



Newsletter December 2012

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



Data base: 5249 Whanau/Family Carers.

Like us at www.facebook.com/grg.org.nz

From the National Office:

GRG Survey: More Support for Grandparents

Question 4 in the house 17 October 2012: Hon PAULA BENNETT: We will go out to these groups and these people to work out with

them what this will look like.

Therefore we have initiated this survey to find what you as caregivers, priorities are, not all our members attend support groups, so we did this via snail mail and email with a survey monkey. Please ensure you have your voices heard by doing this ASAP. We want to hear from you all.

Quality support and respite for kin/whānau carers.

Our KidzaCool Adventures programme gives children the opportunity to play and relax in a fun, safe and sociable environment while kin/whānau carers work, relax or catch up with friends and family. We like to think we offer kin/whānau carers peace of mind while offering children, aged 5-12, a piece of the action!! The programme is a **free service for caregivers**. Apply NOW.



Members of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ must state this on the form, so you do need to be a member. (I.E. GRG member) Also a request from Camp administration, PLEASE fill in all the boxes –

Register NOW! Either online or phone camp for application forms.
<http://www.healthcamps.org.nz/kidzacoool-adventures>

KidzaCool Adventures Holiday Programme Dates for 2013 Camps

Whangarei - Maunu Children's Health Camp, Phone 09 437 9050

14 - 18 January; 29 April - 3 May; 22 - 26 July

Auckland - Pakuranga Children's Health Camp, Phone 09 534 4017

21 - 25 January; 29 April - 3 May; 22 - 26 July

Rotorua - Te Puna Whaiora ki Rotorua, Phone 07 345 9097

21 - 25 January; 29 April - 3 May; 22 - 26 July

Gisborne - Te Kainga Whaiora Children's Village, Phone 06 867 5614

14 - 18 January; 29 April - 3 May; 22 - 26 July

Otaki - Otaki Children's Health Camp, Phone 06 364 8069

21 - 25 January; 29 April - 3 May; 22 - 26 July

Christchurch - Te Puna Whaiora ki Christchurch, Phone 03 332 2541

14 - 18 January; 29 April - 3 May; 22 - 26 July

Roxburgh - Roxburgh Children's Health Camp, Phone 03 446 8119

14 - 18 January; 29 April - 3 May; 22 - 26 July

This Newsletter:

Some on email have been telling us they cannot open the newsletter, we have checked with our IT people and the programme we use is stable. It was suggested that we ask you: have you updated your Adobe Reader software? To check for updates to Adobe Reader:

Close all programs and windows.

Open Adobe Reader (click on "Start". Click on "Programs". Click on "Adobe Reader"). When Adobe Reader is loaded, click on "Help". Click on "Check for updates now" (or "Updates").

You will see available updates in the left window. Select any updates or critical items in the left window and click the "Add" icon between the windows. When you have selected all the necessary updates, click on the "Update" icon at the bottom. The system will start processing the update. If there are more than 2 or more updates, you will probably have to reboot between updates. When done, close all windows. You can get the latest version of Adobe Reader [here](#).

Tauranga Support Group (NEW)

We are delighted to let you know that we have a support group now in Tauranga. We thank Maureen Murphy-Boyd who will be ably assisted by Ruby Bidios. Welcome ladies and thank you. Maureen can be contacted on 07 5700175 email murphy.boyd@xtra.co.nz

Please remember to post off your evaluations forms on the Grand parenting DVD toolbox

Our Heroes:



Taiiau Nicholas:

Everybody would like to brag about how phenomenal their mum is? Well my mum is exactly that – PHENOMENAL

She raised her own 5 children, nursed her sick husband, volunteers in our community through teaching Cook Islands arts and now she is



raising her three young granddaughters.

I recall several happy memories as a kid – Christmas and Guy Fawkes with our huge extended family, camps at the beach, travelling around NZ - dancing. We didn't have much money but somehow we never went without the necessities. Our parents tried very hard to instill in all their children morals and self-respect.

