

HOUSING FOR PEOPLE WITH FEW OR NO ASSETS

When her landlord's circumstances changed and Fraoch had to find a new place to live, she thought that the three months' notice she'd been given would be ample.

"I must have visited eighty or ninety places," she says. Often there were forty or fifty people turning up to a viewing. "People who are prepared to pay more can just walk in." Those with accessibility needs or without an adequate income are shut out. Moreover, the quality of many of the places Fraoch visited was "awful, hellish." She recalls: "A few times I only got as far as the driveway because I could see the state of the place. It really opened my eyes."

Unable to find somewhere that was affordable and of reasonable quality, Fraoch stayed with friends for ten weeks, still looking, every day. She reflects that many people who own their home have no idea how hard it is to find somewhere if you are renting on a fixed income. "People don't know if they haven't had to do it." Fraoch was delighted and relieved when a worker at Aged Concern spotted a unit she could apply for in Wesley Village. She took it and hasn't looked back.

Affordable housing care for older people in our community is urgently needed. It has become common to see retirement villages being constructed in our cities, but these are generally run on a business model that is too expensive for many. For those who don't own a house that they can sell, buying into these villages is almost impossible.

As home ownership declines, and our population ages, the options for those without assets are worryingly few. And this problem

is set to grow: currently, a third of retirees are renting, but this number is expected to double by 2048. That's about 600,000 people nationwide, many of whom will struggle in the private rental market. Superannuation alone is simply not enough for a comfortable life for older people who are renting.

CMM approaches this challenge by offering a combination of independent and supported living options, and a pathway to rest home and hospital-level care when people need extra assistance.

At Wesley Village, there are 26 studio units, 12 one-bedroom villas, 15 apartments and Whare Tiaki, providing supported independent living for eight kaumātua Māori. However, with the exception of Whare Tiaki which currently has vacancies, there is a waiting list of over 70 people.

CMM is committed to ensuring that rents are affordable by setting the rate at not more than 80 percent of the market rent for similar properties. Rents are reviewed annually and increased only if necessary to meet operating costs.

In the Village there is a strong sense of community. Residents organise activities such as movie nights, board games, fish and chip dinners, and they publish a regular newsletter. There is also support from CMM staff when needed, including prepared meals, shopping trips, and pastoral care. CMM Housing Operations Manager Annie Smith comments that the sense of community is something that



the residents create themselves. "They have their own system of looking after each other," Annie says. "Wesley Village is affordable and social, and residents can have support from staff to help with independent living. It offers a different kind of living from the for-profit retirement village model."

Executive Director, Jill Hawkey, agrees. "If older New Zealanders are to live comfortably and with dignity in their final years, regardless of their financial status, then we need an aged care system that works for everyone." Government funding is key, but for many years it has been inadequate. This has led to the closure of many smaller rest homes that offered an affordable pathway for retirees without financial assets. Jill stresses that governments must take a long-term view and address the significant and chronic underfunding of this sector. "These are our elders. They deserve respect and care right to the end of their lives."

At Wesley Village, staff support residents in their transition to a less independent life when that time comes. WesleyCare, the rest home and

You can help CMM deliver suitable housing to older people with few or no assets

Visit www.mmsi.org.nz/Donate and select CMM's Aged Care Fund from the drop-down menu

hospital adjacent to the Village, operates on the basis of being as affordable as possible. While all rooms are Premium Rooms, with features over and above those required by national residential care standards, WesleyCare works hard to keep the Premium Room charge affordable and accommodates residents who are unable to pay the full cost.

There is a close community relationship between Wesley Village and WesleyCare, with some of the Village residents volunteering at the rest home. Fraoch is one of those people. "I like to be in there, being active, looking after each other." She reflects on her life in the Village. "I like the way everybody mixes together. Everyone's included. The staff are brilliant and everyone feels that they're valued." She smiles. "I'm so pleased to be here."

PUBLIC CELEBRATION ADDRESSES AGED CARE CHALLENGES

We were delighted to have Katherine Foulkes, Principal Advisor to the Aged Care Commissioner, deliver this year's keynote address at our 2023 Public Celebration.

Our annual Public Celebration event is an important opportunity for CMM supporters to learn about the work that has taken place over the past year and to hear from our Executive Director Jill Hawkey. This year's keynote address focused on the issues facing the aged care sector and the changes needed to make affordable, quality aged care facilities available for all.

Katherine outlined the mounting challenges confronting New Zealand's ageing population.

"We are living longer. By 2034 just over a fifth of our total population, around 1.2 million people, will be 65 years and over. As people age, it is critical that they have access to services that enable them to live independently and safely, remaining connected to their communities."

