

# The Mission *Message*

## Are We Looking After Our Children?

It is often said that it takes a village to raise a child; our society is a collection of villages. The Methodist Mission believes all children should share similar opportunities and advantages in life.

We see that some positive steps have been taken over the last decade:

- Child poverty rates appear to have levelled out
- Infant mortality rates have decreased, particularly for Maori
- Communities have taken a strong stand on the issue of family violence
- Officials at the frontline of care and protection are responding more quickly

Yet concerns remain:

- At least 1 in 5 children live in poverty
- Half of all benefit-dependent families live below the poverty line
- Too many of our children are murdered, suffer neglect or abuse, or witness family violence

The Mission sees that the levels of poverty and disadvantage in our society have long term consequences for all of us, and remain at unacceptable levels.

In this election year we invite all of you to think hard about political policy statements:

- Do parties have explicit policies about lifting children and families out of poverty?
- Do parties have clear policies of provision of social services to help children and families in need?
- And finally, how can we as professionals, citizens, and as members of families, contribute to the development of policies that can address these problems?

The challenge of how to address these problems is a challenge for us all.

Laura Black  
General Manager

## Recent Mission News

### **MISSION SAYS "NO THANKS" TO POKIE \$**

At a recent meeting of its Board, The Methodist Mission decided to stop accepting money from gambling trusts and casinos, because of concerns about the damage that gaming machines are doing in society.

We are dedicated to supporting and challenging people into better futures and a lot of the gaming machine profits distributed to social services such as our own comes straight from the pockets of problem gamblers.



We understand that something like half of New Zealand's 23,500 gaming machines can be found in the poorest third of our neighbourhoods. In 2007 alone, there was a 10% rise in the number of calls to the Gambling Helpline, and its total client base was reported to have grown by 13%.

When the Board of The Methodist Mission came to discuss the issue, the decision was clear. Although there will be a financial impact for us, we would rather face that challenge, than undermine the integrity of our work.

### **OUR CENTRE OF INNOVATION RESEARCH**

Recent research at the Methodist Mission's Early Learning Centre shows that for families, what counts as support is best determined by the person receiving it; and is often the little things that matter most.

The Mission has a Whanau Support Worker attached to its Nursery and Preschool, and for the last three years has been part of a Ministry of Education-sponsored research programme as a Centre of Innovation.



The research looked at what counts as support for families from a childcare centre that actively works with parents and children. The research focussed particularly on how best to make use of our Whanau Support Worker - we are unusual in having this support available, and we want to make best use of it.

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The research shows that parents have chosen to see our Whanau Support Worker as everything from a friendly ear to a full-on Social Worker. We now understand that support is not just for times of crisis, but more often for healthy families who just need a hand every now and then.

The research shows that ALL families regularly need support and reassurance in their choices, their parenting confidence and in being part of a community at the Early Learning Centre that is outside of their immediate family setting. The little things that matter are all about engaging with parents not only about their child, but with them as people and members of a family.

One of the changes at the Early Learning Centre, as a result of the research, has been that staff now actively look for opportunities to provide support. We don't wait for something to become a problem – we're there well before that. Family support isn't a job for just one person, the Whanau Support Worker, but a job for us all.

## **PETER KENYON WORKSHOP**

We were proud to help organise the recent Peter Kenyon Workshop for community workers: *Creating Healthy, Inclusive, Safe and Sustainable Communities*.

The workshop was supported by the Community Trust of Otago, The Dunedin City Council, and Strengthening Families. Feedback from the nearly 50 who attended showed strong interest in Asset Based Community Development (ABCD) and Strengths-Based Models. We're looking forward to seeing the work done by the 5 interest groups that were generated!



For more information on Peter's work, ABCD and Strengths-Based practice check out [www.bankofideas.com.au](http://www.bankofideas.com.au).

## **TRIPLE-P ASSESSMENT WORKSHOP**

The Mission was pleased to deliver a Positive Parenting Programme workshop with Steven Hayns, Registered Psychologist in early May. The workshop enabled staff from within the Mission and in other agencies to become fully accredited to Level 3 in this assessment methodology – useful for those working in family consultation and intervention.

## **PATHWAYS TO PARTNERSHIP**

The government has announced new funding for the community section, which is to be welcomed. At this time, we are unable to say how the funding changes will affect the Mission: we don't currently receive a lot of our funds through the Ministry of Social Development, the timelines for implementation and some core definitions appear to be still in draft form, and how this will affect applications for new projects remains unknown.

## **NEW MISSION WEBSITE LAUNCHED**

As the final stage of our re-branding, we are proud to have launched a new website for the Mission at [www.dmm.org.nz](http://www.dmm.org.nz). Full information on all our activities, reports, and background on the Mission is now available at the click of a button!

## **PUAKA / MATARIKI**

In celebration of Matariki the children and staff of our Early Learning Centre (ELC), along with horticulture students from Approach Community Learning, planted native trees at the ELC for future generations to enjoy.

The children showed a great interest in the new plantings, after being shy at first. However, after a short time children were involved with every planting. We are all looking forward to seeing what grows from this year's celebrations!



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## Something to Think On



In its 22 March issue, the New Scientist reported on research into leading a happy life undertaken at the University of Louisville, Kentucky, USA. As much of the work we do as a social service agency concerns unhappiness – the experience of poor life outcomes – we thought this would be interesting reading!

