



NEWSLETTER - NOVEMBER 2015

DATABASE: 6149 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

Food for thought! Grandparents in Parental Role Highest in Auckland Region

The last Census in 2013 provides information on the number of grandparents in parenting roles where the parents of the children are not living in the same household.

Did you know that there were 9,543 grandparents in a parental role at the time of the 2013 Census? Just over two-thirds (6,429) of these grandparents were in 'couple with children' families.

In 2013, the Auckland region had the highest number of grandparents in a parental role, with 2,571 people (26.9 percent).

The regions with the next-highest numbers of grandparents in a parental role were:

- Waikato – 1,410 people (14.8 percent)
- Bay of Plenty – 921 people (9.7 percent).

Around 4,641 are spread across the rest of the country. Unfortunately we don't know from the Census exactly how many children were being raised in these households. However, from our own membership database we have worked out that our members are raising an average of 1.8 children each. When you extrapolate that out against the 9,543 grandparents in a parental role in NZ that is around 17,000 children.

We think that when you add the number of children in whanau care it is likely that there are over 20,000 children in New Zealand being raised by someone other than their parents!



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Coordinator News

It is with sad regret we inform you that Delphina Galvin from Pukekohe has resigned to concentrate on her family. We wish her well and thank her for all she has done. If anyone in this area is keen to pick up the mantle please email Diana East on d.east13@yahoo.co.nz

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Winner
Mitre 10 Community of the Year



Changing Dreams

After 30 years of marriage raising 3 of our own children and taking in 2 foster children with all its up's and downs our nest was finally empty.

Yay freedom. Freedom to recapture our very early days of marriage, albeit much older, but just the 2 of us with only each other to consider, life was ours and ours alone. We bought a

convertible; (the last one we had been in was a very old Mark 1 Zephyr, which had a leaky roof). Every week-end with hood down in our new convertible we would venture out into this beautiful country of

ours in search of antiques. Many happy miles we travelled. A cruise was on our long list of 'us' time, to sail the seas and be waited on and see different parts of the world. Well why not, after all we had worked hard through our lives and had given back to society.

Our dream lasted a whole 6 months until we were asked to take on 2 foster grandchildren by Child Youth and Family. Our dreams came to a crashing halt, lives turned upside down. The needs of the children were so great we had no time to give any dreams a thought. And although we had moved into 'dream time' one very quickly moved back into the pattern of child raising again, akin to like slipping in to a comfy slipper. But this time of child raising brought about many challenges, and many tears, challenges one certainly did not experience first time around and at times would drop us to our knees.

To look into the innocent frightened faces of



two beautiful children a new dream developed, one that would make their lives safe and enjoyable as best we could. Also out of this experience a new and very different dream developed. An expanding of our circumstances and a realisation that many others, just like us had had their dreams shattered into a million pieces. There was no support, so our dream became tangible and one that would make a

difference. Hence an amazing dream unfolded and grew into Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ.

Over the years of raising this new family we were still able to take that cruise,

although not to wider parts of the world and with a couple of little precious people extra in tow. Thank goodness for kids clubs on these ships is all I can say.

Instead of a relaxing trip to Australia, it was a crazy exhausting time spent at theme parks. A memory from our Australian trip was going on a crab boat where they picked up the crab pots and cooked them for lunch, the children were

fascinated and could be heard giving all the crab's names, much to the horror of the other people on the boat. Now you try and eat a crab that has been named Bob! Needless to say the children did not eat any crab and had chicken instead. Our dreams were being fulfilled

but just a little differently to what we envisaged. People looked at us and smiled thinking what good grandparents taking their grandchildren on a holiday, giving the parents a break. Little did they know. (Continued next page....)

This was all of 18 years ago when we began to live our dream for a mere 6 months. Then there was an interruption to that dream. Things changed as did the convertible very quickly, not very practical for young children being a 2 door, but we still managed to grab snippets of that illusive dream.

Now once again our nest is empty, but we are so

The Hardest Decision of our Lives

After ten years of raising our beautiful great-granddaughter, we have just had to make the hardest decision anyone should have to make.

When we took this wee one on at four months of age, we had retired, were fit and healthy, and lots of time and love to give her. Now at ages 81 and 74, and failing health, we are now no longer able to give a ten year old all the life experiences she should be having. The street we live in has no children for her to play with, and for the past year it has broken our hearts to see her so lacking in fun things to do – just the computer to play games on.