In September 2004 my father passed away from a long history of kidney failure. My mum aged 51 thought she might get a chance to age quietly and vowed that if she ever became a grandmother that her philosophy will be "hi nana – bye nana". In March 2006 my younger sister gave birth to my parent's first grandchild. Mum was instantly besotted with this baby girl – and her philosophy of hi nana-bye nana went out the window. Another year came and so did another baby.

My sister's life involved things that would cause harm to her and her children. Mum intervened so many times but resulted with huge arguments. She contacted the police and CYFS many times to make them aware of the danger the children were in. CYFS scheduled a family group conference but after no proper investigation concluded that there was no problem and it was just an issue between the adults.

Mum found herself a lawyer and kept them posted about what was happening. Mum literally harassed her lawyer's office daily. In 2009, after several agonizing months of sleepless nights, another baby and a \$6500 legal bill mum was granted day-to-day Parenting and guardianship of my sisters 3 daughters.

There have been times mum has broken down because she was tired or she had to put aside the things she enjoys doing. Mum is repeating my childhood with my nieces by filling their memories with joy and happiness. She spreads out every dollar to ensure the girls are fed, warm and safe.

This is bittersweet because I want to ensure my family's privacy but I want everyone to know how amazing my mum is – who knows what would have happened to these girls, my mum is their / our / my hero. I love you mum and I am honoured to have you as my mum. *Simone Aka "a very proud daughter"*



My name is **Elizabeth Sayegh** and I am 18 years old, and I would like to deeply thank Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust for their love and support. I have had the great pleasure of being lovingly raised by my wonderful grandparents, right from the tender age of 2 weeks. My parents were unable to care for me, and the option was given to the family to take legal custody of me to ensure that I was brought up in a loving caring environment, and

that my biological parents could still see me whenever they wanted. My grandparents, **Ann and Des** stepped forward without hesitation and have been a constant support and loving guide right throughout my life, and continue to be the first people I can turn to for advice.

I must be honest when I say that we had our definite ups and downs, particularly in my teenage years. I gave my grandparents a very hard time by rebelling against them and 'the rules.' They provided me with not only the essentials, but also sacrificed their own money to ensure that I had the best they could possibly give. I was lucky enough to learn Irish dancing for around 5 years, where I entered and won awards on numerous occasions. I have also always had a passion for music and this is greatly supported by many generous people including my singing teachers, Trish and Ken Cornish, and my grandparents who have paid for everything and driven me all around New Zealand so that I can do what I love doing so much. Learning singing also meant that piano lessons and theory were part of the scene. Many Saturdays were spent almost entirely on having lessons and at competitions which was an extra boost to my motivation to succeed.

I attended St Mary's College where music was also a huge part of my life. I won both the junior and senior singing cups, took part in school productions, and lead singing at many school masses. Learning the Viola and drums, as well as being part of the Schola choir, all contributed to who I am today.

In 2010, when I was in year 12 at St Mary's, I shocked my grandparents with the news that I had fallen pregnant. This was devastating to them, to see all the progress and hard work slide. I was determined to prove to my grandparents at this time, that although I was making the huge decision to keep my little boy, I would not let them down, and would continue to strive towards my dream of becoming a professional opera singer. I went on to study level 2 and 3 NCEA by correspondence during my pregnancy where I decided to stay at the Bethany Centre and learn the skills I needed to be a successful mum. Teachers at St Mary's were wonderfully supportive, and gave their time and resources to help me through and gain good NCEA results.

I finished NCEA at the teen parent unit at Henderson High School, where my little boy Tyler was cared for while I studied. It was very inspiring for me to see other young mums also striving to finish their schooling and to have such support around them.

At the end of 2011, I decided to take my singing a step further, and applied to study a Bachelor of Music, majoring in Classical Performance singing at the University of Auckland. I auditioned and was accepted into the school and have almost completed my first year, so far with pleasing grades. Studying full time and being a mum has been a new and exciting challenge, and sometimes it can be extremely hard to juggle time, studies and finances. Without the support of my partner (Tyler's dad), my grandparents and the generous people around me, my motivation could so easily slip.

