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PRESBYTERIAN SUPPORT SOUTHLAND MAGAZINE

INSIDE

Sardines and Sausages

Mentor Lloyd Esler shares adventures with his Little Buddies.

PLUS

Foster mum's home a place for healing hearts.

Community project improves outcomes for Southland's migrant communities.

Innovation and collaboration overcoming nursing shortage.



Presbyterian Support
Southland

Our Services

enliven

Family
Works

This Issue...

3.

Thank you ILT

\$2 million in funding over 25 years supports Southland families.

4.

Overcoming Barriers

Community project improves outcomes for Southland's migrant communities.

6.

Sardines and Sausages

Mentor Lloyd Esler shares adventures with his Little Buddies.

8.

Healing hearts

Foster mum's home a place for healing hearts.

10.

Innovation reaps rewards

Innovation and collaboration overcoming nursing shortage.

12.

Passion for care

Dedication to aged care reaps rewards for new Resthaven Village manager.

14.

Māori policy milestone

New tāngata whenua policy marks a significant step in PS' cultural haerenga.

Thank you ILT

ILT has recently confirmed funding to a total of \$138,750 to support the work of Presbyterian Support Southland (PSS) and its service brand Family Works. This signals over 25 years of ongoing support to PSS and over \$2 million dollars in grant funding.

ILT started funding PSS in 1997 for the provision of Family Works' services and programme delivery, and operating costs to enable staff to do the work. This included its Parenting Programme, which the ILT and ILT Foundation had supported since its introduction in 2003.

Family Works director Judith McInerney said the funding had made a significant difference to a huge number of families in Invercargill.

"This has resulted in not only positive outcomes for the families receiving services, but also for our community overall, as what we do puts less pressure on health, welfare, education and the justice system, resulting in a better life for everyone.

"Without the ILT's support we would not be able to assist as many families

as we do. For that we are grateful, as are the families we work with.

"The saying it takes a village to raise a child is very true, and ILT and ILT Foundation are part of our village."

ILT president Paddy O'Brien said the ILT was a proud supporter of PSS' exceptional Family Works programme and the role it played in supporting the ever-changing and growing needs of the community.

"PSS' unwavering dedication to improving the health and well-being of our community had made a tangible difference in the lives of countless families.

"We're proud to stand alongside another community-minded group that shares similar values to our own, and we look forward to continuing this partnership to provide on-going benefit to the people of Invercargill."

ILT president Paddy O'Brien and Invercargill Family Works director Judith McInerney celebrate over 25 years of ongoing support towards Family Works' services and programme delivery which has benefitted a huge number of Southland families.

Family Works supports more than 1100 families each year, about half of which are new families. With an average of three people per family, this equates to tens of thousands of people helped by Family Works over the past 25 years, thanks in a large part to the ILT's support.

"The saying it takes a village to raise a child is very true, and ILT and ILT Foundation are part of our village."

Overcoming barriers

As Southland's migrant population continues to grow and diversify, Family Works has initiated a community project to explore ways for migrant families and service providers to access social services more easily.

Family Works director Judith McInerney said staff identified the need for such a project about three years ago when some Colombian families were referred to Family Works. Staff felt they needed help to overcome the language barrier and better understand what was needed in regard to cultural differences and to also work safely with the families.

Judith said if her staff were lacking confidence and knowledge about how to work with families from some other cultures, then staff from other agencies would likely be feeling the same way.

With funding from the Tindall Foundation, Family Works brought together organisations and agencies

which worked with migrants in Southland to discuss the barriers faced by staff and the migrant community when accessing social services, and how they could be overcome.

Several meetings were held last year, attended by representatives from about 30 Southland organisations



“The various agencies and organisations now have a better understanding of what services the other agencies provide.”



Members of the Southland Migrant Settlement Network.

and agencies, including NZ Red Cross, Ministry for Ethnic Communities, Southern Institute of Technology (SIT), Southland Multicultural Trust, MAR Colombia, Barnados, NKMP, NZ Police, Great South and WellSouth.

Following these meetings, the group renamed itself the Southland Migrant Settlement Network.

The group determined migrants settled in Southland for a variety of reasons and therefore had differing levels of need. There were those who come to Southland for permanent or seasonal work, and the extended family who joined them, while others were resettled former refugees, or SIT international students.

