

## Methodist Mission provides support for people in need

Most people in New Zealand will face a time when they need support. Social Service agencies such as Methodist Missions, are in place to provide support.

Through a broad range of activities; from aged to child care, education programmes, access to Foodbanks, Shelter, a hot shower, providing a hot meal, activity programmes, community gardens, psychologists, social workers and counsellors. Social Service agencies provide a wide range of ways for people to interact with others. They work to build community and acknowledge and support people as they require it, while enabling them to maintain their self-respect. Through each of their different range of services across the city (and the country) a range of social service agencies stop people feeling lonely in their particular time of need.

Catherine Hodges, Director of Methodist City Action, the Methodist Mission in Hamilton experienced her own family crisis recently, and has shared her story.

“I recently had the experience of a major health event for my Mother in Law which required her transfer from Tauranga to Waikato Hospital and for my Father in Law to camp in the family lounge for a fortnight. Thank goodness for a public health system that (although not perfect) provides exceptional health care in an emergency” says Catherine.

“Mum had a burst brain aneurysm, it took a few days for Dad to realise that the splitting headache was a bit more serious, and then it was action stations with an emergency transfer via ambulance into the Neuro ward in Hamilton. With a few procedures undertaken we knew that there were options for repair, but Mum presented the doctors more challenges than just plain old diabetes and obesity.”

“The first attempt at repair didn’t work and they needed to get a special part from Australia. We weren’t clear if the Specialist said that spare part cost \$15k or \$50k, but it duly arrived and when they started the procedure again Mum had a stroke on the table so the aneurysm repair was abandoned.”

“After 4 weeks in hospital, Mum has gone home with short term memory loss and she’s even more adamant she’s right about things than before. We are hoping that these will both come right in time.”

“While this was happening I had to address a funding shortfall at work and as a consequence make a staff member redundant.”

Catherine was willing to share her personal story as a way to tell you why social service agencies are important.

“I was dealing with a raft of highly emotional personal issues. While this was all happening I had a good team of staff around me who could cover my lapses in attention and pick up the slack. I had a Board who encouraged and supported me and understood that my mind was on other things. I accessed Professional Supervision. I fell back on tried and true strategies and tools for myself; eating well (maybe a bit too well), vitamin B supplements, lots of cuddles (my husband and kids thought the cuddles were for them with Mum / Nana being sick), getting some fresh air and exercise (which my Supervisor said would help me metabolise my stress hormones- actually it did help me feel better!)”

“I had support and tools. The people that Methodist City Action staff and other agencies work with on a day to day basis might also be dealing with issues of a similar degree of stress, and as is the way of life, when it rains it pours and it all happens at once and it becomes overwhelming.”

“If you didn’t have someone to turn to in times of crisis; whether its friends or family, or knowing who to call and what to say; what would you do? How on earth would you cope? If you didn’t have family or friends to fall back on, would you be able to have hope that all would end well?” Catherine asks.

Spare a thought for the people that the agencies across Hamilton work with, and for others that you see in the community. There are people who may not have friends and family that can help them, for a range of reasons not necessarily of their own making. There are people who don’t know that they can ask for help, they don’t know how, or who. They may not have the financial resources or wherewithal.

Also spare a thought for the agencies who are often expected to pick up the slack in the community that limited government funding doesn’t cover. These agencies are often largely reliant on philanthropic funders, fundraising ventures and donations, and volunteer hours.

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