

A black and white photograph of a bouquet of flowers in a vase. The bouquet includes lilies and other flowers. In the background, a house is visible, slightly out of focus. The text 'HOLDING HOPE TOGETHER' is overlaid on the right side of the image.

# HOLDING HOPE TOGETHER

*Celebrating the contribution of the non profit  
sector in rebuilding Christchurch communities*

Disclaimer:

The views expressed by the contributors to this book are not necessarily those of the Council of Social Services in Christchurch or the Christchurch City Council.

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# HOLDING HOPE TOGETHER

*Celebrating the contribution of the non profit sector in  
rebuilding Christchurch communities*

*By*

*Council of Social Services in Christchurch*





Council of Social Services in Christchurch

301 Tuam Street  
Christchurch  
New Zealand

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# FOREWORD

Na te Upoko Runaka ki Otautahi o Kai Tahu

*Tautahi e karanga e te iwi e  
Kua eke mai nei ki runga te marae e  
Mauria mai ra e nga mate o te motu e  
Me nga tini roimata e maringi whanui e  
Titiro e nga iwi e nga mahi o te motu  
E hora atu nei e  
Ru ana te whenua, whatiwhati te moana  
Aue te aroha te mamae i ahau e  
Ru ana te whenua whatiwhati, Hi!*

Our tribe is calling to the people  
Who have just set foot on this marae  
Bring with you the memories of all our dead  
And so many tears spilling forth nation-wide  
Look at our people working across the land  
spread out far and wide  
Shaking is the ground, quivering is the sea  
Oh the love and pain within me  
The ground shakes and quivers!

The heartfelt memories of the NGO sector representatives are crystalised in their responses outlined in this book. Their testimonies bear witness to their commitment, dedication and calling to the work that they were involved in and continue to carry out today. Their accounts reflect courage, humility and service beyond the call of duty in adverse circumstances. The earthquakes of September 2010 and February 2011, and subsequent aftershocks, reshaped and redefined the character and content of what it is to be a 'Cantabrian'.

The rebuild and recovery of Christchurch is an exercise in reflecting of what was and now the possibilities of what can be. The earthquakes have generated a true spirit of kotahitaka, of unity and solidarity, amongst the communities. It is this value associated with manaaki ki te iwi (love, care and hospitality to all living things) that inspires us to continue to rise to the great heights of care and love for others as we did in the times during and after the earthquakes.

The interviewees for this book were leaders of their respective organisations. Leadership is a fundamental value that people recognise and look for in times of trauma and chaos. It was very evident that the leaders stood tall during these difficult times. They inspired others and led by example thereby ensuring their organisations were able to respond to those in need during their most critical and vulnerable times .

The proverbial saying 'ma te huruhuru, ka rere te manu', 'with feathers the bird can fly', denotes a common thread that weaves these organisations together. This commonality is funding. Before the earthquakes many of these organisations found it difficult to compete for the limited funding and resources available. Post earthquake this has become even more difficult as the need has increased but for many the resources have not. This harsh reality is softened by the generosity of spirit and of people's desire to more actively participate in their communities.



It is those on the ground at the front line that we must truly acknowledge. Many of them were also severely affected by the earthquakes and had to deal with their own personal situations. In spite of this the call to service remained strong and they put others before themselves. They worked long and arduous hours in order to provide the necessary supports required to those in their time of most need. They never seek recognition for all that they have done and I hope in some way that this book will reveal some of the tremendous work that these people have achieved.

“Ru ana te whenua, whatiwhati te moana. Aue te aroha te mamae i ahau e”.  
These words are an extract from a much sung waiata. The words encapsulate both the horror of the earthquakes and the resiliency of the organisations and people to recover.

Na te Upoko Runaka  
Rev. Maurice Manawaroa Gray



# CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i> .....	13
<i>The Interviews</i>	
Pacific Trust Canterbury .....	15
Christchurch Migrant Centre .....	22
New Brighton Community Gardens .....	28
Friends of Linwood Cemetery .....	35
Christchurch Methodist Mission .....	42
Tenants Protection Association .....	48
Christchurch Community House .....	53
Mental Health Foundation .....	58
Alzheimers Canterbury .....	65
SPCA Canterbury .....	71
White Elephant Trust .....	76
Christchurch School of Music .....	85
NZ Council of Social Services .....	94
<i>About Plains FM</i> .....	100
<i>Acknowledgements</i> .....	103





# INTRODUCTION

*Sharon Torstonson, Executive Officer of the Council of Social Services (COSS) Christchurch*



*At last count, there were around 97,000 non-profit groups and organisations in New Zealand.<sup>1</sup>*

These groups range from small, local groups consisting entirely of volunteers, to large, national organisations with big staff rolls and budgets of millions of dollars. With their coverage from Plunket to Probus; across sports, arts, education, culture, politics, health, tangata whenua, faith, civil rights, recreation, environment, social services, community and international aid; there would be few people in New Zealand who have not had some sort of involvement with a non-profit group at some time in their lives. In spite of this, the contribution that non-profit groups make to our personal and community wellbeing is under-recognised.

They are so much part of the fibre of our communities and lives that we often take them for granted.

During and after the earthquakes of 2010 and 2011 in Christchurch and Canterbury, some non-profits rightly received public recognition for the enormous contribution they made, and continue to make, to the emergency response and the ongoing recovery. Examples of organisations that received public recognition are; Red Cross, the Salvation Army, the Student Volunteer Army, Gapfiller and others. Many other groups, large and small, also have remarkable stories to tell of their role in helping Cantabrians recover and rebuild their wellbeing while themselves dealing with the effects of the earthquakes.

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<sup>1</sup> [http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse\\_for\\_stats/people\\_and\\_communities/households/non-profitinstitutionsatelli-teaccount\\_hotp2005.aspx](http://www.stats.govt.nz/browse_for_stats/people_and_communities/households/non-profitinstitutionsatelli-teaccount_hotp2005.aspx)

When we at COSS heard some of these stories of non-profit groups and organisations, we wanted to share them with the community. In 2012 and early 2013, with the support of a small grant from Christchurch City Council, I interviewed the managers or leaders of 13 non-profit groups and organisations and broadcast the interviews on community radio station Plains FM as part of a series called 'Connected'. This book presents those interviews, which were transcribed by a team of volunteers and edited to make them easier to read. The general structure of the interviews was to find out what the group had done pre-quakes, how they managed through the quakes, and what they were doing now. I also interviewed a national organisation based in Wellington about their role in supporting local groups.

While we tried to cover as diverse a range of groups as possible, we are very aware of many gaps. In some ways the final selection was quite random, depending on who had a free space in their diaries when the recording studio was available. I know that there will be many groups disappointed not to have had this opportunity to tell their stories. All of the COSS team sincerely hope that there will be other initiatives to capture more of our sector's stories of earthquake survival and recovery, because they must not be lost.

The Council of Social Services Christchurch was established in 1979. COSS's Vision is: A world based on social equity, justice and wellbeing. COSS's Mission Statement is: The COSS will invest in this vision by actively promoting and supporting social equity, justice and wellbeing through collaboration to identify, understand and advocate on issues that impact on the marginalised.

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# TONY FAKAHAU

*General Manager of the Pacific Trust Canterbury*



*Pacific Trust Canterbury was set up in 1999 as a not-for-profit organisation primarily to look at the Pacific community and some of the issues they were facing. Many Pacific people weren't accessing services.*

Services range from primary care, so GP services or doctors, nurses, and home-nursing support services for the homes. Also social services, so that's with social workers for domestic violence and so forth. So one of the ways of trying to get them in to use those services was to set one up that had some themes and was tailored to meet some of their needs. The Trust operates to look after Pacific people, but we also look after anybody that comes looking for support.

We also deal with mental health and alcohol and addiction services. And have a programme for early childhood learning, helping to transition young children into pre-school.

*This integrated service is a bit like a one-stop shop, so if someone brings their child in for a check-up, they can also be connected with the early childhood service.*

Yes, we're an integrated provider. So, pretty much, we have all that linked in so that when the customer or the client comes in, the service that's provided to them is pretty seamless across the organisation.

Because some Pacific people don't have transport, it's good to have these services close by, and having them in one location helps them because they're

bringing in kids, so once the kids get their check-ups, the mums might have support for breast feeding, ante-natal support, access to some of those services, because we also have links to other programmes that we don't provide, but they'll come to work with us. We're pretty much linked into the services within the region, and also to the hospital.

*The numbers of people using the Pacific Trust's services has changed since the earthquakes.*

Our patient register is around about 1800 at the moment, and it's building. Prior to the earthquake, it was sitting at around 2200, so we had a pretty big drop, by about 500 patients. So we're slowly recovering, back up to 1800. As well, quite a significant number are using our community health services, like mental health, alcohol and drugs. We've got youth mental health workers as well as adult mental health workers. So we normally look after the mild to severe cases of Pacific people that do have mental illness. And parents and families that have domestic abuse cases. We have two social workers who work with these cases. It's quite an intensive programme, so they're referred to us by CYFS and other agencies.

*Since the earthquakes, the Trust has seen an increase in cases of domestic abuse, and mental health issues among the Pacific community.*

There was a spike in terms of domestic violence. Many of our people lost their jobs when the fishing companies closed, and some other businesses closed, so that caused a lot of problems in terms of financial issues. Many turned to drugs and alcohol, and that often led to domestic violence cases. There was definitely a spike there. It's starting to level off now but it's still occurring and probably will stay that way for some time, until the recovery's complete.

*The increase in these cases meant the Trust took on more staff around mental health services, and some of the community nursing programmes they have.*

We're also a Whanau Ora provider. That means when you work with a family, you've got a navigator. It's a new position that's been put in place to help some of these families navigate their way through our programmes, as well as other programmes that are out there.

We're talking about families who have multiple needs, so we'll have multiple agencies looking after these families and we just happen to be one of them. So we have the Whanau Ora programme where we'll have someone helping those families trying to move them along these services and direct them and guide them.

We're trying to hold their hand, up to a point where they can look after themselves really.

And then, hopefully, sustain that wellness in the long-run. So that's the whole purpose of the Whanau Ora programme. So those are some of the new positions that we've had to take on. What we do recognise is the difficulties and the time that we have to take, that we have to look after these families because they're more intensive now compared to previously.

*The Pacific Trust is not only dealing with a higher number of these cases, but they are also more complicated.*

They're a lot more complicated with multiple problems, not only with, say, the father, but also with the children. When there are multiple agencies involved, it just makes it very difficult for the family. So our job is to try and help them through that and get them into a position where the children are safe, the family is safe, and the mum and dad are well.

*The Pacific Trust used to be based in Worcester Street, next to Latimer Square, but lost their premises in the February earthquake.*



One of the things that happened was that when our staff got out of the building, as nurses and medical people, they were first on the scene to help triage those that were brought over from the CTV building.

So for many of my staff it had been a traumatic event because most of the people that were pulled out, and the injured, they were there looking after them. Even the deaths that occurred, they were the ones helping to look after the people that were there, and also to try and give a sense of respectability to the deceased. You know, some of the staff took off their coats and that, just to give a bit of comfort. So that gives a bit of perspective about the experiences my staff went through.

*With traumatised staff and critical social needs among their patients, it was a difficult time. On top of which, the Trust had to move to four different locations over that period.*

It was a very difficult time. We're now fortunate to have secured new premises at 177 Montreal Street and also 189 Montreal Street. So we have two buildings at the moment.

But the first place we shifted to, because we're a GP service, it didn't really work out because our clientele weren't the right clientele for that place, for that area. So we were asked by the GP in that location to move along. Because, as you know, with Pacific families, you can have a vanful of them coming, and they can easily fill up a small reception area.



So we had to find premises that were big enough to look after them. And our needs are a bit different, so after moving to two other small places, we found another location in Shirley just across from Partnership Health. That worked out alright but then

the insurance company told us to get out of there because they were residential premises. It was difficult.

So we then moved to Hoon Hay for a couple more weeks before finally securing the current premises. So, it has been a very, very interesting move for the past 18 months.

*All this upheaval has come at a financial cost to the Trust.*

We lost 25% to 30% of our patients due to the moves that we've had to make. And it's quite difficult for any business or any non-profit organisation. So financially it was pretty hard on us, and we're still trying to recover from that. We're hoping that we'll get those numbers back. But so far, with the new premises, it's looking really good now.

*Some former patients left the city, and others enrolled with different providers.*

Many of them have gone down to either Ashburton, Oamaru, or back up to Wellington and Auckland. And others have enrolled, especially around the Hornby area and Hoon Hay area. They've moved out that way. A lot of our clientele that used to be in the east side have left, so that's had a big hit on us. But fortunately, yeah, we're climbing back again so we're getting the numbers climbing up rapidly, so I'm pretty happy with that.

*It has been a testing time for staff as well.*

Staff are pretty happy about how things are improving. Every time there's a shake I can see the stress showing in their faces, but I think everything takes time and, for myself, I think – yeah, I just want to see the rebuild completed and get back to normal. But like everything else, time will heal.

*Tony would like to see a lot more greenery in the city.*

A lot of greenery. I like the fact that we're not going to have those tall buildings. I like the fact that we're only going to have up to six storeys, you know, for





this place. But also this is an opportunity to turn this place into what it should be. It is the Garden City so it would be nice to see a lot of greenery and a lot of gardens in the city. That's what my hope is.

