

## Decent housing for our elderly

*After a rewarding career running profitable businesses, Norman entered retirement with modest savings. He was renting a small property outside Christchurch that he hoped to stay in for the rest of his life. All was well until one day last year when he went to get out of his car and collapsed.*

"I crawled on my hands and knees to my house, got to bed, lay on that for a while thinking I'd come right. An hour later, I went to stand up and fell over again. I realised I was in serious trouble." He activated his medical alarm. It was a respiratory infection that meant a four-night stay in hospital, from which Norman thankfully made a full recovery. However, the illness prompted one of his sons to have a closer look at the house in which Norman was living. It was found that the concrete foundation was cracked. Cold and moisture had been seeping into the house from beneath for years and within days, the house was condemned.

A long-term stay in a local hotel nearly depleted Norman's savings. He then found rental accommodation in Christchurch but the facility closed two weeks later. Happily, his distress at being without accommodation again was eased when he was offered a place in Wesley Village, CMM's affordable rental village for older people.

"That's the story of how I arrived. I like it here and am very comfortable. All the tenants come to meet you and introduce themselves. On a hot day, we sit around and have a talk. I've met a lot of the older ladies and men. They are all different sorts – solicitors, clergymen, a great variety of people - and they make you feel very welcome."

Norman, 80, is one of 60 older people who live in Wesley Village. A 2022 Retirement Commission study shows that 46% of the New Zealanders they surveyed aged 45-64 believed they would be renting after they turned 65 or would still be paying off their mortgage. The need for more community housing for older people as they enter retirement has never been greater.

CMM Executive Director Jill Hawkey says that the Mission plans to develop more long-term, affordable housing options for elderly with little or no savings. "Currently we have 70 people on our wait list for our older person's housing and as there is only a turnover of four or five units a year, we have had to close the list. With such strong demand, CMM is committed to building more social and affordable housing units for older people over the next two to three years, as funds allow."

Norman has been living in the CMM complex for three months. He describes his unit as warm and well insulated, and says he feels settled. "It was a bit of a shock to my system from living in the country with an acre of land to a one-bed unit with manicured grounds and a lot of people but it only gets better as I find out what they offer." Perhaps one of the best things for this former businessman is the rent. At less than half what he was charged at his previous house, his rent "is unheard of," he says.



# New family units on the way for Blenheim

*The Christchurch Methodist Mission is putting in place an array of measures to help address the worsening housing crisis in Blenheim and on the West Coast.*

A new housing advocate for people falling through the cracks and left ineligible for services has been created in Blenheim, and is engaged in efforts to expand the pool of available housing in collaboration with other local organisations.

Next July, staff will cut the ribbon on six new two-bedroom units for families in Blenheim, the first such development undertaken by CMM in the town. Work is now underway to create these beautiful new homes for families who are currently unhoused.

“We’re doing our best in terms of providing more housing,” says Vanya Vitasovich, CMM Regional Housing Manager, “The housing that’s available on the West Coast is dire and the rental market and the building of new homes is very slow.”

Vanya says a large number of older homes on the West Coast are no longer fit for habitation and that a lot of homes are flood damaged. As it is difficult to find building contractors and available land, some people endure emergency

housing for years because there’s simply nowhere else to go. CMM is working with other church groups and the local council to find solutions to this problem.

“It’s difficult to manoeuvre through. I’ve attended several housing hui on the West Coast and it seems as if they’ve been battling the same thing for years and are just going through the motions. But at the last hui with local leaders and NGOs, it looked as if we were beginning to make progress.”

In Blenheim, job opportunities are plentiful—in vineyards, on fishing boats, at the mussel farms, on construction of the new high school and the new Picton wharf—but there is no housing to support the workers. People in emergency housing sometimes get evicted for more lucrative tenants, such as construction or RSE (recognised seasonal employer) workers.

Last year, Vanya’s team supported 340 whānau experiencing homelessness or who were on the brink of being made homeless in Blenheim, West Coast and Nelson. CMM was able to prevent every person who faced homelessness from ending up on the street.

Depending on a client’s circumstances, CMM will link them with support, give them an opportunity to work with housing or tenancy



You can empower CMM to make available more affordable and healthy units for vulnerable individuals and whānau by selecting the ‘Community Housing’ programme from the dropdown menu at [www.mmsi.org.nz/donate](http://www.mmsi.org.nz/donate).

social workers, and walk alongside them throughout their housing journey.

