

CHRISTMAS: A LUXURY FOR MANY KIWI KIDS

In New Zealand we have a series of statistics to be ashamed of. One child is killed every five weeks, fifteen per cent of children born in New Zealand are at risk of abuse, 80,000 witness family violence each year, and over 150,000 notifications were made to CYFS in the year ending July 2011.

Yet the vehicle that so often houses, feeds and nurtures these children, foster care, is wildly ignored and underestimated. This is despite the fact that the number of children who need placement in New Zealand is on the rise, while the number of available carers is on the decrease.

In 2011 alone, 120 children were placed with foster carers like Ron and Joy Liley through Lifewise' foster care services. "Aunty Joy" and "Uncle Ron" became foster carers more than 20 years ago, working with the Department of Social Welfare, before joining what is now known as Lifewise Family Services.

"We have always been passionate advocates of foster care," says Joy. "Both of my parents were bought up in orphanages in England, so once we had had our own family it seemed like a logical step to open our home to foster care. Everyone in the family is really supportive of the process, and we were really attracted to the personal approach of the smaller agency organisations."

Since that first step the Lileys have provided care to hundreds of children, from new borns to teenagers, many of whom have suffered horrific abuse at the hands of those closest to them. Joy admits at the beginning it was very hard not to become emotionally attached, especially to the children who had suffered abuse. Now she says she is better able to shield her heart, but says it is still difficult to do so with the babies. However, the reward of seeing children getting a new start in permanent placement, either with extended family members or in ongoing foster care, helps affirm the care she and her husband provide.

The Liley's themselves have permanent placement of 10-and-a-half year-old Harlem. Placed with Joy and Ron at only 10-and-a-half weeks, Harlem was a shaken baby,



“ MANY CHILDREN WERE OFTEN FOUND HIDING FOOD UNDER THEIR BEDS OR PILLOWS FOR FEAR THERE WOULD BE NO MORE ”

although it was not until after his first birthday that the Liley's discovered this.

Shaken babies suffer varying degrees of trauma, much of which is often not diagnosed until much later. Confined to a wheelchair and completely dependent, Harlem was blind for a year. Despite this, Joy describes Harlem as a happy child.

Through this story Joy and Ron hope to change the prevailing attitude our society has towards foster care and carers.

"Foster carers are not there to take children away, their role is to provide children with stability and love at a time when that is missing in their lives. And, to help them realise that what happened to them is not their fault, and that they are deserving of more," says Joy.



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CHRISTMAS: A LUXURY FOR MANY KIWI KIDS

"This is not a quick fix, many of these children have deep-seated issues surrounding trust, maybe having even been 'threatened' with the spectre of foster care by their parents. Our role is to redress the misconceptions and lies, build self esteem and in some cases to teach basic self-help skills."

The Lileys tell stories of the children who were entrusted into their care who were not used to having a bath, or washing their hair or even sleeping on a bed. One little boy was used to getting his food out of the rubbish bin. Many children were often found hiding food under their beds or pillows for fear there would be no more.

“ A FOSTER CHILD NEEDS YOUR HELP THIS CHRISTMAS ”

Constant reinforcement of their importance in the family unit is the most lasting lesson Joy and Ron instil in their charges. Children in the Liley's care get to choose their birthday meal and are made to feel special with gifts and added attention from all. They are also taught about the value of responsibility. Each child is given chores and must clean up after themselves, teaching them to have respect and pride in their environments.

Christmas, is a special family time in the homes of Lifewise foster carers. In the Liley home each child has a stocking, which can be a novelty for some children, who have never received a present before. For most children in foster care celebrating Christmas in a safe and loving environment is a novel experience. This is truly heart breaking.

For most kiwi children, engaging in a wide range of extracurricular activities is a given – sports games, music lessons, dance clubs etc. And for these children the rewards of being involved in such activities are endless

- improved self-esteem and personal health, the opportunity to develop bonds with other children and of course the chance to discover untapped skills and talents, just to name a few. For foster children however, such activities can be a luxury. Funds simply do not stretch that far.

This Christmas we would like to ask you to consider donating to our foster care Christmas fund. A fund set up to cover the costs of a variety of extracurricular activities for the children throughout the coming year. We would like to ensure that the children in Lifewise foster care services do not have to want for such an experience in this coming year. We know that the children who would benefit would be elated with this gift. **Would you please join us in making a difference in a foster child's life this Christmas?**



ADVOCATING FOR THE CHILD

An important role Lifewise can take is that of advocate. Foster care often flies under the radar of public awareness, a startling fact when approximately 15,000 children are in foster care homes throughout NZ and countless more will enter foster care in the years to come. We must all recognise that, first and foremost, the children are the victims. Foster care can offer so much to a child in need, and only through increased awareness can we hope to support and build on this critical service.

