



REPORT TO: Support Group Co-ordinators, GRG Members,
Kin Carers, Community Organisations and others.

FROM: NZ National Office Convenor

SUBJECT: National Office NZ Report December 2010

Carer Data base: 4558 members.

Tena Koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Malo e Lelei, Bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kam Na Mauri, Greetings to all.



From the National Office:

The GRG Trust Board would like to wish each and every one of you Season's greetings, take time out with your charges and enjoy! We give thanks to the many organisations, general public and funders who donate goods, clothing and many other items for distribution to our wonderful caregivers, we are blessed and say THANK YOU.

New Skylight website was just launched - *check out all the new, amazing links, articles, the grief blog, downloads, new support resources and our new children's stream!* www.skylight.org.nz

Two amazing phone calls to GRG office:

Out of the blue a young woman who is doing her degree, telephoned to say thank you for our organisation. She was raised by her grandparents and said how much she appreciated that it was so hard for them and she thinks the support we give via our newsletters, being on the end of the phone, and our resources are just wonderful. She has an Aunt who is now raising her Mokopuna and she hears first hand how much this Aunt appreciates GRG Trust and she just wanted to say what a wonderful organisation we were. Humbled, yes we were, very humbled.

And on another note, we have had a mother who was addicted to P, now clean, who also rang to say very many thanks for supporting her Mother who is raising her 5 children, for many years. At the time in the early days she was really angry with her Mother, but after much therapy and a drug programme she see's things in a very different light now. Although her Mother still has the orders over the children, roles have reversed as Mother's now ill and she has had to step up and care for her. *Di*

Grand's /Kin and Children's Voices:

A thank you Letter:

God bless you for all your hard work....

God bless you for all your hard work....all the seen and especially the unseen. I don't have any Christmas stories to share but hopefully I will have some happy New Year ones to uplift and encourage everyone as I have been when they share all their lovely stories in the newsletters. So look forward to receiving the newsletters .You're such a sweetheart.

Grace

And another email:

Thank you for your very interesting article on "Trolling" we must keep ahead of these teens otherwise we are lost. I am doing a search on my computer as I email. And here was me remembering back to the Sunday Stories about 'Bill Goat's Gruff' that was the only troll I knew about.....now I know better!

Searching gran



On the lighter side:

Here is some excerpt's on Christianity that my grandson (6 yrs) came out with this week. He attends a Catholic school.

1. When out for a walk with me yesterday, I chastised him for going ahead of me with his scooter and crossing the road. He said, "It's alright Nana. I looked both ways and crossed myself three times before I crossed the road."
2. Nana to Grandson: -"Who does Nana love most in the world?" Grandson, (Jubilantly) : " It's me." (Then looking very serious) "But you shouldn't Nana, 'cause you're supposed to love God the most!"
3. Grandson:-"Are you only allowed to use the Lord's name in vain in church?" Nana, "You aren't allowed to use the Lord's name in vain anywhere, but you can talk to God and pray and sing to him in church". Grandson: -"Do you mean like this?" And he proceeded to sing to the tune of "Oh my Darling Clementine." "Oh my God, Oh my God, Oh my darling, darling God."
Nana G

Congratulations:

We in the Wairarapa are rejoicing with our Grandma, Kaye and her late beloved husband, Brian. Their treasured grandson, now 17 has just been appointed Deputy Head Boy at Wairarapa College! Congratulations, Ethan! A well deserved reward!

And to Kaye who is feeling so proud, yet very sad that Ethan's mother and Grandfather cannot be here to see what a success story this family is, our heartfelt congratulations on a job well done!

These are the rewards that can be obtained by giving these children the stability, love and routines they so need to be able to succeed in life. No matter how hard it gets, keep on going and you too will have a wonderful success story!

Wairarapa GRG

Who will I marry?

Our just turned five year old great-grand-daughter announced that she was having terrible trouble picking someone to marry.

I told her that she has at least twenty years before she makes that decision (forever hopeful!). She told me she couldn't choose between Jack, Casper or Travis because she liked them all. I explained that over the years she would meet lots of other nice boys, but then she turned to me and said "The trouble is, I LOVE Penny!" (Her little girl-friend!) Oh, well, looks as though we may not get any Great-great grandchildren!!

Wendy

Great Nan



Getting ready for Christmas:

We're having garage sale soon to help with Xmas cheer and I'm now finding toys popping-up with prices marked on them?



