



NEWSLETTER - APRIL 2015

DATABASE: 5901 WHANAU CARERS

TENA KOUTOU, TALOFA LAVA, KIA ORANA, FAKAALOFA LAHI ATU, MALO E LELEI, BULA VINAKA, TALOHA NI, KAM NA MAURI, GREETINGS TO ALL!

*Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ Mitre 10 Community of the Year*



## FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE

### Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder

FASD can be a very isolating disability for families as the brain damage caused by alcohol exposure in utero manifests itself in 'anti-social' ways. This means that families are often dealing with learning disorders, sensory issues, and behaviours born out of frustration. Connecting with other parents and caregivers enables them to gather strength from each other. They will collectively acknowledge, learn and accept that 'bad behaviours are not a sign of poor parenting but rather a symptom of a damaged brain with impaired cognitive functioning. Neurobehavioral strategies which take into account brain dysfunction can be shared and modules on topics such as grief/loss/coping strategies will be given. It is envisioned that guest speakers with skills specific to FASD expertise will be invited to attend some meetings

There is no substitute for talking with someone who understands the challenges that supporting someone with FASD presents. Apologies this can only be accessed via web site.

<http://www.fasd-can.org.nz/>

### Out of the mouths of babes:

Firstly thank you for an amazing organisation. I have gone through a real tough time with my little grandchildren but we are all good now! Thank you for very good advice when needed.



The other day my little three year granddaughter asked for a little scoop of ice-cream. So, grandpa piped up that he would like some too. So she looked at him and said "I would like some three". We could only laugh at her little expression.

On another occasion our seven year old grandson (at the time he was five), asked his grandfather most earnestly, when was he going to get a wife. So I looked at my husband and waited for the answer. He replied, "you first have to study, grow up into a good healthy strong young man, get a young nice girlfriend and then choose one as your wife" I saw this puzzled look on my grandsons face, and then came the answer that made us roll with laughter. "But oupa (grandpa) what is your girlfriend going to say when you have married ouma"

Bless his little soul.

Koko

## Parity (Clothing Allowance)

As most of you will know we have been trying for many, many years to get parity for clothing allowances that Foster Care children get, where as those under our care do not.

GRG presented along with others at the submissions in Wellington and Tracey Martin MP had her second reading in the house late February and other parties debated this, we are thrilled to say that all the other parties are in favour of this, but there was a catch, 2018 was the start date, why at that late time I hear you ask! This is because at this time the School Year Start up fund and the Extra ordinary care fund finishes. Yes we are aware of the limited time frame. SO what to do. !!!!

OK lovelies, here is what I think we should do:

### Option 1.

- 1) get a picture of your moko/kin children (all of them)
- 2) get them to write on a piece of paper  
'please do not make me/us wait until 2018' important it is child's writing. Attach photo.
- 3) Photocopy 5 copies
- 4) Write on it Social Security Clothing Allowance Bill
- 5) place 1 photocopy in each envelope and no stamp required, address each envelope to the following people.

Jan Logie MP

Jacinda Adern MP

Tracey Martin MP

Alfred Ngaro MP

Matt Doocey MP

All addresses are the same

Freepost PO Box 1888 Wellington. NZ. 6160

### Option 2: (no photo)

Get your children to write to them, again in their handwriting, asking the same. Add a hand-print, stickers, whatever, if children too young to write do it for them.

Will you help us to help you? I know you will and thanks.

Example below.



## Community Services Card

I phoned Work & Income as I had not received a new card from them this year...or had I lost it? She looks up the records and told me that I was no longer in receipt of a benefit – OH YES I AM.....I just thought maybe there are others out there in this situation and to check their cards are current!!! It has been sorted and a new card is on its way now... here I was thinking I had lost it.

Nanny A



## A wee holiday, or was it?

We are booked into Oreti Village on the western shores of Taupo for a week....sound idyllic? Not when you are taking your special needs shaken baby now 13 years old (with a 2 to 3 year old brain) grandson.

