

## Neighbours Day Is Almost Here!

For one weekend, streets, avenues, and cul-de-sacs across New Zealand celebrate neighbourliness. Wherever you are in Aotearoa, put **25-26 March** in your diary as a weekend to celebrate where you live and get to know your neighbours better.

Every year on Neighbours Day, families and communities across Aotearoa compete for prizes and bragging rights to the biggest BBQs and most bountiful bake-offs ever seen. Building better relationships on our streets can transform whole neighbourhoods into healthy, fun and vibrant places to live. Just one act of neighbourliness can make a difference to the street you live in.

Here are some suggestions:

- bake or make something to share with your neighbours
- bring fresh, extra garden produce to them
- invite them over for coffee and a chat

For more inspiration, ideas, and a chance to win amazing prizes, check out [neighboursday.org.nz](http://neighboursday.org.nz) or [facebook.com/NeighboursDay](https://facebook.com/NeighboursDay)



## Merge Café - Eat well, feel good, do good

**merge**  
DO GOOD FOOD

Come in and become a part of our vibrant city centre community.

Merge Café on Auckland's iconic K'Road provides fresh, nutritious meals from as little as **\$2 for breakfast** and **\$4 for lunch**. Enjoy free wifi, free access to computers, fresh, barista-brewed **Miller's coffee** and delicious meals.

For people experiencing homelessness, there is also free tea, free coffee, and free access to websites such

as [www.awhina.net.nz](http://www.awhina.net.nz) – an online directory of support services in the city. Peer support workers are also available for support and connection to services.

**How can you join us, you ask?** Make Merge Café your daily local with a pay-it-forward approach – buy a meal or coffee for someone in need and help to support them towards independence. You can also donate generously at [lifewise.org.nz/donate](http://lifewise.org.nz/donate)

**We're on 453 K'Road, Weekdays 7am - 2pm**





## Kia ora!



Welcome to our first newsletter of 2017 and thank you for joining us. We start the year sharing some stories that demonstrate our belief that together we are stronger.

**Every day we see how life changing a personal connection can be**, whether it is over a meal at Merge Café, or while growing veges together in a communal garden.

That is one of many reasons why Lifewise built on the work of the Takapuna Methodist Church to launch Neighbours Day in 2009 – to encourage personal wellbeing and strengthen community spirit. Over the years, the event has gone national and our surveys show that being neighbourly leads to an improved sense of well-being and also an increased sense of safety.

I'm sure you know how good it feels to be a part of something bigger, how valued you feel, especially when you see how your input helped to achieve amazing results. Here at Lifewise we are seeing some exciting results of inclusion and collaboration, be that **our partnership with Auckland City Mission on the Housing First programme**, or the people with lived experience who have helped to shape this unique, evidence-based strategy for ending homelessness.

Friend, your support has given us the confidence to make bold strides in this direction. And for that I cannot thank you enough. I look forward to sharing with you more successes along our journey towards connected, just, and inclusive communities. Together we are stronger.

Warm regards,

**Moira Lawler**,  
Chief Executive, Lifewise



## Jonathon Hape: Strong & Independent

*"I now do my own shopping and cook at home," says Jonathon*

In February last year, Jonathon Hape moved into his new home in the city centre. "It's a nice place," he says. "I've got a kitchen, my own bathroom and shower, I've even got a washing machine and drier."

That might seem like nothing to write home about. But to Jonathon, who is wheelchair-bound and has lived in temporary accommodation for 23 years, it's a really big deal.

Although he had his own kitchen before, he did not have his own bathroom or shower and had to take his clothes to the laundromat.

Last year, he was this close to becoming homeless when the boarding house he lived in was to be demolished. Luckily, during his regular visit to the WINZ office, he found out about Lifewise and Merge Café.

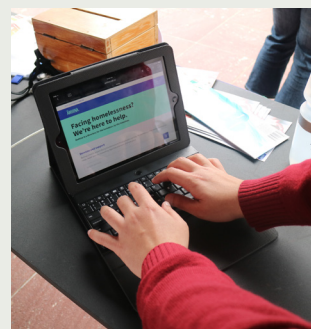
To know the full story, visit [www.lifewise.org.nz](http://www.lifewise.org.nz) and search Jonathon

## You Can Help Yourself

People with lived experience of homelessness have helped to build [awhina.net.nz](http://awhina.net.nz), an online directory for support

When you see someone sleeping rough, don't assume they are helpless. In fact, **many homeless people do manage to house themselves**, sometimes with little to no help from external agencies. In this way, they gain valuable knowledge of what works and what does not. They have a lot to share about their lived experience, and their insight is invaluable for projects such as the Housing First programme (see page 4). By becoming project members who know what it's like to be homeless, they are best placed to help develop peer support – a crucial factor in helping to stay off the street and maintain tenancy. People with lived experience of homelessness have also helped launch an online directory for support called Awhina.