The Pacific community is still recovering, it's taking us a bit longer to recover because of the housing issues that they have. What I hope for is that, out of all this, that more effort and emphasis is given to some of those poor families who have housing issues. That's probably one of our biggest problems. And that's one of the biggest problems that causes health problems, which is bad housing. So, if you can sort that out and give some of these low income poor families some decent accommodation, I think it will set us on a good course.

*Tony would welcome people sharing any ideas they have on helping over housing difficulties.*

At the moment, a lot of my people struggle to get rental accommodation, decent rental accommodation. Right now, any house that's around about \$400 to \$500 dollar mark, they struggle with that because most of them are on benefits. Most of the state houses haven't been rebuilt so it's going to take them a while. So, I suppose if there's any help, it will be around housing. We can certainly do with any support or any help you might have in terms of housing for the community really.

*The Trust does get volunteer help from the community.*

We have a significant number of volunteers, especially around the new Whanau Ora programme. The community is helping us to try and work out a model that is more effective in looking after our people. We can't create that, we need input



from them, so we've got an advisory group – voluntary groups, non-paid, who make the time and effort weekly to help us. We're fortunate we've got those people. We look at them as the experts but they're giving their time for free to help us sharpen how we do our work.

## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

Affordable housing continues to be a very real issue for the Pacific community. A lot of rental houses are in poor condition, and the rise in rents and in the cost of power means the Pacific Trust is seeing an increase in a whole lot of health issues – overcrowding leads to the spread of disease, and often mental health issues.

But Tony says that on the good side 'Our Community Development Scheme to build capacity and capability among Pacific communities is working really well, and is being supported by our Whanau Ora services for families. We've now got two sites to accommodate PTC services, and to share with other Pacific organisations – it's a village concept. Our clinic at 177 Montreal Street is at maximum capacity due space constraints, but our Board and management are working hard to come up with solutions.

Right now, one of the things we're really focussed on is working with the Tongan community to do what we can to provide relief for the Ha'apai Islands in Tonga, following the recent cyclone.'

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# REX GIBSON

## Christchurch Migrant Centre



*The Migrant Centre was set up in August 2010 – before the earthquakes – to fill a gap in the services available for migrants. There was no system in the city that coordinated services and the Centre was set up primarily to do that coordination.*

We are dealing with what we generally call ‘settlement needs’. Migrants are usually interested in accommodation, in employment, in education, in health, and the wider things that fill up a person’s life. Things like sport, culture, clubs, organisations they wish to belong to. For many of them, meeting all those requirements is very difficult because most agencies that service migrants’ needs, deal with only one of those particular aspects. So it’s very difficult for many of them to get from agency one to agency two, to agency three, and so on, and our service was initially set up to speed up that process.

It could be really confusing being someone new to a place, a different culture, to try and find their way around, particularly if they’re from a non-English speaking background.

*The Migrant Centre is run by a Trust Board. There are 11 members on the Trust and of those, three represent Ngāi Tahu, two are European Kiwis, and the rest are all migrants.*

These are people who have come to Christchurch, been successful, have jumped all the hurdles and don’t want to see other migrants have to jump over the same number of hurdles that they had to get over.

And there are four staff. At the moment, two of us are full-time and two are part-time. There is an administrator and myself, who are there full-time, and we have two part-time people. One, Kevin, does work with community groups and all the liaison work there. And the other one, Jane, is our Case Manager. She interviews new migrants and determines what their needs are, and sets them on the right path to meeting all those needs. We're not really there to deliver services, we're there to coordinate and to help people help themselves.

*The Migrant Centre was barely off the ground when the earthquakes struck. They had a profound effect on what the Centre was doing because the coordination of community groups and the coordination of the agencies had to be dramatically brought forward.*

The first earthquake in September happened immediately before we were to get our first lot of funding from the Christchurch City Council. I was really so appreciative of the Council – at their very first meeting after the September earthquake, they gave us a sizeable set-up grant to get going, but then that allowed us to be in a position to coordinate things after the February earthquake, because we were one of the very few agencies on February 23rd 2011 that still had facilities.

We were based at Rehua Marae under the umbrella of Ngāi Tahu. We had available to us meeting spaces, kitchen spaces, dining room spaces, showers, toilets, office space. Many of our agencies – in fact, we estimated 80% of all the agencies we work with – lost their offices, or lost access to their offices, because of the red zone.

We were at Rehua for the first couple of months after the earthquake, and then we had our own purpose-built premises to move into. But the shrinking of the red zone didn't happen quickly enough, so we weren't able to move in until the end of May last year.

But Rehua was a great base for us. We were greatly supported there by some of the other groups that were based there, in particular we needed eyes and ears around the city, and they were provided very, very successfully by the Māori Wardens, who were people who were culturally sensitive, not just for their



own culture, but for all forms of cultural insensitivity which were occurring, particularly in some of the relief centres that were happening around the city. That allowed us to make alternative arrangements for many of the migrant groups that weren't being catered for.

*The experience of migrants during and after the earthquakes in Christchurch raised issues that the Migrant Centre believes that communities should be aware of, and they've put together a document.*

We set out most of our concerns and the lessons that we learnt as a result of the post-quake experience in the document simply called *Lessons Learned for the Migrant Community*. That document's now out there with a lot of groups we've been working closely with, such as Civil Defence.

That's really just the area of responding to the earthquake. In terms of what we do now during the recovery period, we've got a number of funding applications in, for which we are reasonably hopeful, where we can begin programmes working with migrant leaders.



And in that, we want to coordinate their opinions, we want to coordinate their needs and present united voices for them in terms of what migrants want.

In terms of what we want in the new area, we want particularly, recognition of the people who lost their lives in the earthquake who were not New Zealanders in the sense of being born here, who were new migrants, or who were students. We're very keen to see the process of constructing a memorial, consulting with those communities

that were most affected. Particularly the Japanese, the Chinese, and the Filipino communities.

We've only had a verbal indication that will happen, we're still waiting to see how that pans out. But we'll be keeping a very close watch on the process.

*The Migrant Centre was also part of a group that ran a forum for migrant leaders quite early on in deciding what they wanted in the centre of the city.*

We're very keen to foster the ethnic gardens concept that was developed with two or three groups, particularly the Lincoln University landscape design students, and we're very keen to see that that type of concept comes into it. There was also quite a bit of interest from the migrant groups in the individual hub type areas. They're quite keen to see an ethnic food area within the restaurant precinct; they're quite keen to see an ethnic retail area within the retail precinct. But it's early days yet and it's very hard to determine yet whether that's going to be part of it.

One of the groups that we work most closely with is the Multi-cultural Council here in Christchurch. We try and listen very much to what they have got to say, but they're not the only group that we bring together that involves a number of different ethnic groups. We've had a very successful Africa Day where we worked with 18 different African communities to produce an amazing day where 900 people turned up. That sort of work gives us really close contact with the particular ethnic groups.

*The rebuild phase of the city's recovery has brought new challenges in the work of the Migrant Centre.*

The major challenge at the moment is for the migrant workers who are being brought in for the rebuild period. We are expecting hundreds. We've spoken with one employer alone who's expecting to bring in well over 200 migrant workers. There is a lot of effort going into making sure that they have accommodation and they have work, but there's very little effort, as far as we can see, going into the rest of the aspects of their life – their cultural, their social, their outside-of-work-





# Christchurch Migrants Centre Trust

hour needs – and we’re working closely, particularly with the Filipino community at the moment to try and put together the process to look after those people in the wider sense, with their Church needs, and so on.

*Rex says there is a role for volunteers to work with the Migrant Centre.*

We have plenty of volunteers from the migrant communities themselves who wish to assist with many of the day-to-day things that we’re doing, and I’m thinking particularly of the women’s programmes that we’ve just started. But my main concern is actually – we’d really love someone from the established Kiwi community who could come in and assist with some of our paperwork. We really are so involved with front-line activities that things along the lines of policy writing and other documentation jobs – we’d love to have a competent volunteer in that area.



## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

The Migrant Centre would still really welcome volunteers sympathetic to the needs of migrants as they settle into New Zealand life, and those who could help with the paperwork!

The Centre has great plans for a social programme starting in February this year. It includes English classes, craft sessions, and yoga classes, which were all very successful last year. And they're adding new programmes, which include book discussion groups, and walking groups.

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# CATHY SWEET

## *New Brighton Community Gardens*



*In recent years, quite a number of community gardens have been developed around Christchurch. They operate in different ways but what they all have in common is that they respond to a need for people to be together in their daily lives. Especially people who haven't got regular work, or are doing shift work and have got some gaps in the daytime. And, of course, who want to grow vegetables and learn more about how to grow vegetables.*

There's a lot of old knowledge out there but some of those people are in their own homes. To get out and share it's a really good thing. That seems to happen naturally out in the gardens, and round the kai table at lunchtime, stories get swapped. We often get people in their 60s and 70s and 80s coming along with a lifetime of actual learning from application, just learning from hours in the garden what works and what doesn't work. It's great to get their stories.

*The New Brighton Community Gardens lease a section off the local Rawhiti Domain.*

It used to be a bowling club so we're lucky to get a pavilion, and it's a really good sized bit of land. The Council have arranged for us to have that at a low cost in return for looking after it.

It's eight years, officially, since we got incorporated. We've got seven trustees. We've always had a good number of trustees – it's been a really good thing. It

got started with help from the New Brighton project, which has helped set up a number of great initiatives in New Brighton, part of their role is to get things started.

*Cathy says that in those eight years it is pretty amazing how the New Brighton Community Gardens have matured.*

We've got the before and after photos on the wall. Because it was an old bowling club, we've had to build everything up, so it's a pretty design – we managed to make a really neat design. Sue Cobb, who is a New Brighton resident, contributed to that design and things got going. It's just beautiful to walk down the paths now with growth and greenhouses.

The way we run it is we don't have allotments, we have a situation where people can come and do a couple of hours gardening then take away their veges in return. So people are coming in and doing their couple of hours, or they bring their lunch and stay for the day quite often, just treating that as their backyard a bit more.

*Sometimes the gardens produce a surplus.*

And there's people who know us and swing by and get a few veges for a gold coin or a wee donation. And we've always got good seedlings for sale at a low cost too, and we try and do the spray free thing there.

*The New Brighton Community Gardens were lucky not to get liquefaction during the earthquakes.*

We were extremely lucky to avoid liquefaction, it would have been heartbreaking. Some of the gardens have had to deal with that, and even had to close. People around us, very close by, had a lot of damage. Some of those people have come in to do their gardening with us rather than at home because they'd given up on their sections, or just haven't had the space or the room, or the energy to cope with repeated amounts of liquefaction too.





We had trustees and staff, particularly our key staff member in the garden, who've dealt with massive things in their own lives. I wasn't there at that stage, but they only had the gardens shut for a couple of weeks and people just poured back in, not always staying for the length of time they used to but people wanted somewhere to go that felt kind of safe around other people. A lot of anxious people wanted to be around other people and the comfort. And then just to start to focus on something that was a known quantity and a routine, and something would actually grow, a sense of hope and stability. It's amazing the response – we've had more visitors in the last 15 months than we ever had.

*The New Brighton Community Gardens are open Monday, Wednesday, Friday, and a shorter day on Saturday. There has been an increase in the numbers of people coming to the gardens, and Cathy says it's as if they provide some comfort from the trauma of the earthquakes.*

It's sort of a slow start, but by 11, or between 11am and 4pm there's usually 13 or 14 people in the garden, and up to 30 visitors a day. That is more people coming through, people wanting to talk about their situations, so there's a lot more conversation, sharing how people cope with things – a lot more of that going on. A lot more intimate sharing of people's lives really, the personal details coming up – finances, stress.

Also the workshops we're running have changed as well. We're quite focused on self-reliance – collecting your own water, compost loo making, and responding to some of the concerns about what might happen in future, or the people who still haven't got their plumbing going properly at their houses.

There's been such a difficulty finding a clear answer in lots of areas of life, hasn't there. With EQC and insurance companies, with getting plumbing fixed – some people can't get the drains done till there's something else done. Life's in a muddle, and I think just to talk about that provides really good stress relief. The whole mental health side of the gardens is really coming to the fore at the moment and I can see that going on for years really. The story's just changing shape a bit – it's not so much digging liquefaction or how many families are living in their home, it's more like dealing with companies, insurance and legal stuff, and moving house.

*Some of those involved with the New Brighton Community Gardens also responded to the earthquakes by doing some plant moving for people.*

We found that people were really attached to some of their plants. There were lots of stories, and histories of their homes. The smaller plants we were able to move to new homes, or put in containers, or give away. That was a lot of comfort for people.

*Cathy is a strong believer in the mental health benefits of getting into action and achieving something.*

We like to get people moving and get them to garden alongside another person. That's a chance to chat, and lunchtimes are a chance to chat. But we're finding that keeping on talking has got its downside too! Seeing the garden developed, seeing a new lot of something planted, another lot harvested, and working together on a project, clearing an area and just seeing seedlings come up, life cycles going on. It's a grounding thing, really grounding.

We'd love to open more days, there's demand for it. We'd love our supervisor, our Garden Manager actually, to have some planning hours. She's on the run when she's here on her three days a week. That's the funding issues. And we could do some more plant moving if some money came our way as well. But really we'd just like to keep making sure we offer a really stable place for people.