For the past two years we have been preparing her for the fact that she will be going to her grandmother's to live when we are no longer able to care for her (Grandmother raises her little sister), and she seems to understand. To help the process along, her grandparents have been having her for the holidays and have made space in her sister's room for her own wardrobe and drawers etc. She loves being with her sister. They live by the beach and granddad has a boat. Receiving photos by e-mail of her catching her first big fish which they prepared for dinner, has made our decision a little easier to cope with as we are able to watch her experiencing life as she should be!



much more tired these days and the energy is just not there. But would we change it...? Nope! Our dreams just took an unusual turn and we have given the children, now adults, a chance to dream for their positive future. This is a gift and a dream we happily give, may they cherish it and live it to the full.

Di writes a blog for www.kiwifamilies.co.nz

She rings us each night to tell us of all the exciting things she has been doing that day. She is tired out every day, but grandma says she still doesn't go to sleep until 10.00pm and up again at 7.00am. Her sister HAS to have 12 hours sleep or she gets very ill, so she says they will have to build on a new room for her with all of this to take place at the end of this year. A new town, a new house, new friends, new school, new parents – such a huge change for a pre-pubescent ten year old. We feel guilty for having to do this and are very tearful, but realise that if

it is not done now, it will be much harder for her if we die and she is still with us. At least she will be settled by then hopefully.

We think we will move too, to be close to her and give her some continuity, but that too will be a hard choice, as we will be leaving all our friends and half our

family, change doctors and hospitals etc.

We are finding that we just have to put aside all our feelings and let our wee girl see what a wonderful life she will have with her grandparents and little sister, as they are young, fit and active and able to encourage her to do her best at whatever she chooses.

We hope not too many of you will have to make this decision - it is heartbreaking!
GGW

GRG Awareness & Appeal Week 27 October to 2 November 2015

Throughout the country local GRG Support Coordinators and support group members have various initiatives planned to raise awareness in their local communities. For more information on these initiatives please go to our website at www.grg.org.nz and click on the Events tab.

The GRG Trust's objective is to raise the general awareness of the grandparent care phenomenon in NZ and to appeal to the public for its support for GRG, its work and the support services it provides to thousands of full-time grandparent and whanau caregivers who are raising some of New Zealand's most vulnerable and at-risk children. In particular we wish to raise awareness of the fact that:



It was tough at the start...
Scars on her body
and scars on her heart ...
Safe now...with Gran...
an abundance of love...
and with help, she can...
fix the hurt that she feels
from the trauma of early
years...



Grandparents Raising
Grandchildren Trust
New Zealand CC2009

www.grg.org.nz

- ♥ In the last 10 years the number of grandparent caregivers in NZ has more than doubled to over 9,500 grandparent caregivers raising around 17,000 children. [The number of children in grandparent care is an estimate based on GRG research and membership data which reveals that each grandparent caregiver family is raising an average of 1.8 children per family. Extrapolated out against the number of grandparent caregivers recorded in the 2013 Census this equates to around 17,000 children. The MSD figures for 2013 reveal there were over 8,614 grandparent and whanau caregivers in receipt of the Unsupported Child/Orphan's Benefit supporting 12,069 children. GRG Trust has around 6000 members, the majority of whom are grandparents who do not receive the UCB. GRG therefore estimates the total number of children in grandparent and whanau care in NZ is likely to be over 20,000.
- ♥ GRG Trust has nearly 6000 members caring for over 10,000 children.
- ♥ In most cases these children would be in state/foster care if it wasn't for the grandparents taking them on.
- ♥ In 95% of cases the children are in grandparent or whanau care as a result of a traumatic incident or family breakdown; being circumstances where they can't be cared for by their parents.
- ♥ Most caregivers in these circumstances are eligible for the Unsupported Child Benefit, but most don't receive it because they either don't know about it, haven't been told by Work and Income or they've been given the wrong information by them. This means many caregivers are missing out on financial support they should be getting.
- ♥ The parents' substance abuse, mental illness, violence and neglect are often factors which continue to adversely affect the children and their caregivers for a long time - sometimes even for life.
- ♥ Around 90% of children in grandparent and whanau care are not under the care or supervision of CYF.
- ♥ Although they are doing the same caregiving job a foster carer would do, they cannot access the same financial and support services available to foster carers.
- ♥ Grandparent and whanau caregivers need, but struggle to get, adequate access to, and assistance from, specialists and professionals to help them deal with the short and long term adverse consequences of the abuse the children have suffered before coming into their care.
- ♥ Over half of the children in grandparent and whanau care have physical and/or psychological disabilities, problems with higher rates of special needs and greater challenges for their caregivers than is the case in the general population¹.

