



Newsletter March 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: 5063 Whanau Carers.

From the National Office:

Your Voices

Lucky No 8

Before arriving on Nan and Matua's doorstep these children would be lucky to shower once a week. Now that they are in care they shower at the very least, once a day.



7/8 of the children take swimming lessons twice a week at Duck n Dive Swimming Academy for over the past year and 2/8 have entered a swim-a-thon.

Now that summer is here, that means beach, tide, waves, flags and learning your limits and sign language.

We were fortunate to spend a week at Orewa in the holidays, so here came the test.

8 children require at least 8 adults. Children ready in togs and adults line the beach with their deck chairs.

Tide is going out, and children know their limits when they are standing on the sand, when they get into the water those instructions go in one ear and out the other. For the 1st half hour, no adults are sitting in deck chairs as planned; all adults are standing on the shoreline, jumping, waving and yelling in all directions.

Everyone is told to get out and we start again. The children explain that it's not deep where they were. The adults explained we couldn't get to them fast enough if something happened to them. We managed to put a beach towel between the children and adults. By using the towel as a wave and explained we can only see them when the wave drops. We then put the 2 younger ones into the water and let the older ones sit in the deck chairs so they could understand what we see. They were frantic, hello, they got it.

We have explained hand signals from the shoreline

Left and right means: - you have drifted, and come back in line with the deck chairs.

2 hands pulling inwards means - "you're too far out"

One hand with thumb pointing to the right means – you're out, no more chances, come sit with Nan or Matua on the sand till those ears learn to listen.

Hand signal in water - arm in the air means - swimmer needs help

Most importantly, swim in a crowd. After we got that straight, yes hooray fun in the sun for everyone. Can't wait for the next summer holiday's. *- 8 is enuff*

Reflecting:

Having a clean out I came across a number of recorded tapes that had our 3 charges names on them, now for 14 years these tapes had been hidden (lost) away. I sat and listened to the innocent very young voices that spoke, 2 aged 5 and one 6. They were talking about what they would do when they grew up. 5 year old male stated that he was going to be my security guard and stand at the door with 2 Rottweiler's to keep the bad people out (interesting upon reflection). 5 year old female was going to be my nurse and she would have me in a rocking chair complete with a ruggie, with puppies, kittens and rabbits on my knees and birds flying around the room. (Imagine the mess) She would mush up my food for me and change my nappies, umm OK! (I must have seemed really old to her) The 6 year old female would work as a vet to earn money to bring home for us and help with the cleaning.

These young children are now 18 & 20. You will be pleased to know that they are not guarding my door, nor changing my nappies or mushing my food! And no, eldest is not a vet, she attends Graphic Art school. As for the cleaning bit all I can say is Ha!!

Now for the other 6 tapes.....Wonder what treasures they will reveal. Nan *

Hello from the beautiful garden city - Christchurch.



I am 52 and early last year I made the choice to save my 2 grandchildren from a life they did not ask for.

Someone told me that I had sacrificed my relationship, my career, my social life & freedom.....what an amazing woman I am. True, but what I have received in return is much bigger.

My grandchildren are living in my home, they are safe, fed, cared for, loved and nurtured.

My daughter is a drug addict. My actions have not only protected my grandchildren - but I have saved my beautiful daughters life. She is now on the methadone programme; she is working, saving money, and striving forward to be a better mother to a 7 and 3 year old.

The cost to me has been enormous..... but I would do it all again in a heartbeat. The smiles on 2 children who have their mother back - worth every tear and heartache.

I read this quote and wrote it down. This I share with you.

"Other Things May Change Us, But We Start and End with Family"

I am truly blessed. Despite the earthquakes and aftershocks, we are coming through this together as a family.

Kindest wishes to everyone, Donna

And

Every time I see on the news stories of child abuse and murder, like the most recent event, it reminds me why I do what I do. Yes, I am tired and getting older quicker than I should, but I

would do it all again. God bless our little girl and I am so sad for the children such as those on the news who never had an opportunity. *Grand-dad*

You are NZ heroes:

I have been giving thought about all of us in the many and varied circumstances we have found ourselves in, we sadly hear so much about child abuse and deaths of our taonga. It is appalling and we need to know, but also pushes the negative, the cry goes out from the general public and the media each and every time a child/baby is killed “where was the family?” Does anything change.....NO



Well I think it is about time we flipped this around! We are here, we have stood up and we should be celebrated! Perhaps if we were celebrated for our bravery and that is, what it is, then this may encourage others to do the same. We are doing no favours to New Zealand by hiding our bravery, forget the shame (Whakama) we need to be celebrated and shouted from the roof tops, this needs major media attention: Pluses:

- Empower and encourage families to stand up to abuse, let them know they are not alone.
- Celebrate your and their bravery.
- Put right the discrimination for our grand/kin children.
- How many children have we saved, rather than see them in the ground.