The value appears to be based on sentiment alone hence 1 x T-ball set without the T or the ball! This is one of the highest priced of items at \$5.

A wee stack of books ostensibly seem well-priced until one realizes they are mostly activity books - with most of the activities already completed! I understand this enhances their value because the lucky buyer won't have to puzzle over the answers - "they will be amazed!"

A deflated rugby ball is a bonus at \$5... and we can tell the lucky buyer they can (easily) get a new pump at the \$2 Shop!"

It's already a great Xmas don't you think? God bless them!

We have lots and lots of love to share and our heartfelt blessings are with all those who can't be with their loved ones.... to hold them close and to share their time. Arohanui,
Nanny T

Falling thru the cracks:

I am a grandmother who has been raising a grandson, now 12, for the past two years. It has been a rocky ride, with CYFs not providing any assistance, falling through the cracks with WINZ, and ACC not coming to the party either.

My daughter, through her use of P and her arrogant attitude that CYFs could not prove her incompetent, has now lost all three of her children. The younger siblings, aged 5 and 6, are with a paternal family member now on a permanent basis, but due to the apathy and incompetence of the 'system' meant to protect our young ones, the child with me has been left in a precarious position with me having only a lapsed interim parenting order and additional guardianship with which to protect him.

I can't reassure him, as Christmas approaches, that he has a permanent home with me, a safe and nurturing future to look forward to, or all the opportunities I would like to provide him with leading up to young adulthood. My heart breaks as we are prevented from traveling to see his dying great grandfather overseas, and he is prevented from visiting his birth country and the other family members that so desperately want to meet him. We have no family here in New Zealand, other than his mother, whose goal in life seems to be to ruin his, so holidays come with a mix of joy and sadness. We take heart that there are those who have become our New Zealand family – his Big Buddy, his psychologist, his teachers and principal, our wonderful multicultural neighbors. We are thankful for their unwavering support and encouragement despite their desperate backgrounds, differing religious beliefs and, for some, difficulty in communicating in English.

Heartfelt blessings also to all you wonderful grandparents out there who have altered your lifestyles, relinquished freedoms and fiddled finances, to bring up the children that someone else couldn't or wouldn't. We will be repaid in full when we see them heal and grow, and go out confident into the world to become the next generation of New Zealand leaders and citizens.
Grandma

The sun is shining over.....

My hubby and I raise two of our brother's children and they are younger than our mokopuna.

We have had them from birth and would never ever be without them now.

We have just joined your group and you made us aware that we were entitled to different

tax rebates which after 6 years we were unaware of, so am very grateful for

that, and just to know that there is that extra support for us and others in our situation,

awesome...truly, truly is... However, we have just had another moko and her name is 'Alexandra'. Our 6 (soon to be 7)

year old and I were in bed watching Tamati give the weather forecast, which is part of our routine most mornings, and he

said that "Today is sunny over Alexandra" and my daughter was so amazed that he knew Alexandra, let alone knew that it was going to be sunny over her.



The kindest wishes and many, many blessings for the Christmas period to all. Ka kite.

He loves to bake:

My grandson is now 17 but academically he is 7. He has a learning disability, Asperger syndrome and needs Irlen lenses to read. But he is a whizz with computers and such like. He has 2 days a week with a tutor doing correspondence school and he got himself a work experience job in a local bakery 3-4 days a week. He is looking forward to Christmas as he will be paid for the days he does. He has a big shopping list ready for when he has his wages. As he has no idea of monetary value, it is going to be interesting to see what gets dropped from the list. He will be helping with the cooking on Christmas Day, as cooking and baking are things he loves to do. Not the cleaning up though.

Today he is helping a neighbour clean her carpets with the machine from the supermarket. I am sure our Christmas will be fun filled as we have a good start; we live at a great beach!

His cousins will be here for the holidays and they spend most of their time on the beach.

Wishing everyone a very happy Christmas and may the New Year bring everything you hope for. *Nan*

Painting the Passion fruit:

We have a prolific passion fruit vine which yielded over 100 fruit last year, the grandchildren (x4) and I had noticed this year that although there were heaps of flowers, they were falling to the ground producing no fruit. We had also noticed a lack of bees. So let's do Mother Nature's work for her I told the children. The look on their faces was priceless, "Nanny don't be silly we can't do that" they said.