*Not surprisingly, Cathy would like to see an emphasis on green spaces in the rebuilt Christchurch. Groups working together post-earthquakes have shown how strong that can be for the well-being of the community, and she hopes that will keep going.*

The Canterbury Community Gardens Association is really advocating strongly for some green spaces, particularly around the river – that whole idea of having the river park, which I think should have always been there. I can't think of a better way to attract tourists, for families to get out, health issues of sedentary jobs, and supermarket food and everything. There are just so many answers in getting that green space happening. So we're strongly supporting those initiatives and opportunities for people to grow things, have fruit trees in those spaces, and maybe more community gardens. We'd like to be a picture for people, when they come to our gardens, to come and see how it can look – how beautiful and how productive, and what a great atmosphere it is.

*Bugs and pests are a constant battle for any gardener. At the New Brighton Community Gardens they work as organically as possible. And like to share that knowledge.*

We are not certified organic, but our Garden Manager's got a background in growing things organically, so she's got a great wealth of knowledge. And you know, some of the best organic growing around Christchurch relies heavily on compost. We've got our full-time volunteer compost maker! So that keeps the soil really strong – we're teaching those sorts of things.

There has been a resurgence of interest in being around home and neighbourhoods since the quakes, so we are trying to pick up on that and provide lots of neat cooking and bottling advice – using your veges, compost making, lots of things around gardens, not just the gardening itself, like how to make your own cleaners. Just things to really get people feeling good about being in their neighbourhoods and home.



*The New Brighton Community Gardens group is full of good ideas that they would like to share, but funding is the main challenge.*

We get by alright but we'd love to do more than what we do. We're just starting to develop our Children and Youth Education Programmes around gardening and sustainability, and we'd love to take that a step further. We've got started with some Earthquake Appeal and Vodafone funding for that. But we'd like to just provide some really good activities in east Christchurch for young people. We can combine some gardening knowledge along with some entertainment. People on our side of town are driving a long way on terrible roads to get to a lot of services and entertainment, so let's make it local again.

*The group welcomes volunteers and donations.*

Just join the volunteer team. We get tools donated, people come in if they're in the salvage business, we're always grateful to get posts, good posts, and Clear-lite, and things like that. And donations of course – we love donations! Sometimes we have bigger projects so if people contact us we can put their name down with what they've got to offer. Particular building projects or something like that, we'd love to have their skills on board.

So even if you're not a gardener yourself, I'm sure we can find something for you!

## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

Cathy says everything is going very well at the New Brighton Community Garden.

'It's really positive. It's as if it has become an oasis of peace for visitors, who are often surprised when they first come at how beautiful the gardens are. People are taken away from their troubles.' The group can still do with more volunteers. Cathy's message is 'The garden needs you.'

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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*Email via the website [www.nbgardens.org.nz](http://www.nbgardens.org.nz) or  
[www.communitygardens.org.nz](http://www.communitygardens.org.nz) for information on other gardens.*



# ALEXANDRA GILBERT

*Secretary of the Friends of Linwood Cemetery*



*The Friends of Linwood Cemetery is a small group with a tiny budget, and all the work is done by volunteers. They think of themselves as the self-appointed guardians of the cemetery.*

We started about 12 years ago, or maybe its 15 now, as a gardening group. Because Linwood Cemetery, which is the cemetery behind Bromley Park off Buckley's Rd, had become very overgrown and neglected. A group of people got together to garden and tidy it, and I think some school children were invited to plant, and that is how it started.

It's probably not what we do the most now, though. One person, Judy, has been gardening in the cemetery, and some of the other cemeteries in the area, for probably over 15 years. She just goes around in her spare time and puts in a significant number of hours doing that. We have a minimum of four working bees a year, where the trustees front up and we are usually joined by a few members of the public to help us just clear a small area. But its nearly 20 acres, so a working bee doesn't make a huge amount of impact.

We have seven trustees, and we are the decision making group that meets once a month. We're a charitable trust, so we can't have members as such, but we have people who support us by joining us with a small donation of five dollars a year. We keep it that low so they can give us additional donations if they want to. We also ask anyone connected to or who has ancestors in the cemetery to give us information about those ancestors so that eventually we can publish those on a website for everybody to have access to.

*Linwood Cemetery was established in 1884. Early European settlers are in there, and some of Christchurch's movers and shakers over the years, including 13 Mayors and a couple of Knights.*

Sadly a lot of heritage sites have been disappearing around Christchurch, so we feel that it's a really important connection that people locally need to make. We might have lost the building but the people who actually got the buildings designed, developed, built, and worked in can often be found in our cemetery.

That's a really key part of our history, when Christchurch was actually becoming a really well-established city, with these amazing buildings going from an A-Frame up to brick buildings. It's a really interesting cemetery when you start delving into the people that are there.

*The Friends were very relieved to see how little damage there was at the time of the September earthquake, but the February earthquake hit the eastern suburbs of Christchurch particularly hard.*

Oh it was tragic. We lost a huge amount of headstones. We can't actually say how many because there was never an audit done on what the headstones looked like beforehand, because we have seventeen and a half thousand grave plots so it was never an achievable thing. But we felt we had to go in to look at them after the damage. We went in early March because we were so upset about what had happened. It was good going as a group and we were very philosophical. One of our trustees said it could have been worse, and indeed we are now well over that.





*Following the earthquakes, the Friends of Linwood Cemetery have had enquiries from all over the world from people with family members in the cemetery, particularly in Australia, where people had heard that the whole of the eastern suburbs were going to be demolished.*

So we had to do quite a lot of putting people's minds at rest. What was very interesting was that a lot of people seemed to turn to their ancestors at the time of the earthquakes. There was almost a period of reflection that they required. How did people in the past deal with disaster and their difficult lives, compared to us. We had already a great interest, and still do have, from people doing genealogy and looking into their ancestors, including people wanting to visit their ancestors' graves and locate their ancestors' graves. Suddenly it became a very important social need. *Alexandra is not aware of any academic research into this kind of social response following a disaster.*

*The group did get sent some very good analysis that was produced after Hurricane Katrina, one of the deadliest hurricanes to ever hit the United States, which caused such devastation in 2005. It looked at the way that the damage was assessed, and they did pass it on to the Council.*

We got some interest from the University of Canterbury to have some help with collecting oral histories, which we hope will start in the next academic year. They are hoping to build that kind of aspect into a lot of their history courses, so although it will be a small involvement to start off with, we are hoping it will be a long-term one for us. It will take a huge amount of pressure off us, being a small group, if we can have other people taking on that role.

*All the members of this small group are volunteers.*

We all give varying amounts of time. One of the things I really like about the Trust is nobody is judgemental about anyone's achievements, abilities, or the time they put in. So I feel very free about the involvement that I have, which in terms of hours is a lot, but in terms of gift payback to me, it has really helped me



through the earthquakes to have something different to focus on, and to fulfil my own sort of skills and abilities. It's done me a lot of good and I'm very, very pleased to have had that as a sort of hobby.

*The work of the Friends of Linwood Cemetery has been changed somewhat by the earthquakes.*

We made sure that any pieces that had fallen – and a lot had – off a grave were tucked away at the back of the grave or put back on the grave.

Then we were lucky enough to win some paint and that was to paint plywood that was around the large mausoleum in Linwood Cemetery, which was the Peacock Mausoleum. We have painted a trompe l'oeil on there of what the mausoleum used to look like. It lifted the area of the cemetery so much. It's a good talking point. It's got a graffiti protective coat on it so we are hoping it won't collect anymore graffiti because it's actually a nice piece of artwork on four sides.

This was done after the quake and because we felt very stuck with what we could do while Council, quite rightly, was making policy and trying to work out what to do with all the cemetery damage all over Christchurch. We had a really worthwhile project to tap into and luckily our Chair at the time was an artist who excelled herself, and we have this beautiful piece of artwork.

And it's a lovely memorial to Peacock, who also was one of the big givers to Christchurch. *John Thomas Peacock was a businessman, politician and philanthropist who in 1904 had left £1,000 in his will to the Christchurch Beautifying Society. With it*

*they had built the ornate Peacock Fountain, which is now in the Botanic Gardens.*

*But back to Linwood Cemetery ...*

The cemetery is quite large. But when you come into the car park off Butterfield Avenue there are two routes you can go, one which goes sort of parallel to Bromley Park, and the other one is known as the old tram line. This is another interesting thing. The tram used to go into Linwood Cemetery and we believe that it's the only cemetery in the world that had a tram stop actually in it.

And we do have some people in their 90s who remember as children going to visit a family grave, going in the tram and taking that stop, and getting off and walking to the grave. So if you go up that tar-sealed path, there is another path on your left that leads to the Peacock Mausoleum.

*Some of the Friends of Linwood Cemetery moved away from Christchurch because of the earthquakes.*

Some of the older folk have moved to family that are elsewhere and that's very understandable. There hasn't been too many. After 34 years living opposite the cemetery, our Chair has decided to move out of town because of her family. Her daughter's had a baby, so they've got grandchildren now and they wanted to be closer to them.

But generally people are sort of very proud to be in Christchurch, very proud of the cemetery, and we did have a meeting after the February earthquake where we said look, is it worth us going on, and everyone said we are still needed and we will keep working. So that is what we are doing.

*In a rebuilt Christchurch, the Friends of Linwood Cemetery would love to see a real connection between the city and the cemetery.*

When there is a plaque put up, or information on websites that said this was built by such and such a person, I would love them to say 'And they are buried in Linwood Cemetery'. So people would take the trouble to come out



to the eastern suburbs. Because it's a very large space to walk around and its very beautiful and very interesting. You can't help walking around Linwood Cemetery and seeing names that remind you of roads in Christchurch; and there are interesting sculptures on the headstones; and little bits of people's life stories – such as someone was drowned in such and such river, or died at Gallipoli. There's so many things there to engage you. So I would really like us to be networked in somehow with the rebuild.

And of course if anyone has a family member or ancestor whose remains are in Linwood Cemetery, we'd love to hear from them. And people who would like to help with our work.

## **UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014**

As part of the Christchurch City Council's Make Safe Programme for CCC cemeteries, from September to December last year a Council team went through Linwood Cemetery ensuring headstones broken during the earthquakes were placed back on the correct grave and the right way up. Sadly, current CCC finances mean that any hope of financial assistance for restoration of grave plots from Council has now gone. Some families have restored their ancestors' graves, making a significant improvement to the landscape, helping to restore the dignity of this 20- acre public space.

The Trust made detailed submissions to the Council's Review of Cemetery By-Laws. As a result, the Council has created a new position of Gardener for the four public cemeteries in the suburb, so that shrubberies and other planting can be monitored and maintained more regularly.



The Trust was able to support an intern from the University of Canterbury, who went through the Suffrage Petition and identified those who signed it that are buried in Linwood Cemetery. The first batch of filmed interviews with people with ancestors in the cemetery has been completed.

The impact of the earthquakes on the amount of time trustees can give to the Friends has been unexpectedly high. So they are going to cut back activities in 2014 to the ANZAC Commemoration (the Sunday before ANZAC Day), their twice yearly Newsletter, and helping the public to locate their ancestors in the cemetery. They will also maintain their website as best they can, and continue work on the film and research information that was collected in 2013.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

*Linwood Cemetery is at 31 Butterfield Avenue, Bromley (this is not staffed)  
The Friends of Linwood Cemetery Charitable Trust can be contacted by:  
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# MARY RICHARDSON

*Executive Director of the Methodist Mission*



*The Methodist Mission was formed over a century ago out of compassion for those who were hurting, vulnerable, and enduring poverty or injustice.*

While it was formed by people of faith, it was formed to actually help without judging or conditions. It didn't require people to participate in any activities, whether that was Church or secular. It was just there to help them when they needed help.

Methodists have always had a commitment to social service and social justice in word and deed, and have always been a people who are outward looking. So it's never been about recruiting for the Church, it was just about seeing need and responding to it.

The Mission's operators and management are secular. They provide services to all people. It's a sort of community or social service-based organisation. We still get large support from the Methodist Connection, in the city, in the country, and throughout the world. So during the earthquakes it was really telling the amount of support, donations, and goods that were donated to us from the Connection way off in America. We'd be getting cheques as a response to the earthquake to support the Mission to help where it was needed. No conditions ever have been put on our support from the Methodist Connection. They are unconditional gifts.

*The Methodist Mission has four main streams of work currently – residential aged care hospitals, rest homes and individual living units; social work services and community development work; social housing; and advocacy around social justice and poverty issues.*

We provide support to vulnerable children and families, and that can be based around social work, budgeting, emergency food support, and child counselling. The community development work is where people work through local community settings. So that can be through our early childhood centres or through our family whanau centres. Or where we have a team of workers in other community settings such as schools and local centres, just responding to what that community wants. It could be programmes, whether it's activities, whether it's ukulele bands – you know, whatever is going to support the needs of that community and those people.

The fourth service is our social housing, or low-rental accommodation. We are the largest non-government providers of social housing in the city, and we've been in social housing for 50 or 60 years, and are actually expanding that in response to the housing need in the city at the moment. And then I guess the other area which is not a service but is a core activity, and always is of Methodist organisations, is social justice and speaking out against poverty. Poverty can't be resolved by silence. So the Methodist Mission has always made a commitment to speak out about issues around social justice and poverty.

*As with so many service organisations in the city, the Methodist Mission faced huge challenges after the earthquakes.*

After the September quake, fortunately all our aged care services were fine. We didn't have any major damage to our buildings, but we were trying to run aged care services without water and power in some circumstances. That was difficult, particularly in a four-storey building getting people up and down, but there was not any major damage to our facilities there.