Judith said the group determined migrants sometimes had difficulty accessing interpreters, housing, education, GPs, and mental health services as well as getting Work & Income benefits and pre-employment and workplace support.

The main barriers identified were a lack of knowledge and understanding among migrants and those working with them about what assistance was already available in Southland, a lack of understanding about the way New Zealand services such as GPs, hospitals and mental

health services operated, and caution about dealing with government agencies in case visas were compromised.

Judith said one of the biggest benefits to have come out of the meetings so far was the increased cohesion and collaboration between the groups working with the migrant community, and the sharing of information and ideas.

“The various agencies and organisations now have a better understanding of what services the other agencies provide.”

On a more tangible level, the network group had suggested organisations needed to be clear in promotional material that their services were available to everyone irrespective of their visa status. They also suggested advising Southland foodbanks which food was not suitable and which items were more culturally appropriate to include in food parcels for migrant recipients.

Judith said there was a desire amongst the network to continue to meet regularly because they had found it a useful forum to discuss and resolve issues as well as to share information and ideas.

“We are delighted with the positive

response from the agencies and front-line organisations involved.”

At present, the network is seeking funding to establish a migrant coordinator position to act as an administrator for the network and a connector in the sector.

“Everyone involved has been very committed and the project and subsequent forming of the network is a testament to what can happen when good collaboration occurs, making a real difference for those carrying out work in our community but most importantly for the people we work alongside,” Judith said.

We are delighted with the positive response from the agencies and front-line organisations involved.

Sardines and sausages

Lloyd Esler, former Invercargill City and Environment Southland councillor, Southland historian, avid outdoorsman, author, columnist, natural history teacher, tour guide, botanist, and Family Works Big Buddy!

You could be mistaken in thinking the man who wears so many hats would not have time to be a Big Buddy. Not so. The 66-year-old invests more time and attention in his relationship with his Little Buddies than what was expected - something he chooses to do because he finds it rewarding, he said.

Rather than setting aside a certain time each week to spend with his Little Buddy, he simply integrates them into his life.

"Whatever I am doing, they can just tag along," he said.

Family Works' Buddy Programme matches children between the ages of four and 12 with an adult who can offer them friendship, support, guidance, and encouragement. Through the Buddy relationship, the children develop social skills and their self-esteem and confidence grows, as well as having lots of fun hanging out with their Big Buddy.

The well-known Southland identity joined the Buddy Programme eight and a half years ago after the passing of a friend.

"A friend of mine had been a Big Buddy for several years, and when he died suddenly, I thought I would pick up where he had left off," he said.

And he hasn't looked back, having

been paired with six Little Buddies so far.

Each of his Little Buddies did not have their father in their lives for a variety of reasons, such as family separation, prison, or their father had died.

However, he said he was not a father figure to the boys, but rather saw himself as a friend, or perhaps at most a pseudo-grandfather.

His first Little Buddy was a 10-year-old boy who had relocated to Southland with his mother where they did not have any friends or family support.

Lloyd said he enjoyed watching the Little Buddy blossom over the two and a half years they were Buddies. They did lots of things together, including walking the Milford and Rakiura tracks. The Little Buddy is now 18 years old and the pair had formed a strong bond and were still in regular contact, as Lloyd was with

"The way to a boy's heart is his stomach."



four of his other Little Buddies.

One strategy Lloyd employs to connect with the boys is to find out what food they liked, food being something all growing boys have an interest in.

"The way to a boy's heart is his stomach," he said.

That tactic had worked particularly well with his fourth Little Buddy, who Lloyd discovered loved eating sardines and sausages. One particular day Lloyd was having trouble getting his Little Buddy to agree to get up early to go on a trip but, with the promise of a can of sardines, the Little Buddy consented immediately.

Lloyd said he did not have a television or video games, preferring instead to do outdoorsy things, play board games and cook with his young charges.



When Lloyd talks about his Little Buddies, the joy he gets from the relationships is evident. His face lights up as he recalls a funny incident, or how they have achieved at school or had grown in confidence.

“[Being a Big Buddy] gets me out exploring the bush or beaches and doing things I wouldn’t otherwise be doing...and I enjoy seeing the way [the Little Buddies] progress.”