"Come with me and gather some paint brushes", I said. So with one paint brush each we proceeded to paint the passion fruit flowers, brushing each flower gently then going on to another, my little bees, working along in a line, and buzzing away I might add. Youngest granddaughter said "I can not do the brush, can I just get them to kiss each other" and so she did. Guess what 2 weeks later we have much more fruit forming and very few flowers falling.

*Nan D**



Dear Santa,

I've been a good Nana all year. I've fed, cleaned and cuddled my grandchildren on demand, visited the doctor's and dentist's office, sold sixty-two cases of chocolate bars to raise money to plant a shade tree on the school playground. I was hoping you could spread my list out over several Christmases, since I had to write this letter with my grand daughters red crayon, on the back of a receipt in the laundry room between cycles, and who knows when I'll find anymore free time in the next 18 years.



Here are my Christmas wishes:

I'd like a pair of legs that don't ache (in any colour, except purple, which I already have) and arms that don't hurt or flap in the breeze; but are strong enough to pull a screaming child out of the lolly aisle in the grocery store.

I'd also like a my own natural colour of hair - and even SOME hair - as I seemed to have lost mine somewhere between the Family Court fighting for my Grandchildren's safety, or pulling it out in my sleep with frustration at birth parents who do not take responsibility for their actions.

If you're hauling big ticket items this year I'd like fingerprint resistant windows and a radio that only plays adult music; a television that doesn't broadcast any programs containing talking animals; and a refrigerator with a secret compartment behind the crisper where I can hide to talk on the phone.

On the practical side, I could use a talking doll that says, 'Yes, Nana' to boost my parental confidence, along with two kids who don't fight and three pairs of jeans that will zip all the way up without the use of power tools.

I could also use a recording of Tibetan monks chanting 'Don't eat in the living room' and 'Take your hands off your brother/Sister,' because my voice seems to be just out of my children's hearing range and can only be heard by the dog.

If it's too late to find any of these products, I'd settle for enough time to brush my teeth and comb my hair on the same morning, or the luxury of eating food warmer than room temperature without it being served in a Styrofoam container.

If you don't mind, I could also use a few Christmas miracles to brighten the holiday season. Would it be too much trouble to declare tomato sauce a vegetable? It will clear my conscience immensely. It would be helpful if you could coerce my Grandchildren to help around the house without demanding payment as if they were the bosses of an organized crime family.

Well, Santa, the buzzer on the dryer is ringing and my grandchildren saw my feet under the laundry room door. I think they want their crayon back. Have a safe trip and remember to leave your wet boots by the door and come in and dry off so you don't catch cold.

Help yourself to cookies on the table but don't eat too many or leave crumbs on the carpet.

Yours Always, Nana...!

P.S. One more thing...you can cancel all my requests if you can keep my Grandchildren happy, healthy and always believing.

Crepe Paper decorations: Christmas' past.

As a child growing up we just simply could not wait for the day when we got home from school to find our Mother had put up the hand made decorations in the kitchen. Bright colorful ribbons of crepe paper danced across the kitchen ceiling. Twisted some and criss-cross folded others. In each corner, hung a Christmas bell, they were flat and when you opened them up and clipped the clip, they presented as a most pretty bell. The Christmas tree of course was a real pine and took pride of place in the lounge. They even hung colourful lights outside the house. Not like the little ones you see today, these were the real McCoy, a full sized coloured light bulb. Christmas eve all the Aunts and Uncles would come over, Blackberry Nip, Sherry and Pims come to mind, I suppose the men had a beer, being a female child I was only interested in the Ladies (my Aunts) who were beautiful and teetered ever so carefully upon very, very high stilettos, and boy could they talk! The children all played outside until dark and then we were allowed in to have brief visits with them all. How old was I then, perhaps 10, my, that was 50 years ago, I wonder does anyone put up decorations in their kitchen today?
Nanny *

Santa, God, and Tooth fairies:

8yr old grandson on way to bed one night says " NAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAN "

"Yes" I reply." Nan I believe in Santa, I definitely believe in God. But Nan I'm not sure that I believe in the tooth fairy?"

"Why is that Sam? "Well remember when I lost my tooth and Nadia the tooth fairy wrote me a note to say that she found my tooth in the playground at school and she left me \$2.?"

"Yes" "You know the writing looked like yours, I'm sure it was your writing!" Just to mention Santa writes letters to Sam also. (Same writer as Tooth fairy) *Cheers Win*

Informal Coffee Group: For times and venues

Coromandel/Tairua/Whitianga: Brenda 07 866 4476

Hamilton: Is anyone willing???