But our social services and our central support services lost their building in the quake, so in September we were locked out of our building because of significant damage. Basically our teams of workers had to set up from mobile



services, working from cars, from different hubs, working out of the rest home library, and also the Council found us some space to work from. So we restored and re-cabled our building, and got up and running and moved in, I think about 10 February. We had been in for just over a week when the earthquake hit, and tragically the building collapsed, as did the church and the hall, and our food bank came down, and our other building was damaged beyond repair.

So those services were once again out of the building, but because we'd had the practice run in September, we were able to re-establish, and people just got back out on the road. We changed all our services and instead of expecting people to come to us, we were going out to them. We leased a whole lot of cars, because our cars were trapped in Durham Street, and just got people out on the road from day one. And that was largely it.

I guess the decision to start back at work straight away was for two reasons. One was because our aged care service didn't have a choice. They were there 24/7 whether there were earthquakes or not. They were working and so it was a duty on the rest of the organisation to also be at work. Plus, the belief we had

was that if the city ever needed us, they needed us now, so we were ready to respond in whatever way was needed. So whether it was food support, clothing, visiting people in their homes to see what type of support they needed, whether they were stressed, guiding people to the right services, whatever was needed, we were there ready to respond.

*Mary is concerned about what is not being talked about for the rebuild of the city.*





One thing that we've found remarkable, that it is really startling, is that when people are offering up solutions for how we can rebuild Christchurch city, inequality is not something that is deemed worthy of repair.

So that's one of the key things that we think we have an opportunity to address in the rebuild. We've had an extraordinary time in the history of our city, and straight after the quake, and still today, people have great expectations about what can be done, and a great sense of hopefulness.

Particularly, a number of people see that we have real opportunities to create a better city than we had before, and that it's not just a matter of repairing the buildings, it's actually about making a city that's more hopeful, really. But I think we're being constrained by what is a very small, unimaginative vision for our city by some of our leading institutions; that what we are in danger of is of becoming two cities – one city of people who have great opportunities; and another city of people who are stuck in permanent poverty.

*History shows that there is a danger that, if these issues are not addressed, disasters can entrench and worsen the inequalities that existed before that disaster.*

We have had all the warnings about that, and all the research, from the word go, and it highlights the need to pay attention to those things, or it will entrench and exacerbate those inequalities.

There has been an astonishing silence about issues of poverty and injustice in the plans for the rebuild. It appears that people have actually given up on the concept of economic justice, but I think it is something that the Methodist Mission is compelled to say something about. That we're compelled to say something about it because of our history of social justice, and social service. And our history of what the Methodist Mission stood for and what the Methodist movement is all about. That it is actually about speaking out, rather than having a city or country that seems to have a growing indifference to poverty. And in some ways has contempt for people who are marginalised and vulnerable. There are even policies and practices that are becoming more punitive. We've seen that in our law and order policies, and then just last week



we saw the reports on the sanctions on beneficiaries – double the number of sanctions we had on beneficiaries than we had five years ago.

And I guess what the Methodist Mission does is we actually remind people that these decisions about benefit sanctions, about school closures, the decisions about prioritising commercial buildings over peoples' homes, they are decisions we've made, they're not actually ones we have to make. They're not like an earthquake that we couldn't control – these are decisions that are within our control and we don't have to make those decisions. We can actually create a city that's better, more just for everybody.

*Mary wants other members of the community to join the Methodist Mission in voicing these concerns on behalf of those without power in society.*

It's really about listening to the people who are without power. It's what you do for those who are the least amongst us. It's not about how we listen to the rich and the powerful, it's about how we listen to the ordinary people and give the ordinary people voice. So I guess speaking out, listening, and vocalising a better community and better city. Not actually accepting the status quo, and not accepting that inequality is the inevitable outcome of any society. It's looking for ways to create a better society. That's what people can do, I guess.

## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

In her interview, Mary expressed her concern that recovery is not neutral: disasters often widen the gap between the rich and the poor unless agencies pay attention to issues of pre-existing inequalities. She noted that while recovery offers opportunities to create a more equitable community, we are in danger of consolidating greater levels of social inequality.

At the annual Political Studies Association (PSA) Conference held at the University of Canterbury in December 2013, Mary spoke passionately about how the rebuild still seems squarely aimed at the hopes and aspirations of the well-off. She believes we need a new story of recovery which marries prosperity with humanity, compassion, and justice. Go to the following article for more on this important issue:

*<http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/business/the-rebuild/9517254/Is-the-rebuild-worsening-poverty-in-Christchurch>*

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# HELEN GATONYI

*Manager of Tenant's Protection Assn. (TPA)*



*In 1981, a group in Christchurch concerned about people living in sub-standard, poor housing in the city, set up an organisation to support the tenants living in those sub-standard situations. It was the beginnings of the Tenants Protection Association (TPA).*

They were interested in the well-being of Christchurch and the well-being of the people in Christchurch. Andrew Alston, who was with the Law School [at the University of Canterbury], and some other like-minded people – in fact some of our leaders in Canterbury – Garry Moore and Vicki Buck, Jenny Smith – people like that were involved with the establishment of TPA, and it was very much to support, advise, advocate, and educate for tenants.

1981 was before the establishment of the Residential Tenancies Act, so TPA was very much in the forefront of developing the legislation that the landlord and tenants now work with. The structure of TPA is that we have a governance body made up of voluntary participants and we are predominantly funded by grants. We don't receive Government money. And I guess that's our strength in some respects. Sometimes it would be fantastic if they would throw us a few thousand dollars now and then, and indeed they have for particular research purposes or a particular piece of work that they would like us to participate in, but generally we receive no Government funding whatsoever.



At times it's been a big struggle. In recent times, we've got an amazing administrator who seems to be able to pull it out of the bag with the funding – so thanks Ali! However I'd really like to acknowledge the generosity of our funders – the City Council, the Canterbury Community Trust, COGS [Community Organisation Grants Scheme] – people like that, and some of our smaller funders – the Casino, the Todd Foundation and others. It's as a result of their generosity that we've been able to continue for so long.

*Despite its name, the TPA is not only concerned with the welfare of tenants.*

It's very much about working with and looking for a win/win for both parties, so indeed we are set up specifically to work for and with tenants, however as part of that we work very closely with a lot of landlords, property managers, and at times, Housing New Zealand and the City Council. It is about getting the best deal possible for the people that we both serve.

*Following the September earthquake, TPA quickly set up a mobile service.*

We recognised that some people were not going to be able to access our services, which were located at the Christchurch Community House, so we decided to go to them. Part of the kaupapa of the organisation is that we recognise that for people to receive information that you go to them; that to participate in the process of dialogue, you go to them, you don't wait for them to come to us. So we set up a mobile van and went out to many communities. In the February quake unfortunately we lost our building – the Christchurch Community House came down – but two days later we set up at my home and we've been operating from there ever since. We also operate out of other sites, particularly from the Community Link Centre where we were already established before the earthquake.

The impact has been enormous of course for the staff, however, because we have the support of each other, a strong Board that supports us, and a strong community that supports us, we have managed to survive to this point. I think we are all starting to get tired, as indeed many of the community are, however in working with the people who are living in the devastation we must stay strong together and continue to try and provide as we have in the past.



*TPA has five members of staff, but is also involved with many other organisations, which Helen says is part of ensuring that its relationships are strong with the wider community.*

At times we've had up to 20 around the table for meetings and dialogue and discussion at community meetings at home. The worst part of working from home is that we can't bring clients home, so we've been seeing them offsite at the Link Centre or otherwise we go to their home. That isn't such a bad thing because we get a birds-eye view of the conditions and circumstances that they are living in and, believe me, you wouldn't put your worst enemy in some of those situations. People have been living for a very long time in some very poor circumstances as we all know.

Some people's homes were poor certainly pre-earthquake. I think the difference is that the people living in it have less choice, even less choice than they had pre-earthquake. If they have to go from these sometimes uninhabitable situations there is very little choice for people, particularly those on low incomes or people that the landlords decide, or the owners decide, that are not their first choice. So we've been seeing for some time a steadily growing number of people who are being locked out of the market altogether.

*Helen says that sometimes it feels as if they are just dealing with crisis after crisis, rather than seeing solutions being developed.*

It is really frustrating. There's much discussion about social housing and the growth of social housing, however that's only part of the solution and what we need to be looking at is creating a strategy moving forward, in particular a rental



housing strategy, and ensuring that we have a warrant of fitness as part of that, and that we really do look closely at what it is that this city of ours is going to need as we move forward. And although the problems existed pre-earthquake, I think it's really important now, as we build and grow and develop this new city of ours, that we recognise absolutely the importance of a strong rental market which gives security and sustainability to the people and creates a place of well-being for them.

The Government has said that they are committing to ensuring that more people live in well-insulated, warm homes that create well-being – I want to see that translated into a warrant of fitness, and I want to see that translated into some security for people. I'm talking about security of tenure, because I believe strongly that that's what makes a strong, connected community. People secure in the knowledge that they can create and build a sustainable future for themselves and their family. We all know that many families move many times in the course of the children's life at school – we must stop that, we must make ways, create opportunities that people don't have to face the possibility of having to move every year. Because that is the reality for renters in this country.

Housing New Zealand has said, in their new restructuring, that this is not home for life. I can see their arguments, however if indeed the Government is signalling through the Housing New Zealand provision that they don't see the importance of security for life, then we must set up another stream that demonstrates the benefits of having home for life.

*TPA is actively engaged in trying to improve the housing situation in Christchurch, talking with many of the local social service providers.*

We have a very strong Christchurch Housing Forum, which we were instrumental in setting up, and that's been going for over 10 years. That brings together all of the people interested in housing and issues to do with housing. We meet every six weeks. TPA are also on several boards, different Trusts, and different organisations both locally and nationally. I'm on the NZ Coalition to End Homelessness. We talk with a lot of people, we then sit down and we

identify what everyone's saying and have a look at, in our own small way, what we can do. Part of that is that we advocate better practice, different ways of provision, and opportunities to educate.

## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

Helen says there is real progress being made on the issues of creating a register, and bringing in a 'warrant of fitness' for rental housing. 'It's almost as if the impact of the earthquakes has given this a real boost. There are some diabolical practices going on in Christchurch at the moment with substandard accommodation and outrageously high rents. A lot of that could have been avoided if a register and house WOFs had been in place. But the positive is that Councils and the Government are now taking this seriously. The City Councils of Christchurch, Auckland, Wellington, Dunedin, and Tauranga are working together on these issues, and we see real progress being made.'

Helen also makes the point that in Christchurch a lot of home owners, who never thought that they would have to be renters, are having to rent because their house has been destroyed or is being repaired. Many have been shocked by the experience. 'It's increased their awareness of what it means to be a renter, and perhaps created more sympathy. Let's hope they don't forget, because some of these people have influence and could help to bring about change.'

## CONTACT INFORMATION

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# MIKE ASMUSSEN

*Manager of Christchurch Community House  
Te Whakaruruhau ki Otautahi*



*The Christchurch Community House – one of New Zealand’s first ‘community houses’, was a central hub for social service organisations. At the time of the earthquakes, it was at 141 Hereford Street, and was the base for 52 community organisations.*

They all saw Community House as their home, 30 of them were full-time tenants, and 22 were what we called room-in-a-box groups which were using the centre as an administration base mainly. They got access to interview rooms and meeting rooms, they could see clients on-site. It was just a smart, intelligent way of working – you were only there for the time that you saw clients, rather than paying for a full-time office. And we had a legal service

which was a really, really popular service run by the Citizen’s Advice Bureau. People could come in and see a lawyer for free.

*Christchurch Community House was set up in 1989, with its first premises at 187 Cashel St. Traditionally, community groups go to where rents are affordable.*

Christchurch Community House just pitched it at a whole new level. By sharing resources and providing facilities solely for community groups, we managed to make huge cost savings which those groups could then put into their work for clients.

A client might need tenancy advice, so they come in and see the Tenants Protection Association. As part of a holistic approach for them, it may be a

financial issue that the reason for the tenancy advice is required, so they go off and see Christchurch Budget Services. Or they might be a solo parent. So they see Birthright, which is set up to make sure that children from single-parent families have the same opportunities as those from two-parent families. So Community House is really, really client focussed. It is about trying to empower them with a number of options.

*Community House came through the 2010 September earthquake okay, but the 2011 February earthquake was a different story.*

In September we fared very, very well, and in fact the building was humming because we had a lot of displaced organisations and we were providing a home for those groups, whether on a temporary basis or a more permanent basis.

But as a result of the February quake, the building sustained significant damage, and was demolished in October. The tenants unfortunately never got anything out of the House; they never got any access to their records. That all went down in the building, which has been huge for the community groups that were there.



For tenants, for the last 18 months we've been running a virtual Community House. The Trust Board's reinstated, and we got the PABX system up and running. That's the phone system which helps keep community groups connected with their clients. It's not an ideal situation for tenants. Some are operating out of their own homes, but we've been able to get phones into their homes and use the internet to connect those calls. What we haven't been able to do is provide those interview rooms and those meeting rooms. Some are operating out of their cars; some

have found alternative premises at huge amounts of money, more than what they were paying at Christchurch Community House. So to get re-established is really, really important.

There's been huge support to re-establish Christchurch Community House, and we've actively been looking for alternative premises. It's been a roller coaster ride but I believe there's light at the end of the tunnel, we're almost there.