The trip to Taupo was LONG! Not helped by the fact that if we turned off Ryan's music he would meltdown !! By the time we arrived we were not HAPPY, everything was not AWESOME and we never want to build a snowman !!

We stopped for lunch at Mercer, at McDs. I would have preferred a café or a restaurant, but we do not take Ryan to places like that. Finally arrived at the resort just after 5pm..no Ryan it is not Paihia .... Another meltdown and a refusal to go into the unit, we went in and ...it is over 3 levels, and no chain on the front door, yet another headache for me, with a boy who likes to explore in the early hours of the morning.

We unpack, and I make dinner and finally Ryan comes in. By this time he is quite blind - being cortically blind his vision goes when sick, tired or grumpy. He falls down the stairs. We sit for dinner and Ryan is off outside. I missed dinner and sat on the door stop watching that he wouldn't get run over. It was dark when he finally came in and asked for pudding and drugs (his pills go in his yoghurt every night.) End of Day one.



Saturday, he woke early, we had piled the suitcase and the chilly bin in front of the door to give us a clue when he was leaving...when Ryan is up we are up! We decided to go to lunch in Turangi and get the supplies that were forgotten. We arrived in Turangi and he would not get out of the car! So I run into the supermarket and a bakery and we find a park and picnic in the car, in the heat! Back at the unit later Blake took Ryan for a swim, being a new place he was hesitant, took 20 minutes of persuasion till he finally got in. They return to the unit and Ryan announces, 'I happy' ! So am I now !!

Sunday, we had a day at "home"....oops didn't notice Ryan had escaped (I put it down to sleeping with an ear on what is happening!) An elderly lady knocked on our door ...your son is in our lounge and we can't get him to leave!! They had a radio on and I had to ask them to turn it off till I got the terror out of their unit. Fast asleep next morning, I hear the chilly bin fall down the stairs ...he was up and it was only 4.30am!



Monday we drove to Taupo and met Blake's cousin, Blake, Ryan and the cousin and her grand's all went for a lake edge walk, I stayed under a tree and read my book ...BLISS !!! We decided to go for lunch when they returned but another meltdown meant KFC in the car ...internal scream....I wanted to go to a café !!!!!!!!!!! We were all in bed early Monday night.

Decided on Tuesday to picnic at a local bay! Found a lovely one, with a picnic table and no one in sight. We get our picnic out and start to go for a walk...Ryan panics and is back in the car...we think it is the noise of the lapping water so pack up and finally find a quiet bay, where we all sit at a picnic table and eat...it is almost pleasant , until it started to rain!! So it was back to the unit. Should say Ryan has just learnt to watch you tube on the ipad, an excellent distraction when we are home ... why did I choose a place with no internet??

Wednesday, Ryan was up three times. When he was finally up he was grumpy so after trying to go out and him refusing to get in the car we stayed home...he didn't even want a swim.



We went home on Thursday, because I had an appointment!! Another long trip with that CD playing! I miss eating out, I miss putting my feet up, I miss reading a book or even a magazine and I really miss having the opportunity to snooze in the middle of the day.....good job we love Ryan to pieces and would not have him anywhere else but safe with us.

### **In Search of the Lost Key**

Several days ago, as I left a meeting at a hotel, I desperately gave myself a personal "total body search" pat down. I was looking for my keys. They were not in my pockets.

A quick search in the meeting room revealed nothing. Suddenly I realized I must have left them in the car. Frantically, I headed for the parking lot.

My husband has scolded me many times for leaving the keys in the ignition. My theory is the ignition is the best place not to lose them. His theory is that the car will be stolen.

As I burst through the door, I came to a terrifying conclusion. His theory was right. The parking lot was empty. I immediately called the police. I gave them my location, confessed that I had left my keys in the car, and that it had been stolen.

