



NEWSLETTER - FEBRUARY 2016

DATABASE: 6283 WHANAU CARERS

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

Our 17th Birthday

February 9th 2016 heralded the 17th year of foundation date for GRG. Oh my, when we look back at what has been accomplished and changes made over the years, we can be proud, very proud indeed. Like the proverbial saying goes 'a rolling stone gathers no moss,' well we proved the opposite, we rolled and we gathered. Gathered here, there and everywhere, the finest most selfless, amazing people we could ever have gathered. The bonus in this gathering was the precious ones they care for.

We can, will and still do make a difference.



No credit on cell?

And you need to contact a service or it is a toll call? Then call 0800 211 211. Ask the operator to put you through to the organisation you need, including us please. This does not cost you.



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School Books

Hey guys, buy extra school books whilst on sale and cheap. Store them away as when kiddy winks come home and say they need a new book, you have a stash. Buying them later will cost so much more as sales are over.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Winner



4 Reasons Parenting Trauma is Incredibly Difficult

<http://emergingmama.com/4-reasons-parenting-trauma-is-incredibly-difficult/>

We were well into the third year of our family's new normal, before I had come to the realization that things really were different for us. That no, all kids really don't do this whatever "this" may mean at the moment and that we were not imagining the stress. We were not imagining the frustration. It took nearly four years to accept that the challenges we were facing couldn't simply be dealt with by working harder or doing more. It took nearly four years to come to terms with the fact that living in a family with children who have experienced early childhood trauma(s) can be an isolating, lonely, and oddly enough traumatizing endeavour, with very unique and difficult challenges. So few on the outside can understand what it's like to live inside our walls. That is not to suggest whatever is inside our neighbour's walls is more or less difficult, just different perhaps. Below is my imperfect attempt to give words to some of our family's daily struggles.

- **Invisible Disability.** Children who have experienced in utero and/or childhood trauma have disabilities that may not be visible to the untrained eye. Our children can look physically healthy and happy, and yet their physiology has been altered by one or more traumatizing events in their lives. Their biology is different. Their brains are physically different. Because 80% of brain cells grow in the first two years of life, the damage experienced during those first years can and does manifest over the course of one's lifetime. How our children respond to day-to-day stressors is often outside the norm. Our children can and do achieve in school and in other environments. Yet, sometimes they cannot. They can be

behaving in socially acceptable ways one moment, and become dysregulated the next. Disability is defined as "a physical or mental condition that limits a person's movements, senses, or activities." When children who have experienced past trauma are "triggered," their disability shows its face. And yet, while focusing on the behaviour or the child, the disability itself, the underlying causes, often remains invisible to eyes who have been taught that disability needs to look, act or talk in a certain way.

Just because the disability may not be familiar to you, that does not mean it doesn't exist.

- **There is SO Little Understanding.** While I cannot speak from their perspective, I often wonder if trauma parents today may feel in any way similarly to the way parents of children on the autism spectrum felt a decade or so ago. Living with a general diagnosis that doesn't quite hit the mark? Confused about how to advise teachers, coaches and other caregivers? Parental instinct and daily realities constantly tell us something is not quite right, but so few resources are able to help us correctly identify what is going on AND what to do about it. Trauma mamas and papas often find support, comfort and professional resources in private online groups or through private conversations with others living this reality. One of the most frustrating parts from my perspective is that not one of our countless home-study visits or adoption agency meetings leading up to our adoption(s) consisted of someone telling us, "This will be the hardest thing you have ever done. Line up the therapists and begin counselling immediately. For your kids, for your family, for your marriage." Other than a brief online training about RAD, or reactive attachment disorder, which was presented as an extreme and unlikely reality, trauma and it's

likely realities, as they would present in our home, wasn't even broached. Perhaps that is because the DSM (Diagnostic Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders) is not even sure how to classify trauma and attachment disorders? There is progress being made, however, and there seems to be chatter about reclassifying PTSD as "a spectrum disorder." This gives me hope, as so many of our children are definitely on trauma and attachment spectrums. Yet, due to lack of understanding in society, or worse, judgement, we often retreat to our safe places and speak nothing of this. We are simply too tired, to be quite honest, to do more than what is essential each day and yet we desperately need more professionals who understand trauma to be vocal advocates for trauma informed awareness and education. We need those who know and understand to help move society from a place of so little understanding to a place that provides knowledge and resources for parents, teachers and caregivers.