*For the first five months, Christchurch Community House operated from Mike's home, which was something of a challenge.*

It's probably not one that I would want to repeat! Working from home – there's people that like it, there's people that don't. I'm unfortunately the latter. I didn't really like working from home – the computer was too accessible, I found it hard to separate family and my work life. It's a real discipline, so I take my hat off to the people that can do it. I'm the sort of person that can't.

Fortunately the Trust Board's now secured an office for Community House admin. That's thanks to the Community Probation Services in Ensor's Road. So we have a small office in there, we've gone from 1800 square metres to about 10 square metres!

We'd love to do more for the tenants but, because it's not our premises and we don't want to be a burden to the Probation Service, we're limited in what we can do. But we've reinstated the phone system; we have reinstated the photocopy service, binding, laminating; mail still comes to Community House and we distribute it out to the tenants. And we've worked on issues of insurance – the House provided a group insurance scheme for its tenants.

Community House got involved in anything that would save organisations money and we did that very, very well by reducing their overheads, so they could put their money into clients. The difficult thing now is how clients can access those services. Obviously organisations can contact clients by phone, and they're meeting clients in coffee shops. Or Westpac Hub's been a good option for some groups. Again, it's not the be-all and end-all solution. Re-establishing the House is really where we've put our energy.



*The centre was a fantastic networking opportunity for the groups and they shared a lot of resources. But in the light of what happened due to the earthquakes, Community House re-evaluated their situation.*

We've had to take stock of where we're at. We've looked at our Trust Deed for instance, and changed our membership status because all our members were tenants of the building. When the building came down in October we didn't have any tenants. So now we've changed our membership so Community House is available for all community groups to belong to.

I can see, once we do get re-established, that we're going to be based in the CBD, within the four avenues, and I can see the centre being a resource for community groups so that they may be full-time tenants; they may use it as a hub; they may see clients in there rather than going to a café.

We really want to promote a comfortable environment for clients. It's a neutral venue, it's not a government facility or anything like that, so they can feel comfortable coming in and seeing field officers or social workers or whatever their needs are. They can come in and see those groups and get face-to-face contact with them in a comfortable, safe environment.

And the people who are involved as a volunteer or a paid worker in a community group, they can come in and use the facilities there, even if they are based somewhere else. If they are a member of Community House they'll get it at a rate that's below our normal community price, so there is an incentive to belong to Christchurch Community House. But our services aren't solely for our members. Some groups may just choose to use some of the services.

I'm hoping that in the coming months that we will have a venue that we'll be able to invite people to come in and share with our other tenants.

## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

Community House is still in temporary premises, at 3/575 Colombo Street, which is currently home to 15 community organisations. But things are looking up. The CCH Trust has signed a lease for 1,200sqm at 293-307 Tuam Street, the old Christchurch Star newspaper site. The plan is to make this a permanent home, and they hope to move in June 2014.

Their lease is for only part of the available space. They've formed a strategic partnership with Community Energy Action, and will share facilities such as lunch room, toilets and server room.

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# CIARÁN FOX & STEVE CARTER

*Mental Health Foundation staff members*



*The promotion of good mental health and well-being in our communities is the aim of the Foundation. It was established in 1977, following New Zealand's first Telethon.*

Steve: It's interesting when we talk about this because when most of our colleagues talk about it, they say 'You'll remember the Telethon?' And of course, as a non- New Zealander, or not originally from New Zealand, I wasn't around in 1976 when the first Telethon actually happened. But that first TV Telethon appeal raised, I think, a million dollars to set up the Mental Health Foundation. So, that's when we started, 35 years ago.

*The Mental Health Foundation is a national organisation with offices in Auckland, Wellington, and Christchurch.*

Ciarán: We're mostly focussed on mental health promotion. One of the key documents that lays out the Foundation's health promotion is the Ottawa Charter. That's one of our key and guiding documents, along with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. We're about information provision; we're about education; we're about promotion of developing projects that build community.



Steve: Research, advocacy, a huge range of things, but ultimately we're about promoting good mental health and the things that support and develop good mental health. And, obviously, recovery from mental illness can be part of that. But really, our primary aim is mental health for everybody. You know, we're trying to have a conversation with the whole of New Zealand.

Ciarán: That's right, and make it clear that there is a difference, you know, that when we talk about mental health, we're not necessarily talking about its opposite, or the idea of mental illness. We do a lot of work around countering the stigma and discrimination faced by people with experience of mental illness. And we provide services and information around suicide prevention.

One of the key things that we do have, which is unique, is a really comprehensive resource and information service. It's based in Auckland, it's like a library – literally, that you can go and visit. But it also has an on-line presence, so you can search all of those resources. We have full-time staff who are information specialists, able to seek out information and research literature on anything under the sun basically, relating to mental health and well-being.

*The Mental Health Foundation has around 35 staff to cover the whole of New Zealand. The way it manages is to work through key alliances and with champions for the cause.*

Steve: Also, part of our mental health promotion contract with the Ministry of Health has a workforce development element to it. That's supporting organisations that are doing the kind of work in their communities that support good mental health. We work to enable them, through provision of research and information and various types of capacity building, so we don't try and do it all ourselves, we work with a whole lot of key partners.

*Funding for the Mental Health Foundation comes from a variety of sources.*

A large part of our funding comes from our core contracts – the mental health promotion Like Minds Like Mine, which is tackling stigma and discrimination, and the suicide prevention programme. But we do also get money from Movember, which is for mental health.



We also get a lot of money through various forms of donations, events like the Great Lakes Relay, and then a whole load of fund-raising activities – people cycling and walking around New Zealand, raising funds and raising awareness around mental health. Donations and wills and that kind of stuff underpin the work as well.

We're constantly seeking the funding, like most people in the sector, and trying to make sure that we diversify our funding base. It's really important that we're able to be responsive to the communities that we work with.

Ciarán: And priorities can change, and the nature of health promotion. You've got to be in it for the long game, seeing change in terms of changing community – the face of the community's health or society's health and well-being is something that's going to take years. And it's hard, because often the government or the community is looking for quick fixes, or quick wins, they're looking for results.

Steve: But fortunately, as a peak body organisation that does a lot of that work, certainly nationally behind the scenes with things like workforce development and research, and working through other key partners who are more localised on the ground, does mean our funding actually allows us to operate in a fairly diverse way. But our core work of mental health promotion doesn't really change in the sense that mental health promotion remains a quite clear discipline. But we change in terms of the ability to be responsive at the time, and what is needed in various communities all over the country.



*The Mental Health Foundation's ability to be responsive to local conditions was critical at the time of the earthquakes. The Southern Office was based in a building called Securities House with a lot of other NGOs, mostly clustered around the mental health sector.*

Ciarán: It was a big happy family in the building there. We took up about three or four floors and we walked out of that building on the 22nd of February with just our coats and nothing else. We never got back in to Securities House, so we didn't get to salvage anything, not a stick of furniture, equipment, or files, or resources. We lost a lot of resources. But we kept working, we carried on in our communities. We had tremendous support from the rest of our team around the country. We were given tremendous support in the early days, to do the work that was needed, like all of us supporting families in our neighbourhoods and communities.

And then we were set up to work from home. We got together as a team, I'm not sure how soon after when we all got together and started working out what we needed to do – Does our role change? What things can we offer?

Steve: It was probably a good three or four weeks really, before we got together because for some of us the power didn't even come back on for two weeks, so even communicating with the outside world was quite difficult. But really, when we were able to do that through mobile communications for instance, really, the message from right up on high in Auckland was 'Look, do what you need to do in your communities'

And ultimately, we made the decision to come back together and sit down in coffee shops and in back gardens and think how can we bring the knowledge that we have to the community in terms of mental health, because that's going to be an issue.

And as it's played out over the last couple of years, that's certainly proved to be the case. I think, in terms of mental health promotion, I guess there's been more traction for our work than we've ever had before, because people are much more alive to some of those kinds of issues around how can they maintain good mental health and be aware of the mental health of their friends and families in the communities around them. People are listening.



Ciarán: And you know, it seemed like there were other groups at other tables that appeared to be doing business as well, everywhere.

You know, we'd been chipping away for ages, trying to talk – bring this message of mental health, you know, what does it take to have good mental health? All of a sudden people were, like, collectively now, after the earthquake, 'So, tell us more about this mental health thing again.'

Because we were all experiencing it, it was something that was a tremendous – I don't know if being a leveller is the right word, it's certainly a terrible pun, but it was a collective experience that everyone shared, and it was an impact on people's mental health. It didn't mean mental illness, it was an impact on our mental health, the stress and anxiety and living through aftershocks, and the uncertainty of the time ahead. And suddenly people had had that experience and were interested and wanted to know how do we actually build ourselves back up again; how do we improve and protect our mental health?

*But as the city started to move into the recovery phase, the Mental Health Foundation started to think about its work at a more systemic level, and at an advocacy level. They thought about what decisions they needed to make about the recovery.*



Steve: About how we engage with communities; the type of buildings, even, that we put up. We have the opportunity to make decisions that support mental health and well-being for the community when everything's been changed. We have an opportunity to learn from the past and move forward into a different sort of a future where we do consider well-being. So that's really the level of the work we are doing now.

Ciarán: That's right, we've been in a position to analyse, as some of these decisions are being made, and as documents are getting published, such as the CERA strategy. We're applying that lens of how is this going to improve the well-being of this community, this beautiful city, and this region? What are the consequences of decisions about zoning, and building, the quality of structures, and the way we approach developing and recovering infra-structure? Some of those things that, perhaps, in our rush to see things getting done as a city, as a society, we might dash on through and make, well, I don't know, errors of judgement? Or, whatever, but the point is that you have an opportunity to actually think about and see what we're doing.

*As a result of some of that questioning, The Mental Health Foundation produced a document called A Flourishing Ōtautahi, subtitled Rebuilding Christchurch for Mental Health and Well-being.*

Steve: It puts out some of the basic information that we know around flourishing and well-being, social inequalities, and then applies that lens to the five domains of the CERA recovery strategy. It's available for download on our website. Hard copies flew out the door, but if people are interested in having conversations with us about how they might change their work, or think differently about some of the outcomes perhaps, with that well-being lens on it, then we'd be happy to make further presentations for people. We're really interested to have those conversations.

## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

As many Christchurch people know only too well, the end of the earthquakes has not meant the end of the stresses they are living with. The immediate trauma has been replaced by continued disruption to their lives, wrangling over EQC and insurance issues, seemingly endless political debate, and the sheer difficulty of getting around the city. These stresses continue to be significant, and a major focus for the Mental Health Foundation has been the 'All Right?' campaign, delivered in partnership with Community and Public Health. The campaign aims to help people realise that they're not alone, and to encourage them to connect with others.

'People still need support', says Steve. 'So we launched the campaign in February 2013 and we are funded until June this year. What we hope is that we will be able to secure funding to carry on after June.'

Steve and his colleagues have noticed some really positive signs, though. 'People seem to be really conscious of valuing their relationships, and their wider community, and they're talking about it. And recognising that small things can be important – like the pleasure of going to the beach, or enjoying beautiful scenery. This appreciation helps to keep people going.'

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# DARRAL CAMPBELL

## *Alzheimers Canterbury*



*Alzheimers is the most common form of dementia, and the one that most people would know about, but Alzheimers Canterbury, a not-for-profit organisation, supports people with all kinds of dementia. There are many – vascular dementia, alcohol-related dementia, lots of neurological conditions that may result in dementia. The group gets about 500 new referrals a year.*

There are around 3000 Cantabrians living with the reality of dementia every day and this number is expected to double in the next 20 years because the population is ageing. We need to position ourselves to be able to deal with that increase.

*Alzheimers Canterbury was set up about 28 years ago, primarily by a group of carers and health professionals because of the needs of carers.*

But we now cover quite a wide range of services, including social work, working directly with people with dementia, and with their carers and their families. We have educators who are out there delivering courses in the community, providing specific education to our clients and their families, and also just raising the profile and awareness about dementia in the community.

We have a Volunteer Co-ordinator. Volunteers are a very significant part of our organisation and work directly with people in their homes as companions, as well as doing all manner of other things to support us in our work.



*Alzheimers Canterbury has a federation model organisationally. There is a national office and there are 22 member organisations throughout the country.*

We all function independently but work towards the same goal, which is to make life better for people affected by dementia. We have an executive committee that provides a governance role within the organisation, and an operational team that's out there doing the doing.

We cover up to and including Kaikoura, and we recently extended our coverage to include Ashburton and the Ashburton region. We also cover across to the West Coast, and we visit the West Coast every month.

*It's a big area and a big workload. Finding the money to pay for the service isn't easy.*

We have a contract with the CDHB which funds approximately half of our service, and we have to fund-raise for the other half. And that's quite a challenge, given the recession, given the impact of the earthquakes in Canterbury, and given that there's still a lot of stigma associated with dementia.

It's not something that most people readily want to know about. And it's the condition that people often say they don't want to get, but we don't have any choice about whether we get it or not. And it affects so many families. There's still a lot of stigma about what it is and what it isn't, a lot of myths. And maybe because it does affect predominantly older people. Maybe it's about the value we place on our older people. But that doesn't mean that it doesn't sometimes affect younger people, and we certainly have a number of people who have younger-onset dementia.