“People sometimes come seeking to escape violence and without any emergency housing available, the team have to work quickly to

come up with solutions. This is when we use their relationships with the Ministry of Social Development and local motel owners to get roofs over heads. We don't give up; where there's a will, there's a way.”

## New emotional regulation programme

*Issues with emotional regulation have become commonplace across the ECE sector in New Zealand, with 25% of respondents in the New Zealand Early Childhood Educator and Kōhanga Reo Hauora Health and Wellbeing Survey reporting having been subjected to physical violence from tamariki.*

Research studies show that self-regulation skills can be improved with “regular, high-quality practice” and that children with better self-regulation skills make better decisions more often. This means that they are able to function more effectively in a wider range of situations, leading to more positive outcomes across their lifespan.

In recent times the number of tamariki at Aratupu Preschool & Whānau Hub with high needs and complexity has increased dramatically, with a high proportion of tamariki

struggling with emotional regulation. This results in frequent disruptive and at times severe behaviour.

Aratupu teachers have developed a programme to support these tamariki to develop the self-regulation skills they lack. Specifically, our Kaiako have identified the need to create more intimate spaces for tamariki with additional learning needs to prevent them from becoming overwhelmed or overstimulated.

Additionally, they have recognised the need to increase the number and range of suitable sensory items at the Centre that help tamariki to find their calm.

A donation to Aratupu will significantly help these children. You can support this initiative by selecting Aratupu from the dropdown menu at [www.mmsi.org.nz/donate](http://www.mmsi.org.nz/donate).

### Help the Christchurch Methodist Mission help others

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Please return this form to: CMM Fundraising, FREEPOST 2143, PO Box 5416, CHRISTCHURCH 8542

**You can also donate online by visiting [www.mmsi.org.nz/donate](http://www.mmsi.org.nz/donate)**

# Housing First Ōtautahi marks five-year milestone

*Since its launch in 2018, Housing First Ōtautahi (HFŌ) has expanded and evolved, overcoming challenges and adapting to provide the best support for people experiencing long-term homelessness in our city.*

Having housed over 290 people during this time and now with 32 team members supporting 272 Kaewa (clients) both in housing and on the wait list, the service has achieved countless positive impacts for some of our city's most vulnerable people.

"I'm proud that Housing First is a recognised name in Ōtautahi now, and that it's well respected," says Housing First Manager Nic Fleming. "I'm proud of the Kaewa that are housed and remain to be housed and all those that we support."

Over the five years since HFŌ opened its doors, Covid-19 and the national lockdowns ranked among the most significant drivers of service innovation for the organisation. "It was a crazy time, 12-hour days, phone calls every second of the day, driving around picking people up off the street," says Nic.

There have been many lessons learned along the way about the realities of long-term homelessness. "When we started we had mostly males and a few females," says Nic. "Now 25% of our Kaewa are females and we have around 30 families. I never thought we'd have families. I never thought kids would live on the streets, or be couch-surfing. We're starting to have more conversations about how we can try to stop the cycle of homelessness for those children."

Community development initiatives to support people experiencing homelessness have expanded over the years, with The Commons Project recently celebrating its one-year anniversary. The Commons Project provides a

space for those most vulnerable in the city to regularly connect, engage with services, share kai, and enjoy a range of creative pursuits. These weekly events are held at The Commons Gap Filler site and foster a valuable sense of community for those experiencing isolation, as well as enabling the team to reach more people in need of support who may otherwise have slipped between the cracks.

Looking to the future, the team have goals in two key areas. "Our first main goal for this year is to use community integration principles to better support Kaewa once they're housed to overcome isolation and phobias associated with living in a house," says Nic. "Second is harm reduction; we're working on further upskilling our team in motivational interviewing techniques to support Kaewa with alcohol and drug addictions."

Recent increases in Peer Support roles have been a positive development. "It's an exciting space where we can incorporate their experience into the work we do and the decisions being made. Their lived experience is highly valued and allows them to build trust with Kaewa, bridging the gap between Kaewa and Keyworkers," says Nic.

The lack of available suitable housing and barriers to access services continue to be the biggest obstacles to providing successful outcomes for Kaewa. "Some services put up barriers that prevent people who have high complex needs from accessing them which just serves to increase their suffering," says Nic. "Housing is such a huge issue. We've always had the attitude that we'll just keep going and keep doing it because no one else will."