Hard hitting, yes, but this is the reality! Each and every one of you is a hero!

What do you think, we would love to hear from you and how we should go about this. *Di*

HELEN: The Helen Meads Tragedy: Book review

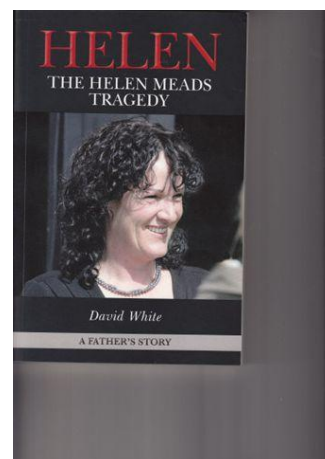
Here is the story of Grandparents who not only had to appear in the High Court for their beloved daughter's murder but also in the Family Court to protect their young grandchild. I do know some of you will identify with this. And all our members will relate.

On the morning of 23 September 2009 Helen Meads was murdered by her husband Greg at the stables on their Matamata farm. It was the final chapter in years of control and abuse.

Here, Helen's father David White describes the events of that day, and what led to it, and tells of the ordeals that a family is subjected to when one of their own is murdered. There are issues of custody, access and bail, and looming court appearances. There is also the bureaucracy and the media that have to be dealt with and accepted as inevitable intrusions on the private lives of the victim's families. Families, who would prefer to be left alone to grieve.

It is a story that is becoming far too familiar in New Zealand.

David White was born in Pahiatua in 1944 and attended schools there and Raumati, and was a founding student of Kapiti College. On leaving school, he took a temporary job at Whitcombe and Tombs (now Whitcoulls) and stayed with books, working for publishers and retail booksellers. He retired after selling the Highland Park Bookshop. He now lives in Matamata with his wife Pam and until the death of his daughter Helen, his retirement consisted of driving a milk tanker for nine months of the year, and fulfilling dreams for the other three. Now



responsible for his grandchildren, he is also actively involved in the prevention of violence towards women. The book was published and released for sale on the 12th March. Available at: Whitcoulls, Paper Plus and all other bookshops and hopefully at your Library. A must read! Have tissues handy.

Country Life for me:

During the holidays....Lolo (Koro) took her to the A & P show. They are sitting there watching the horses jump cause Nana was working there in the horse ring and grand-daughter 4 says...Look Lolo...Look...he is looking all around the place and says what am I looking at?...she replies there is a Friesian Horse jumping the jumps...YES she does listen to what Nana teaches her about the breeds of cows on the way to work (and actually there is a breed of horse called Friesian but not one of those that were there). Then today we are heading home and she says...hope that horse in the paddock doesn't touch that fence Nana it might be hot cause the sun has been shining all day today...she hears us saying not to touch the electric fence as it is a hot fence!!! Out of the mouths of babes: *Smile, I do on a regular basis.*

Miss 4.5 is in bed...supposed to be asleep....I go in and nearly break my neck, here are all her dolls on the floor lined up with their Dora quilt over the lot of them...and then I hear....they just won't go to sleep Nana....what do you say - Nana said nothing I just walked out shaking my head...girls are so different to boys!!!!
Ann

Morning Tea with Ian Grant: Hamilton this time: 28th March



**The Methodist Centre
62 London Street
Hamilton. 10am-11am**

GRG Trust NZ are very happy to announce we are working with Parents Inc. to bring to you in this year “**Morning tea with Ian Grant**” nationwide. These venues, time and dates will be advertised in these newsletters, web site and direct email. Have a tea or coffee, sandwich or slice and the chance to listen to wise words and humour. You WILL enjoy. ***Hamilton's turn this time; Please register with Di on Freephone 0800 472 637 extension 1 or email office@grg.org.nz by 25th March for catering purposes. This event is free to our members.*** More of these to come throughout the country, we will let you know.

