

LIFEWISE



My **LIFEWISE**

The heart of Lifewise shared by
some of those who know us best

In a nutshell

Lifewise is a gutsy and determined charity in pursuit of a socially just New Zealand.

Lifewise stands up for people of all ages who need a hand in facing significant life challenges, providing timely and practical help wherever possible.

Lifewise is not a traditional charity. We do not use hand-outs to solve problems. Instead we work passionately to turn lives around. To do this, we respond to the underlying causes of serious social issues and act to put things right as effectively as possible.

Both independently and through our partnerships, we seek out permanent solutions, not band-aid quick fixes. And our actions bring about results.

In short, Lifewise's goal is to build a better, fairer New Zealand for all. A society which values the relationships between people, where everyone counts, where everyone feels that they belong and where everyone has a contribution to make.

My Lifewise is...

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Hamish

"My Lifewise is... rewriting my story"



When Hamish hit rock bottom, he hit it hard. Humiliated and exhausted, he finally acknowledged his need for freedom from a drug that had, in his words, "found its way into my bones."

For thirteen long years he had been hamstrung by an addiction to methadone; alienating his family, jeopardising his employment and robbing him of his dignity and self-confidence in the process. His eventual arrival at rock bottom presented an opportunity for Hamish to rewrite his future. Hamish had all but exhausted

his treatment options when his case worker provided a timely referral to Lifewise. Desperate, broken and hopeful of a better future, Hamish explains that the support of Lifewise staff who had "walked in his shoes" and who treated him as an equal was critical to him.

"Lifewise didn't judge me. They treated me like a person, not as an addict." To Hamish, Lifewise staff were, and continue to be, like family. He found that the positive outlook of Lifewise staff and the holistic approach to detox

and treatment were instrumental to his progress. Hamish remains resolute in his recovery, determined to maintain the freedom he fought so hard for.

Lifewise's commitment to pursue permanent solutions for people like Hamish, means that we will continue to be energised by stories such as his.

Kabonya

"My Lifewise...
is standing on
my own two
feet again"



Few can claim a life story that encompasses civil war, tragic loss, refugee camps, adoption of orphaned relatives and assimilation to a foreign land. Kabonya can. Facing language barriers, perplexing cultural practices and well-meaning yet ill-advised government agencies, Kabonya had the odds firmly stacked against her when she and her eleven young sole charges attempted to integrate into New Zealand after a 9000-mile journey from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Life in NZ was like nothing Kabonya and her children had ever experienced. Learning how to live within NZ society was more difficult than expected. Further complicating matters, Kabonya's difficulty in responding to parenting in a NZ context resulted in CYFS being notified. CYFS in turn contacted Lifewise for assistance.

Lifewise's thirst for finding tailored solutions for children and families whose situations are often labeled 'too hard', coupled with Kabonya's determination to adapt to her adopted

country, meant that the transition was smoothed and the family kept intact. Lifewise connected Kabonya with other women from her home country who had successfully integrated.

The simple yet profound act of connecting her with her own community was key to Kabonya and her family's successful settlement. This allowed Lifewise's social work team to downscale involvement, safe in the knowledge that 'natural' support structures were in place.

Elaine

"My Lifewise is
... a reminder
that I do
matter."



When her husband died of cancer, Elaine despaired that she would never find happiness again. In search of a better life, Elaine made the brave move to New Zealand. She then met and fell in love with Chris. Tragically, just five short weeks after being diagnosed with cancer, Chris died.

They say that we are all just three life-changing events away from homelessness and this was certainly true for Elaine. In short succession following the loss of Chris, Elaine was evicted from her home and, due to

time away from work, lost her job. Battling grief and the beginnings of depression, Elaine turned to gambling. Elaine was at her lowest ebb and says she would have thrown herself off a bridge if one was nearby. "I felt I had nowhere to turn; as if there was no one in this world to help me."

Elaine faced being forever marginalised, as so many in the homeless community are. It was while staying at a hostel that Elaine met Lifewise social worker Steve, who offered real help, help that treated

her as an individual and advocated passionately on her behalf, help that would bring her in from the margins. As a result Elaine is now housed, receiving support for her depression from a local GP, and reconnected into the wider community. Lifewise's unique approach to ending homelessness worked for Elaine, just as it has for so many others. Elaine beams as she shares, "Lifewise saved my life. They helped me to take the reins of my life back. The best part is, they taught me how to do that for myself rather than doing it for me."

Judy

"My Lifewise...
means living in
my own home."