Katherine noted that the focus on funding hospital specialist services over community aged residential care has saddened Aged Care Commission staff, and acknowledged Jill Hawkey's concerns about this issue in relation to WesleyCare Rest Home & Hospital.

Prior to the event, Katherine enjoyed a tour around WesleyCare, Wesley Village, and Whare Tiaki, noting that she was "blown away by the obvious care and compassion in the community" shown in CMM's services for older people.



FREE NAPPIES BOOST TAMARIKI ENGAGEMENT

CMM's Aratupu Preschool & Whānau Hub has served the needs of families in Christchurch's northern suburbs for almost 50 years.

The Hub's unique practice model is grounded in the understanding that poverty can be a significant barrier for tamariki to receive education, and for parents to build strong and supportive relationships with their children.

In mid-2022 CMM extended the assistance it provides to Aratupu whānau by supplying free high-quality nappies to Aratupu tamariki. At the time, kaiako (teachers) reported that the combined effect of Covid and persistent increases in the cost of basics like rent, food and fuel, had placed already stretched households under additional pressure. Aratupu manager Katie recalls that period, noting that the scale of the problem became obvious as more families started requesting more food parcels more often.



Please consider supporting Aratupu whānau and kaiako by giving a gift to the Aratupu Nappies project

You can support the project by selecting Aratupu Nappies Project from the dropdown menu at www.mmsi.org.nz/donate

"Coping with the cost of living had obviously become even harder for our whānau," Katie says. "We started to realise that some of them had stopped supplying nappies for their tamariki as they no longer had the income to buy them. We were regularly receiving requests to use some of our supply until their next pay."

Following the launch of the Aratupu Nappies Project, CMM supporters started making cash gifts to ensure that the centre could provide high-quality nappies to tamariki while they are onsite. Cheaper nappies require more frequent changing and ultimately are costlier, says Katie.

"In an educational setting, more frequent changing removes both teacher and child from the learning environment more often and for longer. The nappies we supply are durable and have other protective benefits; many poor families can't afford them because of the higher upfront cost."

Providing high-quality nappies free to Aratupu whānau enables more continuous teacher engagement with tamariki, says Katie. "While this is an educational benefit, free nappies also remove a financial stressor for struggling families."

HELP CMM HELP OTHERS

You can also donate online at www.mmsi.org.nz/donate

My gift is \$ _____ Please tick payment method: Credit Card Internet Banking

Card number: _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ Visa Mastercard

Expiry Date: ____ | ____ Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____

Internet banking account no: 02-0800-0766258-00. Please put 'DONATION' in Reference Field.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Email: _____ Address: _____

Please send me information about leaving a gift in my Will to CMM

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

SUPPORT A FAMILY BRINGS CHRISTMAS CHEER TO THOSE WHO NEED IT MOST

Strong support from Christmas hamper donors turned what would otherwise have been a bleak period into a joyful time for families across Christchurch once again.

Now into its 16th year, CMM's Support a Family Christmas appeal matches donors to families in need to provide them with a personalised Christmas hamper. Hampers include gifts for the children and food items to fill their pantry and provide a Christmas meal.

Support a Family Coordinator Glenda Marshall says the initiative's purpose is to bring joy to children and relief to their parents who are struggling to make ends meet.

"Here at the Mission we know that the past few years particularly have been tough on disadvantaged families. Too many children would wake up without presents under the tree or food on the table if it were not for the incredible generosity of Support a Family donors," says Glenda.

CMM staff and volunteers distributed Hampers to over 650 individuals, including 408 children, on the last Thursday before Christmas from the pop-up Support a Family Distribution Centre at the Christchurch North Methodist Parish in Papanui.

"It's been my privilege to run this event for the past 12 years," says Glenda. "Over this time, I've seen the need for support over the festive season grow in the community. And every year individuals, families, parishes and businesses have opened their hearts to our appeal, and responded with incredible kindness and generosity."

Glenda says that none of this is lost on the families who receive a hamper and that it is quite common to hear recipients say how good it is to be reminded that people do actually care. "I can't tell you how often I hear from them that they're amazed that someone they don't know is willing to help them out in this way."

Niva Chittock from RNZ's Checkpoint programme was one of several reporters that covered the event, speaking with donors and families, and interviewing Glenda. As Niva reported, picking up her hamper brought some joy after a tough year for one single mother of four. "It's really hard at the moment, as it is for many other families as well. I'm over the moon to be honest, it's going to help so much. We're really going to have a Christmas."