Then I made the most difficult call of all. "Honey," I stammered (I always call him "honey" in times like these), "I left my keys in the car and it's been stolen."

There was a period of silence. I thought the call had been dropped, but then I heard his voice. "Are you kidding me?" he barked, "I dropped you off!"

Now it was my time to be silent. Embarrassed, I said, "Well, come and get me."

He retorted, "I will, as soon as I convince this cop I didn't steal your car."

Yep it's the golden years...



### **Saying thanks.**

We would like to take the opportunity to say thank you to our wonderful volunteer coordinators scattered throughout the country, these amazing people either are raising their grandchildren or have raised their grandchildren and therefore really do understand your joys, heartaches and issues. They give their time freely to you all and are an extremely valued part of our organisation. We salute them for their dedication and willingness to give back to our whanau and our community. We are sure you are with us when we say together we make change. Richest blessings we send to them.

### **Reminder**



Do not forget to register your children for respite camps for holiday each time the children have holiday. Please do well in advance.  
[www.standforchildren.org.nz](http://www.standforchildren.org.nz) and look for Kidsacool camps.

## News from Palmerston North GRG Group

Jan Salter plays Poi Toa with her grandson Bailey as part of Sport Manawatu's Active Grandchildren programme. It's designed to get grandparents active with their grandkids.

Grandchildren are set to be racing around town with their grandparents after the launch of a new active programme from Sport Manawatu.

The Active Grandparents - Mokopuna programme was launched at Bill Brown Park in Palmerston North yesterday.

The programme is part of Sport Manawatu's Active Families programme and aims to provide guidance and support to create a healthy and active lifestyle primarily for grandparents who are raising

Thursday and include a different activity each week, starting with the traditional Maori game poi toa.

Howie said he hoped to introduce the children to winter sports and get them interested in playing.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust Manawatu support co-ordinator Martha Taonui -Andrews said she hoped the programme would be a nice way to get grandparents out with their grandchildren and get active.

"A lot of what happens with these children is that they feel isolated because they're being raised by grandparents, so they feel different. So this was a way of the kids getting to know



their grandchildren.

Sport Manawatu's Active Families co-ordinator Marcus Howie said he was thrilled with the turnout yesterday.

"It's not easy to be a parent, but when you're getting on in years, it gets harder to run around after the kids. We want to support these grandparents to look after their grandchildren, and keep the family healthy and active," he said.

"Some of these kids struggle with conditions, such as ADHD, which puts an even greater strain on their grandparents. "Giving these kids an outlet is also about giving these grandparents a helping hand." The programme will be held every

each other and grandparents getting to know each other," she said.

Kagan Nottle, who took her grandson Kareama, 8, to the programme launch, said it was about creating a community for the children. "It's to give them a sense that what's happening for them is happening for other families as well," she said.

Kareama said the first day of the programme was cool and his favourite part was playing poi ama.

## Hardcore what?

Young 12 year old grandson, had a friend over for lunch, after lunch they went to play a game on my computer whilst I washed up the lunch dishes, it is in the dining area of the kitchen I cannot see them, but can hear them, chatting away. Up to elbows in hot soapy water I hear, his friend say, 'have you seen hardcore porn' my ears nearly dropped off my head, not to mention the glass that I dropped into the water. I stopped, frantically thinking, what to do, should I rush immediately to the computer screaming like a banshee? One side of my brain screamed, but what if I had misheard, was my hearing going, and if not, how would I handle this!



The other side of my brain kicked in, nah they know I can hear them, I hesitated and boy, am I glad I did. The conversation continued, 'yeah' said the friend 'it is on TV and they get all this neat stuff and sell it.' Phew! That's 'Hardcore Pawn'. Thank goodness I had seen this show.

Even getting my hearing checked would have made no difference under these circumstances.

