

Serendipity heralds selection of new Chief Executive

Presbyterian Support Southland (PSS) board members and staff have recently welcomed new Chief Executive, Michael Parker to the fold.

Michael took over the role in early February, replacing John Prendergast who has relocated to the capital and now holds the position of General Manager of the Catholic Archdiocese of Wellington.

Michael said his selection came after a year-long string of serendipitous events saw his speedy return to health and the workforce - following cancer treatment - coincide opportunistically with the job opening and his suitability to the head position.

“Our move to Southland has been a really positive one for Gillian and I,” said Michael.

“I feel privileged to be here – both for being well and also for having almost ‘fallen’ into this position.”

PSS Chairman Tim Loan said the board had every faith Michael would lead the organisation admirably. He said the organisation was “incredibly fortunate” to be reaping the benefits of Michael’s wealth of experience and in-depth knowledge that spans the finance, business and non-profit sectors and includes his most recent tenures as Chief Executive of two different ‘sister’ Presbyterian Support organisations.

A long-time champion of social equity and community conscience, Michael’s early banking career was spent helping low-income families dig their way out of oppressive debt, having fallen victim to exploitative loan sharks.

Fast forward to the year 2003 and Michael “found his calling” when he was first appointed Chief Executive to one of the seven federated Presbyterian Support organisations - finding the

social services provider’s strategic vision and ethos of community good and community care, aligned to that of his own. This most-excellent ‘fit’ was reaffirmed when Michael spoke of the internationally-recognised work he and his team undertook embedding the client-centred ‘Eden Alternative’ model of care into aged-care residential homes, as being one of his proudest contributions.

“The Eden Alternative philosophy centres on the principle of eliminating the three plagues of loneliness, helplessness and boredom in residential aged care. The change is actioned via collaborative care partnerships, capacity building and empowerment and can, interestingly, be applied to almost any care setting,” said Michael.

“I see the essence of this fitting nicely with Presbyterian Support Southland’s vision and values but for now I’ll just be observing things, getting to know the people and services on offer, understanding what makes us tick, why we do things the way we do, how we stay relevant ... So that we can continue to grow the many good things I see happening down here”.



Outgoing CEO John Prendergast (left) passing the torch over to new CEO Michael Parker (right)



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Resthaven evacuation goes according to plan

Rising river levels and inundating floodwaters sparked the overnight evacuation of residents from PSS's Enliven Resthaven care home in Gore on February 5th - the execution of which went according to plan.

Enliven Resthaven Manage, Donna McEntyre said all 56 of the rest home's residents were moved to alternative care homes as a "precautionary measure" in a planned evacuation declared by the Southern District Health Board. She said the call was made in response to severe weather conditions and widespread flooding that lead to Emergency Management evacuation orders being issued for large parts of Gore, Matakura and Wyndham.

"We were deemed as being more at risk (of flooding) because our care home is located in a low-lying area," said Donna.

"But we, as a residential rest home and as a community, have prepared and planned for this exact type of emergency situation and I'm thankful to say, everything went smoothly and according to plan."

Which turned out to be no small thing given Donna was in Invercargill and became stranded as flooding and resulting road closures cut-off access to and from Gore - preventing her being on site.

Once word of imminent evacuation was received from the SDHB evacuation manager, Donna and the management team in Invercargill and her Resthaven staff in Gore sprang into action alerting residents' families and preparing the residents for relocation to local care homes, alongside essential documentation, specialised equipment, medication, mobility aids, toiletries and overnight clothing.

Donna said the decision to evacuate was made at 8.15pm on Tuesday evening and all 56 residents - some in their 90s - were moved by 7am the next morning with staff working through the night to ensure the residents were transferred by bus to the most appropriate care facility, while they also responded to the residents' need for comfort and support.

It was a big, complex job. Some of our residents have complicated medical conditions, others have cognitive defects or diminished sensory ability and many have mobility impediments.