His newest Little Buddy, Jake* (9)

Big Buddy Lloyd Esler and his Little Buddy Jake* at work in the garden.

*not his real name.
Jake’s name has been changed to protect his privacy.

said of his experience being Lloyd’s Little Buddy – “It’s fun. I get to go to new places I have never been to before. We do a lot of different things. Otherwise mostly I would be at home on my Play Station. With Lloyd I do funner stuff.”



For more information about the Buddy Programme, or to sign up as a Big Buddy, visit pss.org.nz/family-works/services/buddy-programme or phone Family Works team leader Helen Goatley on 03 211 8200 or email hgoatley@familywordssld.nz



Healing hearts

Family Works foster mum Katrina Taplin (or NaNa as she is known by her foster children) always intended to retire from fostering when she had grandchildren. She recently became a proud first-time grandmother, and yet she cannot seem to say no to taking in a child in need.

"We wanted our home to be a place of healing hearts."

"I am a sucker for children who need to thrive. It is their right to be happy, to have a place of love and security," she said.

Katrina and her husband David have been foster parents for about six years, taking in and caring for about 25 children aged between 7 months and 17 years in that time.

It all started when the couple's own two children grew up and moved away.

Katrina decided she wanted to become a Big Buddy, so she went along to a Family Works information night to find out more about the Buddy Programme.

She came away with more than she had anticipated.

After receiving information about the foster care programme, she decided she would become a Big Buddy and a foster parent.

"I'm a very empathetic person, and the need for carers is huge."

Her husband was on board with her new calling, although their children were initially somewhat less enthusiastic.

The couple decided to do respite, transitional and short-term foster care, which involved anything from a few days of care to several months.

They live on a farm on the outskirts of Winton, an environment where the children could enjoy playing with the animals, riding on the tractor, climbing on the hay bales, feeding the lambs, exploring the farm, and going on nature walks.

Katrina said their goal was to ensure the children felt safe while in their care.

"These kids come from so much trauma.



"We wanted our home to be a place for healing hearts."

They completed the required training through Family Works and then welcomed the first child into their home.

Their first experience of fostering brought with it some challenges.

The child was very angry and defiant, she said. They persevered with him for several months, but ultimately it was not the right fit and the placement came to an end.

"We were quite unprepared for the amount of trauma the child had."

The couple could have very well ended fostering there.

"After the first child, I didn't feel qualified to handle it, but the need for caregivers motivated me to try again."

Katrina had experienced trauma in her own childhood, so she had empathy for how her foster children felt, she said.

"Sometimes we just need someone

to love us for who we are with all our warts and crinkles. Just love us. People think we're naughty, you just need to look behind our behaviour. All we need is unconditional love, understanding and kindness."

Katrina took advantage of any training opportunities that came her way and had since developed effective strategies to deescalate situations and better support her foster children.

A supportive husband and support from Family Works have also been key.

As a result, Katrina and her family have formed close bonds with many of the children in their care over the years.

There were highs and lows involved in being a foster carer, but with Family Works' support, they have been able to overcome the obstacles.

"If [the children] felt love, they felt safe and they have had fun [while in my care], I feel I have accomplished filling them and myself."

We always need more foster parents. If you are interested, contact Allannah on 03 211 8226, email fc@familyworkssld.nz or go to pss.org.nz/family-works/services/foster-care to find out more.



Innovation reaps rewards

Presbyterian Support Southland's response to the global nursing shortage over the past few years is now bearing fruit due to its creative ways of attracting and retaining staff.

Presbyterian Support Southland (PSS) Enliven service has faced three challenging years operating its care homes with a significantly reduced nursing staff, employing a mixture of creative interim solutions, collaboration with training entities and a committed team to overcome the obstacles.

Enliven typically employs 40 registered nurses (RNs) across its four care homes and geriatric hospitals. At times last year this was significantly reduced. Now it's

anticipated that the Enliven facilities which had been required to close would open to their full capacity in coming months due to the successes in recruiting.

Enliven Director Carol Riddle said Enliven had always relied on international nurses to staff its care homes, as New Zealand nurses were not typically attracted to the sector. And, with the COVID-19 pandemic and New Zealand's borders closed, Enliven had been unable to access this labour market.