Since the time of the ancient Greeks, there have been two main schools of thought about the best path to happiness: either one finds it in the pursuit of pleasure, or in the use of personal “virtue” for the benefit of others. Religion, philosophy and the self-help movement have evolved these ideas, but the core remains.

Much of modern society is based upon the former, with our emphasis on consumer goods, unending youth, and increasing promotion of the individual over society.

However, Louisville’s research shows that the more “virtuous” activities people engaged in, the happier they were. Surprisingly, there was NO relationship between pleasure-seeking and happiness.

The authors suggest that understanding this, could significantly change the way we approach the problems in our lives.

The article concludes:

*As individuals and within organisations and institutions, we should have conversations about meaning and purpose. We should invite a vocabulary that addresses people’s dreams, the obstacles they have to overcome, and the places they have yet to get to.*

## The Strategic Future

At the end of 2007 the Mission completed its 2008-13 strategic planning process. We have committed to four strategic drivers:

***DISTINCTIVENESS:*** complementing not competing, specialist provision, and independent purpose.

***CLIENT ALIGNMENT:*** working with people, from the place that they are to the place they want to go next.

***COMMUNITY ALIGNMENT:*** anticipating changing needs and leading community responses.

***BALANCE:*** sustaining the ability of the Mission to do its work over time.

Having looked at what it would mean for us to be truly meeting the challenge of each of these drivers, we have identified that some 70+ (yes, seventy plus) changes to how we work are needed. The next 5 years will be busy – and will start with a look before the end of this year at how we are investing in our skills and structures.

If you would like more information, please contact the General Manager on [laurab@dmm.org.nz](mailto:laurab@dmm.org.nz).

## A Bit of the Mission

Introducing ***WISE UP WALK TALL TAMARIKI*** our life skills programme for 5-13 year olds.

Wise Up Walk Tall runs for 8 weeks for 1 ½ hours per week in small groups either in school or after school. It’s a time to have fun and learn important skills to stay safe. Learning includes:

*Team work - Fun & Fitness - Self Confidence  
Social Skills - Feelings - Self Esteem - Self Discipline  
Self Defence & Courage*



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Wise Up Walk Tall offers small groups, role modelling, role plays, and fun for all. The programme was developed from research at Canterbury University into child behaviour and needs, and is run across the South Island.

The in-school programmes are subsidised, and the after school programmes cost \$45 per child.

Referrals are accepted from parents, caregivers and adult family members, schools, Resource Teaching and Learning Behaviour specialists and social service agencies.

Contact us on [cfs@dmm.org.nz](mailto:cfs@dmm.org.nz) for more information or check out our website [www.dmm.org.nz](http://www.dmm.org.nz).

## Support & Learning - Right Now

### APPROACH COMMUNITY LEARNING

*Restart Your Learning!*

Adult Learning • Youth Training • Family Learning • Smart Food • Edible Gardens • Prisoner Education

Contact us TODAY at 177 Mornington Road, Dunedin  
Phone 487 7959 or email [acl@dmm.org.nz](mailto:acl@dmm.org.nz)

### CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES

*Support for Families & Children*

Early Learning Centre • 20 Free hours for 3 & 4 year olds • Family Whanau Support • Wise Up Walk Tall • OSCAR & Holiday Programme

Contact us TODAY at 11a Wesley Street, Dunedin  
Phone 455 1445 or email [cfs@dmm.org.nz](mailto:cfs@dmm.org.nz)

### COMMUNITY & SOCIAL SERVICES

*Advocacy & Support*

Home Support • Community Support • SPAN Caversham Social Group

Contact us TODAY on 466 4600 or email [css@dmm.org.nz](mailto:css@dmm.org.nz)

## HOW TO HELP

### Donations

The Methodist Mission relies upon the generosity of donors to help us maintain and develop our services.

If you would like to know how a donation could make a difference please contact Laura Black, the General Manager, on 466 4600, write to her at P O Box 2391, South Dunedin 9044 or email [laurab@dmm.org.nz](mailto:laurab@dmm.org.nz).

### Work for Us

We are an equal opportunity employer and welcome applications from suitably qualified people in all walks of life. The Methodist Mission has a number of job vacancies at most times, which are normally advertised in the ODT. To find out what vacancies we have, please call us on 466 4600 or email [admin@dmm.org.nz](mailto:admin@dmm.org.nz).

## Remember

The Methodist Mission has been serving the Dunedin community since 1890. We are a social service agency of Te Hahi Weteriana O Aotearoa, the Methodist Church of New Zealand. The vision of the Methodist Mission is of a fair, safe, caring and sustainable society where every citizen is valued and respected and enjoys equal opportunity to lead a fulfilled life. We promote social justice through partnerships that strengthen families and build fair and safe communities. In partnership with the network of Methodist social services agencies throughout Aotearoa, ours is a commitment to Creating Cycles of Hope®.

We use the airborne seed of the native New Zealand Clematis Paniculata, also called Puawhananga ("flower of the skies") as our emblem; the Maori harbinger of spring, a traveller to far-off places, a climber that grows in harmony with host trees of the forest: a gentle, free, adventurous plant that represents our commitment to enough support and challenge for you to risk a better future.

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