"Staff went above and beyond. Evacuation preparedness measure are always in place as part of the facilities emergency response plan and resulted in, a nice, orderly evacuation to our pre-identified recipient homes," said Donna.

Donna said many staff members had homes and family affected by the floods

themselves and the majority had also worked the afternoon shift.

"They willingly put their hands up and put our residents' needs ahead of their own. They were amazing and I thank each and every one of them."

Special mention was also made of Robyn Byron Clinical Manager of Resthaven in Gore who did a "magnificent job" as Evacuation Coordinator and Donna expressed her heartfelt gratitude to the managers and staff of Albany House, Bupa Windsor Park, Parata House and Enliven Peacehaven "...who took such wonderful care of our residents."

In the end "they never did get wet feet", as Donna termed it, and the residents coped remarkably well with their overnight 'escapade' - something she puts down to great relationships, good communication and ...preparedness.

"Yes - we do have a few areas we can improve on ... But, by and large, we had a plan and that plan worked well."

"Everyone got out safely, in a timely manner, there were no injuries and morale has remained high."

And we can all be thankful for that.



Gratitude Corner

This year we have been very fortunate to receive a very kind and generous donation from a local Southland family for the purchase and signage of a new van for our Enliven Services.

The staff at Vickery Court were the first to welcome the new van as that is where it is stationed, however the van will be used amongst all of our Enliven services including the rest homes where the van will be utilised for resident outings and community activities such as Coffee Club. The van itself features the latest comfort and safety features that our residents and clients are very happy and pleased with.

We would like to thank our anonymous donor we are eternally appreciative for your support.

We would also like to give a big thank you to Creation Signs Invercargill who applied our striking signage to the van.

Make sure to give us a wave or toot if you see us driving around!!



The new signage for our Enliven Services van, we received a very generous donation from a local Southland family to purchase the new look!

Getting to Know PSS staff



Meet... Liam Poole

Role with PSS: Marketing Assistant

Started: September 30th 2019

Overview of role:

My job is to assist the Marketing Manager in helping to carry out marketing campaigns by assisting in the creation and design of both digital and printed marketing materials for Presbyterian Support Southland and its service brands Enliven and Family Works. This includes items such as brochures, posters and newspaper advertisements which I am responsible for the distribution of most of these materials around Invercargill and Gore. In addition, I manage some of our website content as well as our PSS and Enliven Facebook pages.

What do you love most about working at PSS?

I enjoy working with a team of highly dedicated and motivated individuals who are all working together to help build a better community for all Southlanders.

What do you enjoy outside of work?

Many things haha. I enjoy Mountain biking, going for nice walks through forests and mountains. I am also a bit of a movie enthusiast and hanging out with friends.

What's the one thing you can't live without?

The Ricky Gervais show!



There are spots open for our Foster Care Programme for people interested in becoming Foster parents, this is a great opportunity to learn new skills and to make a difference in someone's life by offering your support, encouragement and reassurance to young people who need love, care, attention and stability.

Christmas Spirit Alive and Well in the South



“...It’s the most wonderful time of the year...”

For many of us Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. It is the season of good food, gifts, goodwill and quality time shared with family and friends.

But for some Southland families, the festive season heralds in overwhelming busyness, added financial pressure, estrangement or loneliness and sometimes, heightened family tensions.

Last year, as in previous years, PSS Family Works’ Christmas appeal initiatives encouraged Southlanders to embrace the true spirit of Christmas and look beyond themselves and their own good fortune, to give hope and help to families in need.

Journey alongside us here as we recap just how the Spirit of Christmas swept across the south in December past and the impact it had on those receiving some much-needed Christmas cheer.

H&J Smith Secret Santa Tree Appeal

An “absolutely incredible” response to H&J Smith’s Secret Santa Tree Appeal has meant over 150 Southland families in Family Works’ Family Start programme, had presents to wake up to on December 25.

