safe House costs
- The Lion Foundation – covering our rent for several months

- Pub Charity – helping us provide skilled staff to support to crisis clients
- The Strathlachlan Fund – helping with our Safe House costs
- First Sovereign Trust – supporting provision of our early intervention and prevention services

Thanks to Christchurch International Airport and The Jones Foundation who made generous donations to our work. We also wish to thank the many community groups, businesses and individuals who have supported us throughout the past year with donations of money, goods and/or their time. Particular thanks go to Toyworld Tower Junction, which keeps our toy cupboards well stocked; and The Millennium Hotel, Sudima Hotel and Scenic Circle Hotels, which have all provided good quality bedding and household goods for the Safe House and for clients setting up new homes. The many donations from community groups and individuals are too many to list, but you can be assured, they are very much appreciated.

Raising Rural Awareness

Since 2008 Christchurch Women's Refuge has been working on bringing on-the-ground services to the Selwyn district.

Experience in providing service in North Canterbury over the last 20 years had shown that it takes time to prepare a rural community to be ready and willing to address the issue of domestic violence. Rural communities have different needs to urban centres - they can be more isolated; they are often more close-knit (e.g. everyone knows everyone, making it harder for victims to seek help locally); they can be distanced by geography; and neighbours can be far away.

Christchurch Women's Refuge began initial community development in Selwyn in 2008, securing the government's Te Rito contract for the region (Te Rito is the government's strategy to combat family violence). The Te Rito project in the Selwyn District focuses on strengthening the community's response to family violence by raising community awareness, strengthening the relationships between social service providers around the issue of family violence and putting a community response plan to family violence in place which includes better information-sharing protocols and processes.



Research undertaken in 2007/08 and community consultation in 2009 and 2010 identified that there was little acknowledgement of family violence as an issue in the local community, no family violence provider based in the district and a need to build the community and social service areas' capacity to respond to the issue.

In the last two years Christchurch Women's Refuge has worked to resource the community with information by utilising existing networks and engaging with non-traditional partners (such as health and education services and the business community), both of which have been vital in helping place family violence in the centre of conversations.

The focus is now shifting to using community activities and events to draw attention to family violence within the Selwyn district. The goal is to develop sufficient awareness and demand in Selwyn for a Protected Persons education programme to be held in Rolleston, which would save current Selwyn clients the commute into Christchurch and make accessing face-to-face support more feasible for potential clients.

If you are living in the Selwyn area and would like information about our services please contact us on 0800 1 REFUGE.

Police referrals of family violence in North Canterbury tripled immediately following the 22 February quake.

Boxing Day Replay

In late 2010 Australasian party-plan clothing company UnderCover Wear gifted almost 60 boxes of new clothing and lingerie to Christchurch Women's Refuge. This wonderful gesture was arranged by Nelson consultant Penny Short with the intention that the clothing be used to benefit Canterbury women, especially those impacted by the earthquake.



Something for everyone!



Local stylist Angela Stone, UnderCover Wear consultants Tamara and Theresa, and CWR Brand Manager Julie McCloy.

Christchurch Women's Refuge distributed the clothing as part of the inner city's 'Boxing Day Replay' on 12 February. Free clothing was passed out to those most affected by the earthquake while members of the public purchased items for \$5 each.

The event was a great success and created quite a buzz. We gave away a huge amount of clothing and the feedback was very positive. Christchurch Women's Refuge also made approximately \$2,200, which will be used to support the operation of our temporary 'earthquake office' in the Safe House.

Annual Appeal Week 18-24 July

We are already thinking about our annual appeal on Friday 22nd and Saturday 23rd July! For two chilly days Christchurch Women's Refuge will be undertaking a street appeal in those locations where this is still possible. By joining us for just two hours you, your staff, colleagues, friends or families can 'make change' that creates change.

Another option to really get involved is to recruit colleagues, friends or families and undertake your own fundraising activity for Christchurch Women's Refuge. It costs approximately one million dollars to run our services each year, and generally about 40% of that comes from government. The rest we must generate and we'd love to have your support, so start thinking now about events or activities you could do that will show you support keeping families safe from harm in their own homes.