Judy cherishes her beloved home and after 65 years there – a length of residency almost unfathomable today – it is full of memories. Understandably, staying in her home is a priority very close to her heart. For Judy, Lifewise plays an important role supporting her to achieve her own goals, one of those being to stay in her home.

"I don't know what I would do without Lifewise. They are a marvellous help and are always so eager to help... I know that with the support of Lifewise I will continue to live at home and that

is very important to me." Through a mode of practice that provides as little or as much assistance as needed, Judy has been able to navigate the loss of her husband Jack – as well as a number of health concerns – with the assurance that should her circumstances change, Lifewise would be there for her.

Lifewise celebrates the fact that over time and for some people, this should mean less or even no ongoing support is required.

Continuing to provide a response that both advocates on behalf of, and "rolls up its sleeves for", a population group that is far too often undervalued has always been, and will continue to be, a priority for Lifewise.

Aimée

"My Lifewise is...
my second home"



The excited squeals of 20-month-old twins Ella and Mia ring out across Lifewise's Glen Eden playgroup while young mum Aimée looks on with a smile, happy that her girls have an opportunity to mix with children their own age.

The Lifewise playgroup also fulfils another role; that of giving Aimée the opportunity to meet up with and talk to other new mums with the same experiences as herself. "The girls demand so much of my time that there's very little left for me at the

end of each day. It's nice to know that I am not alone in that! I feel at home when I come here. To be honest it feels like playgroup has brought the local community closer. And because it's free, we can come regularly. Local mums like myself have a place to go for support and time out. For many mums this could be a lifesaver."

Access to quality education is critical, especially in the first five years. Aimée's girls are testament to this, "My girls love it, and their development has sped up; they relate to other children

better, it's been amazing." Lifewise's Glen Eden playgroup is a free service open Monday to Friday. "From day one it's felt like we were meant to be here." Aimée explains that Tracey (Lifewise playgroup co-ordinator) has been instrumental in that, "she just seems to always know when we need a little extra support."

Nick

"My Lifewise...
challenges me
in my thinking."

Nick has spent much of his working life looking into what makes people tick. Despite finding success in doing so, seven years ago Nick was at a point in his life where he asked, "What more can we do here?" That impetus led Nick to work with Lifewise as an advisor.

He quickly realised he was working with people with a similar outlook. "I connect with Lifewise because of the fundamental reason they exist, to turn lives around. It strikes a chord with me."

Nick says he has become empowered by the stories of change he has been privileged to be part of, especially those he has witnessed through his continued participation in the Lifewise Big Sleepout.

"There is something very special in the way Lifewise works. As a result, partnering with Lifewise makes me feel like I am making a contribution. I feel respected, welcomed and acknowledged by them for what I can bring to the table. The other thing I value is that after spending time with

Lifewise I am always challenged in my own thinking. I now find myself imagining what would be possible if we all thought and acted the way Lifewise does towards those on the fringes of society." When asked about the work of Lifewise by others, Nick is quick to share, "I have seen the work of Lifewise first hand. It works."



"My Lifewise...
is my hands and
feet."

Jan

Jan is a committed supporter of non-profits organisations who "roll up their sleeves" and who are "not afraid to take on the hard tasks." As such, Jan is an especially big fan of Lifewise's gutsy approach to serious societal issues.

"Lifewise takes on the hard tasks, acting as our hands and feet at a frontline level and, just as importantly, as an advocate for the disenfranchised on a national level."

Jan is a third generation Lifewise supporter (formerly Methodist Mission

Northern) and the work it carries out. After personally supporting Lifewise for many years now, Jan has developed an "absolute trust" that Lifewise applies her donations in "the most effective and practical way possible."

As a Christian, Jan believes that social justice and spiritual life go hand in hand and she is especially proud of what her donations to Lifewise have achieved in the area of homelessness.

"I know that my donations are helping to address not just the presenting

issue, but also the underlying issue of homelessness."

Rebecca

"My Lifewise... is hopeful."

It was a desire to use her energy and skills to enact wider societal change that brought Rebecca to Lifewise. That was back in 2007. A passionate champion for the power of thriving neighbourhoods, Rebecca lives and breathes Lifewise's commitment to connect neighbours and build resilient neighbourhoods from the street level up. "Isolation is crippling. We're not designed to do life on our own. We're stronger together. We thrive when we have strong relationships, with family, friends but also with those who live close by".

Lifewise's approach resonates with Rebecca. "Lifewise helps enable solutions. We're not about encouraging reliance on long-term social services.