Flu Jabs:

Are now available at your local Doctor and you may even qualify for a free one, ask your local Doctor.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ Green Paper Submission:

We have been very busy preparing this document for you all as stakeholders. This is a combined effort from the Trust Board, CEO, Field officers, our research and some of our members. We are unable to print this out in hard copy as it is 18 pages long. It is viewable on our web site in main menu under “Green paper Submission” www.grg.org.nz

Ashburton Support Group for GRG started

Jude is running this group, with assistance from her daughter Annemarie who is also a kin carer please phone Jude on 03 307 2147 or email jude.brian@clear.net.nz. Welcome Ladies:

Nelson GRG Meetings:

Meetings and coffee mornings: Meetings last Tuesday of each month and coffee mornings every 2nd Tuesday of the month . Also cards every Thursday if anyone interested, please contact Paula on 03 548 6660 email paulaegggers2000@yahoo.com.au

Wanting to buy:

Grandmother raising 6 grandies and has 3 of her own would like to purchase a very reasonable priced 12 seater van please ph. 06 370 1305 (Manawi)



Word to the wise:

Grand-daughter now 20 and out in extended education, applied to Study Link for a loan (granted) and Student Allowance for her course. Phone rang at home and woman asked to speak to her, she was told she's not here as at her course. 'Does she live with you' was the next question, what is your relationship to her. 'Grandmother'



I replied, She then went on to say, 'I can see she has lived with you for a while, would you be prepared to sign a parental form for her' "What does that entail, as I am not her parent' I asked, 'Oh that does not matter' she said, "we have heaps of Grandparents, Aunt's, Uncle's acting in parental role nothing to worry about just your name, address, IRD number and your savings and income details" I knew at that point exactly where she was coming from, she wanted our income details to see if we could afford to keep her. For goodness sakes! She was told in no uncertain terms that our income had nothing to do with our Grand-daughter. She promptly said goodbye. Be warned. Then I did some checking and.....

I searched on Study link's web site and look what was found.

Parents - general definition | www.studylink.govt.nz

This provides a general definition of parents: **This is a natural, adoptive or whangai parent, a guardian, caregiver, step-parent, partner of your parent, or any other person acting as a parent who is responsible for your well-being and financial support.**

Hello she is 20, I am not her Guardian any longer, nor her caregiver. She indeed had been paying board for the last year, but had now decided to further her education.

Note: This may include a caregiver who receives an Orphan's Benefit or Unsupported Child's Benefit only if they are acting in place of a parent. **A caregiver appointed by the Chief Executive of Child, Youth and Family or an agent recognised by the Children, Young Person's and Their Families Act 1989 is not regarded as a parent.**

*Quite frankly this is appalling!!! This is an outrage!!! Again our children are discriminated against! **The last sentence says it all.***

Well just bury me in the back garden! Cause I sure will not have any money left for a funeral. So ok, we have to raise them on a pittance, educate, clothe, feed and pay legal fees, now we may have to pay to support them after they turn 18 plus (hers is a 4 year course) and heaven forbid we die before they reach 18 we have to leave enough money for a Court battle for a testimonial guardianship, because the 'parents' can challenge again.

Income test for both parents: Study Link

For you to be able to get the Student Allowance, your parents' combined annual income must be less than:

\$82,953.82 before tax if you live in a parental home to study = Taxed \$64,659.33

\$89,936.68 before tax if you live away from a parental home to study = Taxed
\$69,337.80

Now admittedly the threshold is quite high, but it is the principle of it all that gets to me! *A mad as a disturbed Hornets' nest. Di**

PORSE:



PORSE may be able to assist you with the in-home childcare of pre-school grandchildren. The grandparents must have a challenging and yet rewarding job on their hands and as an ECE provider we can offer a range of services that may be of interest or help to you and the grandparents.

At PORSE we feel the home is the finest setting for children's growth and development. Children in a loving, stress free, stable home environment contributes greatly to their emotional needs, growth and development.

We have a range of In-Home childcare options that the families can use, they can support each other with respite care or they can choose to look after pre-school children in their own home whilst at home with their own grandchildren. For example;

- **Home Educator** – Children are cared for and educated in the home of an approved PORSE educator. Rates start from \$5.50 - \$6.00 per hour per child.
- **Family Educator**- where a relation or friend cares for children and utilises the PORSE benefits and support services.

PORSE do not charge placement fees. In fact in some cases, we can contribute to the cost of the childcare. We offer a host of benefits for both the family and the educator.

By phoning free phone 0800 023 456 you will be connected to your local branch.

We drew a line in the sand: As hard as that was!