¹GRG Research 2005 and 2009

What happens should I die?

Who has the responsibility and legal right to care for the child/children if they are under 16 years of age?

If you are partnered or married are both of you named on orders? If your partner is named on the parenting orders then this is not an issue. If they are not named as a caregiver in the orders, then the information below may apply to you:

Testamentary Guardianship

Ideally you will have a current and validly executed Will. If you haven't got a Will – you should speak to a lawyer and get a Will prepared and executed as soon as possible.

On your death, through your Will you can appoint a “testamentary guardian” who you would wish to care for the child/ren when you have passed. A testamentary guardianship clause in these circumstances involving grandparent care may simply states your wishes along the lines that:

“Upon my death I appoint [name, address] to be the testamentary guardian to my [grand]children [insert names] for whom I have legal guardianship in accordance with an order of the Family Court dated [insert date] until they attain 16 years of age and I authorise [name of testamentary guardian] to take all reasonable steps to obtain parenting and guardianship orders as appropriate to settle their care arrangements following my death.”

A testamentary guardian has the same legal rights as you do to apply to the court for parenting and guardianship orders in respect of the child or children. It doesn't however mean that that person automatically has the same legal rights as you do under the parenting and guardianship order that was in effect before your death.

This is because that order no longer has any legal effect. However it makes it a lot easier for your testamentary guardian to step into your shoes and take responsibility for the children and the Court will take notice of your wishes expressed in your Will as evidenced by the appointment of a testamentary guardian for your grandchildren.



In our experience, this is a time when the birth parents (knowing that the parenting orders no longer apply) issue a challenge in the Family Court for parenting and guardianship orders. This will be a very stressful time for your family and your mokos. They do not need the added stress of things being left up in the air as

far as their care is concerned. You should also give consideration to the cost of applications to Court and supporting the children following your death when considering your testamentary guardian, whether it be your partner or some other member of the family or trusted person. It seems that even when our toes are turned up, we still have to pay to ensure our beautiful children are safe.

If you don't have a Will or you haven't appointed a testamentary guardian it is a good idea to contact your lawyer or local community law centre for advice.

Grand's reflections...

What is that smell?

Every time I walked past grand-daughters room I would catch a whiff of something stale and musty and not nice. Search as I would I could not find the source and was worried because her bedroom backs on to a bathroom (could it be the plumbing underneath the house) I wondered and dollar signs loomed large in my thoughts. Under the house no leakages spotted from the bathroom! So where was this awful smell coming from?

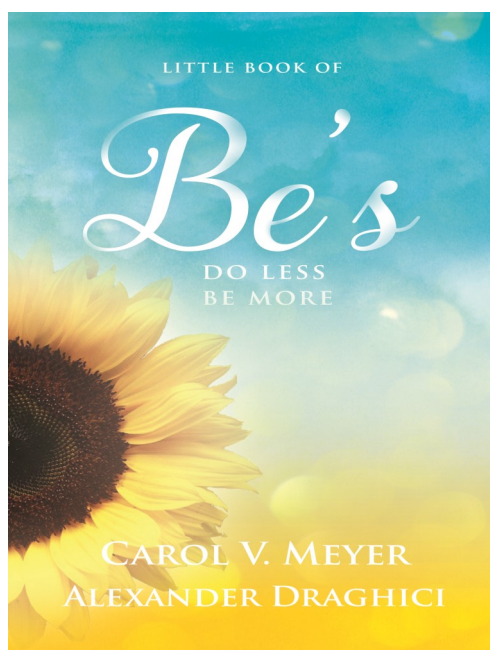
Enough was enough so I rolled up my sleeves and literally turned the whole room inside out, laundering blankets, sheets, mattress protectors, pegged pillows out in the sun and still that musty smell clogged my nose. Checked all drawers and cupboards for food scraps or anything else un-savoury: Nothing! What was it? Where was it?



Drove me crazy all morning as I scrubbed and laundered everything...and then I moved her dressing table. At some stage in the past she had knocked a mug of milo (I think) over and instead of mopping it up had just moved the dresser over it where my eyes and the sun couldn't possibly notice it. Being a sort of food-stuff I guess, a form of fungus had thrived in this damp, dark place and a patch of the carpet was choked with this cancerous growth.