*Despite the earthquakes, Alzheimers Canterbury didn't have to move from their premises. They're based, along with a range of other tenants, in Worcester Street at Aspire Canterbury (formerly the Disabled Person's Centre).*

We are very lucky that we have not had to move. Alzheimers Canterbury has been there for many years and our buildings – though we thought they were quite flimsy and pre-fabricated – have stood up very well in the earthquakes. So we are where we've always been.

*However, although the earthquakes haven't seen them out of their home base, their work has been quite profoundly affected.*

There is nothing that we do now that doesn't involve looking at the impact of the quakes first. For our clients, who maybe are already struggling with any change in routine, and need to have familiar routines and familiar environments, the changes – the massive changes – that happened as a result of the quakes have impacted significantly. And they've impacted on their carers – from people being displaced from their homes, from their familiar environments, from their usual way of driving, walking, from their usual place of shopping.

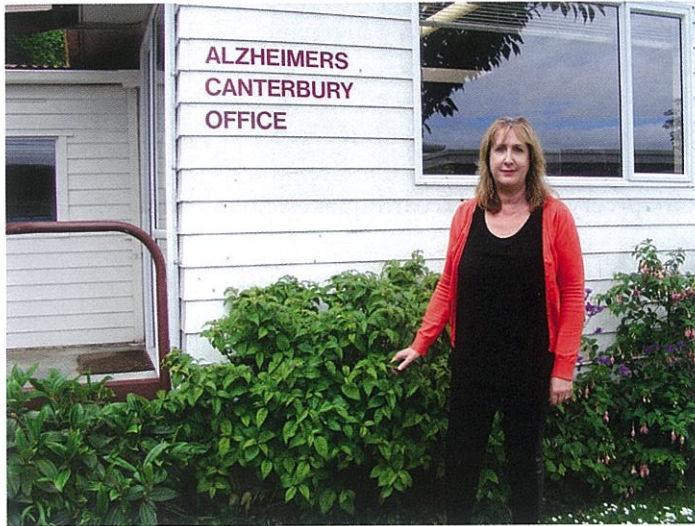
All of those are very significant things for people with dementia. But also for older people generally. I think the older community has been very hard hit by the quakes, and it's difficult for many people to envisage a new city, or being around for the new city.

*There has also been an impact on the staff and their ability to get out and about to visit clients.*

We do still operate a range of groups that are generally held at our premises in Worcester Street. Memory groups for people with dementia, carer support groups, a post-placement group that supports people when their partner or loved one goes into residential care.

But the social workers' role is predominantly to be out in the community visiting people in their homes, and so that means if that home is in the east, or was in the





east, or is moved, then that's where we go. So we've had to be flexible and make sure that we are equipping our staff to be able to go out there and see people in their reality. That's what's significant.

*In a post-recovery Christchurch, Darral would like to see a city that is elder-friendly.*

One that actually enables people ready access, good ability to walk around the city, sheltered areas, perhaps communities within the city to enable people to be part of

their local community. I think dementia-friendly, simple things like simple notices, not too much information, messages that are not open to vastly different interpretation, thinking carefully about what we're doing and who it's for, and making it a place that older people feel comfortable. In the end, if it's friendly for older people, it's friendly for everybody.

Certainly as an organisation we've had good opportunities, working through the Council and other organisations who are involved in services for older people, to have input and to share our ideas, and that's been a constructive process.

*Darral believes the work of Alzheimers Canterbury could help create a more friendly and accessible city.*

I guess, overall, raising awareness about disability and about the need for our society to value older people, and to increase awareness about what happens to people if they are dealing with something like dementia is all part of the message. People need to still be part of the community, not to be cut off socially. Social inclusion is a very significant part of making people feel good about themselves.

We want to de-stigmatise dementia, and dispel some of the myths about what happens to people, and to encourage people to be able to live well for as long as possible in the community when they have dementia.

*Each year Alzheimers Canterbury has an Awareness Week that culminates in the annual street appeal on Alzheimers Day. The money raised is a significant help in keeping their service going. But Darral says there are other ways that people can help.*

We lost half of our team leaders and a significant number of collectors post-earthquake, and in 2011 weren't able to do a street collection. So if anybody is interested in collecting or being involved with us in any way, we'd love to hear from them.

Also, people can help by learning more about dementia – we sometimes have displays in libraries, or people can look on the website. I'd like them to think about the reality, which is that dementia can affect, and does affect, anybody and everybody and that we don't have choice about that. We need to be focussed on making sure that people with dementia and their families and their carers feel that they are valued members of our community.

## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

Darral says that there does seem to be an interest in making a rebuilt Christchurch more inviting for older people. 'There is talk about more inner city, flat walking space, with transport to the walking space, seating, shelter from winds, clearer signage. 'There is a project / piece of research being done by a colleague in the CDHB around Dementia Friendly – as an example, that might be a picture of a toilet, rather than words alone. Some people with dementia may have reduced language skills but recognise familiar symbols. It remains to be seen if these good ideas are actually implemented.'

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# BARRY HELEM

*General Manager of SPCA Canterbury*



*The core purpose of the SPCA is to prevent cruelty and suffering to animals.*

There's two ways in which we prevent cruelty and suffering to animals. Firstly, the preferred way is through education, so if you like, it's the fence at the top of the cliff. So prevention's better than the remedy. And the other thing we do is enforcement, so we are empowered under the Animal Welfare Act 1999 to enforce that legislation, and we have warranted inspectors to do that. So they're the two core strands of the work that we do.

We have a National Office in Auckland, but SPCA is quite unique in that, while we have a National Office that supports all the centres, each centre is independently run. So we have our own Board, we have our own branch constitutions, and we do all our own fund-raising. So we are quite independent.

There is a proposal being talked about at the moment to regionalise the SPCA, to make them a bit more consistent, and structured under the umbrella of National Office, but that's going through a period of consultation at the moment and may take some time to come into place.

But in the interim, SPCA Canterbury is its own stand-alone centre, and we're one of about 48 throughout New Zealand. I'm the General Manager, so I look after the finance, the administration, fund-raising, the education programme,

the animal welfare arm of the business – or the charity I should say, not business – and also the marketing. So I have four managers reporting to me. The Animal Welfare Manager looks after the animal welfare; we have an Animal Care Team Leader who does the day-to-day operations of caring for the animals in our Shelter; and then also we have a team of inspectors and field officers that are out there in the field investigating complaints against people that have perhaps done cruel things to animals.

*Of course it was not only people who were badly affected by the earthquakes. Animals were also vulnerable, and SPCA staff were extremely busy immediately after the February earthquake. Between then and June they needed to find homes for around 800 animals.*

It was quite a major undertaking and we had a lot of support from not only local volunteers and staff, but also the Animal Rescue Unit came down from Wellington in the days and weeks after the quakes, helping get animals that were stranded and stuck in buildings. The two or three months around February to June were very, very demanding.

*The Animal Rescue Unit is a specialist team within the SPCA.*

They're made up of volunteers who are trained and skilled to go in and rescue animals. I think they have training in abseiling, and initially it was established because in Wellington there's a lot of hills and cliff tops where dogs would get stranded, so there was quite a need to have that type of unit in Wellington. And so they are available to jump on a plane and go out throughout the country if there is a crisis or Civil Defence emergency.

*One of the things common to many organisations at the time of the earthquakes was that while staff were helping out in the community as part of their jobs, they were also having to deal with their own personal circumstances.*

Like everyone in Christchurch, we all had staff that were individually impacted by the earthquakes and they had to deal with that, as well as come to work and feed and care for the animals.

In terms of the Shelter itself, we had moderate damage, a lot of it mainly cracking which has since been repaired. So we were able to continue doing what we do without having to relocate anywhere, which was great because we would have really struggled if we had to look at alternative premises as well as do our work for the animals.

*For Barry, the big issue for the SPCA looking to the future is getting the message out about responsible pet ownership.*

For us, it's an issue that was in existence even before the earthquakes. While we would like more dog parks and that type of thing, I guess what was highlighted with the earthquakes was that in the weeks after the big event, there were a lot of displaced animals and it really highlighted the importance of having an animal micro-chipped so that we can reunite them with their owners. It highlighted the importance that we must have animals de-sexed because if they become stray or abandoned, it increases the number of unwanted animals, and that becomes a problem, and ultimately, an environmental problem.

So I think education and ownership responsibility is really, really important going forward for the animals of Christchurch, to reduce the number of unwanted animals through us educating the community more about the importance of de-sexing. But also about micro-chipping cats and dogs so that in the event of a civil emergency we can reunite animals with their owners.

Not knowing what has happened to your pets is extremely upsetting. They are part of the family and there's a lot of documented research now that shows the strength of the animal/human bond and how important animals are in the lives of people and families.

So we've developed our own education programme. Obviously we're targeting schools because we think it is important to educate the next generation around how to have that empathy for animals, and understand how to look after and care for an animal. Also, we're looking at community groups and that's a really important focus for us. So, I guess we're continuing to invest in that whole education programme.





We have been investing in de-sexing campaigns as well, and for people on low incomes we recently had a campaign where we paid for vet expenses to have animals de-sexed, and that's just doing our bit for people who have been impacted by the earthquakes and in the months since. We may do that again in the future but for now we are trying to promote that message and that's what we'll continue to do.

*One of the biggest challenges in getting the message out into the community is funding. Barry believes that not many people realise that, even though the SPCA can administer the Animal Welfare Act, it is not government funded.*

We rely solely on donations from the public or local community. It costs us about one and a half million dollars a year to fund our operation. We have around 28 staff plus 30 odd volunteers at the moment. We've got four vehicles operational. That all costs money to do.

To get a message out there we need people on the ground. We need to pay for advertising and media and promotion – so it's quite a challenge. We're up for it but we're always reliant on the generosity of the community to do that.

*The SPCA is heavily reliant on its volunteers who help at the Shelter or who foster animals. But there are other ways that the community can help.*

Be event volunteers, so if we're going out there doing collections in malls or for our annual Paws Appeal, we're always looking for people to help with that. And in October we're hoping to open the first SPCA op-shop in Christchurch. So, again we'll need volunteers to help staff that as well.

There's a number of different ways and opportunities people can help. We do have a waiting list for volunteers working at the Shelter but people should feel free to put their names forward and perhaps specify what type of volunteering they'd like to do for us because we welcome any support.

We have our own website, we're in social media, we have our Facebook and Twitter for those who are into social media. So there are various ways you can contact us.

## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

The SPCA has now got two op-shops, one in Ferry Rd, and one in Hornby. Details can be found on the website.

They've also developed a 'Humane Empathy Education' programme that they've been taking out to schools, community groups, and to at-risk youth groups. This emphasises building empathy with animals, and also carries the message about responsible pet ownership (including vet treatment, de-sexing, microchipping and providing for an animal's daily needs).

SPCA also joined with vet clinics in a short campaign, putting in over \$100,000 to subsidise de-sexing operations. Barry says there are positive signs – kitten numbers to the centre have decreased between 2012 and 2013.

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# NATHAN DURKIN & SEB FRANCES

## *White Elephant Trust*



*The Trust was set up in 2006. It was a collective of six DJs who were playing different styles of music – a bit of a jumble of DJ styles, you might say – and they saw a connection between white elephant and jumble sale.*

Nat: They started with a thing called White Elephant Radio, which was actually illegal radio broadcast out in the suburbs, which was just a tool that they used to get their music out there. From that, they started running parties and started losing money. So the next progression was to become a not-for-profit...

But it's come a long, long way in the last six years. We've really grabbed hold of the strengths-based development approach to our work. We really enjoy working with young people and trying to get the best out of them. We work with a lot of young leaders in the city, and really try and challenge young people as much as possible to do things that they normally wouldn't have done, and try and grow them through that process.

A big change was actually bringing on Seb as a worker. So previously I used to run the Trust by myself, which meant running all the parties by myself, designing the promo, and funnily enough, no one would turn up to them. And then Seb – you want to talk about what happened when you came on board?



Seb: There's been a few phases, I suppose, with White Elephant. I volunteered for a couple of years before being employed, and at that particular time Nat had just come on board – probably not as the manager, just random employee, White Elephant's first employee, and it was in a real lull, doing not a huge amount. Then Nat started building it up from there. The building was halfway through a renovation that never ended up happening.

Nat: Yeah, so with the involvement of Seb, we saw a massive increase in how big our parties were getting. He's a phenomenal DJ and the young people who learn to DJ really look up to his skills, and so we've had a lot of young people come through our DJ school and learn to DJ. In the last few years, we've run a lot of events, probably over 25, and they've been really, really well attended largely due to Seb's promo skills.

*White Elephant's best crowd was over 600.*

It's only happened once, usually a few hundred less than that. It's quite a personal vendetta for me. I remember a time in Christchurch where 15 events could have a thousand people at them. So that's the goal.

*'Youth' is defined as being between 15 and 25 years old. The Trust runs events and a DJ school.*

Seb: For our events especially, 15 to 18 is about what happens because as soon as people turn 18, they've got better things to do than come to our events.

Nat: The DJ school runs from Monday to Thursday, 3 till 7pm at 283 Barbadoes Street. Any 15 to 25 year-olds who are interested in seeing what DJ-ing is, or having their first go with some really top-level equipment, just feel free to rock down and see us, we're really open and welcome.

And we run the city youth councils, so we run the Ōtautahi Youth Council, which is basically the Christchurch Youth Council. It's about getting young people to engage in the City Council processes, have a say on what things like the bus exchange or the new library are going to look like. Are they going



to be specially designed and built to cater for young people, and so, yeah, that group's all about trying to get voices heard at the top level and not just heard, but acted on.