CHANGING IN LEAPS AND BOUNDS

Marred by misunderstandings and an all-round lack of public awareness, the neurobiological disorder, Asperger Syndrome (AS), places considerable strain on families and immense frustration on the individual.

Characterised by difficulties with social interactions, obsessions, speech patterns and facial expressions, Asperger's Syndrome is said to affect thousands of New Zealanders. Diagnosed with high functioning AS, at ten years of age, Sam Lewis' behaviour had long puzzled his family. Distinctly 'different' from his four brothers, and considerably more challenging, Sam had certainly given his parents a run for their money. An eventual diagnosis was a relief, however, it took receiving the right treatment for the Lewis family to see that an AS diagnosis was not insurmountable.

Megan Lewis, like many parents of children with AS, was weary of having a stream of strangers entering Sam's life via various support agencies. Lifewise understood this hesitation and having already developed a response to families in similar situations discussed with Megan the option of employing a support worker specifically for Sam, someone that he already knew and trusted and who had an understanding of how to best engage with Sam. For the Lewis family this meant employing Sam's grandfather, Timothy. This was a huge relief for Megan.

Timothy has taken up his role with gusto, filling the time he has with Sam with go karting, the skate park, visits to the library to research military history and of course help with Sam's homework. Having diligently researched AS, Timothy is well aware of the unique needs posed by individuals with this syndrome.

“ TIMOTHY HAS TAKEN UP HIS ROLE WITH GUSTO ”

The improvements have been nothing short of remarkable. Sam's schoolwork has improved "exponentially" since receiving support. Sam relates to his peers better, having found his place in his social environment - especially important as he moves into high school. And most significantly, Sam has calmed considerably. With Timothy's exceptional ability to calm Sam, outbursts have decreased in frequency and duration. Further evidence of this being the calm and considered way Sam has taken on the care of his kitten Laila.

Megan speaks warmly of the Lifewise approach, saying that the flexibility of service options was especially appreciated. She describes Lifewise as being a "well-oiled machine and so accommodating". As always, Lifewise finds that stories such as Sam's simply reaffirm our commitment to provide a service that honours the individuals involved and which takes seriously client preferences.

Lifewise' work with Sam and his family is one example of the growing work we do with people living with disabilities.



ANNUAL REPORT 2010/11 HIGHLIGHTS

Lifewise is committed to reporting back to you, our supporters. This year we've changed from a printed report to an interactive PDF report online, allowing us to incorporate videos and other resources while reducing production costs.

However we know that not everyone has access to the web and so this newsletter features an abridged version of our full annual report.

Read the full 2010/11 report, visit www.lifewise.org.nz. If you are unable to access the web, please call us on (09) 302 5392

THESE ARE YOUR STORIES

It is not the funds raised, the grants received, the policy progress made or the monthly statistics gathered that gives us the greatest satisfaction, rather it is the many stories of lives turned around because of support received by Lifewise.

The stories told in this past year have both humbled and inspired us. Each story celebrates dignity, respect, justice and significant personal change.

We do what we do because of the stories, such those contained in our 2010/11 annual report. It is for this reason that we are committed to ensuring that donor funds are allocated with the utmost diligence, targeting all donations received to frontline services, and thereby reassuring you, as the donor, that your

JOHN MCCARTHY
GENERAL MANAGER

thoughtful donation is making a difference in the lives of New Zealanders in need.

On behalf of all of us here at Lifewise, thank you for joining us in bringing support to those who need it most. Your support is a great encouragement to us and undoubtedly enables us to continue doing what we do. We hope to be able to continue to count on your support.

We hope that you are deeply encouraged by what your support has been able to achieve this past year. Here we present extracts from our annual report. Please read through this feature, and the full online report, with the knowledge that these are your stories too.

With gratitude, John & John

JOHN MURRAY
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

no. 1 NOTHING COULD STOP THEM

Like most people of their age, Travers, Daina, Richard and Susan, longed to leave the family nest and enjoy the rite of passage known as "flitting". Yet they faced significant hurdles.

You see, the members of this group are each living with a disability and have had to fight for access to accommodation options others would take for granted. With help from Lifewise, they and their parents have overcome all the obstacles and now all four love their newfound freedom. To find out more about their ground breaking journey, go online to www.lifewise.org.nz to access our full annual report.

“LIFEWISE EMBRACED THE CHALLENGE AND HAS PROVIDED STUNNING ONGOING SUPPORT”

no. 2 INVESTING IN AT-RISK UNDER 5s



The first five years of a child's life are fundamentally important, shaping future health, happiness, growth, development and learning achievement.