•**Few Integrated Solutions.** Because traditional parenting methods do not work on children who have experienced trauma, because consequences have no lasting impact, because reward and punishments systems do not encourage positive behaviour, because our kids often lack cause and effect thinking in the moment and because there is so little understanding in society as a whole about how trauma operates, it often feels like our family is David facing Goliath, with the whole world stacked against future healing and wholeness, through no fault of our child. Yet, there are approaches and systems, or more accurately lifestyle modifications, that do show promise for bringing healing to children who have endured trauma. Trust Based Relational Intervention, Connected Parenting and Therapeutic Parenting are amazing approaches that truly understand how trauma has impacted our children, why our kids behave the way(s) that they do, and how we should parent our kids to foster healing. These techniques require consistent effort and focus, and are contrary to way most of today's adults were raised. They are HARD.

Personally, I get it wrong more than I get it right. Yet, when I understand that **my child is always operating out of fear of the worst case scenario happening again**, I can better understand and better respond.

Unfortunately, because schools and the greater systems of society do not often operate under these "connected" principles, parents are again alone, either shielding our kids from systems that don't understand or trying to piecemeal a plan together that is not a win-win, but is also not a lose-lose. Again, we need advocates! We need the training and education to leave academia and enter our educational systems, paediatric offices and our parenting models.

•**Secondary Trauma.** Maybe you, like I, have learned this the hard way? Maybe you, like I, lived in denial for a long time? Maybe you thought you could soldier through or shake it off? Maybe you tried to convince yourself you were imagining things? The truth is, however, I have come to learn the hard way that being the parent and primary caregiver to a traumatized individual or individuals, and constantly being exposed to their trauma, means that there is a high likelihood that I am living with secondary trauma. According to Amy Sugeno, a LCSW and trauma therapist, "Many parents describe feeling burned out, chronically overwhelmed, or fatigued. It can become increasingly difficult to maintain compassion and the desire to nurture, while simultaneously feeling guilty about this. We may shut down and withdraw or be on edge a lot of the time. There can be hopelessness, anxiety, and seemingly unending frustration. Other issues may be more specific to the experiences parents went through during the adoption journey or to the experiences of their adopted children." In short, many adoptive parents are living with secondary trauma. So busy caring for the needs of those around them, that we forget to remember we need to be cared for too.

If you can relate to anything written above, you are certainly not alone. The pain is real. The struggle is real. The trauma is real. The isolation is real. More so, the hope is real and the healing

can be real too. For our children and for us. While it may seem like no one understands and it is true that few actually do, there are professionals who can relate. There are communities of parents you can join who will support and encourage you. There are approaches to loving and raising our kids that show promise. And while we, as parents, certainly need professionals to advocate for our children and families, to educate the educators, and to help us heal, the truth is that YOU will likely become your child's biggest advocate. I want my child to succeed in school, socially, and in life. Therefore, my choice,

is to either continue to view myself as minuscule and paralyzed David, who is facing a monstrous Goliath, or remember that when David was armed with wisdom and knowledge of a greater plan, he was able to not only face the giant in front of him, but begin to dismantle it. And as daunting as that may seem, perhaps that is exactly where you and I need to begin? By sharing the realities of trauma and the education we have received with everyone who influences and interacts with our children, we can help to begin to move in a new and healing direction.