Jump online to find out more [www.awhina.net.nz](http://www.awhina.net.nz)





## Margaret's Special Monster Dust



To see how Margaret banishes monsters visit [facebook.com/LifewiseNZ](https://facebook.com/LifewiseNZ)

Margaret Chung has to have one of the biggest hearts in Auckland – she has been a foster Mum to more than 50 children.

"Most of our kids are obsessed with food. They hoard it and hide it because they're not used to having so much. We leave the pantry doors open so they can see that there's always going to be food in the cupboards. It's not because you're good that you get fed. It's a right.

"Children also have a right to feel angry and to feel joy but some come from such chaos, that they have to create chaos to feel at home. They lash out because they are so hurt inside and it can take them a while to settle down.

**When a child gets placed with us, they become part of our family.**

"It doesn't take long to bond. Some children who come to us have been really neglected and it breaks my heart. We had a three-month-old baby who was severely underweight, with conjunctivitis and bleeding ears. He looked like a little rat really.

"Why would you allow your child to be in that state? **Well, it's easy to judge. Weak people without a backbone judge.** Many parents are in turmoil; they are in despair. They can't even afford a pair of socks for their kids. They don't know what to do, so they do nothing. It's not that they don't love their children, it's just that they don't know any better because that's how they were shown love when they were growing up."

To read the full story, visit [lifewise.org.nz](https://lifewise.org.nz) and search for Margaret

## Youth Transition To Adulthood

**Lifewise provides safe housing and support for youth who don't have a safe or stable place to live.**

This service is based in West Auckland and supports 17 to 24-year-olds who either are homeless, at risk of becoming homeless or have a serious housing need.

The service encourages self-sufficiency by using the positive youth development approach. Resident youths receive opportunities to exercise leadership, build key skills and get involved in their communities.



Young residents receive support for taking on responsibilities, like growing their own veges in the communal garden, budgeting daily expenses, and seeking employment

**Victoria Hearn**, Service Development Designer - Youth Housing believes that access to housing is a basic human right.

Without a safe place to live it's difficult for young people to access education, get employment or support themselves financially. By providing stable accommodation and support, young people have a base to build from and a chance to develop independent living skills.

To find out more, visit [lifewise.org.nz](https://lifewise.org.nz)





In photo above is Ratenesh Sharma, Group Property Manager of Airedale Property Trust with Paula Bennett, former Minister for Social Housing, at the Barney Way homes in December.

## New Social Housing Block

Warm and dry homes for youth and young families who will also have easy access to the support they need

This Glen Eden block is the result of a collaboration between Airedale Property Trust, Lifewise, Housing New Zealand, VisionWest, and Monte Cecilia.

The youth and young families who have moved into these homes will be given the support and help they need to move into permanent, stable housing and achieve independence.

Tenants will be able to access a range of services including social work support, advocacy and budgeting, counselling, parenting courses, back to work training and youth education.

In December 2016, Paula Bennett, former Minister for Social Housing, visited this 15-unit social housing block in Glen Eden. Mrs Bennett said this new development is a fantastic example of community housing providers and agencies working together to house vulnerable families.

"This is the kind of partnership the Government encourages – the resources of Housing New Zealand together with the experience and people-centred approach of community housing providers," said Mrs Bennett.

To know more about Airedale Property Trust, visit [apt.org.nz](http://apt.org.nz)

## Lifewise + Auckland City Mission = Housing First!

Lifewise and Auckland City Mission are excited to launch their Housing First programme.

We are one of four programmes to receive funding from the Ministry of Social Development in Auckland to implement Housing First. **This is the first time government funding has been provided to support social agency initiatives that are focused on ending homelessness.** People with lived experience of homelessness are a part of this Housing First Programme. This means the voice of the homeless community becomes a part of the decisions that shape the Programme.

To know more about the Auckland City Centre Housing First programme, visit [lifewise.org.nz](http://lifewise.org.nz) and search Housing First



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