

THE advocate

Will You Help Build a Safer Future for Our Children?

It's appeal time once more and that means we need your help again! The more wonderful supporters we have helping us in some way, the more funds we can raise; that is important as over 40% (\$800,000) of the money required to provide the free services that our community needs comes from fundraising.

Last year, Tania (our appeal coordinator extraordinaire) was determined to see us raise \$25,000 for our Annual Street Collection. We'd recruited more volunteers than ever before and in the past few years had raised around \$22,000, so she thought it was in the bag! And whilst 2018 was one of our bigger street collections, we didn't quite get to the \$25,000 goal.

Can you help us get there this year? Every cent raised will go towards ensuring we can provide support to children and young people who have experienced family violence to create the safer, brighter futures that they deserve. Did you know that children are present in 80% of family violence incidents and, without support, the effects can stay with them their entire life? But with YOUR help, we can help.

Here's how you can help:

• Gift just two hours of your **time** to collect for us at one of our designated spots on 17 and 18 May. Register at avivafamilies.org.nz

• Organize a **collection** amongst your colleagues, friends or team-mates

• Organize your own **event** (it doesn't have to be big!) or encourage your workplace to



Tania is ready; are you?!

• Make a **donation** directly to Aviva's Children and Youth Services (**appeal**. avivafamilies.org.nz)

• Attend our **movie fundraiser** of the feature film Vai (14 May) – see our Aviva Families Facebook page for details.

How your donation can help:

• \$25 helps fund our driving service to collect children for their weekly group education programme and return them to school

• \$65 will ensure that support is available via our 24-hour phone line during the night, weekends and public holidays

• \$300 buys morning tea and resources (such as worry dolls and boxes) for a children's group for a term

• \$1,900 enables a child or young person to undertake a life-changing 10-week education programme

Thank you for being part of a caring community.

Roz is Finally Feeling Safe at Home

Since Roz undertook Aviva's family violence education programme, she can recognise straight away those who haven't in the Facebook support group she is part of. "They are still asking themselves what they have done wrong" she says. "They don't realise that the problem isn't them."

Roz knows what it is like to blame and question yourself. She was with a person she describes as a narcissist for nine and a half years. During that time, they had had a daughter together, a sister for Roz's older son.

Roz met her ex-partner when she was in her early 20s. When she caught him cheating on her 30th birthday, she made the decision to end the relationship; it took ten months to physically leave. "People say 'why don't you just leave?'. He had manipulated me for so long, saying 'you can't make it without me, no-one else is going to want you' – you believe it. We had a child together and you're going to lose a lot of people in your life – our daughter's grandparents, her aunts and uncles – it's like chopping off half of your life."

When she did leave, the abuse got worse.¹ "I moved to a farm in Kaiapoi. He would come to my place at night and shine torchlight through the windows so I couldn't sleep. He tried to take our daughter; turned the lights of my car on to run the battery flat; and took a log splitter to my front door to steal back the family dog."

Roz went into a safe house several times. "Once whilst I was there, he rammed the farm gates with his SUV, then left two other gates open, letting the bull and dog out – he got run over. The second time I came home to a broken bedroom window." He watched her house constantly, texting Roz demanding to know who was visiting. One day he called her over 200 times. Unsurprisingly, Roz had to take stress leave from her job.

Roz estimates that she called the Police at least 30 times. They issued Police Safety Orders, and she got trespass, protection and parenting orders. "None of it seemed to deter him." Although Roz moved, her ex found out her new location. After picking her children up from the school bus one day, he chased them at 160km/hour. Roz moved again and had Whānau Protect security measures installed by the Battered Women's Trust. Shortly after, she undertook Aviva's 10-week education programme.



Image courtesy of Shutterstock

"I did group twice. The first time I didn't take it all in and felt I needed to brush up on the skills I'd learnt. The education made me feel sane – I wasn't the only one this happened to. I learned about the cycle of violence, the hearts and flowers tactics etc – everything. I think the education was great and I'd recommend it to everyone. I'm far more confident and resilient now."

Roz' son and daughter also did the ten-week Tamariki group. "My daughter was having nightmares and my son was very anxious about going out anywhere. I could see the growth slowly from the beginning of the programme and they still use the tools they learned in group. The anger rules help my daughter process and label her emotions, and my

son now will remove himself from a situation that is upsetting him and get some space to get his mind straight."

The harassment suddenly stopped two years ago, "but I still lock my door and am super-vigilant. I've changed my entire routine – when and where I shop, my phone number, everything. We're recovering and life is a hell of a lot more peaceful. To someone else going through what I did I'd say there are lots of people and organisations to help you – let them. Use all the resources you are offered. You can do it, and life will get better."

¹ 50% of Intimate Partner Violence deaths occur at the time of separation. (Family Violence Death Review Committee 4th report. (2014).)

Sharing Wisdom and Inspiring Change...