You can be sure that 100% of all fundraising for Christchurch Women's Refuge is spent to support local Canterbury women, children and families.

If you or your children are in immediate danger, always call 111.

Taxing Times

The end of the financial year is soon upon us and it brings good news for those who have made - or still want to make - donations.

For companies, charitable donations can be claimed as a deduction. This reduces the amount of the company's taxable income and thus its income tax. For individual donors, your donation will be eligible for a 33.3% tax refund when the new financial year begins on 1 April.

If you or your business would like to make a donation to Christchurch Women's Refuge you can use the donation slip in this newsletter, or donate online at www.womensrefuge.co.nz

For those of you who support us with automatic payments throughout the year, a tax receipt will be posted to you by mid-April.



Christchurch Women's Refuge Street Appeal:

Times: 8:30am-5:30pm in Christchurch, Rolleston, Kaiapoi and Rangiora (Friday 22) and from 9am-5pm in malls and other venues (both days).

Locations: We are collecting throughout Christchurch, Rolleston, Kaiapoi and Rangiora.

Needed: Collectors to fill slots (ideally two hours) and volunteers to help before and during the appeal days with administration.

To volunteer: call 353 7400, email enquiries@womensrefuge.co.nz or visit www.womensrefuge.co.nz



Volunteer Jo and CWR member Julie brave the cold at Riccarton market, 2010.

'Quaky Cat' Still Raising Funds for Canterbury

Just before Christmas children's author Diana Noonan and illustrator Gavin Bishop published 'Quaky Cat', a wonderful storybook about a cat's experience of the earthquake. The Boxing day aftershock, the 22 February earthquake and the many other small shocks throughout the country have all contributed to the book's popularity, resulting in a recent reprint. Proceeds are being donated to the Canterbury Earthquake Relief Fund and Diana has generously offered to gift her royalties to Christchurch Women's Refuge. If you haven't bought a copy of Quaky Cat for your children (or yourself) yet, order one directly from scholastic.co.nz, or pick one up from your local bookstore.

Items we are always looking for include:

- Disposable nappies – variety of ages
- Toilet paper and sanitary items
- Non-perishable foods
- Women and children's new underwear – variety of sizes

Christmas at our Place

Support from the local community once again made a big difference to those needing Refuge services at Christmas and we sincerely thank all of the individuals, schools and preschools, community and church groups and businesses who made donations of gifts or food.

We had some innovative support, such as 10-year old Josh Watkins who, having auctioned his flax weaving creations on Trade Me, used the proceeds to buy Christmas presents for children who are clients of Christchurch Women's Refuge. It is wonderful to see young children having the desire to want to make other children's lives a little happier.

Just some of our special thanks go to:

- Target Furniture, which collected over \$700 in a Christmas collection for Christchurch Women's Refuge.
- UMC advertising agency, who made a large donation to Christchurch Women's Refuge in lieu of client Christmas gifts.
- Team Hutchinson Ford, who made a large donation to our Christmas funds.
- Robert Harris Northlands, who chose Christchurch Women's Refuge as their charity of choice this Christmas and asked patrons to donate Christmas presents.
- Child, Youth & Family central city office who, once again, collected a huge amount of Christmas presents from staff.



Josh and his brother display some of the toys they fundraised to buy.

Confronting Child Abuse Nationally and Locally

New Zealand has a long way to go when it comes to care of our children. In early February this year the United Nations published a report outlining our shortfalls in caring for our most vulnerable citizens. It noted what it called “staggering” rates of child abuse, poverty and infant and child mortality.

Child abuse rates in New Zealand were among the highest – third – in the OECD countries and 20 per cent of Kiwi children were living in poverty (defined as a household earning 60 per cent less than the median income). Ironic, then, that social costs arising from child abuse and neglect are estimated to cost our country about \$2 billion a year.

Children and young people can be significantly affected by family violence in the home, even if they are not physically hurt. Trauma can manifest in sleeping disorders, anti-social behaviour, anxiety, truancy, poor educational outcomes, drug and alcohol problems and even youth suicide.

Family violence comprises 60% of New Zealand child abuse and approximately 75,000 children witnessed reported incidences of family violence in 2008. Yet, according to Police, only 15% of incidents are even reported.