The best solutions come when control is given to communities rather than communities having things done to them." Lifewise is creating opportunities for people to understand the aspirations of the place they live in and to empower them to make things happen. As part of the Lifewise team, Rebecca is encouraged by Lifewise's 'relentless positivity', "Lifewise expects

to find solutions within people and communities".

Lifewise's approach reminds her of the Maori proverb: Nā tō rourou, nā taku rourou ka ora ai te iwi, with your food basket and my food basket the people will thrive.

"Lifewise is a vehicle to bring baskets together. We know that together there is a different way and it is possible. We recognise that our approach is part of the solution."

Shane

"My Lifewise...
is not scared of
a challenge."

Enter the gates of Lifewise Rotorua and exhale. The physical and social environment combined fosters a tangible sense of manaaki that is truly palpable. It is no wonder that Lifewise's mental health and addictions program has grown from strength to strength, restoring and rebuilding confidence and identity, for many.

For the past two years, Shane Unuwai has headed up the HEHA – Healthy eating, healthy action – program. "I am passionate about sharing positive knowledge, and in doing so,

supporting clients to make healthy life choices."

The highly successful HEHA program encompasses physical exercise, healthy eating, kaupapa Maori and therapeutic art. All clients attend HEHA classes both before and after entering treatment during which time they are empowered to set personal goals, goals that Lifewise then supports clients to meet.

Importantly, clients are not viewed in isolation throughout this process,

reintegration with whanau and community is critical. Clients testify that Lifewise's HEHA program encourages the development of an "unshakeable sense of self-belief and self-respect".

As for the future of such work, Shane shares, "I have a huge sense of excitement for what is in store for Lifewise. Lifewise is not scared of a challenge. We leave no stone unturned and we have shown that we are not afraid to try new things. As a result we will continue to see many lives turned around 180 degrees."

Our heritage

The heritage of Lifewise stretches back to the 1850s to a humble wooden chapel in what is today central Auckland. From there, local Methodists worked tirelessly with those affected by the social issues of the day - poverty, unemployment, poor housing as well as educational and healthcare deprivation.

This dedicated group of benevolent forebears were said to pioneer an approach that applauded the rolling up of sleeves and the promotion of a thriving, inclusive and caring society. Combining business acumen with a passion to speak out about pressing social issues, they were determined to deliver on their vision for the future.

Fast forward 160 years and the spirit that underpinned their drive, endures to this day. From the early days of the Helping Hand Mission, through to the Auckland Central Methodist Mission and later the Methodist Mission Northern, it is now Lifewise that holds that heritage of social justice and practical action, applying it to the challenges of today.

However, more has changed than simply the name. Over recent years, Lifewise has changed its entire approach to working alongside vulnerable and marginalised people. Experience, and evidence, shows that 'hand outs' simply don't solve problems. In fact, traditional charity, despite best efforts, will often do little more than foster dependency in people. Add to this the growing inequality in New Zealand society and it would be fair to say that the charitable 'band aid' approach of old is just not cutting it.

Lifewise is responding to this by focusing on the underlying causes of social issues, rather than the consequences. Lifewise's decision to close its iconic soup kitchen and drop-in-centre, in favour of a targeted service which reintegrates the homeless into houses, jobs and community in general, illustrates this commitment.

Today Lifewise values, and actively engages in, collaboration. We are known for partnering with other organisations, parishes and communities to grow joint capacity in order to provide lasting solutions to social issues. In addition to the programmes and support given by Lifewise to individuals, families and communities, Lifewise is committed to supporting other community based organisations that are developing their own ways to meet their social needs.

We believe that this collaborative approach is crucial to successfully restoring, enhancing and maintaining the social fabric of our communities and creating a better future for everyone. The goal is not simply to support people to independence; rather it is to support the development of interdependence.

Milestones

1851 Land for a Mission in central Auckland is gifted by Governor Grey

1880 William and Marianne Smith arrive in New Zealand and establish the Helping Hand Mission in Freemans Bay

1897 Auckland Central Mission is founded in Albert Street, with 20 visiting sisters

1913 The first orphanage opens in Mt Albert

1927 Auckland Methodist Central Mission begins depression relief work from Airedale Street including a soup kitchen as well as court and prison work

1939 Goodwill Industries is launched – an early social enterprise with the slogan 'Not charity, but a chance'

1942 The first residential care home for older people opens

1976 The care of children, having changed from orphanages to foster homes, comes under the responsibility of the Mission

1992 The Mission is awarded one of the first contracts to provide home based support for older people in Auckland

1994 The Mission creates a separate trust to provide micro-finance to small businesses

2009 Lifewise becomes responsible for the Mission's broad range of social and community activity

2010 Lifewise closes the soup kitchen on Airedale Street, moves its homeless support team to Karangahape Road, and opens a community café

