

A guiding light in the community to be honoured for her time given to helping others

Nola Edmonds passed away in October of 2016. In October, Toughlove Waikato and Toughlove New Zealand lost a person in their organisation who was pivotal to its beginnings in the Waikato. For over 30 years, she has worked in Waikato, New Zealand and travelled to America working with parents who want to make positive changes in their lives. While her family quietly mourned her loss, the Toughlove world was hard hit.

Toughlove survives because of their philosophy, *'When you are in crisis, you need Toughlove. When you are not in crisis, Toughlove needs you.'* Nola Edmonds, at the tender age of 81, had only recently given up her active role in the organisation. However, true to her style, she was still keeping council at her bedside. A grand lady of style, Nola was one of a select group of people known as 'He Kaunihera of nga Tangata Matatau' (the Council of Wise People).

In her role she was adviser, moderator, listener and guide. She was neutral. She was also the voice of the people, and along with other Wise Council members, she kept the organisation true and honest.

At the Toughlove Waikato Trust AGM in June, Nola will be honoured for the time she has given to the organisation. Tracy Roose, Chairperson of Toughlove NZ says that one of Nola's strengths was to reproduce herself, to help other parents to become stronger so that they in turn could help other parents to make changes.

"I had the honour, many years ago, of being mentored by 'Aunty Nola'. My story, like so many others, was not pleasant - though had I gone to Toughlove much earlier in the piece mine might have been an easier journey. My oldest son's behaviour was so out of control that I had become physically in danger. Our other children were frightened, and our marriage was crumbling. Somehow, one night, we ended up at Toughlove - neither of us remembers who recommended it or where we heard of it from. The atmosphere was so jovial and friendly that we went back outside to check the sign - we thought we had the wrong place. "

"There were many other new people that night - we weren't the only ones. Our first night at the Parent Support Group (PSG) is a bit of a blur, however I do remember people smiling and laughing, some tears - tissues being passed around, and most of all HOPE - for the first time. There began my journey, and with Aunty Nola's help, and that of many others, I have carried the torch onwards. In October, losing Aunty was like the end of an era - the first of the Waikato 'Dinosaurs' as they are affectionately called - to leave us" says Tracy.

Toughlove has reached a pivotal point in its journey. Expenses are not large, no staff are employed, and instead they rely totally on the good faith and assistance of volunteers, as well as local grants and donations. They provide free workshops to parents, schools, community groups, workplaces and other interested parties, who are looking to get some quick tips and check they are on the right track. Toughlove Waikato are looking for a corporate sponsor who would help to contribute towards costs so that they are able to do more presentations.

"Nola was a guiding light in our community for a programme that is proven to work - she believed, as I do, that nothing is a given in this world, that you have to work for what you get and that you need to make the first change in yourself" says Tracy.

Toughlove workshops are booked through waikatops@gmail.com, however all are welcome to attend the Parent Support Group Meetings on Tuesday evenings from 7.30 - 9.30pm at Waimarie

House on Wellington St. To find out more visit www.toughlove.org.nz. All are welcome to attend the AGM - please email waikatopsg@gmail.com for details.