CMM sincerely thanks all those who took part in this year's Support a Family initiative, from our donors to our distribution day volunteers who lifted everyone's spirits in their reindeer and elf attire! Your generosity and kindness brought Christmas cheer to those who need it most.

Share the Christmas spirit with a family who would appreciate a hamper

Sign up now for Support a Family 2024 by registering your interest with Glenda at glendam@mmsi.org.nz





CMM COMMUNITIES CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS

Christmas celebrations took place across CMM's communities including another successful WesleyCare residents party and joint Christmas and three-year anniversary celebration at our Guild Street Housing Community.

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING ON THE WEST COAST

This summer there has been good news for at least one family on the West Coast, thanks to the generosity of the Greymouth Uniting Church.

The parish has decided to lease its parsonage to CMM for use as transitional housing. The house has five bedrooms and a big yard, ideal for a family with growing children.

Far too many families on the Coast are living in insecure accommodation. Sometimes this involves squeezing into an overcrowded house with other family members, sometimes it means living in a caravan or a cabin at a camping ground, or being placed in a motel unit that is being used as emergency accommodation.

These places offer shelter, but they are by no means an adequate solution to the homelessness crisis on the Coast. Emergency accommodation, which is managed by the Ministry of Social Development, is only intended to be used for very short periods – just seven days. But with no transitional housing available on the Coast, families are spending many months living in emergency motels. The house leased to CMM by the Greymouth Uniting Parish will be the first transitional house where families can stay up to 12 weeks and in many cases, will stay longer.

The housing situation on the Coast is dire for the many families and individuals who are in urgent

need of a place to live. Most of these people are long term Coasters who have found that their options are few: the rental market is small, the supply of public housing is low, and affordable housing is slow to come onto the market. Flood damage to existing housing stock over the last few years has further reduced the availability and habitability of homes.

CMM's regional housing manager, Vanya Vitasovich explains that her biggest concern is the number of children living in emergency motels. "It's so important to get children out of emergency housing and into more stable and permanent homes. In the holiday season, many families are asked to leave emergency motel accommodation to make room for holiday-makers. As a result, these families end up in camping grounds, making their situation even worse." What's needed is affordable, long term housing with security of tenure.

Kāinga Ora (the Government housing agency), is currently planning to build around sixty public housing units in Greymouth, but these probably won't be completed until late 2024 at the earliest. While this will provide a welcome boost to housing in the area, it won't be enough to cater for the number of families searching for a permanent home.

The partnership between CMM and the parish provides a welcome opportunity to make a difference by creating a pathway out of emergency accommodation for families and supporting them in their search for a permanent home.

WORLD HOMELESS DAY STREET ART EXHIBITION

To mark World Homeless Day 2023, Housing First Ōtautahi partnered with The White Room Creative Space, Life in Vacant Spaces, Creative Junk, and Telling Lives to put together a Street Art Exhibition featuring artwork created by Housing First kaewa. Artwork was available for purchase, with profits going back to the artists.

The exhibition ran over eight days in the Life in Vacant Spaces Incubator in Cashel Mall, and we were delighted to sell lots of incredible artwork and engage in many important conversations about homelessness.



World Homeless Day is observed annually on the 10th of October, with the aim to shine a light on homelessness issues and spread awareness about the harmful stigmas associated with it.

Visit www.housingfirstchch.co.nz/Whats-On/World-Homeless-Day-Street-Art-Exhibition to watch the event video.

CMM ACCREDITED AS LIVING WAGE EMPLOYER

We're excited to announce that we have been accredited as a Living Wage Employer. As one of the South Island's leading social service organisations, we employ 288 staff in Christchurch, Blenheim, Nelson and the West Coast.

"I'm proud that CMM has become a Living Wage employer," says CMM Executive Director Jill Hawkey. "Over the past few years our leadership and governance teams have worked hard to

ensure that all of CMM's employees and service providers

are adequately compensated for their work, and that they work in a safe and rewarding environment."

"Paying the Living Wage gives workers more financial security, leading to better wellbeing," says Gina Lockyer, the Living Wage Movement's Executive Director. "Employees feel happier at work, and at home. In a service like CMM, this will have a ripple effect on their communities and every person they serve."



2023 ANNUAL REPORT OUT NOW

Our 2023 Annual Report is out now, detailing our work over the past year to support those most vulnerable in communities across the Central and Upper South Island. You can read it online at www.mmsi.org.nz/Who-We-Are/Annual-Reports-and-Accounts or email

laurat@mmsi.org.nz to request a hard copy.