Trust News

Research 2016 Starts This Month

We are well down the track to finalizing the research survey questionnaire, which we expect will reach your email inbox on the 29 February. We cannot stress how vitally important this is for you to do please. We will remind you periodically after this has been dispatched. Again, if you are not getting these newsletters on email but by post and you do have an email, please email Kelly on kelly@grg.org.nz or phone her on 09 418 3753 to let her know your email address. If you don't have email and would like to take part then phone Kelly and let her know you would like to do this via telephone. Many thanks.

New Field Officer

Sheree McKenzie

Sheree has resigned as Coordinator for the Rotorua group and a new Coordinator will shortly be appointed. Sheree is passionate about supporting safer whanau. Her role is to provide support for grandparent/whanau carers dealing with family violence, mental illness and child abuse/neglect issues. Sheree has experience of raising step-children and is now raising two grandchildren. With a business management career including

banking, sales and marketing, Sheree knows the total life shift/devastation that occurs when a grandchild/ren arrive in your care with no notice. She retrained to upskill herself to cope with her personal situation and to be able to help others on a similar journey.

She provides support, advice and referrals for grandparent/whanau carers throughout New Zealand, particularly in areas involving traumatized children, the Family Court process, safe-guarding yourself and accessing support for behaviour issues. Her position commenced February 2nd. She is contactable on sheree@grg.org.nz or 021 2368115.

New Support Group Coordinator & Support Groups Required

We warmly welcome Sharon Warne as our new Support Group Coordinator for Papakura-Pukekohe.

Coordinators are also currently being sought for Tokoroa, Kaitia and Napier-Hastings areas. If you are interested in joining our team of wonderful volunteer who assist local members to have access to information and support to build their strengths, skills and knowledge please contact Diana East (Field Officer) on 0800 472 637 x6 or email d.east13@yahoo.co.nz

Local Group Meetings (please keep for future Reference)

Wanting to find the GRG support group nearest you? Here's a list of meeting times and venues for most of our groups. **Note:** Contact details for all our Coordinators are on the back page of this newsletter. Tell the Coordinator that you are considering a GRG support group. Ask questions. Ask if you can visit their group to learn more. When you do make phone calls to contact a Coordinator, remember they are volunteers; they may not be able to talk or call you back immediately so please be patient. Some of our groups do not meet and are just telephone support only.

- *Ashburton. Meets at Columbus Café every 2 weeks at 10am 18th Feb then 3rd March onwards.*
- *Auckland East. Meet last Monday of the month (excluding school holidays and Public Holidays), 10 am at Dunkirk Road Activity Centre, 50 Dunkirk Road. Panmure*
- *Auckland North Shore, GRG Office 3rd Wednesday every month 10.30am except school holidays. 15-17 Rawene Rd Birkenhead.*
- *Auckland South. PACT Hall. 311 Great South Rd Papatoetoe. 10am 1st Wednesday of month, not during school holidays.*
- *Auckland West, 10.00am in the hall at 267 Glengarry Road, under the Terrance Kennedy Retirement Home. 3rd Thursday of the month.*
- *Christchurch, held in hall on corner 125 Hei Hei Road Hei Hei. 10am, 3rd Friday of every month. Not in school holidays.*
- *Dannevirke. Meet last Tuesday of month, 10am-12 noon, at Tararua REAP office, 20 Allardice Street (temporary premises for next 3 months)*
- *Dargaville. Regular meetings are being organised. Please contact Coordinator for details.*
- *Hamilton, 9th March 10am at 17 Thorpe St, Fairview Downs. RSVP required by phone or txt to 0226007672 so numbers can be catered for.*
- *Invercargill. Second Wednesday in each month. 10am at Family Works 183 Spey Street Invercargill.*
- *Napier. RSA in Napier, 10am on first Friday of the month.*
- *Nelson. Wooden Spoon Café 10am every week on a Tuesday. They also have cards on a Thursday every Thursday 10am- 1.30 please contact Paula.*
- *Porirua: Meet 2nd Weds 10am-12 noon at Connect Global Office, level1, City Fitness Bldg, 1 Walter Leigh Ave, Porirua*
- *Rotorua. 3rd Monday of month, 9.30am-12 noon, at Parksyde Community Centre, Tarewa Road.*
- *Tauranga. First Tuesday of every month. St Peters in the City. Corner Cameron Rd & Spring St.*
- *Te Kuiti. 3rd Wednesday of month, 10am at Tiffany's, Rora Street*
- *Upper Hutt. Last Friday of month (except stat hols), 11am at Iona Centre, Ebdentown Street.*
- *Wairarapa. Meet on 2nd Tuesday of month, 10am at The Lighthouse Church, 23 Intermediate Street, Masterton*
- *Wellington. 10.30am at Great Start. 111 Eastern Hutt Road, Opposite Taitai College. 1st Friday in the month.*
- *Whanganui. Meets Gonville Library on 4th Saturday (March start) of month at 1pm.*
- *Whangarei. 1st Friday of month (except school holidays), 10am, at Anglican Care Centre, cnr Deveron St and Mill Rd.*