Working with people through some of the hardest times in their lives – trauma, grief, fear and hurt – may not sound like what most of us want to do every day, but Carol Brown loves working with women and children who have experienced family violence, and seeing them flourish.

Carol is well known within the Christchurch family violence sector in which she has spent 15 years supporting others, and recently celebrated her ten-year anniversary with Aviva. Carol thinks she will be at Aviva until she retires – and then probably still supporting women experiencing violence in some way; it's her passion.

What initially inspired Carol into the work was her own experience of an abusive relationship in her first marriage. She had utilised safe house services and swore that she would help other women to become safe once she got herself sorted out. "A lot of people think it is just an issue that affects lower socioeconomic groups, but I've seen violence that goes all the way up the social scale" Carol says. "A really big thing – and I experienced it myself – is the 'why doesn't she just leave?' attitude. People have no understanding of the absolute pressure – trying to manage an abusive partner's behaviour, manage children and their behaviour which may be affected by what is happening around them, perhaps being the breadwinner for the family. How does she get the time or energy to work out how to do that?"

When things improved for Carol she made good on her vow to help. She began volunteering on an after-hours crisis line and collecting women who needed access to a safe house before eventually becoming employed as Safe House Supervisor and volunteer coordinator. Since joining Aviva in 2009 Carol has had a range of roles including Women's Services Manager; Earthquake Coordinator; safe@home Coordinator; Independent Victims Specialist (as part of the ISR pilot) and now as Senior Practitioner leading group education for



Carol with some of the thank you cards she has received in the last 10 years.

both women and children. "What I love about working at Aviva is the team, and the teamwork; it really is like a family. Everyone is professional in the way they do their jobs and there is always someone to talk things through with. There's also real variety and challenge in the work. You never know what the day will bring."

It can be hard, demanding and stressful, so what makes it all worthwhile for Carol? "What I really love most is when you engage with women and begin giving them the tools to recognise what is happening to them and their children" she says. "Just providing that support and knowledge to help them address what is going on, letting them see that there are options available, and then supporting them to make good choices.

"I see women coming into (education) group so laden with shame, guilt and stress, not knowing which way to turn. By the end of the (10 week) programme the changes are amazing – some of these women are barely recognisable. The guilt and shame are gone and placed where they should be – with the abusive person. And that group dynamic is a real force – they are empowered by being part of a group. They realise the behaviours of their abusive partner are not about them (the women) or their fault, because other

people's partners have the same behaviours. I feel very humbled when you see how hard many of those women work, and very humbled that they think so much of you for helping. Many of them aren't used to having someone help them."

When it comes to children, the work is much harder Carol says, but just as rewarding. "It's about developing a good rapport and creating a safe environment to talk about what is happening. It's about building safety all around them, so that they know that there is someone who is going to listen and believe them. You get disclosures sometimes (e.g. sexual abuse) and, although that is awful, I feel really good that those children feel safe enough to talk about it in group. You leave them all with a bond. They know we're a team here – someone may be working with them, someone else with mum and/or dad. They know we have their back."

Aviva services are only partially government funded (60%) and the rest are funded by community support and generosity. If you would like to support Carol and her colleagues to continue helping more women and children overcome the effects of violence, please make a donation at donate.avivafamilies.org.nz.

Findings of The Loft Evaluation – “the word collaboration doesn’t even capture it”²

In mid-2018, after two initial years of operation, The Loft (which Aviva, with other partner agencies, established in mid-2016) commissioned its first evaluation. The findings, presented in late December, have demonstrated that the aspirations of Loft partners in creating this new way of providing wellbeing support are being successfully met.

The Loft is a collaborative partnership of community, social and health services working to improve the wellbeing of all people in our community. The first evaluation of its effectiveness included interviews with internal and external stakeholders (including clients), as well as use of data collected from clients over the previous two years on their experience of The Loft.

Clients, staff and external stakeholders all commented that The Loft’s location is working very well at providing services in a place and space that is highly accessible in terms of mobility, personal safety and connection to transport links. Client feedback reinforced that The Loft is a safe and non-stigmatising space for individuals and families, and somewhere that is increasingly visible and embedded in the local community. One client described their experience in this way: “When you walk in, it’s like Oh My God, it’s like my second house. ... They make you feel like a human. They don’t make you feel like a number”. This may explain why word-of-mouth inspired self-referral is the most common access path to Loft services.

Many people using The Loft identify multiple, co-existing needs – most commonly mental health, family violence, financial issues, housing, care and protection of children, and alcohol or drug concerns – and feedback indicates that The Loft is successfully making access to multiple services for those with complex needs easier. The Loft offers a Social Emergency



Response Service (SERS) which means that people are not required to diagnose their own needs and then seek out help from multiple sources; the SERS team does that for them, thus removing those barriers which are part of the traditional social service system. After identifying their primary need, The Loft can facilitate the development of a relationship with an appropriate agency, and even provide some practical support around food parcels, clothing or other items. In its first two years SERS has supported over 600 individuals and families, usually unconnected with other support agencies. Thirty percent identify as Māori; 76% have dependent children; most are between 25-45 years and 70% live in Christchurch’s eastern suburbs.