Now in its 11th year, the appeal lets shoppers anonymously buy an age and gender appropriate gift (for children aged 0-5) and place it under a special Secret Santa Christmas tree in-store. The gifts are then collected and delivered via Family Works Family Whanau Workers to those identified as being most in need, in time for the big day.



Plentiful items were donated and helped fill our Christmas hampers.

Because the appeal had proven so successful in past years, it was, for the first time, expanded to include the department store’s Gore and Te Anau branches.

Family Works Team Leader Karen Willis said a “phenomenal” amount of work went into organising the campaign and the team was so appreciative of the time, effort and care H&J Smith staffers Robyn Colvin and Shinade Goble put into ensuring the gifts were the best possible fit with the recipient children, siblings and carers.

“The generosity and kindness shown by H & J Smith, their staff and Southlanders to these struggling families has, once again, been truly humbling.”

Karen said her team counted themselves lucky to be the ones to deliver the bounty of gifts in the week before Christmas and she wanted all the donors to know that the recipient families were genuinely grateful.

“The look on Mum’s face when she sees us arriving at her door with an armful of presents is beyond priceless.”

“Staff leave with a smile on their face and those warm fuzzies around their hearts that come with knowing you’ve just made someone’s day ... possibly even their year.”



Co-ordination and Delivery of Christmas Hampers

Elsewhere at PSS, friendly elves from the Family Works team put together and packed Christmas Hampers from hundreds of donated goods.

PSS Administrator, Kate Sparrow, who organised and oversaw the appeal from ‘go-to-whoa’ said December 2019’s Christmas Hamper Appeal was an outstanding success.

“Thanks to the big-heartedness of hundreds of businesses, community groups, churches and individual donors, we were able to assemble 51 sizeable hampers, more than ever before, to lighten the load of Southland families experiencing tough times.

Kate said the Christmas Hampers included a large array of fresh and non-perishable food items; pantry, household and toiletry supplies; and extra-special Christmas treats – the latter added because donations to the Family Works Christmas Tree Appeal had been so substantial and plentiful.



Plentiful items were donated and helped fill our Christmas hampers.

“The generosity of the Southland community just continues to astound us,” said Kate.

The hampers were delivered to families who were learning to create better futures for themselves and their children, with Family Works’ assistance.

And it is very much appreciated.

“We know, for these families, the hampers relieved some of the strain that the holiday season puts on budgets and injected some Christmas cheer into stressful and struggling homes.”

“Numerous recipient families have also expressed how the hampers were more than just big boxes of food and household goods. To them; they felt like hope. It showed them people do really care.”



PSS Family Works Christmas Tree Appeal

It seems the generosity of Southlanders knew no bounds this past Christmas.

PSS Marketing and Communications Manager Courtney Forde said the organisation's Christmas Tree appeal, aimed at making Christmas special for local teens in need; ran parallel to H&J's Secret Santa appeal - giving Southlanders an alternative opportunity to buy and donate food items, necessities and treats, alongside new gifts.

"People whose budgets often don't stretch to cover the rent, bus, groceries and/or power bills on a week by week basis can't afford to buy their children gifts and special food to celebrate Christmas with That's where we, and the people of Southland, stepped in."

And stepped in (and up!) they did.

The beautifully-trimmed Christmas tree at PSS's Central Office in Spey Street was literally inundated with hundreds of wrapped and unwrapped gifts, grocery items and goodies - so much so that stacked-high piles of donations were taken to an adjacent room, several times over.

"We were absolutely blown away by the support that came in from the community, businesses, clubs, churches,

families and individuals," said Courtney.

"Southlanders really are a very giving lot."

"It was quite amazing to see"

The Impact of the Spirit of Christmas: the Spirit of Giving

... So too was witnessing the emotional responses of caregivers when they opened the door to their Family Whanau Worker - arms laden with gifts for the whole family; or carrying in not one, but two, extra-large boxes jam-packed with food, necessities and treats that not only allowed them to celebrate Christmas but also lightened the financial load going through into the New Year.