I believe my faith is another factor to my success so far. I am a Cantor (lead singer) at St Patrick's Cathedral, which I enjoy, as it shares my passion with all those that come to mass, as well as keeping my faith alive. Singing here has brought other opportunities, such as singing for weddings and funerals and private occasions. Monsignor Bernard Kiely and Sr. Mary Neven as well as cathedral staff and choir members, are all very kind and helpful towards me.

Through University, I auditioned and was accepted to sing in the Auckland Choral Society for 3 of their concerts this year. This has been very beneficial to my musicianship skills and I met so many wonderful people full of passion for music.

Having Tyler has made and matured me and I believe, made me a much better person. He has made me see the truly good in life and has brought our family much closer together. My grandparents just adore Tyler and we all get many happy days from all his little toddler antics.

I hope to end this year with a bang and to start strong again next year doing what I love most. *Singing: Love and God Bless* *Elizabeth Sayegh*

Annie:

Their Nana raised 3 of them, they are now 19, 20 & 22. Nana sadly passed away a year ago this month, leaving them totally alone, yes they do have a Mum and Dad but they are not in their lives. Her death was a shock; they thought they would have had her for a few more years. Organising a funeral and everything else that needed to be done was a terrible learning curve for them, but without the help of our local North Shore GRG support group, they would have had a much harder job. One Grand in this group told Annie that altho they felt alone they were now part of the GRG family. And true to this ladies word, she still has a relationship with them. When in need of some grandmotherly advice or just a hug, I know where to go, said Annie.



We have found out that there is a booklet produced especially for **grandparents who are raising their grandchildren**, which talks about all the issues in regard to sexual health and different types of contraception, it is important that we are up to date with these issues. The pack has information and updates on talking about sex and

relationships, differences in attitudes to teenage sexuality and looks at the what, when and why of sexuality education in schools. - This resource is available to order online from our website http://www.familyplanning.org.nz/online_shop/resources/a-z_products/productid/230/filterletter/t

- This resource is also available as a printable PDF in the free resources section of our website at <http://www.familyplanning.org.nz/LinkClick.aspx?fileticket=rgAYRKXyZhQ%3d&tabid=930>

Family Planning PO Box 11-515 Wellington 6142

Family Planning provides quality sexual and reproductive health services throughout New Zealand. For more information visit www.familyplanning.org.nz **If you are unable to access our website:** for up to three free copies please send a stamped self addressed A5 envelope to: Family Planning Resource Unit, P.O Box 11515, Wellington.

Also what may be of interest to readers “**Open and Honest**” workshops for **grandparents** – a workshop offered in some areas by Family Planning Health Promotion. For more information follow this link to find details of your nearest Health Promotion office http://www.familyplanning.org.nz/education_training/health_promotion/parents_and_caregivers

Question please: I am a single (divorced years ago) grandma caring for my 3 grandchildren, why am I on a Domestic Purposes benefit, when there is a DPB for caregivers, what is the difference and why am I not on that?
*The DPB Caregiver Benefit is for a single person caring for the **sick & infirm**, it means to care for Disabled or very ill people. Yes as Grandparents we are caring for children, but you would not qualify for this Benefit if a child is healthy.*

Living with an Autistic grandchild.

Our lives are not our own with these kids, we live to their routine. I can't even have a shower unless he's locked in the room with me or in the shower with me and I can't when he's sleeping in case he wakes and gets up and I'm not aware of it.

I live inside a locked house and even then I'm never sure it's locked enough because he's a mini Houdini.



My days are a relentless repeat of all my yesterdays and waking up in the morning isn't something I look forward to.

No one wants to have him for more than one night and day and the length of time between offers is longer after every visit.