Because 40% of people entering The Loft identify family violence as a significant issue for them, the role of Te Ara Atea – Family Violence Wayfinder, was created. This person offers short-term support and make safe interventions until a specialist family violence agency can take over for longer-term support. The evaluation indicated that supports for people experiencing family violence were seen to reach children, young people, women, men and all people using violence and/or being subjected to violence. Practitioners of non-family violence related services based at The Loft said that their own understanding of and ability to recognise family violence had also grown.

Feedback from both clients and workers based at The Loft also suggested that services are indeed being delivered in a more coordinated and integrated fashion than has happened in standalone services, thanks to the Navigator and SERS, as well as the ease of connection between practitioners and agencies. This prompted one Loft client to say “The Loft is perfect. That’s all I can say. They should have The Loft in every city in the country.”

One external stakeholder reflected that “(The Loft has) put out the challenge really, about this is how services can operate collectively without that whole sense of competition... And it’s the kind of stuff that we’ve talked about in the social sector for a long time.”

The Loft evaluation is available to view at www.theloftchristchurch.org.nz



*Sep 2017-Aug 2018 †2016-August 2018 ‡2017-August 2018 §2016-2018 ¶2016-2017

² External stakeholder interviewed for the 2018 Loft Evaluation



Hui activities were designed to stimulate conversations about collaboration, connection and transformation.

Hui Provides Opportunity to Recharge and Share

In 2015 Aviva was fortunate enough to be chosen to receive a five-year funding partnership with the Todd Foundation. Each year the Foundation gathers its funding recipients together to share their progress, and to talk and think strategically about their varied work. The hui enables the various funding recipients to share and learn together, something they rarely otherwise get to do.

This year the hui was in Christchurch, hosted by Aviva and the Champion Centre, with the theme of collaboration, connection and transformation. Thirty-nine attendees from all over New Zealand participated in a range of presentations and social events over two days and nights. The hui opened at The Champion Centre, a local charity working with young children with disabilities and their families. This was a time to re-connect with hui participants from previous years, get to know new ones, explore what The Champion Centre does, and set the scene for the next two days.

The following day the hui moved to The Loft, a perfect example of collaboration and transformation in how it brings together a wide range of service partners to better support the wellbeing of Christchurch people. Aviva shared its own 46-year long journey of collaboration, connecting and transformation in our approach to addressing family violence. Facilitator Chris Mene provided a range of exercises that provided opportunities for participants to reflect on how the hui themes might impact their own work back in their home agencies and communities. The final day was spent at

the new central library, Tūranga, with Kilmarnock Enterprises sharing their own journey of transformation in moving from a charity model to a thriving social enterprise.

Feedback on the hui was overwhelmingly positive, and perhaps best summed up by one participant who reminds us all why social and community organisations are so important: "I'm grateful for the reminder that behind every organisation is a group of committed people who are there to do good work for their community."

Thanks to Our Supporters

As always, we want to say thank you for your support over the last few months. It is our privilege to be able to pass on your caring and good will to so many in our community. With your help we aim to generate \$800,000 each year on top of our contract income so that together we can keep supporting our friends, neighbours, colleagues and families to live free from the effects of violence.

Recent Funders:

- Christchurch Earthquake Recovery Trust for contributing to Family Support Worker wages
- One Foundation for helping keep our 0800 AVIVA NOW line operating after-hours
- Air Rescue Services for supporting our marketing and promotion efforts
- Community Trust of Mid and South Canterbury for making face-to-face support for sexual assault easier to access from Ashburton
- Rata Foundation for contributing to management and Family Support Worker wages
- The Southern Trust for contributing to Family Support Worker and Education Coordinator Wages
- The Strathlachlan Fund for enabling the continuation of safe@home
- Roy Owen Dixey Charitable Trust for helping keep our 0800 AVIVA NOW line operating after-hours
- New Zealand Communities Growth Trust for covering costs related to our 0800 AVIVA NOW line in office hours

Other Supporters

- Drummond Inheritance Fund
- The Jones Foundation
- Sensi Holdings
- The Jean Stanbury Family Trust
- Kaiapoi Anglican Parish
- Lions Club of Rangiora



Some of our Aviva Activator City2Surf team

- Inland Revenue Customer Compliance Services
- Scenic Hotel Group
- Deloitte

Fundraisers:

- Our Aviva Activator City2Surf team
- Brown Bread, through their Broadly Speaking event
- Rangi Ruru, Christ's College, and St Margaret's College

There are many more of you who have supported people experiencing and overcoming family violence recently. We can't mention every one of you by name and don't mention individuals for privacy reasons but please know that the children, young people, adults and families you've helped on their journey really appreciate all the support you give to them, through us. Every bit of your generosity contributes to improving someone's life in some way, so THANKS to you all.

Donate: donate.avivafamilies.org.nz

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