The nursing shortage in aged care was further compounded by nurses choosing to leave the sector to work in the public health system which offered better pay conditions, or relocating to Australia, attracted by higher wages and immediate residency.

Carol said as a result of a reduced nursing staff, the team had been required to make changes to how it operated to minimise any impact on staff and residents.

“It was important to us that our current staff could manage their workload and ensure the clinical safety of our residents.”

Twelve beds in Vickery Court were temporarily closed as a result and would remain closed until new registered nurses came on board. It was hoped these beds would be reopened in the coming months.

In addition, Southern District Health Board supported Peacehaven for six months by seconding four nurses to keep the psychogeriatric unit operational while staff were recruited.

Our admissions were also carefully reviewed prior to acceptance to ensure staff could provide the appropriate level of care, Carol said.

“It was important we maintained the high clinical standards of Enliven.”

In response to the staffing shortage, Enliven undertook a variety of measures in an attempt to attract, recruit and retain its nurses.

Carol said Enliven identified that some of the care workers on staff were overseas-qualified RNs. So, Enliven partnered with Otago Polytechnic to make it easier for those staff to become New Zealand-qualified nurses.

Otago Polytechnic runs the Competence Assessment Programme (CAP) which international registered nurses are required to complete in order to gain their New Zealand registration.

Otago Polytechnic staff worked with the Southern Institute of

“It was important we maintained the high clinical standards of Enliven.”

Technology (SIT) to run the course in Southland via a virtual platform. SIT also agreed to provide a clinical tutor to support the nurses’ six-week placement in an Enliven care home.

In addition, the PSS board agreed to increase the RN pay rate and allowances to remain competitive within the aged care sector, although no funding had been allocated for this.

“The cost to the organisation of doing this is huge, [but] we needed to be competitive to attract new staff.”

Enliven also supported its international nurses to make the transition into work in New Zealand as easy as possible, including providing welcome settlement packs and temporary accommodation.

PSS people and capability lead Tracy Harris said they had applied to Immigration NZ and were granted Accredited Employer Status so they could invite employees to apply for an accredited employee work visa (AEWV).

“...to date the most successful way of sourcing overseas qualified RNs into PSS has been the AEWV pathway along with the support we have received from Immigration NZ to ensure the work visa applications are prioritised as health care workers.”

Since then, the Government had given RNs immediate pathway to residency to encourage them to choose to work in New Zealand.

Carol said the change was positive for the industry going forward.

All of the measures introduced, as well as a dedicated nationwide RN recruitment campaign, had meant Enliven was now in a stronger position, she said.

“Acknowledgement must go to the managers and clinical managers and coordinators at our care homes who had to fill the gaps by working on the floor doing RN shifts, sleep overs, and weekend work. Without their commitment we would not have been able to keep our doors open.”

Peacehaven enrolled nurse
Fiona Young at work.



Passion for care

Hard work and commitment to aged care proves a winning formula for an Enliven nurse.

Gore local Robyn Byron has risen through the ranks of aged care from care worker, registered nurse, and clinical manager to take over the helm of Resthaven Village.

She replaces Donna McEntyre as manager of Resthaven who retired on June 2 after four years in the role.

Robyn is a well-known identity in Gore, having lived and worked in the rural town her entire life, well, all bar one year.

Her association with Resthaven started in 2001 when she was employed as a caregiver while training to be a nurse. When she graduated in 2003, she was one of five new graduates employed by Presbyterian Support Southland (PSS) as registered nurses (RN) that year.

After five years working as an RN, she decided she wanted to experience another aspect of

nursing and took a job at Southland Hospital.

However, she made her return to Resthaven 12 months later.

“I missed being able to develop relationships with my patients and their families and I missed aged care,” she said.

“You form a bond with your patients/residents and in some ways become part of their family, particularly if they are here for a long time.”

Robyn returned to Resthaven as a clinical manager.

Twelve years on, she was ready for her next challenge of managing the care home.

“I wanted to make a difference to our residents...and I wanted a new challenge.”

Robyn already had ideas for how to improve the experience for residents.

“You form a bond with your patients/residents and in some ways become part of their family, particularly if they are here for a long time.”

“I want to look at how we can accommodate our community better.”