I don't want an anti-depressant, I want a happy pill for me and a focus pill for him and I'm so far over people looking at him then at me and saying all those things on the list not their list, about what not to say to me and other people who are raising these damaged kids, because they don't live with them so they are not subject to the relentless repeat of unlearned yesterdays.

Or to say:

Why don't I tidy up my yard? Why don't they come tidy it up for me? Why don't they ask how they can help me instead of 100% no offers then asking me why I don't? My soul is already destroyed, why do they have to kick me when I'm already down?

And how about this one; 'Is his medical condition diagnosed? Is it just that some parents are a little ...FLAKEY... and they say Oh this is wrong with him ' and 'that is wrong with him'...But I don't mean you are Sharon'..... said the Lady from Special Ed....

I knew he was going to have some kind of damage due to his Mothers drinking and heinous drug taking during her pregnancy, so I started working on him from the first week I had him, after I'd searched the web for all the possible names for anything that might be caused by damage in utero and the ways that I could help repair or reroute the damage and get the good parts of his brain taking over and reloading him with potential ways to get around it.

I've done the left and right brain stimulation, the object permanence, I've covered the routines but told him 24 hours prior about any changes to our usual routes and I've exposed him and the people around us to him and verbally educated them along the way. I've been blunt with them when I have needed to be and protected them from him in advance (and after he got hold of that 90 year old lady's paper thin arm that day I've been even more vigilant) but I can see where what I've done from that first week has helped him be the best he can be within what he is and believe me he is adorable!

He's just a little unpredictable to those who don't watch and observe and understand the minuet changes that flicker across his face when something's going on that he's not coping well with, but I'm onto it and I can usually calm it before it gets out of hand and I use a LOT of distraction at the right time (if I miss the cue it's all over) which is why it's so mentally draining because we have to be on high alert to manage to prevent and avoid those triggers. THAT'S why the housework takes a back seat.

I'm learning HIM. It's not all bad, the scales tip more to the bad some days then back again, but on the whole I do laugh a lot amidst the crying. He's very clever and onto it and one day when I was holding it all in he paused and looked at me hard and

asked 'Are you crying on the inside Shanna'? I had to laugh even then because I WAS.....

I got him on a Saturday which was Valentine's Day 2009 and it's been love ever since. He wakes me up every morning even if I set the alarm to try and beat him up he still wakes 99 times out of 100 before me and if he's not already in my bed he comes to stand beside me and tilts his head to one side and looks at me adoringly and says, "Good Morning Sweetheart" or "Good Morning Mrs. Sweet Heart" and how can ANYONE be mad at a kid who does that to them at 4 am??? or 5am or 6 am EVERY DAY Sometimes I just needed to express my frustration, I do share the things that make me laugh or that I think will teach those others something about these kids and maybe give them a window of understanding about what my life is like.

I love to write and I do have a gift with that I know, but these days I have no time and I do have the messy house and the dishes piled up but I also have a big gate with a padlock on it and barbed wire along the top to keep people OUT, so I lock that when it's too messy and don't give a rats about the flotsam and jetsam, I just do what we all do which is sit and observe and interact with him or have him follow me from room to room...

And I actually like toileting with the door open because if he's not sitting on his wee box beside me at least I get a clear run to him or can hear what he's up to in the next room, but usually he has to follow me because if I can't see him then he is definitely getting into something.

I have a very funny toilet story and because some of you have kids who toilet training isn't on their list of things to do, you might get a good laugh from. Our Special Ed lady said not to call the nappy a nappy but to call it Poo pants and when you need to have a poo ask Shanna (a little bit of Sharon and a little bit of Nanna) tell Shanna you need your poo pants and then get him to stand in the toilet to do his biz. I'm thinking 'nice idea but like THATS gonna work' but from the very next day he has asked for his poo pants (surprise surprise) but it's taken about 4 months for him to tell me he has to stand in the toilet room to go and that's about one in 7 but at least it's a start.