An initiative introduced by the Ministry of Social Development in recent years to help protect children from violence and abuse was the creation of 45 Advocates for Children and Young People who Witness Family Violence. Their role is to encourage communities to actively support the safety and wellbeing of children affected by family violence.

Christchurch Women's Refuge hosts the North Canterbury advocate (currently Angie Brott) and has done so since 2007. Angie works with children as well as service providers, schools and child-related agencies to ensure that the needs of children who experience family violence are identified and addressed.

Angie is available to provide education and advice to individuals, families, community groups and organisations about the effects of family violence on children and young people, to assist with assessment of needs, and the development of protocols and referral processes. If you are based in North Canterbury and want to do more to support children who have experienced family violence, you can contact Angie on (03) 313 9296 or at angie@womensrefuge.co.nz



It's always OK to ask for support.
Call 0800 1 REFUGE (733843), 24 hours a day. It's free and confidential.

Clean Heat for Charity

Here comes winter! Ready to take the challenge to clean up your act and support Christchurch Women's Refuge at the same time?

Aircon Cleaners have offered to donate \$12 from each heat pump cleaning if you mention Christchurch Women's Refuge when you book. To ensure that your unit runs smoother, cleaner and more efficiently call **0800 480 482** and don't forget to mention Christchurch Women's Refuge.



The Heatpump Challenge ...

We challenge you to ...

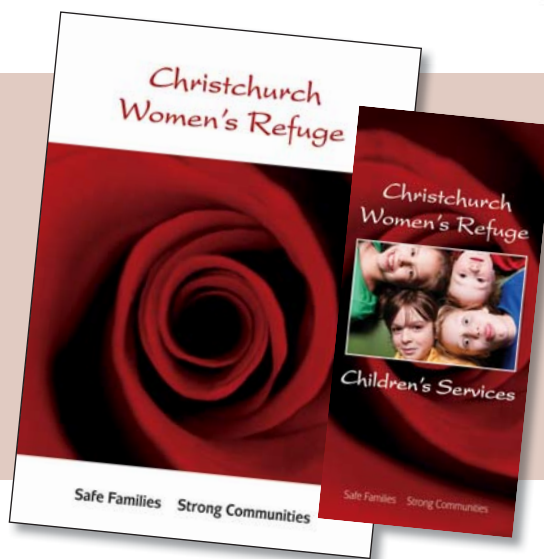
1. Minimise both allergies and asthma
2. Protect your family from lurking bugs
3. Save money on power bills and maintenance
4. Increase your heatpump's efficiency – cooling in summer and warming in winter
5. Reduce pet smells and fur particles
6. Enjoy healthier, fresher air and peace of mind



Read All About It ...

Christchurch Women's Refuge now has a range of publications available which detail more about our services and how we make a difference to Canterbury families. Check out our overview brochure; our children's service brochure; our agency profile document, our Employers' Toolkit as well as our latest Annual Report. All are available at womensrefuge.co.nz via the Newsroom.

Examples of our Agency Profile document and Children's Service brochure



Like us on Facebook



We finally have a Facebook presence! Check us out and 'Like' us to keep up to date on what we are doing and to share your thoughts with us.

Receive *The Advocate* by Email

Please help us reduce costs by choosing to receive *The Advocate* by email. Contact julie@womensrefuge.co.nz or call (03) 353 7400

Join the journey to a violence free society

Charities Commission Number CC 30026

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Other _____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Please add me to the email distribution list.

Please post to:

Christchurch Women's Refuge Inc., PO Box 32 034, Christchurch 8147

Here is my donation of \$25 \$75 \$150 \$200

Other amount (please enter) \$ _____

Cheque payable to Christchurch Women's Refuge

Or charge my Visa MasterCard Expiry date ____ / ____

Card No.

Name on Card _____

Please send me information about making a gift to Christchurch Women's Refuge in my will.

If you wish to discuss a donation or make automatic payments please contact Julie on (03) 353 7400, at julie@womensrefuge.co.nz or visit www.womensrefuge.co.nz

Thank you! We will send you a receipt