Fainting granny

## Grey Hair.

Today I looked in the mirror to check out my hair. I'm one day closer to my goal of growing out my grey hair and can now see at the roots what my hair colour is going to finally be. Both my parents were white-grey in their later years and it looked great, but for some reason my hair, although dark in childhood and into my 30's, then started to become "mousey" with a few grey hairs here & there. It was an uneven hotch-potch colour, thin and not attractive at all. So from mid-30's to now, mid-60's, I have had my hair professionally coloured and it always looked pretty good. However, as I cruise quickly towards retirement I have made the decision to go "natural" – I am totally over the time and expense it takes to keep my hair colour even and attractive. So, armed with several photos off Google of different 'shades of grey' (?!?!?) I consulted my hairdresser who assured me that by the time she was finished I won't ever have to colour my hair again. I loved the look of the grey hairdo's I printed off, especially impressed with the photo of Helen Mirren – that grey colour, I decided, was definitely 'me'. When I told the family, my partner said "whatever makes you happy dear" while rolling his eyes, however grandson, who has lived with us for just over 2 years, is mortified...!!! "You will look old" he said. "This is not good" he said. "What will people think?" he said.

I am determined not to colour my hair ever again and am becoming used to the comments from friends which range from "that colour has made you look years younger" to "ummm what have you done?" and "will you leave it like that?" I must say, though, that I almost changed my mind when the hairdresser made me blonde. Oh my goodness, that isn't grey, I wanted grey, the pictures I showed you were grey – not blonde! But apparently they can't rinse hair to grey, it has to be gradual. The blonde streaks which, admittedly, has made my hair much lighter, will eventually blend in with the re-growth of my own hair and become the grey I desire.

Well that's the theory! And meanwhile I wait and watch...!!

Watching even more closely than me, in seemingly abject horror, is our grandson who cannot believe that his dark-haired energetic Guardian/Grandma may suddenly become a grey-haired "oldie". He's definitely worried but yee-haaa - I say bring on the zimmer frame...!!!!



At her age then two  
 my granddaughter new  
 Came to me to stay ,  
 for starters, maybe just a day.  
 But no! for the past eighteen years  
 We have travelled a way  
 With brownies and ponies, many changes each day.  
 A beautiful butterfly's suddenly here  
 Emerged from cocoon so dull and so drear.  
 With fluttering wings she's embarking on life,  
 Though still not quite ready to be someone's wife!  
 Corporate garb every day she will wear  
 With lots of attention to makeup and hair.  
 Travel and perks, and money a plenty..... but  
 All of a sudden, my nest is empty.  
 What now for me at age seventy five?  
 I think I'm just lucky to still be alive!  
 We both travel on in the hope we both thrive

**Member Support Manager: Di & team (as a caregiver you are part of our team)**

heoi ano, na. *E te Atua, aroha mai..... O God shower us with love. Ka kite*

*Ka Whangaia ka tupu, ka puawai* That which is nurtured, blossoms and grows

**Can we help you? Members ONLY Services Nationwide**

**Toll free line 0800 472 637 (Caregivers only please)**

**Members Support Manager: Di Vivian New members and general information ext. 1**

Landline users only. Auckland/free callers (09) 480

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**We are respectful, we listen, we learn**

*He rōpū manaaki, he rōpū whakarongo, he rōpū ako mātou*

Please pass this on to other grandparents/kin carers you know of.

GRG Trust Head Office hours are 9am – 2pm daily.  
 (We raise grandchildren too)

Disclaimer: Any article, services offered or views may not have an endorsement from Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ, discretion is advised. This newsletter is also has copyright

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or update your details please contact Kelly at the Trust Office on 09 418 3753 or email [kelly@grg.org.nz](mailto:kelly@grg.org.nz) as this is where the total mail out membership is kept. Moved home or planning to? Be sure to let us know.

**We are a Charitable Trust**



Anti-bullying



0800 456 450



Give a Little for GRG  
<http://www.givealittle.co.nz/org/grg>



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We would like to wish you all a Happy Easter from  
GRG!!