She aspired to consider other models of care and opportunities for Resthaven residents which would provide better connection between the community and the care home.

She also wanted to encourage more community involvement with the care home and its residents, which she said had waned since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as play group visits, musicians coming in to entertain the residents and people bringing their pets into the home for residents to interact with.

Enliven director Carol Riddle said it was exciting to see a nurse progress to a management position.

“It is something as an organisation that we celebrate, and her absolute commitment to aged care is commendable.

“The sector needs the Robyns of this world.

“I’m excited to work alongside her and for what lies ahead for Resthaven.”





The sector needs the Robyns of this world."

Māori policy milestone

The recent signing of Presbyterian Support New Zealand's (PSNZ) tāngata whenua policy Te Pātikitiki o Kotahitanga marks a significant step in PS' cultural haerenga (journey).

The revised policy was signed in Wellington on May 2 by members of the PSNZ National Council, National Executive Board and Te Kahui Rangatira.

Presbyterian Support Southland (PSS) chief executive Matt Russell said the sign-off of the policy represented an exciting milestone for PSS on its cultural haerenga.

"It is particularly special that we have been able to arrive at this milestone together with our partner Presbyterian Support regions from around the country."

The overarching goal of the policy is to ensure PS operates in a culturally inclusive way at all levels of engagement and operation.

PSS Pou Tohu Tohu Ahurea Māori Michelle Ryland is part of Te Kahui Rangatira, the national group which reviewed the policy.

Te Kahui Rangatira, consisting of each PS region's Pou Tohu Tohu Ahurea Māori/cultural advisor or senior Māori practitioner, provides

guidance to PSNZ National Council and PS National Executive Group regarding matters relevant to the delivery of organisational strategic objectives, particularly for Māori.

"This policy shows our continued commitment to working to enhance quality of life for Māori clients by providing high quality services honouring our responsibilities under Te Tiriti o Waitangi and developing organisational procedures and practices which are inclusive of Māori cultural concepts, beliefs and practices," Michelle said.

In practice this means such things as building meaningful relationships at an organisational level with runanga, iwi, marae, iwi organisations and Māori providers, proactively offering opportunities for Māori participation on committees, panels or governance boards and encouraging staff participation in Māori community programmes. It also means supporting services to be responsive to the values and beliefs of Māori, understanding

the importance of whānau support for whānau wellbeing, providing a culturally safe working environment for all staff and continuing to use appropriate Te Reo skills at all levels across the organisation.

Michelle said Te Pātikitiki o Kotahitanga demonstrated PS' desire to be solutions-focused on all interactions with Māori partners and whānau.

"It's incredibly humbling to work for an organisation which has a commitment to creating a workforce that is respectful and responsive to Māori whilst providing opportunities for Māori to be involved in service design and organisational decision-making."

Te Pātikitiki o Kotahitanga takes its metaphoric concept from raranga (a Māori weaving style used for baskets) kete and its interwoven pātikitiki pattern construct that in its finished state allows the kete to hold and carry with strength and flexibility any kaupapa (policy/idea) placed in it.

The polished side of the kohatu pakohe sat as the kaitiaki (guardian and protector) so the wairua (spirit or soul) could be felt as the document was signed with the kohatu pakohe igniting its mauri as it was gently rubbed. The signed document was placed in the kete and will be returned to our national office with the kohatu pakohe protecting it, its mauri (life force) holding its essence.



PSS trust board chairman Craig Smith signs the revised national tāngata whenua policy in Wellington recently.

Together we can make a difference

Our staff work with more than 3600 vulnerable children, whānau/families and older people in Southland and the Whakatipu Basin every year. Every contribution, large or small, helps us help others.

How to donate



Website: pss.org.nz/get-involved



Internet banking: Our bank account number is 02 0924 0545924 00 (BNZ)



Cash/Eftpos: Please visit our Central Office, 183 Spey Street, Invercargill, or any of our Enliven care homes

For more ways to see how you can help through donations or volunteering your time, please visit our website.

Unemployment, poverty, family disputes, mental illness, loneliness, social isolation and social inequity are just some of the issues we see people struggling with every day.

Thank you to all those who have donated towards the work we do. Your donation will help enable us to walk alongside them, letting them know they are not alone and can get the support they need.

Thank you to our major community funders



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