Howick/Manukau: Lorraine 09 271 2900

New Plymouth: Sue 06 756 7542

Palmerston North: Triphena 06 355 8316

Tauranga: Colleen 07 578 5341

Wairarapa: Sheryl 06 304 9957

If you would like to start an informal coffee group in your area please contact Di at Head Office



Unsupported Child Allowance or Orphans Benefit:

If you are in receipt of these you may also be entitled to: In Work Tax Credits: Child disability Allowance: Disability Allowance, Childcare subsidy OSCAR: and Community Services card.

Board Payments from CYF:

You can apply to IRD for "In Work Tax Credits", requirements are that if single you work 20 per week or in a partnership 30 hours per week. Quarterly clothing Allowance: Birthday and Christmas payment.

If Child included in your main benefit:

You may also be entitled to: Family Tax Credit: Child disability Allowance: Disability Allowance: Childcare Subsidy OSCAR: and Community Services card.

None of the Above:

Parental Tax Credit: Minimum Family Tax Credit.

Free phone: Work and Income 0800 559 009: Inland Revenue: 0800 227 773

Nits:

The warm days we are having has brought these critters early this year. As mentioned in past newsletters the best way to deal with them and the cheapest way is to massage the child's hair heavily with either mayonnaise or conditioner, Divide the hair and start with your nit comb at nape of neck moving up to the front of hair. After each comb thru, wipe the excess mayo or conditioner off on a paper towel, you will be amazed how many live ones you catch and how the eggs slide off, and this makes the comb slide thru hair very easily. Then rinse off the left over product. Repeat every 2 days for one week then every 7 days, until none remain. One of the joys of raising children!

Local Co-ordinator Contacts:

Locality	Name	Phone	E-mail Address
Auckland ** East	Tess Gould-Thorpe	09 535 6903	pan@xnet.co.nz
Auckland ** North	Bonnie Williams	09 473 9055	willingclan@xtra.co.nz
Auckland ** South	Virginia Peebles	09 256 1620	
Auckland ** West	Debbie Hall	09 818 7828	debron@xtra.co.nz
Canterbury**	Jan Farquhar	03 313 6487	farlaw@xtra.co.nz
Coromandel**	Keitha Jenkins	07 8668273	northbrook@slingshot.co.nz
Dannevirke **	Denise Henman	06-374 5855	denise.henman@xtra.co.nz
Dargaville **	Barbara Sterling	09 439 4555	ladybee@vodafone.co.nz
Helensville *	Maree Hemana	09 836 5133	mhemana@clear.net.nz
Hokitika *	Fran Edwards	03 755 8142	
Huntly **	Lodi Liebert	07 828 6123	rulo@clear.net.nz
Invercargill *	Christine Marsh	03 216 9773	chrisandbob@xtra.co.nz
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Whangarei **	Janet Puriri	09 435 0044	jpuriri@ihug.co.nz

* Telephone support only: ** Telephone Support & Meetings. December 2010

Drug websites put a human face on addiction:

“It’s a complete love relationship. That’s what makes it so powerful, so destructive for me. Because that becomes more important than my relationship.”

*“I tried everything to convince myself that my using was sweet. Yet every day, I had proof that things were really f****d up.”*

These are just some of the thoughts shared by people featured on two new drug websites launched in late August as part of a government programme to reduce the demand for drugs.

The DrugHelp.org.nz and MethHelp.org.nz websites – produced by the Drug Foundation and funded by the Ministry of Health – are part of a \$1m, three-year project to show people struggling with drug abuse ways they can get help for their addiction.

The sites are designed to give hope and direction to people struggling with drug use, but who feel alienated from traditional treatment avenues or just don’t know how to get help.

The websites feature compelling stories from people about the highs and lows of their drug use and their journey through drug treatment. People featured on the websites range from gang members to professionals, and include parents and partners of people who use drugs.

Drug Foundation Executive Director Ross Bell says the websites are deliberately not preachy or designed to scare people off drugs, but that it is hard to argue with the videos which are raw, authentic and uncensored.

“Those struggling with drug addiction are often caught in a spiral. They want to be free but can’t imagine coping without drugs, and they see nothing but barriers between themselves and help. These websites have been created to show them that others have been where they are and that a drug-free life is possible.”

