



# Catholic Social Services

people helping people *āwhina tātou*

## Meeting the Needs of People who are Isolated and Lonely

“17.6% of New Zealanders aged 15 years and over reported feeling lonely at least some of the time in the last four weeks in 2021.” *Ngā Tūtohu Aotearoa — Indicators Aotearoa New Zealand*

People in our communities are experiencing feelings of isolation and loneliness more than ever.

Kindness, such as a friendly ear, can go a long way towards helping people and the privilege of working with people brings with it many joys. Practical support, like food parcels, can help people through an immediate and pressing crisis or need.

But in today's world people's lives are becoming increasingly complex. Systemic or deeper issues faced by people can be hard to spot except by a trained and experienced eye. Unless we recognise this need for expert support and thread in the kind of help that will make a difference, all we are doing is binding people to us and bringing people back to emergency or crisis assistance over and over again.

### How Catholic Social Services can support your visitation and friendships ministry

Our kaupapa is about supporting the work you do, coaching and em-

powering your teams to carry out your ministry more safely and giving you the tools to recognise when you need to thread the appropriate help into your relationships. It is about strengthening and supporting you and your community and building local capacity.

### Professional standards of care

CSS regularly receives calls from people desperate for connection. We are looking for ways to connect with Parishes and other communities to whom we can refer people.

CSS is a MSD accredited social service agency and we have strict privacy, safeguarding, and safety protocols. Before we can make referrals to community groups or volunteers who offer friendship and connection, they must meet certain minimum criteria:

- All volunteers are police vetted and have attended Archdiocese of Wellington safeguarding courses.
- A structured and transparent vol-

unteer programme is in place.

- All volunteers attend regular peer supervision, coaching and mentoring
- All volunteers understand how to re-refer people.
- Attend ongoing professional development.

If you or your community would like to connect with Catholic Social Services and be a part of a network of trained and trusted befriender volunteers, then we would love the opportunity to assist you through our programme of coaching and mentoring. We offer coaching workshops on various topics:

- ◇ **Boundaries:** Develop transparent policies that prioritize the safety of both volunteers and the people they visit. This includes discuss-

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## Community Facilitation - Working with Communities

At Catholic Social Services, we work collaboratively with partners and people to strengthen communities by threading in our programs, services, and projects.



Deirdre Meskill (pictured), our Community Facilitator, works across several of our projects including: Women's Friendship Project: we pair

locally-connected women with former refugee and migrant women for intentional friendship with a commitment to meet regularly for at least 6 months. There is a lot of interest from women and, following an initial 6-month pilot, we are growing the project in Wellington with our partners, Changemakers Resettlement Forum. We will extend the project into Greater Wellington in the future.

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## Community Facilitation - Working with Communities *(cont'd from page 1)*

• **Benefit Impact (Advocacy):** In a time of a cost-of-living crisis, it is increasingly important that people can access the support and benefits to which they are entitled. Since 2016 we have partnered with Hutt Valley BEST to run Benefit Impacts with communities. At a Benefit Impact people can identify what support they qualify for and if they are

receiving their full entitlements. Next, we help people navigate the processes with Work and Income.

Deirdre also delivers coaching for visitation (see our main article) and can visit parishes, schools and community groups for korero on the challenges they are seeing and new opportunities to collaborate.

*(Right: the table set for a Women's Friendship meeting at CSS.)*



For more information contact:  
Reception@wn-catholicsocialservices.org.nz

## Meeting the Needs of People who are Isolated and Lonely *(cont'd from Page 1)*

ing public/private relationships, person-to-person contact, sharing personal information, lending or borrowing money, and accepting gifts.

### ◇ **Recognizing the Need for Referrals:**

Build a resource network of community assets and agencies while empowering volunteers to identify when a referral might be necessary. Volunteers can observe situations and behaviours during their visits that may raise concerns, and with the right information, they can make appropriate referrals to professional organizations.