Relieved that I had found the source I set to work with the Dettol and scrubbing brush and then sat for an hour or more with the hair dryer trying to dry the carpet. But, problem solved.

Afterwards sat out in the sun with hubby until I remembered all that bedding and laundry still drying out on the line, waiting to be brought in and folded, beds to be remade etc. and a roast waiting to be cooked for dinner...It's made me think that I really do need the wisdom and patience of a ninety year old, the strength of a twenty year old and the energy of a ten year old! Got a really clean bedroom in my house though. Can't have everything I reckon, but what a way to spend a beautiful Sunday! - Pauline Sloan



How often in this life are we really kind to ourselves? How often does the inner voice heap on us unnecessary anxiety and worry rendering the colour of our external world and all its demands a positively vanilla shade by comparison to the colour of our own thoughts? If we are honest about it—we all do it. Carol Meyer's *Little Book of Be's* is “a call to us all to do less and BE more” encapsulating in her 12 Be's all you could ever need as a guide to happiness in the present, dissolving the thought patterns that hold us back from our goals and desires. Carol is offering grandparents raising grandchildren the opportunity to purchase an e-reader copy of her book for \$2 and is generously donating half to GRG. For email newsletter readers: to order your copy of the e-book simply click on the image of the book at left. A link is also available on our website at www.grg.org.nz

Feeling a bit Nitty?

It's back to school for the final term of the year and if you've had nits in the family before you will no doubt be hoping that your grandchildren don't start scratching any time soon. Getting rid of nits is frustrating, expensive and time consuming and most products don't work. Why? In short, researchers say lice are developing resistance to insecticides. Having survived and adapted for 1000 years or more it is unsurprising that they've managed to get one up on modern science. Remedies such as those that include neem oil, anise oil, ylang ylang and coconut have been found to work if applied every 5 days. About the length of time just before a nymph grows into an adult and starts laying eggs. Equal mixtures of shampoo and cider vinegar with lots of combing can help. Cider vinegar is quite good at dissolving the nit's concrete-like attachment and makes the hair incredibly shiny but it is very time consuming. Perhaps one of the most effective and inoffensive non-insecticide treatments now available is dimethicone.

Dimethicone is a silicon compound commonly used in moisturisers, shampoos and hair conditioners. It suffocates and dehydrates the lice. Nits slide easily off the hair shaft making it easier to comb them out. In NZ we are aware of one headlice treatment containing it. Hedrin 15 Spray Gel which retails for around \$20-\$25 for 100ml, available at pharmacies and online. It is a slippery substance but does not smell and we would recommend you don't spray it when standing on a wooden or tiled floor or you could go for a skate. Following up with a dimethicone rich shampoo and conditioner (Dove is one good option) and combing with a fine tooth metal comb—preferably with little grooves on each tooth (Ladybugs do a good nit comb) should see you nit free. Remember the hatched nymph (1-2mm) takes 5 days to become an adult (2-3mm) when it starts laying eggs (around 6 a day). It lives for 3 weeks and can lay 50-150 lice in its life time. The trick is to re-treat not less than 7 days later to prevent the new adults from laying more eggs and getting rid of any newly hatched nymphs.

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



www.powertoprotect.net.nz



Give a Little for GRG

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



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/			
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 **	Kerry Batten	07 560 0291	kebatten@gmail.com
Invercargill **	Lynette Nielsen	03 216 0411 9773	jhandli2@xtra.co.nz
Kaikohe*	Moengaroa Floyed	027 644 0978	floyedz@xtra.co.nz
Kaitaia *	Dianah Roberts	09 408 3489	
Kerikeri *	Martha Taonui-Andrews	0272662653	marthataonuians@xtra.co.nz
Levin*	Ann Waddell	06 362 7269	ann.hen@xtra.co.nz
Napier **	Maria Noanoa	06 870 3742	puatai@xtra.co.nz
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 **	Sheree McKenzie	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
Tauranga	Karen Ormsby	07 579 3571	jewelzs@hotmail.com
Te Kuiti **	Kay Higgins	027 430 2939	palmdrive@xtra.co.nz
Tokoroa *	Jo Gregory	027 862 5538	tokoroagrg@gmail.com
Upper Hutt **	Margaret Pearson	04 976 9475	maggiemagpie@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