Grand's reflections...

Oh Dear

Grandson Ryan, who is now 14 (but because being a shaken baby is cortically blind and has had strokes,) had a hard morning with appointments so I thought I would buy him a gift. I found a battery operated bottle stirrer for baby's



milk and took the beaters off it, so he did not catch his fingers in it. Only \$4.95! I figured he would love the vibrations from it as they're good for sensory development. Gave it to him in the car and on the way home we had to stop at traffic lights. A car of

older people all were pointing at Ryan killing themselves laughing - I thought how rude they should know better! Then driving along, I caught sight of Ryan in the rear vision mirror and realised why they were laughing! Oh dear! Can't take it off him, so just letting EVERYONE know IT IS FOR BABY FORMULA!! A MIXING STIRRER!!

Goodness Me

Down at the GRG office after a meeting, I decided to sort out some donated stuff. When finished I grabbed my sun glasses and popped them on top of my head so as not to forget them. Off I went into the local shops, the Chemist, Post office and various other places. I did notice a lot of people staring at me and smiling, but thought oh well, I am quite well known in the local area, so smiled

back. It was not until the sun broke through the clouds and I grabbed the sunglasses off the top of my head to put on. Oh no, from the donated goods, I had accidentally grabbed a child's tiara and was proudly walking around with this glittering on my head!!! Silly old duck, am I. Talk about embarrassed.
Di

A Whale of a Time

Grand-daughter Kayleigh's idea is to work for DOC eventually. Bridget (a friend of ours and a DOC worker) has taken Kayleigh out a couple of times but last week was quite a highlight for her, as Bridget had to go to Whale Island to check on some Kiwi and asked if Kayleigh would like to go. Kayleigh jumped at the opportunity, so here she is sitting on the wharf near the boat, then out past "Lady on the Rock"

PJ Tours are very good at taking Bridget out to Whale Island and even White Island free of charge, when she needs to check on anything for DOC. Hence it was very upsetting yesterday when one of PJ's boats caught fire, fortunately our coast guard are very alert and on the ball. All were rescued with no one but the boat hurt.



Nan Shirley.

Sexual Health

More than 28,000 people, including 465 children aged between 10 and 14-years-old, were diagnosed with chlamydia in New Zealand in a single year, latest figures show.

Statistics from the Institute of Environmental Science and Research show there were also 3038 positive tests for gonorrhoea in 2014. Of those, 74 were young people between the ages of 10 and 14.

Figures for 2015 were not available.

Queen Charlotte College principal Tom Parsons, of Picton, said young people were engaging in risky behaviours, like drinking and sexual activity, at an earlier age than in the past.