# Building on a tradition of compassionate care

*Donna Coxshall joined WesleyCare as its new Manager earlier this year, following Cath Swain's retirement. Donna managed a private retirement village in Ashburton for the last seven years and before that she managed Glenwood, a home for older people in Timaru.*

"Donna has spent her working life in aged care or community care leadership," says CMM Executive Director Jill Hawkey. "As a manager for 14 years at New Zealand's largest health care provider, Healthcare NZ, Donna would send healthcare workers out to provide in-home care for clients. After the Canterbury earthquakes, she went to the District Health Board at Timaru before entering the aged residential care sector."

Donna says that she is pleased to return to the not-for-profit sector after her time running a private residential facility. "There is quite a difference. It's nice to come back to this model again."

Expanding access to specialised medical equipment like overhead hoists and shower

chairs are priorities for her and she was delighted to oversee the recent deployment of new equipment made possible by generous supporters who responded to an appeal earlier in the year.

"I'm proud to be part of the WesleyCare tradition of compassionate care and of activating community support to buy the equipment residents need. In most cases Government contracts don't cover the cost of buying this expensive gear, so it's gratifying to see the strong support the appeal garnered from residents' family members and the Manchester Unity Welfare Trust Board."



You can help us to deliver greater resident care. CMM is running an ongoing appeal for funds to buy urgently needed bed hoists. This equipment offers residents greater comfort and protects staff from lifting-related injury. If you are able to help, please do so on our website [www.mmsi.org.nz/donate](http://www.mmsi.org.nz/donate).

thank  
you

CMM is tremendously grateful to everyone who supported us during the 2023 financial year, from those who provided a one-off donation, to Mission Partners, bequestors, funding bodies and philanthropic organisations.

This quarter we would like to recognise the \$772,198 contributed in the past year by supporters and major funders.

Grant funding is crucial for providing community-led initiatives.

Without this support it would be impossible for staff in these service areas to be available for people in need. We would like to recognise these funders for their generous and ongoing investment in the work we do: Central South Island Synod; Christchurch City Council; Farina Thompson Charitable Trust; Jones Foundation; Manchester Unity Welfare Trust Board; Maurice Carter Charitable Trust; Methodist Church of New Zealand; NZ Lottery Grants Board; Philip Brown Fund; Rātā Foundation; Sister Rona Fund; The David Ellison Charitable Trust; The Tindall Foundation; Wayne Francis Charitable Trust

# Persistent demand for winter warmth

The CMM Blanket Bank has seen unprecedented demand over the last few months, with 329 blankets distributed since May. Many whānau have said that finances are tight. Several take care of children from extended whānau, while others have moved from emergency accommodation with nothing.

Thank you to everyone who has supported this cause. If you have clean blankets and bedding that you no longer use, please consider dropping them off at New Brighton Union Parish (24 Union Street), CMM Office (3 Marblewood Drive), Halswell Community Hub (381 Halswell Road), or the Challenge Service Station, South Brighton. Alternatively, please help to cover operating costs by donating at [www.mmsi.org.nz/donate](http://www.mmsi.org.nz/donate), selecting Blanket Bank.



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## Eminent public servant joins CMM Board

We are delighted to announce the appointment of Dr Jan Wright to our Board of Trustees. Dr Wright was appointed a Dame Companion in the NZ Order of Merit in this year's New Year Honours List and was Parliamentary Commissioner for the Environment for two terms from 2007 until 2017. She has also been Chair of Land Transport New Zealand and Transfund New Zealand, and held membership of the Boards of Transit New Zealand, ACC, the Energy Efficiency and Conservation Authority and the Independent Biotechnology Advisory Council. Dr Wright chairs Te Manahuna Aoraki conservation project, a nationally significant biodiversity project in Aoraki National Park and the upper Mackenzie Basin.

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## Five new housing units at St Marks

CMM is partnering with St Marks Methodist Parish to deliver five new public houses for whānau in Somerfield, Christchurch. It is hoped the project will be underway in October, with the demolition of the current dwelling, which is no longer fit for purpose. It will make way for three three-bedroom and two two-bedroom two-storey homes that will be warm, dry and powered in part, by solar. Whānau in our transitional housing will be prioritised for these new builds which we aim to be ready for habitation in the middle of next year. Once built, it will bring to 36 the number of houses for families that we own and 17 that we lease.