2012 Lifewise begins to provide early childhood education, mental health & addiction support services

LIFEWISE

Three trusts, one vision

**METHODIST
MISSION
NORTHERN**

LIFEWISE

**AIREDALE
PROPERTY**

With a history of tackling the hard issues, we have long established our commitment to New Zealand's vulnerable and marginalised. After all this time, one challenge remains – significant social issues still affect New Zealanders of all ages. We must be there for people facing difficulties today and in the future, and we must make the best use of finite resources. Sustainability and maximising impact are the challenges that drive us.

Collaborating with others, not duplicating work, is one response to these organisational challenges. Another came in 2009 when Methodist Mission Northern evolved into three separate 'sibling' trusts, enabling each to concentrate on its core area of expertise. Lifewise is responsible for all social and community initiatives; Methodist Mission Northern, the

theological and pastoral work; and Airedale Property Trust, a skilled commercial partner, stewards the Mission's assets and returns annual 'dividends' to support Lifewise and Methodist Mission Northern.

The real value of the three trust structure comes through working together on multi-disciplinary projects; made possible by a shared vision, shared values and a shared office. We live and breathe collaboration, as seen through: our social housing developments, our early childhood education centres and our 'backroom' support services to a broad range of other organisations and projects.

United by a common goal, the structure has proved to be highly successful. Impact has been maximised, ensuring

that things are put right for New Zealand's most vulnerable. Together, the trusts are working hard in the hope that they will not be needed tomorrow.

Ecclesiastes 4:12b A cord of three strands is not quickly broken (NIV)

LIFEWISE

Growing others

Looking back Maata says, "If Lifewise hadn't been there, to walk hand-in-hand with us, I don't know where we'd be today. I'm thankful Lifewise is with us, not just for the project, but for the future of our littlies".

For Maata, the lost potential she sees in many Pacific students is soul destroying. As a senior teacher at Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate she witnesses students leaving without qualifications and wonders what their futures, once brimming with hope, now hold.

Beneath a quiet and reserved demeanour, Maata has a steely determination to turn this preventable situation around, and ultimately to help young people achieve both their aspirations and their potential. The key to this effort, she believes, starts years earlier, in "our littlies, and giving them access to quality, and affordable, early childhood education". It's a belief Lifewise shares. Maata volunteers as a Board member at a small Tongan early childhood education centre in the heart of Otarā, Auckland. For nine years she, and

others in the Otarā Tongan Methodist Parish, had a vision to build a second centre to meet community need but could not secure the all-important funding needed to make it happen.

That's where Lifewise came in. A joint trust, Mustard Seed, was soon formed and funding from the Ministry of Education was provided to Lifewise for the establishment of a new Tongan immersion centre catering for 70 local children. The Parish provided the land and soon Akoteu Tenga'i Musita became a reality. This is just one example of Lifewise working in partnership with others to build capacity and to achieve common aspirations.

Working with others

"Lifewise does far more than pay lip service to collaboration. NDA is a shining example of this."

Vision of Neighbours Day Aotearoa (NDA): to see every street in New Zealand participating in NDA, and ultimately, to see fun, safe, respectful, friendly neighbourhoods throughout Aotearoa, New Zealand.

Such an audacious goal calls for collaboration, which is exactly why after a successful start, Lifewise invited Neighbourhood Support, The Mental Health Foundation and Inspiring Communities to the NDA table. Driven by the united belief that great neighbours make great neighbourhoods, all parties accepted the invitation and the beginnings of what would soon become a highly successful national campaign was birthed. Since that time NDA has cemented itself as New Zealand's leading campaign of neighbourliness, encouraging countless Kiwis to go one step

further in getting to know those next door. According to John McCarthy, NDA Project Sponsor, the key to this success has been, "empowering campaign team members to champion and be responsible for tasks within their organisation's scope and individual skillsets". This move has ensured that "campaign team members adopt a sense of ownership and pride in their area of responsibility and value the contribution of their fellow team members" resulting in a campaign that runs efficiently and which "ultimately gets us closer to our vision for NDA – strengthening Kiwi neighbourhoods".

"Local communities work best when the strengths and talents of individuals are celebrated and brought together to achieve a shared vision, the same is true for collaborative efforts", shares John.

These stories of hope, courage and fortitude have been made possible because of donors like you. Thank you for choosing Lifewise as your charity of choice.

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