So last week he's standing on his little box in the toilet room looking out the window at the birds and the clouds and the airplane and he's noisy, you know how some of them are, he's yelling and singing and moaning then crying and I'm saying 'no stay in there, you are doing well' then he's singing some more and yelling again then he calls out 'Whose that man'? I'm in the kitchen next door and I'm like 'Is there a man out there'? 'Yes' he says. I ask 'Is he on his own side of the fence'? (Its tin and 6 ft tall) and he says 'Yes'. I said 'that's good, it's ok if he's on his own side of the fence'. Then there's silence for about 15 or 20 seconds before he yells at the top of his lungs 'DONT LOOKING AT ME I'M TRYING TO HAVE A POO' I dare say that man isn't going to be looking over our fence again, to see if that's me abusing the Child as to why

he's making so much noise. I'm still laughing about it because I know the neighbours have to be wondering what the hell is going on over here some days. *Shanna*

People should never judge until they have walked a day in our shoes!

And another story we are aware of:

Grandma was attempting to lift severely disabled 11 year old into to his car seat when he began a major meltdown, Screaming he kicked at the car door which to prevent it smashing into car parked next to them, grandma had to use her knee as a buffer to prevent damage, causing injury. The man in the car just sat and watched. That afternoon the Police turned up at her door due to a report of abuse to a child. The two Police interviewed the grand and then reported to CYF. Days later and major stress involved they finally made contact. Fortunately for this family the Social Worker was aware of why child was with grand and that his condition was 'Shaken Baby' which has left him with multiple problems. All it would have taken was this man to get out of his car and ask if he could assist, then he may have understood instead of bringing more stress to a family with an already heavy load. On a positive side, a note has now been put on family file at CYF stating dismiss allegations.

Important changes to: Widow's Benefit

From 15th October there are changes to some benefits to encourage and support more people into work. Paid work can provide a better future for you and will help you become financially independent.

If you are on the Widow's Benefit, from **15 October 2012** you will have obligations to get ready for work, or be available for work according to your family situation.

Work obligations - 'Being Available for Work'

You will now be expected to actively seek suitable part-time or full-time work once your children are school age or older, or if you don't have any children.

1. If your youngest child is aged between **five and 13** you will be expected to look for **part-time** work. This means any suitable job between 10 and 20 hours a week.

If your youngest child is aged **14 or older or you don't have any children**, you will be expected to look for **full-time** work. This means any suitable job between 20 and 40 hours a week. You will need to be available and looking for work, and accept any offers of suitable employment. You may also need to prepare a CV, attend a programme to improve your skills, or do other job related training. What is suitable work for you will depend on your individual circumstances. Where it is appropriate

for your circumstances you need to be able to show us that you are actively seeking suitable work or sanctions may be imposed and your benefit reduced.

Work preparation obligations - 'Getting Ready for Work'

If your youngest child is aged **under five** you will need to take practical steps to get ready for work. What you are asked to do will depend on what will best help you get a job. It might be preparing a CV, attending a programme to improve your skills, or doing other job related training. You need to be able to show us that you are making an effort to get ready for work or sanctions may be imposed and your benefit reduced.

Helping you look for work

We can help you access training and a range of other support to help you move into work. You may be eligible for assistance with the cost of childcare while you are working, attending training or some other activity that will help you move into work.

The Childcare Subsidy is for preschool children and the OSCAR (Out of School Care and Recreation) Subsidy is for before and after school care and holiday programmes for children aged five - 13 years. *For more information read 'Help with Childcare Costs'.*

Tricky Adults: <http://safelyeverafter.com/index.html>



- It is unlikely your kid is going to be abused by a weirdo at the park (huge sigh of relief).
- That said, if there is a weirdo at the park, he's not going to fit the "stranger" model — so stop teaching your kid about strangers! He's going to come up to your kid and introduce himself. Voila! He ain't a stranger anymore.
- Teach your kids about TRICKY PEOPLE, instead. TRICKY PEOPLE are grown-ups who ASK KIDS FOR HELP (no adult needs to ask a kid for help) or TELLS KIDS TO KEEP A SECRET FROM THEIR PARENTS (including, IT'S OKAY TO COME OVER HERE BEHIND THIS TREE WITHOUT ASKING MUM FIRST. Not asking Mum is tantamount to KEEPING A SECRET.)
- Teach your kids not to DO ANYTHING, or GO ANYWHERE, with ANY ADULTS AT ALL, unless they can ask for your permission first.