We had to; this situation had gone beyond crisis point. Too many people were suffering and the situation had extended out, affecting other little young grandchildren who loved to visit their Nan & Pop but no longer wished to, because they had become frightened of her, (now 19). Drugs, alcohol, she did it all and did this to excess daily. Not working, disappearing for days at a time, all her belongings began to vanish as did items from our home. When she was here and not sleeping, she was abusive, threatening to injure and yes even to kill us and others in the home. This was relentless. The demands for money for obviously 'false' things came thick and fast and verbal abuse flowed when we would not comply. I had become a shaking mess, her every second word was a very bad cuss word, as I am sure you can imagine. We would wake some mornings to find strangers in our home. After yet another threat to kill and screaming abuse from her, I phoned the police (not the first time either). She was right next to me whilst I was talking to the despatcher and she was screaming abuse and vile language at her, which the despatcher heard and recorded. Police attended (3) She gave them the same treatment, I looked at the Constable and said, 'this was what we get on a daily basis' She called them F*****n c*** pedophiles, at that point due to shaking so badly, I had to walk away and left them to it. Her tirade went on for quite a while. I looked up at the wrong moment to see her handcuffed and being frog marched down the drive.

Later in the afternoon, the Constable phoned to say they had called in the crisis team to the station and they had said she did not meet the criteria and they were going to release her on bail, where to I asked? Now this is where we had to make the hardest decision of our lives. If she was to come back home then we all would be back to the same thing. We drew the line in the sand and asked the Constable to trespass her from our home. He did. She drifted from mates to mates, but quickly they also had, had enough of her. The phone calls to home came thick and fast, full of manipulations, sleeping in bus shelters, lost weight, crying, missed us, not eating, no money, people have stolen my things, sometimes 10 calls per day, we held our stand. We did not abandon her, as having attended the Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Conference I had heard about Dingwell Trust who helped with assisted living. They put a mentor alongside her and today after 2 months; she has accommodation and will soon be entering Odyssey House (drug & alcohol rehab) hopefully under residential care for 9 – 12 months.

Sometimes we have to ask for help.

What helped keep us strong:

- I was able to use her mentor as a buffer, ask/tell ***** and see what she thinks.
- No buying into her horror/drama stories, said 'oh my' and goodness a lot and never offered her advice just reflected her back to *****.
- The minute she started getting abusive or demanding I would hang up the phone. Did this sometimes 5 times in a row.
- Despite begging or pleading and her promises to be good, we would NOT remove the Trespass Order. She was told that she knew this could not continue, over and over again, she agreed but needed constant reminders.
- She is always reassured that we love her, she says the same back now certainly not in the beginning quite the opposite.

Hard, you bet it was and today we are able to go to the City and take her out for lunch, then drop her back at her place. Yes the tears flow, she is still doing heavy drugs and alcohol, still very self-centered, but the phone calls have lessened. That is probably because she has

'lost/sold' her 10th cell phone, but has recently discovered a thing called a normal phone, which is free in her residence. Roll on Odyssey House and may we have a successful outcome for her. And thank you Dingwell Trust I know it has been a rough ride. Might I say for **all** concerned!

Nan*



The 2.99 Special

We went to breakfast at a restaurant where the 'seniors' special' was two eggs, bacon, hash browns and toast for \$2.99.

'Sounds good,' my wife said. 'But I don't want the eggs.'

'Then, I'll have to charge you \$3.49 because you're ordering a la carte,' the waitress warned her.

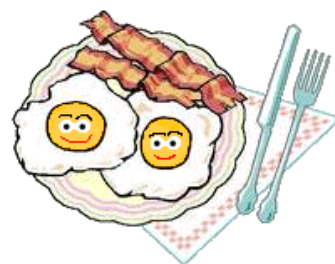
'You mean I'd have to pay for not taking the eggs?' my wife asked incredulously. 'YES!' stated the waitress.

'I'll take the special then,' my wife said.

'How do you want your eggs?' the waitress asked.

'Raw and in the shell,' my wife replied. She took the two eggs home and baked a cake.

DON'T MESS WITH SENIORS!!! WE'VE been around the block more than once!



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)

Chief Executive Officer Geoff Lawson ext. 6

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

Field Officers:**Sharon ext. 2**

Sharon is a counselor with 25 years' experience. She has specific experience in working with families and the challenges of parenting, including children who have experienced trauma and issues of grief/loss for grandparent/kin carers and their families who are also parents, siblings of the original parents of the children in their care. She can assist with Family Group Conference's or Strengthening families as a support person when practical or give advice via telephone.