"Hands-down - this is the best and most enjoyable part of my job," said Family Works Family Whanau Worker Nerida Hope-Johnson, who has been working with Family Start families for over 5 years.

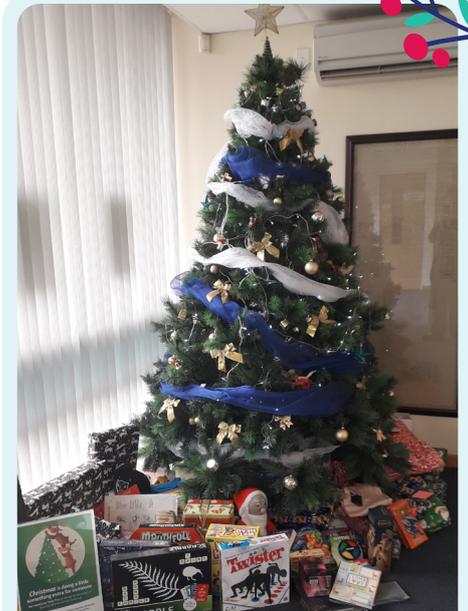
"Often there's tears. We'll see shock, disbelief, joy and yes, there's definitely relief ..."

"But almost always, we'll see their eyes light up, the head and shoulders lift as their mana is restored and they realise that people actually care, that they and their children are 'seen', they are valued ... that they matter ..."

One of the most touching moments of 2019's Christmas appeals occurred when

a young mother of two returned to Family Works Invercargill with donated gifts and hamper goods - She was, she said, 'paying it forward' and reflecting back the kindness and generosity shown to her in former times of less good fortune.

"That is what Family Start is all about," said Nerida, "... Empowering families with the skills that ultimately allow them to become self-sufficient, just like that young woman".



Our Christmas filled with so many wonderful and amazing gifts from generous members of our Southland community.

Maranga mai Murihiku

Maranga mai Murihiku previously known as the Te Whare Tu Te Whare Ora is an annual local Iwi led event that was held on the 23rd of February at the ILT Stadium Southland. This community event aims to support suicide prevention through connecting with others and building relationships through activities like sharing korero and waiata.

For the past couple of years, we have been getting together led by Matua Rusty. (who comes in every morning to instruct and guide the team's practice and sharing of Karakia, Waiata and conversing in Te Reo Maori.)

At this year's we made our second performance (priorly performed at the Working Mens Club in 2017). Part of Family Works performance was to sing 5 different waiata's that we frequently sing in the mornings as a group before mahi.

The team were very anxious and excited in the lead up before the event as they were involved in a bit of friendly

competition with other teams from the local Southland community to win the People's Choice Award trophy. With the support from friends and whanau our brave team got up on the stage and performed brilliantly to win the peoples vote, taking home the People's Choice Award.

Lorna Allott the team leader for this group said "It was very scary for all of us, but we made it on stage again and were in total disbelief that we won the People's Choice award for our performance. We are very humbled and very motivated to keep growing our roopu (group) and our range of waiata to prepare again for next year's event".

Congratulations to all of the staff involved in bringing this event together. The effort and dedication put in to achieve this fantastic performance and win at the Maranga mai Murihiku was outstanding. We also would like to give special thanks to Matua Rusty for his belief and dedication our team and his constant

positive encouragement. Without his support and guidance this performance would not have been possible.



Community pitches in for Walmsley House Garage

With a healthy dose of kiwi ingenuity and a little 'who knows who' networking, PSS Enliven's Property & Procurement Manager Mark Dowling has turned an old shipping container into a fit-for-purpose mobility scooter garage – And Walmsley House residents couldn't be happier!

Mark says the idea of repurposing a shipping container to make a garage that could suitably house (and charge) Walmsley House residents' mobility scooters had its roots in PSS's centennial celebrations of last year.

"At the time, there was suggestion a static display would move amongst a number of our sites," explains Mark, "and I thought a converted shipping container might offer an ideal solution for that and exhibiting at the likes of Waimumu (Field Days)."