See how I said ANY ADULTS AT ALL? That's because:

- It's far more likely your kid is going to be abused by someone they have a relationship with, because most cases of abuse follow long periods of grooming — both of the kid and his or her family.
- Bad guys groom you and your kids to gauge whether or not you're paying attention to what they're doing, and/or to lure you into dropping your guard. Don't. Kids who bad guys think are flying under their parents' radars, or kids who seem a little insecure or disconnected from their parents, are the kids who are most at risk.

SO:

Be suspicious of gifts that adults in positions of authority give your kids. There's no reason your son should be coming back from Bar Mitzvah study with a cool new keychain or baseball hat.

- Be suspicious of teachers who tell you your kid is so special they want to offer him more one-on-one time, or special outings. That teacher who says your kid is into Monet, he wants to take him to a museum next weekend? Say thanks, and take your kid to go see the exhibit yourself.
- You know that weird adult cousin of yours who's always out in the yard with the kids, never in the kitchen drinking with the grown-ups? Keep an eye on your kids when he's around.
- Oh, and that soccer coach who keeps offering to babysit for free, so you can get some time to yourself? NO ONE WANTS TO BABYSIT YOUR KIDS JUST TO BE NICE.

And, here's another good reason to add to the PANTHEON of reasons to teach your children the anatomically correct names for their genitalia:

- There isn't a child molester on earth who's going to talk to your daughter about her *vagina*. Really. But if she suddenly starts calling it a cupcake, you can ask her who taught her that.

"Stop telling your kids not to talk to strangers. They might need to talk to a stranger one day. Instead, teach them which sorts of strangers are safe. You know who's safe? A mum with kids. Period. Your kid gets separated from you at the mall? Tell her to ask for help from the first mum with kids they see."



The GRG Board, CEO, Field Officers, and Co-ordinators wish you all a happy Christmas and safe holidays with your precious ones. Take care and enjoy.

I made Victoria's Chocolate Mousse last night and it's so easy and quick (and very addictive...) so I wanted to share the recipe for you to enjoy.

As with any recipe that calls for chocolate, the secret is using the very best quality chocolate you can as your mousse will only be as good as the chocolate you use. It is truly not worth compromising and using anything of a lesser quality as you won't get the delicious rich velvety texture and exquisite chocolate taste!



Here is a simple recipe that could be your standby classic desert as it only takes a few minutes to make and looks and tastes truly amazing – guarantee to impress!

Ingredients:

180g plain chocolate (good quality dark chocolate)

75 ml water

15g butter

3 eggs separated

Directions:

Break the chocolate into small pieces and put it into a heatproof bowl over a heavy based saucepan of simmering hot water. Do not let the water touch the bowl.

Make sure the water does not get into the chocolate

Beat in the egg yolks one at a time.

Whip egg whites until stiff, but not dry and fold through into the chocolate mixture

Pour the mixture into small pots and let it chill for a couple of hours.

Serve it with cream or ice cream

Warning: It can be addictive and you will never have any leftovers... ENJOY!

www.grg.org.nz or www.kin.org.nz or www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz Email office@grg.org.nz

CEO: Geoff Lawson. Email geoff@grg.org.nz Ph. 09 360 8690 021 727 004

Member Support Manager: Di Vivian Email office@grg.org.nz

Hot Line: Free Phone 0800 GRANDS or 0800 472637 ext. 1 (not for use for Auckland callers) Landline users only. Auckland callers (09) 480 6530

Postal Add: PO Box 34 892 Birkenhead. Auckland 0742

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