Auckland callers use 09 419 0045 Tuesdays & Fridays only.

Nola Adams: ext. 3

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 06 845 3141 (Hawkes Bay callers)

Diana East: ext. 4

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 and issues effecting grandparents raising.

Hours 9am – 5pm 04 970 8177 (Wellington callers)

Tricia Corin: ext. 5

Is a Beneficiaries Advocate, If you are having problems with your Benefits from Work and Income / Inland Revenue or are unsure if you are on the right Benefit, needing advice on UCB or DPB, Disabilities Allowance or recoverable and non-recoverable advances.

Hours 11am 5pm 07 8685490 (Waikato callers)

Please note that our Field Officers are Part Time

Formal GRG Support Groups: All welcome.**Locality, Name, Phone, E-mail Address.**

Ashburton ** Jude Suddens 03 307 2147 jude.brian@clear.net.nz

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

Mangere East ** Teresa Van Kuylenburg 09 974 2388 teresa.mangere@grg.gmail.com

Canterbury North * Jan Farquhar 03 313 6487 farlaw@xtra.co.nz

Coromandel * Keitha Jenkins 07 866 8273 northbrook@slingshot.co.nz

Dargaville * Barbara Sterling 09 439 4555 ladybee@vodafone.co.nz

Hokitika * Fran Edwards 03 755 8142

Huntly ** Lodi Liebert 07 828 6123 rulo@clear.net.nz

Invercargill ** Christine Marsh 03 216 9773 marshfamily3@xtra.co.nz

Kaitia * Irene Turner-Crombie 09 408 3446 iturnercrombie@gmail.com

Kaiwaka * Sarah Rogers 09 431 2194 sarah_jane@clear.net.nz

Kaikohe * Ngara Poa 027 637 42357 ngaropoa@thook.co.nz

Levin * Ann Waddell 06 362 7269 ann.hen@xtra.co.nz

Napier ** soon to be announced

Nelson ** Paula Eggers 03 548 6660 paulaegggers2000@yahoo.com.au

Otago Est/Nth * Aad & Leonie 03 465 1764 omaandopa@xtra.co.nz

Palmerston North ** Martha Taonui-Andrews 06 356 6929 email marthaan@inspire.net.nz

Rotorua ** Win Macredie 07 345 5003 winmacredie@xtra.co.nz

Cyril Anderson 07 347 8163 judycyril@xtra.co.nz

Te Hiku Northland * Koha Mehana 09 408 3788



Upper Hutt ** Margaret Pearson 04 976 9475 maggiemagpie@paradise.net.nz

Wairarapa ** Tere Lenihan 06 304 8804 terelenihan@clear.net.nz

Wanganui ** Lynette Dickinson 06 344 2830

Cherryl Smith 06 344 1278 cherryl@clear.net.nz

Wellington ** Cecilee Donovan 04 477 0632 cecileed@gmail.com

Whakatane * Shirley Faulkner 07 322 8524 shirleyfaulkner@xtra.co.nz

Whangarei ** Janet Puriri 09 435 0044 jpuriri@ihug.co.nz

* = Telephone support only ** = Telephone & Meetings.

Very informal coffee groups – For times and venues

Auckland Central: June 09 630 2409

Coromandal/Tairua/Whitianga: Brenda 07 866 4476

Christchurch (New Brighton): Annie 03 388 0928

Hamilton: Yvonne 07 829 8246 **(new)**

Howick/Manukau: Lorraine 09 271 2900

Marton/Hunterville: Sharon 06 322 9795

New Plymouth: Sue 06 756 7542 /027 8569242/txt

Te Kauwhata: Denise 07 826 3779

Tauranga: Lee 07 578 5870 **(new)**

Timaru: Michelle Txt 027 2323583 **(new)**

Wainuiomata: Tricia 04 971 3538

Wairarapa: Sheryl 06 304 9957

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.

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

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

We are a voluntary not-for-profit organisation.

All donations to the GRG Trust are tax deductible.

Abbreviations:

GRG – Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust

BOT – Board of Trustees

CYF – Child Youth and Family Services

Co's – Co-ordinator/s

UCB – Unsupported Child Benefit

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

BPS – Business Professional Services Limited. Our 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) and they will then make sure you are spoken to by your Social Worker and if they are not available then

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

Member Support Manager: Di Vivian

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

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please contact 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.

We are a Charitable Trust