17 courageous Kiwi's came forth to share their stories. Some of the highlights are quoted below, and their full accounts are available in video on the websites:

- *"They were really respectable. They had money and they were wearing suits. They didn't look like people who were losers, so I thought "well, that's who I want to be. If they can do it, I can." – Jacki*
- *"It just got to a point where I could see that I was going to end up in jail, and that scared the s**t out of me. That was pretty bad. That's what started me thinking about giving it up." - Dale*
- *"Taking a car and finding a picture of a single mother and her kids in the car, and not going "oh, should I really take this car?" Just going "oh well, I don't care. This is my car now" and not having that feeling. – Darcy*
- *"I remember just being like curled up in the middle of the bed, the whole 24 hours, like dying for more drugs. That was it. It was my life. That was what it was." – Sarah*
- *"He offered me some and I was curious. I'll always try something once, and I tried it. Unfortunately I liked it." - Prue*

As well as the videos, both websites contain information about what treatment options are available and how to access them. An online tool allows visitors to assess their own dependence on drugs. Practical advice is also provided about things like dealing with withdrawal and how to make the changes needed to live a life free of drugs.

The MethHelp website, commissioned especially as part of the National Government's Methamphetamine Action Plan, offers a free booklet and DVD called *Guide for Change* which can be ordered directly from the website and includes basic information about how to make a start in seeking help.

The websites were tested before being launched, and feedback from the target audience was strong and positive. People who use drugs and people in recovery told the Drug Foundation they thought the stories were genuine, the messages were credible, and the websites were engaging.

This government funded project has been 10 months in the making. By helping to get people off drugs, the websites are seen as a demand reduction tool, and an attempt to address past imbalances where drug control policy focused almost solely on catching and criminalizing drug suppliers.

Check the websites out for yourself at www.drughelp.org.nz and www.methhelp.org.nz.

New Zealand Drug Foundation - Te Tuapapa Tarukino o Aotearoa

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Di & Team (you as a caregiver are part of our team)

National Convenor

heoi ano, na

E te Atua, aroha mai..... O God shower us with love. Ka kite

Can we help you? Members Services Nationwide

Field Officers:

Alison Cuthbert:

Alison was a Social worker for over 40yrs, 26 of those as a senior social worker for the Royal N.Z Navy. She is able and confident to attend CYF Family Group Conferences (where practicable) to act as a support person for GRG's. I am an Independent Adoption Counsellor. A Family Court Counsellor working with those who have relationship issues and is familiar with the Family Court procedures related to general counselling and court procedures when applications are being made for who will assume the Primary Care Role for children. Ph 09 445 9671 Toll call, use 0800 345 671(landline use only)

Nola Adams:

Telephone advice can be given on the following topics Justice and Prison system, including Youth Court Family Court applications: for persons wishing to self-represent: Child Youth and Family representation where practicable/advice. Disability advice and the Schooling system. Nola can be contacted on ph 06 845 3141 Toll call, use 0508 367474 (landline use only)

Diana East:

In depth knowledge on issues impacting on grandparents raising grandchildren; has many years working with mental health consumers and carers. This gives her a very good understanding of a wide range of mental health issues. Diana can be contacted on 04 970 8177 Toll use 0508 32 34 35 landline only.

Please feel free to send/email this report on to others whom you think may be interested:

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

Disclaimer: Views expressed in this newsletter may not be the views of the GRG Trust.

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GRG Trust Head Office hours are 9am-3pm daily. (We raise grandchildren too)

We are a voluntary organisation.

All donations to the GRG Trust are tax deductible.

Abbreviations:

GRG – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

H/O – Head Office

H/B – Handbook

BOT – Board of Trustees

CYF – Child Youth & Family Services

Co's – Co-ordinator/s

UCB – Unsupported Child Benefit.

WINZ – Work & Income NZ now DWI – Department of Work & Income

Grands – Grandparents

G/c – grandchild/ren

Kin – Kinship Carers

BPS – Business Professional Services. Our out Secretarial Service.

Are your children under CYF?

Do you have trouble getting hold of your Social Worker?
If this is the case then you can call 0508 CARER 0508 227 377 they will then make sure you are spoken to by your Social Worker and if they are not available then someone else will talk to you.

www.grg.org.nz or www.kin.org.nz or www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz or www.raisinggrandchildren.net

Email office@grg.org.nz

National Convenor: Di Vivian

Free Phone 0800 GRANDS or 0800 472637 (not for use for Auckland callers) Landline users only.

Telephone: (09) 480 6530

Postal Add: PO Box 34 892 Birkenhead. Auckland 0742

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