May I say visit a sexual health clinic sooner rather than later, they have heaps of brochures you can leave around your home. If a child/young person goes they also give out free condoms, in a plain brown paper bag. Had to laugh, as now 24 year grand-daughter came round other day and was searching in bathroom cupboard for something and asked "Nan why do you have all these expired condoms in the cupboard?" Well my darling they were yours from when you were 14 and we took you to the sexual health clinic. She cracked up and said throw them away as they all have expired. Gosh hope rubbish men do not search in our rubbish bin!! Packets and packets of them... This issue does need informed information as we do not want to end up being great grandparents raising babies, do we? Family Planning clinics are free for under 22's to find a local clinic got to <http://www.familyplanning.org.nz/>

Can we help you?

Members ONLY services are available nationwide
Caregivers Toll free helpline
0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637)
For landline caregivers only please
New members and general information please dial ext. 1

Members' Support Manager:

Di Vivian
Auckland/free callers:
(09) 480 6530
Email Di at: office@grg.org.nz

GRG Trust NZ
PO Box 34892
Birkenhead
Auckland 0746

Suite 4 (Ground floor)
Rawene Chambers
15 Rawene Rd
Birkenhead Auckland 0626

Office Manager:
Kelly Vivian 09 418 3753
Email office2@grg.org.nz or
kelly@grg.org.nz

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or you have changed address please update your details by contacting Kelly at the Trust Office as this is where the total mail out membership is kept.
Moved home or planning to? Be sure to let us know.

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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

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.

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

We are a Charitable Trust



[Anti-bullying](#)



0800 456 450



Give a Little for GRG

<https://www.givealittle.co.nz/org/grg>

www.powertoprotect.net.nz



SUPPORT GROUP CONTACT NUMBERS

Locality	Name	Phone	E-mail Address
Ashburton **	Margaret Mason	03 308 0190	margaretmason1010@gmail.com
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	09 277 7514	
Auckland West **	Debbie Hall	09 818 7828	debron@xtra.co.nz
Auckland Papakura/ Pukekohe** **	Sharon Warne	0274194777	warneysvision@hotmail.com
Canterbury **	Veronica Brunt	03 942 5935	r.v.brunt@paradise.net.nz
Dannevirke**	Malcolm Johnson	06 3740407	
Dargaville **	Sandy Zimmer	09 439 4420	sandy.zimmer@hotmail.com
Gisborne **			
Hamilton **	Pat Davis	0226007672	hamilton111.grg@gmail.com
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Nelson **	Paula Eggers	03 544 5714	paulaeggers2000@yahoo.com.au
Otago Est/Nth *	Aad & Leonie	03 465 1764	omaandopa@xtra.co.nz
Palmerston North*	Martha Taonui-Andrews	0272662653	marthataonuians@xtra.co.nz
Papamoa *	Rawinia Macredie	07 562 2850	jnmacredie@kinect.co.nz
Porirua Wellington **	Lise Maru	04 477 9445	lise.maru@clear.net.nz
Rotorua **	Anne Donnell	020 402 22910	rotoruagrg@gmail.com
Taumarunui **	Ruth Sandiford Phelan	027 757 8097	ruthsp@email.com
Taupo *	Viv Needham	07 378 1811	viv.maree@gmail.com
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Te Kuiti **	Kay Higgins	027 430 2939	palmdrive@xtra.co.nz
Tokoroa *			
Upper Hutt **	Margaret Pearson	04 976 9475	maggieagpie@paradise.net.nz
Wairarapa **	Tere Lenihan	06 379 5407	terel@swscc.org.nz
Wanganui **	Jenny Morton	027 443 7780	jaydeez@clear.net.nz
Wellington **	Cecilee Donovan	04 477 0632	cecileed@gmail.com
Whakatane **	Shirley Faulkner	07 308 8524	shirleyfaulkner@xtra.co.nz
Whangarei **	Janet Puriri	09 435 0044	

For the most up to date contact details please go to our website www.grg.org.nz

If you are a grandparent or whanau caregiver and need a referral to one of our Field Officers please call 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637) or if you are in Auckland please call 09 480 6530