### ◇ **Conflict Prevention and Resolution:** Provide volunteers with skills and methods to identify vulnerabilities that may lead to

conflict, as well as techniques to prevent and neutralize conflict when it arises. Conflict can arise in any interaction with people, and volunteers need to be equipped to handle such situations effectively.

### ◇ **Personal Safety:** Foster a culture of personal safety that is practical and easy to implement. This session covers the basics, including situational awareness, to ensure the safety of both volunteers and the individuals they visit.

### ◇ **Cultural Respect and Language:** Help volunteers understand their unconscious biases and raise awareness about the impact of language on marginalizing others. Cultural safety and respectful interactions with individuals from diverse backgrounds are essential. This session

challenges biases and encourages volunteers to use inclusive language that fosters connection and acceptance.

### **How to get started**

Contact Catholic Social Services Community Facilitator 04 385-8642 or email: d.meskill@wn-catholicsocialservices.org.nz

Arrange a time for our team to visit your volunteers. We recognise that building relationships is key to successful partnerships. We would like to spend some time with you getting to know you and your community, so we can best serve and meet your needs.

We can then begin working together to ensure a safe and transparent volunteer framework and tailor a series of coaching workshops to your specific needs.

## Seasons for Growth – Learning to live with change and loss



*Tēnā koutou katoa.*

My name is Jess Ferroni and I have been appointed as the Seasons for Growth Trainer/Coordinator

for Catholic Social Services, Wellington.

I was born in Melbourne and lived there my whole life, until October last year when I moved to Wellington with my partner and

our 2-year-old son. My background is in primary school teaching. I have 14 years of experience. As my teaching experience progressed, I began to see gaps in student learning, in particular the area of social and emotional wellbeing. I undertook training in the Berry Street Educational Model. Berry Street is an organisation that help those experiencing poverty, violence, and abuse. This knowledge has allowed me to ensure that any student who steps into my learning space is in a trauma-friendly environment. It developed my approachability, to show compassion and empathy. It has

given me insight into how best to work with diversity and how to best meet my students' needs.

When we moved to Wellington I wanted to get out of the classroom and work in a wellbeing related role associated with children, young people, and adults. Seasons for Growth facilitates the use of my skills, assisting children, young people, and adults with managing their emotions.

I'd love to hear from you so please don't hesitate to reach out to me if you have any questions or queries about Seasons for Growth and I would be more than happy to help.

## Game On! A Parenting Course just for Dads

Catholic Social Services and Greenstone Doors are collaborating to deliver *Game On* a parenting course for Dads.

*Game On* is led by trained counsellors, social workers and facilitators from both organisations.

### Who comes along?

Game On is open to any dad (including step-fathers, grandfathers, uncles etc) with a variety of referral sources: OT, Ministry of Justice, Lawyers, social workers, Family Violence agencies, Police, and self referrals. Many come through promotion in schools and community noticeboards.

### What happens on the course?

The course begins with a group contract and men talking about their parenting journey and their hopes in attending the course. Every session includes an opportunity for men to reflect on what happened in the week and how this relates to their goal of being the best dad for their kids.

During this time men may raise their own issues and goals and the facilitators will aim to incorporate that into the course. Men can talk about their successes and will be affirmed or they may learn something new.

These are guided conversations and activities with input from the group.

- ◇ Week One – What do you want for your kids?
- ◇ Week Two – What sort of Dad do you want to be?
- ◇ Week Three – Communication : Build those skills
- ◇ Week Four – Discipline starts with you
- ◇ Week Five – Building self esteem in us and in our kids
- ◇ Week Six – Nutrition : Food for the body, food for the mind
- ◇ Week Seven – Making changes
- ◇ Week Eight – Putting it all together and celebration

### Why are we offering this course?

To provide dads with tools for effective parenting and relating with their children and (ex)partners.

To provide a safe place where men can express their own frustrations and be honest about their challenges and trauma so they can make good choices for their lives. All of which has a direct impact on making it better for their kids.

To enable supportive, positive discussions regarding the value of dads in children's lives.