While access to early childhood education is critical, statistics show access is not equal, with lower proportions of Maori and Pacific Island children enrolled in

early childhood education than NZ European children. Lifewise believes creating new centres in specific locations is one way to begin addressing inequality. Highlighted in our report is a new partnership with Otara Methodist Parish which is combining the skills and expertise of both partners and helping to keep children top of mind.

no. 3 A JOURNEY OF 9000 MILES

West Auckland is a world away from war-torn Democratic Republic of Congo, but for one woman the safety of New Zealand brought a different set of challenges.

Kabonya faced unimaginable hardships before arriving here as a refugee. Yet difficulty responding to parenting her 11 children in the New Zealand context resulted in CYFS being notified and

Lifewise being called in to help. By taking a fresh approach, connecting Kabonya to other Congolese living here, we've helped turn the family's live around 180 degrees; meaning CYFS no longer has concerns. This is the story of the indomitable spirit of a woman who refused to become a statistic. Be inspired by the full story in our online annual report.



no. 4 ACHIEVING MORE TOGETHER



Where needed, Lifewise provides a range of administration and management support services for smaller non-profits for whom such tools and resources may be unaffordable or hard to maintain.

Our online annual report profiles the support provided to Bainbridge Trust, a small community mental health and addiction service in Rotorua. Viewing collaboration as being highly preferable to the traditional, siloed approach often adopted within the sector, Lifewise' approach ensures maximum support for kiwis in need.

“LIFEWISE HAS POSITIONED US FOR A SECURE FUTURE”

ADVOCACY

Lifewise firmly believes that in order to effect sustainable social change, we must operate at both a grassroots and a governmental level.

We therefore prioritise advocacy as being a key focus. Our full report highlights the promising progress we are making on a number of pressing issues including access to affordable housing, eradicating family violence, ending homelessness, tackling isolation and taking a stand on poverty.

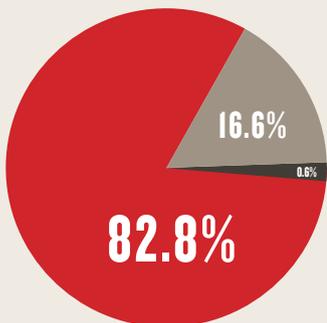
FINANCIALS

Sustainability is a challenge for community organisations such as Lifewise, due to the critical role contracts, grants and donations play in achieving our goals. Financially this year has been an unusually strong one compared to previous years.

Achieving the goal of a strong and sustainable organisation requires us to take a long-term view. With a commitment to making New Zealand a fairer and better

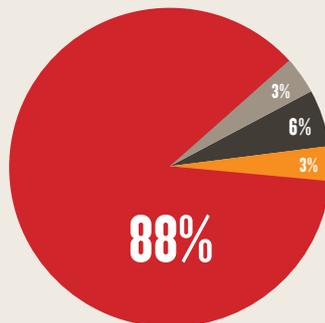
place for future generations, Lifewise must continue to carefully manage costs and steward resources. At the same time we must invest in new approaches to solve social issues, in our staff as well as in up-to-date systems and processes that support and maintain the effectiveness of our work in the community.

VISIT CHARITIES COMMISSION WEBSITE FOR FULL FINANCIALS



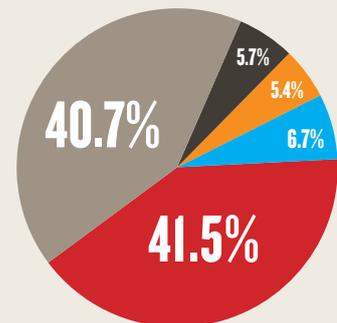
INCOME

- EARNED INCOME - CONTRACTS
- PHILANTHROPIC SUPPORT
- EARNED INCOME - SOCIAL ENTERPRISE



EXPENDITURE

- COMMUNITY & SOCIAL SERVICES
- FACILITIES
- ADMINISTRATION & MANAGEMENT
- FUNDRAISING, MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS



COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- METHODIST MISSION NORTHERN GRANT
- PHILANTHROPIC GRANTS
- 2010 BIG SLEEPOUT DONATION
- VOLUNTEER TIME
- OTHER DONATIONS

OUR THANKS

We deeply appreciate the support of our donors. Without such support we simply could not deliver projects and pilot new approaches and most importantly, we would not have been able to assist so many in having their lives turned around. I have been honoured to have met many donors via my ongoing participation in the Big Sleepout and hope to meet many more of you in the days to come. We cannot list all donors, including the family, friends and colleagues of our incredible sleepout participants, however I'd like to thank all those who continue to make the work highlighted here, and in our full report, possible. You truly are turning lives around with your support.

MARION HINES, BOARD CHAIR