"The shipping container idea kind of stuck with me from thereon-in!"

A chance conversation with PSS's Marketing and Communications Manager's fiancé, Kris Walker – a past employee of South Port - lead to the procurement of a suitable shipping container at "a very competitive price" and the project began to snowball from there.

Mark says the different facets to the project fell into place with relative ease thanks to the expertise of the local firms involved.

"Right from the highly-skilled transport team to the engineer, the electricians, excavator and asphalt pavers – They've

all been incredibly generous with their ideas, know-how and contacts."

"An extra special shout-out goes to Purdues who transported the shipping container and craned it onsite totally free-of-charge."

The end result of this innovative endeavour is a safe, secure and readily accessible garage that can accommodate up to 5 mobility scooters. Features of the new garage include: a ramp and a large automatic front-door for easy and regular access; custom wooden shelving to safely hold the chargers; numerous power points; good lighting; and last, but not least, a great paint-job in Enliven's signature blue.

A number of the residents have taken an avid interest in the project, habitually appraising Mark's work and reporting back to others on progress made.

"For many of our residents, their mobility scooters give them a certain amount of freedom and independence and so they're quite invested in this new garage."

Walmsley House Manager Jenifer De Jesus agrees.

"It's not just about getting from A to B. Our residents' mobility scooters help them stay connected to the people, interests and activities that matter to them in the community."

Jenifer adds that alongside the life-enhancing benefits mobility scooters offer, comes the responsibility of safely storing and charging them in

compliance with fire and Health & Safety regulations.

"The new garage is just the bee's knees," says Jenifer.

"It ticks all the boxes and means Walmsley House resident riders can continue to live their lives to the fullest!"

... It's as good as gold! - I can ride my scooter right up into it, charge it overnight and I'm good to go the next day for a trip to the shops, Queen's Park, or to visit my niece in Jenkin Street."



In Remembrance

It is with great sadness that Presbyterian Support Southland acknowledges the passing of Keith Ashley, Bob Dykes and Pat Goodwill. Keith Ashley was a past board member of Presbyterian Support Southland and sat on the board as a representative for Eastern Southland from 1996 to 2004 and earlier as a sub-committee member. Bob was a past board member of Presbyterian Support Southland from 1968 – 1982 and 1991 – 1997 and Patricia Goodwill was the Director of Aged Care Services from 1989 – 1997.

In the 8 years that Patricia Goodwill held her role she saw the opening of both Wakatipu Home and Frankton Court, the establishment of our aged care community service 'SupportLink', numerous legislative changes and much upgrading and extension work to PSS aged care homes.

Our thoughts and prayers are with Keith, Bob and Patricia's families and friends.



COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS



Our Walmsley House residents attended the Burt Munro Motorcycle Challenge at the beginning of February. They had a blast seeing all the different bikes and hanging out and riding with the guys from Bluff Motorcycle Club. A special thank you to our Activities Coordinator Cheree for organising this great outing.

Our residents at Vickery Court took part in the knitting competition at the Winton Flower Show in February. One of our wonderful residents (pictured) won second and third place prize - a big well done and congratulations! A special thank you to the team at Vickery for making this exciting day happen for our residents.



Our staff are very much involved in our local Southland community. This is certainly the case of our very own Himani Gailbraith, the driving force behind the opening of the Southland Hindi School in Invercargill which has just recently celebrated its one-year anniversary of providing knowledge and education on the Hindi language and culture. Well done Himani, keep up the great work.



A Peacehaven Friendship Picnic was held on the beautiful grounds behind the chapel at the end of February. Everybody from all of our Enliven Rest homes and Retirement Villages came together where an amazing afternoon of fun, laughter, great music and a tasty BBQ lunch was had. Our Peacehaven Diversional Therapist Jo Botting's aim for this event was to bring everyone together to make some memories, catch up on old ones and just enjoy everyone's company. Well done Jo, thank you for pulling together such a memorable event.



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