We run another project called Party Support Crew, which is about training up young people to reduce the harms of drugs and alcohol at youth events. They go through three trainings, being first aid, drug and alcohol harm reduction, and code of ethics – like, some ethics and boundaries around when young people are working with other young people.

So those three party-related events work together. The kids learn to DJ, another group of kids design the event, and then the kids that have learnt to DJ at the event invite all their friends, and then there's a group of young people trying to keep them all safe and healthy.

*The approach of the White Elephant Trust is to get young people actively involved, rather than just turning up to something that has been put on for them.*

Seb: Absolutely, that's very much how we try and run it, we find that people our age – not that we like to consider ourselves old, but it's really easy to get out of touch with 15 to 18 year-olds, and so the best solution is to have 15 to 18 year-olds putting on parties for people the same age.

*On 22 February 2011, Nathan and Seb were just sitting in the office.*

Nat: I had a meeting with a young person at 1 o'clock which was like, eight minutes after the quake actually happened. Normally, typically, I'm the sort of

person who takes things really lightly, doesn't even flinch. Most of the quakes I just sit there and think that nothing was going to happen, but this one was different. I heard a noise and my instincts and body took over and I was under the desk before I knew it. We only had one solid desk in the room so I was quickly yelling at Seb to come under with me, and we were in a one square meter space together for about three minutes while that quake rolled.

We were quite close to Unlimited School, both in relationship and proximity, so one of our first things to do was get out of Community House in Hereford street, run through Cashel Mall which was devastated, and see if the guys at Unlimited were alright and if they needed any help.

On that journey, we came across a badly injured person and we were able to help give CPR. So yeah, we saw some pretty traumatic stuff, and saw all our friends from community organisations in hysterics outside of the building. The guys at Youthline, the roof had fallen on top of them. So yeah, really, really crazy time.

Seb: Yeah, yeah, it was pretty extreme. We were on the second floor of Community House so it definitely felt bigger than usual because it was.

Nat: At Unlimited, their buildings were actually in good condition and it was a bit disturbing for me because while this guy was being resuscitated, I could look up and see 50 of the Unlimited students staring over their balcony which overlooks the Cashel Mall sort of hexa-court area and just thinking about how – what kind of effect young people seeing these kind of tragedies would have and stuff. But yeah, the school were great as far as getting all the kids to Latimer Square, which was obviously the meeting point outside of the city, and getting them home safely and stuff. But yeah, pretty crazy time and sort of hard to remember sometimes, like, looking back on it, it was so traumatic and such a crazy time for our lives that it's a bit of a blur.

*After the earthquake, with the loss of Community House, the White Elephant Trust had no office.*



Nat: The guy we were with, Louis, is great change-maker you know. Really awesome exciting young guy, and he had a relationship with Sam Johnson through the previous clean-up in September. Pretty much that day we were in touch with the student volunteer army. On the Wednesday, we were at Sam Johnson's house working with the student volunteer army to help them with their accounts, almost like, give them a little bit of that leadership and expertise around running an organisation of size, and yeah, both myself and Anthony who helped out with that, received gold Community Engagement awards from the university and got to meet John Key and stuff. There wasn't much down-time, like, we were – from the quake, within twelve hours we were working on this big project to have ten thousand young people go out and support the city and it's clean-up and stuff, which was really exciting.

After that, we sort of, like, tried to work from home for a while. Seb lived across the road from me on Chester Street East and we hired out one of his back bedrooms as our office for a while. It really didn't work eh.

Seb: It was an interesting time. We forgot to mention, in the previous earthquake in September, we had lost our first building which was the semi-renovated



building I mentioned earlier, which was on the corner of Manchester Street and Bedford Row. And so we'd already lost one building. At the time of the earthquakes we had an office space in Community House but our practical space was in Unlimited. So, yeah, second venue lost in a few months – tried working from home, it didn't really happen. You see, we need space for what we do and it presented big logistical problems. Then we had the mobile HQ idea, which was the only thing we could do at the time. Nat put in a lot of hours getting funding to buy some

vans so we could take our show on the road quite literally, which was very labour- intensive. A fixed abode suits what we do a lot better.

Nat: We're currently based at unit 3, 283 Barbadoes Street which, for a while, was the youth hub, and there's still a few youth organisations around there. We've got a three-bedroom house and a garage but it's not the flashiest place, but definitely it's a place for us – for young people to come. They know we're going to be there, we get quite a lot of young people through in a week. For us, having that fixed base where people know you're going to be, has been really, really important for moving forward.

*Post-earthquakes, one of the biggest challenges has been finding venues for their events.*

Seb: It's been the bane of my existence since the earthquakes. I finally found two really good venues. We run two streams of events, one larger, one with four big events a year and then smaller events in between. We're currently using the CPSA student centre, otherwise now known as the Bedford on Madras Street, for our large events, and that's been really, really great. We've had a lot of support from CPIT around that. And our smaller events we run at 442 Tuam Street, otherwise known as Primal Youth, and also really great support there too. Not ideal but suitable venues.

*Young people's responses to the earthquakes have been as variable as any other group. Some have a vision for the future; others are still reeling from how much has been lost.*

Seb: There's a bit of everything, difficult to say you know, it's not something that I think we've pigeon-holed at all, everybody's different. We've seen aspects of it all – some really resilient – actually I think we were surprised immediately after, the young people seemed to just want to get on with everything even more than older people.

Nat: Two years down the track, it's hard to diagnose what's actually happening. But we're seeing a drop-off in our ability to be able to recruit new young people. Whether that's something to do with their capacity or their energy levels in the city to be able to get involved in these community projects, it seems a bit

different but – we’re trying hard enough, yeah, we’re just exploring how we can engage young people and look after them.

One other thing is really, the most important thing around stress and stuff, is being around the staff, trying to make sure the staff are well looked after. They are vital to our organisation and if they fall to bits, we don’t have an organisation. So I’ve put a lot of work in the last two years into staff well-being, trying to keep the staff happy and sane in this difficult climate that we work in at the moment.

*White Elephant has got some clear ideas about what they want for young people in the rebuilt city.*

Nat: We’ve got a pretty specific vision around creating some really awesome dedicated youth space in the re-build. We’re currently working alongside CERA and the Christchurch City Council to try and really fight for young people, that they have some awesome venue space, some skate parks, you know, that the city caters for everybody. Adults generally can have their own say and they’ll lobby the Council themselves and get what they want most of the time. Young people don’t really have the skills and knowledge of how to access these things, so the Youth Council are doing a lot of work in trying to lobby for young people to have specific stuff.

So the venue that we’re looking at, we’re trying to have a thousand-person youth venue that can hold parties, run production classes, have band practice rooms, dance practice space, a really community owned multi-purpose youth facility is what I dream to see in the new city.

*They know they need help to realise this vision.*

Seb: If you’re a property developer or owner, we need to speak with you!



Inner city property is big on our list at the moment. Obviously it's a big thing to do what Nat's talking about, and a huge amount of the work has been done. There's still a few missing puzzle pieces and a suitable plot of land is one of them.

Nat: And we're also just looking for young people, so if you yourself are 15 to 25, or you have children who are in that age bracket and you want to get into some awesome, really fun community activities, if you want to learn to DJ, if you want to help put on community events, or if you want to be a part of the Youth Council, you can find us on Facebook, so the White Elephant Trust on Facebook will give you the links to all our other groups as well.

## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

The White Elephant Trust has just signed a lease on a new youth venue at 442 Tuam Street. Their office is there now and the venue will be up and running in March/April. They say that, after the earlier fall off in numbers of young people coming to them, it's really picked up. 'It's as if they've got more energy again for extracurricular activities,' says Nathan. The Trust has become involved with the Youth Friendly Spaces advisory group set up by CERA, helping to draw up guidelines for the city's development. Nathan says that things are moving pretty slowly, but he hopes something will eventually come out of the advisory group's work.

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# CELIA STEWART

*Musical Director of the Christchurch School of Music*



*The School of Music is a long-established Christchurch institution, and one that contributes greatly to community well-being.*

Our music is traditionally used a lot in those end-of-year celebrations, and many of our concerts, our ensembles and our lessons, our performance opportunities want to have an end-of-year concert.

And we issue scholarships, so we have scholarship concerts related to that. So it's quite a busy time and a lot of our teachers are, of course, working in schools as well, and the music teachers are the busiest teachers at this time of the year because they have to present performances for prize-givings and end-of-year functions. And at the same time, we're getting our processes in place ready for next year's enrolments.

*The CSM has about 850 students, both adults and children.*

In fact, our youngest are two and our oldest are in their late eighties. So we cater for all age groups with a huge range of performance opportunities in ensemble groups. For a lot of people, it's been a huge part of their lives. I'm an excellent example in that I started as a recorder player at the age of seven and worked my way up through all the orchestras and played principal flute with the Christchurch Youth Orchestra for many years. I then became a teaching staff member and supervisor, and now I'm in there as a Musical Director. So it's certainly been a huge part of my life. I'm very passionate about it as an organisation.



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*850 students might sound a lot but Celia says that is down a bit on previous years.*

All related, I guess, to world issues and global recessions and things like that. But our numbers are building. It's kind of like cutting cloth to fit really, we're extending our Outreach programme, so we're doing a lot more work in schools, going into schools and working with the children in their schools, which suits a lot of parents a lot better than coming in after school or on a Saturday morning, which is when we've traditionally done all our teaching.

*The CSM has about 65 staff, who range from people who just do one or two hours per week, up to those who are doing 20 or 30 hours of teaching a week, and conducting.*

So for some people, it's a little part-time extra and they do it because they are passionate about the organisation and they love the opportunity to teach, and for others it's quite a big part of their daily lives. So it's a big range.

We have a Council, responsible for the governance of the School. That consists at the moment of parents and adult students and staff. So it's made up of all those different people and their responsibility is to make sure that everything is going well, and that budgets are being kept to. Then we have a music team, which I lead as the Musical Director. We have supervisors of each of the instruments and have conductors of the ensembles, and so those people take responsibility for the musical decisions that need to be made. And we have an Operations Manager. She's a new appointment and she's responsible for all the financial and human resources aspects of the school.

*In recent years, the CSM was based in a beautiful old building next to the Catholic Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament in Barbadoes Street, but it was destroyed by the earthquakes.*

The building was administered by the Music Centre and we were a major tenant. We've lost that obviously, and that was a very traumatic time because quite a few of our staff were in the building at the time that it collapsed and it was a pretty scary moment for them all, as you can imagine. Particularly the February quake, there was a little bit of damage after September but it continued to be habitable. But in February it basically fell apart around their ears, which was very frightening. And so it's been a difficult process. Our office staff and our Operations Manager and [then] Musical Director and many of the staff were teaching in there at the time on the third floor. So there was a lot of trauma for people, and people have lost things that were fairly precious to them that they had in their rooms and things.

So it's been a really difficult time for CSM staff. But we're working hard to build – rebuild and to get a bit of confidence back. I have to say that I wasn't Musical Director then, and the operational staff at that point did a fantastic job finding places for us to start. Within a few weeks, we had some rooms at the Cashmere Club and we started a few of the ensembles. Then we managed to get some rooms at Christchurch Boys High School, so we did a little bit of teaching there, and then Rangi Ruru came on board and helped us out. So we're very grateful to the people who stepped in and gave us rooms to teach in.

So we did get up and running within a few weeks in various venues and continued right through to the end of the year. We had no office obviously, so eventually we managed to get some office premises in a little warehouse. Unfortunately, we couldn't stay there, so we moved again and now we're based in a little office block, an industrial unit in Waltham Road, just over the overhead bridge from the cathedral.

Obviously it doesn't have the character that our lovely Music Centre had, and we were very central there so you really felt a part of the musical life of the city because people were coming and going. But now people have to make a real



effort to find us beside Mountain Safety and the trampolines and things like that that we've got around us! So it's not quite the same, but like everybody, we're all adapting to the circumstances, as we have to.

*It might seem paradoxical, but Celia believes that music, and the arts generally, took on a new importance after the earthquakes.*

I think that the whole Christchurch arts scene has had a little bit of a boost because people have realised how much they missed it, how much they need it. There's been a huge healing aspect so it was really important to us that we got our children back, that they were playing their instruments again, and meeting up with their friends and being able to forget about it for a while. I think that music had huge powers. I also work in primary schools and I do a lot of professional development – there was actually more demand on my work and on our work at CSM than there had been because people really wanted to get back to normal, and music is such a good healer.

We found that people were very keen to get back to playing and just being able to forget about things for a while and do something that they loved doing – with

their friends. Just making music is a very powerful healer for children, for everybody, for our adults as well. So, more than anything, we've shown that the arts have a huge role to play in the psyche of a community. That's been really proved by wonderful audiences at the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, and wonderful audiences for our concerts, and the Court Theatre. All of those organisations are finding that there is a real demand and people are just hungry for the kind of aesthetic experience that the arts can offer.





*Participation is a big thing for people, and the CSM believes one of its strengths is the ensembles it offers at every level.*

We have adult wind groups, and we have concert bands, and we have jazz bands, and rock and pop bands, and choirs, and wonderful, wonderful orchestras, and orchestras for adults and advanced players, and our junior symphony orchestra – we have some people in their 60s playing alongside children of six and seven, which is always just delightful. So there's no limit to what they can get involved in at any stage. It's wonderful. I love going into the junior orchestra on Saturday morning and seeing the adults sitting at the back of the violins playing away, having the time of their lives. It's lovely.