To promote better ways of



supporting men to achieve their goals.

### Does Game On work?

Some feedback from men attending the course:

- *My kids are wanting to spend time with me and laughing more and playing games more*
- *I'm trying to take on board some of the tools I've learnt from the course.*
- *The course has given me a real boost in confidence and I will now talk to my girls and listen more at their level.*
- *Asking small questions helped to create a better way of getting more information about kids and their interests or understanding how their day went.*
- *That I need to focus on my own behaviour and think about how I can co-parent with my children's mother.*
- *Trying to see myself not as a failure anymore.*

### Ongoing support available:

Tane Talks: a weekly men's support group txt 022 0395788  
Counselling: offered by Greenstone Doors 04 566-5037  
Social work support: offered by Catholic Social Services 04 385-8642

## Deaf Awareness Workshops

During New Zealand Sign Language Week 2023, Catholic Social Services hosted several workshops on Deaf Culture for Archdiocese staff and for social services groups to celebrate the use of NZSL led by Lyneen Allen, Navigator Kaiwhakatere at CSS.

The workshops recognised the experience of Deaf people and the ongoing struggle for recognition even though NZSL is one of the two official languages of Aotearoa NZ.

In spite of this Deaf people still have limited access to interpreting funding, many struggle to access education and employment, and experience feelings of isolation which can lead to poor mental health outcomes.

Feedback from those who attended the Archdiocese staff and community group workshops has been extremely positive.

*"... a wonderful workshop that included information about Deaf*

*culture, tips around when and how to book interpreters, etiquette around interpreters in meetings, an exercise of trying to communicate with a Deaf participant without using words ... and a little bit of beginner's Sign Language at the end. I learned a lot about working inclusively with Deaf clients."*

*"... a great workshop that everyone really enjoyed and I certainly took a lot from it. It was*

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## Deaf Awareness Workshops

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interesting hearing [about] the different levels of deafness.”

“a really good experience. It has improved my understanding of the differences in people’s backgrounds and their needs. Since the workshop, I have been

trying to interact with everyone in a more empathetic way. Highly recommend this workshop!”

In July this year Lyneen will run workshops once a month for people from the Deaf Community to help combat isolation currently experienced by many in this community.

It will also inform them of other services available to them in the community. Staff from Government agencies will also be invited to attend the workshops in the hope they will come to understand the many challenges this community faces.

## More Agencies sign Memorandum of Understanding with CSS

In addition to the Memorandum that CSS signed with **Changemakers Refugee Forum** in April 2022, CSS now has MOUs with **Greenstone Doors** (signed in July 2022) and **The Society of St Vincent de Paul Kapi Mana** (signed in March 2023). More details to follow!

## THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

Like other NGOs, we apply each year for charitable grants to assist us provide our core services and run special projects for the community. This means we compete with other groups for the same funds.

Every donation received outside of this pool of funds is hugely appreciated and vital to our continued work. Catholic Social Services thanks all our funders for their wonderful support. In particular we would like to thank the following:

- **The Archdiocese of Wellington**
- **Gaynor Charitable Nominees**
- **Donovan Family Charitable Trust**
- **New Zealand Lottery Grants Board**
- **Oranga Tamariki Ministry for Children**
- **Wellington Community Fund**
- **Tindall Foundation**
- **Est. Kathleen Alice Boyd Charitable Trust**
- **Wellington City Council – Betty Campbell Accommodation Assistance**
- **The Catholic Foundation**
- **David Daily Charitable Trust**
- **Hutt Mana Charitable Trust**
- **KSC Wellington Charitable Trust Board**
- **Ministry for Social Development**
- **J K Baxter Trust**
- **St Vincent de Paul**
- **Nikau Foundation**

Also, our heartfelt thanks to those who donated to our **Kotahitanga Fund**, (our rebranded 1000 Club group) and all others who regularly donate money and/or goods to our refugee resettlement project. Your donations allow us to continue assisting the most vulnerable in our communities.

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