*The CSM started off as the CSIM – the Christchurch School of Instrumental Music – and along the way it has adapted to meet changing needs. Initially it was all orchestral.*

Then they added in concert bands, and then they added in choral, and now have included jazz and rock alongside of that. So it's about adapting to meet the needs of the changing demographic and the changing needs of the musical community.

*Of course the earthquakes have brought the need for other adaptations.*

We are very grateful to Catholic Cathedral College and Marian College. Of course, they've been through a lot themselves. They're now based on the same site on the corner of Moorhouse Avenue and Ferry Road, and we use their classrooms. We go in after school and on a Saturday morning. We need 45 teaching spaces on a Saturday morning so accommodation is a huge issue for us and it will continue to be, so we're very grateful to those schools who have taken us on – it's not easy for a school to make the commitment to having big groups trooping through your rooms every day. And we're certainly not having trouble finding teachers.

I wouldn't say that anything has changed in particular, we've got just a stronger focus on community, that's one of the things that I really want to reinforce, and so there's a sense of everybody coming along to a big family...if that's not too corny!

I send out a regular newsletter, and we've had a community day, and we had a big KidsFest event where we got lots of our teachers and staff involved and so I think it's what has made us much stronger. We have a wonderful dedicated staff. They don't get paid a huge amount of money, but they're all there for the joy of teaching. Probably just building that community spirit and just making CSM more of a family-friendly organisation is one of the things that's been a big goal for me and is still on-going.

*Celia says there has been quite a turn-over in administration and management at CSM.*

We're basically all new. So we're looking at how we do things and how to process things. There's been a lot of work put into how we present ourselves to the community, and we're working to get out much more into the community, to be at more school fairs, and to be at Christmas in the Park and all of those things, have a presence.

In terms of marketing ourselves, we still feel a bit stunned when we hear that there are people who have never heard of the Christchurch School of Music. You know, it's been here for 57 years, it's quite an institution in the city, and it's actually unique in New Zealand. There are many other pockets of music centres, but nothing like this central city one that's so big. So we really want to spend a lot more time getting out into the community next year and making ourselves more visible around the town.

*In a rebuilt Christchurch, Celia would like to see arts organisations working closer together.*

You know, we've done some lovely things with the Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, and we're developing a really strong relationship with them. And with the university. I'm meeting again on Thursday with the Head of Music out there and we're looking at ways that we can work together, which hasn't really happened before. You know, everybody's been a bit siloed, but we've just realised that there's such potential in these organisations working together. And we are a not-for-profit charitable trust and so we rely a lot on support from other organisations.

There's been a Voice of Music. I don't know whether you know much about that, but that's kind of been put together by the Christchurch Civic Music Council, and they've been working hard to integrate, to get groups talking together, and the Music Centre have been very important in that process as well. The staff that were running the Music Centre are also looking to rebuild.

So, we're very excited by the CCDU plan. It won't necessarily help CSM in that we know that the costs will have to be market rates, and I absolutely understand that, but certainly, it will be lovely to have venues – finding venues of the right size has been really tricky. So I think CSM has a role to play – it's where it all begins, you know, there wouldn't be orchestras, professional orchestras, if it wasn't for organisations like the CSM. And a lot of our students might go on to jazz school, or they might go on to do contemporary music courses, so we're very much at that foundation level. Although our Christchurch Youth Orchestra is pretty stunning – they're our flagship orchestra for Christchurch.

We just want to be part of all that, and to develop close relationships with other people. I think the earthquake has given us a greater opportunity to do that. It was so easy just to kind of carry on in your own little silo before, but we can't do that anymore. We're all sharing pianos, and we're sharing personnel, and we're sharing music – because everybody is trying to get started again and start rebuilding.

*Celia adds that there is definitely a role for people to support CSM.*

Look, we're completely reliant on our volunteers, and we have lots of jobs – running a tuck-shop, putting away music, just kind of keeping an eye on the orchestras. We have markers who tick the rolls every time, and help us to manage concerts, and take money at the door. We're really very keen to build up a big volunteer group.

But more than anything, we'd love people to come along and learn to play. It's never too late to learn. You know, we've got adults well into their 60s and 70s who have just started off an instrument. We've got the wonderful Mark Walton,





who has done a lot of work with our adults, and we have some great adult ensembles who have a huge amount of fun, and make fantastic music.

Our prices are reasonable, you know, and that's what we want to be offering – reasonable access to music education possibilities. We would love to talk to anybody who would like to see where they could begin. And financially we're always looking for grants and for support to buy instruments and to keep our music library up-to-date. So, there's lots of possibilities for support if people would really like to help us. Ultimately, we'd like a new home but that's a little bit further down the track.

## UPDATE FEBRUARY 2014

CSM is busy taking new enrolments for 2014 and is well on track for a roll of 600–650 students. Their big growth area is among late starter musicians, and this year they are targeting the very young in order to build a strong foundation.

The other focus for the year has to be fund-raising. As it was for many not-for-profit organisations, 2013 was difficult. CSM has a range of projects it will be hoping to get funding for, and they are looking for major sponsors for some of their ensembles. They still desperately want and need a home of their own, and are talking with other groups to see what might be possible.

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# ROS RICE

*Executive Officer of the New Zealand Council  
of Social Services*



*The New Zealand Council of Social Services (now known as Community Networks Aotearoa) is based in Wellington, and is the national body to which networks, such as the Council of Social Services in Christchurch, are affiliated. NZCOSS / CNA has around 52 members and they represent quite a variety of interests.*

*Ros explains to Sharon from Christchurch COSS:*

They're not just COSSs, sometimes we've got Rural Educational Activities Programmes (REAP), sometimes community houses; and we have organisations like the national organisation for Access Radio, any broad-based networking organisation can become a member of NZCOSS.

I think it's really important for people to understand that we're actually an organisation that is based on grassroots membership of networking organisations. So we look mainly to membership from the provinces, networking organisations that are out there in New Zealand, working away in their own areas. We're able to take the voice of that community and let it be heard in Wellington.

But another thing – especially at the moment – there's so much legislative change affecting our small community groups, that we can bring information back from the Wellington political scene and share it with our members. So we sort of keep people up-to-date, and help to prepare them for the things that are coming on down the line.



We also are really there to support people, so we hope that, if you're having problems in your organisation, or you want to know something, or if you need any kind of support – advice or information – that you can, if you're a member, you can come to us and we can swing into action and help you out.

*In February, at the time of the earthquake, the Christchurch COSS turned to Wellington for support, so it could provide help to all its many members. Ros was in Auckland at the time.*

I was at an Association conference up in Auckland and we were all sitting around hearing – I can't even remember who our speaker was – and the person who organised the conference came in and said 'Um, excuse me everybody, I need to tell you there's another earthquake just happened in Christchurch.'

The conference basically came to a grinding halt. People were leaping up out of their chairs, rushing to their cell phones to ring their loved ones, or to pass a message on, or find out if people were okay. There was a large group of people went straight off down to a television set and sat around the television set, and I pretty much did the same thing. I think they might have had another speaker that afternoon but I suspect there were very few people there.

When I returned to Wellington to my co-worker here, she let me know that she'd received a call from you (*Sharon at Christchurch COSS*) because you couldn't get through on the cell phone network and you didn't know where your family were.

Sharon: Exactly, and that was just the most wonderful thing that Jill was able to do, to help connect me up with my family and make sure we were all okay.

Ros: So, from Wellington we could actually access those phone lines and get through to people, which was interesting because you couldn't within Christchurch, or that was my understanding.

So, a lot of the national organisations that were in Wellington got together and started saying 'Well, what can we do?'

But while we were all wondering what was the best way that we could actually help, I was contacted, along with Trevor from the Council of Christian Social Services, by the Ministry of Social Development who were swinging into gear very quickly. They asked if we would come down to Christchurch with them to find out what was going on, where they needed most help. There were other people at the meeting and we were called in to join the Ministry of Social Development in Christchurch. So I was on a plane fairly quickly.

The Ministry of Social Development recognised that what was needed was a broad approach across the whole community sector. A lot of agencies that were not normally funded by MSD were called in.

Everybody was completely in shock, including us. We weren't there during the earthquake, but to come in so soon afterwards gave us, even though a small taste, of how it must have been during the actual earthquake. But to see the aftermath so soon afterwards shocked us too.

It was really a stock-take meeting that wanted to know what was needed. And I think one of the really great things that came out of that meeting was a website set up by the Council of Christian Social Services, who we work with here in Wellington a lot. They set up a website where everybody could put their current way of being contacted. Because, of course, so many people were unable to go back to their workplaces, and had to set up in their garage or at home or along with another group in a hall or somewhere. How did people find out where they were? Through that website, which came out directly from that meeting as a requirement, people were put back in touch with each other, which was really vital.

But also, I think we got a real feel for a lot of the things that people needed immediately and, you know, we went away with ideas of stuff that we could possibly do as a national organisation that lived in a different city.

NZCOSS itself came up with a project in response to the earthquake and the needs of the sector in Christchurch.

One of the things that I recognised – it didn't happen immediately, it took a wee while to sort it out but it did happen – is that many organisations had lost all their furniture. So they might have had a space where they could set up but they'd lost their desks, their chairs, their tables, their bookcases. So I contacted the Department of Labour and said to them 'Have you got any spare furniture that you could possibly send to Christchurch?' And they went 'Oh my gosh, yes we do. We have two or three container loads of furniture that we usually would auction off and sell off as second-hand.' And so, after a bit of negotiation I actually managed to get them to send all that spare furniture down to Christchurch so that people could come and use it. And they paid for the whole thing in the end. We were thinking well, we might actually have to pay for the transport, but they paid for that and they gave the furniture freely as well. And that was a fantastic thing that we could do for people.

It wasn't that easy to find a space for it when it got to Christchurch because there was a distinct shortage of storage space!

We sent it all down to you (*Sharon at Christchurch COSS*) which caused you a horrible headache ... I'm so sorry! But at least that furniture got down there. There's another thing that NZCOSS did which is to do with one of our members, the national Access Radio organisation. Access Radio in Christchurch – Plains FM – was actually inside the red zone and they couldn't get into the red zone. But their building was absolutely fine, they just couldn't get in – they couldn't persuade anyone to let them in. And, of course, Access Radio has access to huge numbers of different ethnic groups who make programmes and there are a lot of refugees and people from other ethnic backgrounds who would not necessarily get the information they needed through commercial radio spoken in English. So the big point was that we can get our groups into the station and they can give out messages to people in their own languages.

It was extremely difficult. In the end I interceded with the Minister and said this needs to happen, and the Minister sent a message down the line and in the end, I don't know if it was directly through me, they never came back and said 'Well, it's because you hassled us.' But in the end, Plains FM did get back into their building. A bit later than they really wanted, but we did get them in there.



In such critical circumstances, every voice counts. Especially when perhaps the decision makers aren't as aware as they could be of the needs of all the members of their communities.

Well, it amazed me that not all saw the need for different languages to bring out the messages to people from other cultures. It amazed me that that was not seen as a priority.

Since the earthquakes, there's been a review of the response for communities that are culturally and linguistically diverse, and the need for information sharing in different languages was one of the things that was covered in the report.

There's a lot of lessons to be learned and I think that's a major one.

Sharon: Well, I think it's been a big learning experience for all of us. I think one thing that our experience has taught us, too, is the proven value of being part of a national body such as NZCOSS. So when things are difficult and you're struggling locally, we have that back-up of people such as yourself. I'd like to thank you for all your work Ros during that time.

Ros: Before I go, can I just say I think this is the most important learning experience that we can have New Zealand-wide from the quake in Christchurch and that is nurture your community.

I actually think don't just nurture your communities that provide government services, nurture all those small community groups that make up the structure of your local area. The thing we learnt from Christchurch is the way everybody pulled together, that small community groups pulling together and looking after each other can make the biggest difference.

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# PLAINS FM

Plains FM 96.9 is the community “access” radio station for Canterbury.

Unlike commercial stations who cater for a certain demographic of listener, the station caters to all sectors of the local community in a range of languages. It provides the facilities and support for individuals, groups and organisations to learn media skills and make their own radio programmes and podcasts.

Therefore Plains FM offers a diversity of programming every day with an emphasis on local issues, ideas, information, events and people reflecting the region in which it is based. Plains FM also broadcasts news and current affairs from communities throughout the world via the BBC World Service overnight, and an adult alternative music playlist.

The station is owned and governed by the Canterbury Communications Trust and has operated as a not-for-profit media entity since 29th February 1988. Major funding support comes from NZ On Air.

Web: [www.plainsfm.org.nz](http://www.plainsfm.org.nz)

Facebook: Plains FM







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*Note: This book is transcribed from interviews that took place in 2012 and early 2013. While the organisations provided an update in February 2014 there have nevertheless been staff changes and location changes for some of the organisations since then.*

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*The Christchurch City Council works with a large number of Not for Profit organisations. These organisations provide a diverse range of services to the people of Christchurch. The Council acknowledges the role that the not-for-profit sector plays in the development of strong, equitable and socially inclusive democratic communities. Not for Profits also contribute significantly to creating social capital, that is, to creating the skills, programmes and services that hold communities together and enable them to identify their issues and work together to solve them.*



