



NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2017

DATABASE: 7573 WHANAU CARERS

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



School Year Start-up Payments for UCB/OB Recipients

This opens mid-January 2018 and you can only apply for this online.

If you are unable to access a computer Work and Income (W&I) will let you use theirs in their Community section. Or if you feel nervous or have trouble getting to a W&I office, we will again offer this service and do it for you, BUT you must have your W&I client number ready and the dates of birth of all the children for whom you are receiving the Unsupported Child Benefit or Orphans' Benefit. For assistance please phone 09 4806530 or from landline 0800 472 637 press 1.

Please note:

This is a once-a-year payment.

You need to apply every year between mid-January and the end of February.

As soon as the online link becomes available we will post it on our website and email to all members on our database.

Extraordinary Care Fund – for UCB/OB recipients

The Extraordinary Care fund opens on 15th January and closes 16 February 2018.

Decisions are notified by 30 March 2018

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Read all about how to make a successful application on our web site www.grg.org.nz. You do need to make an appointment with Work and Income to submit all the paperwork. They then scan it and send it to Wellington, so please make sure you get and keep stamped copies of your paperwork.

Application forms can be downloaded on <https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/documents/forms/extraordinary-care-application.pdf>



From the CEO's Desk this Month

Kate Bundle, Chief Executive

As we look forward to Christmas, a welcome summer break and the opportunity to recharge the batteries in time for the next year ahead; it is also time to reflect on the year. And what a year it has been!

Blessing us this year with his trail blazing efforts to date on the **Te Araroa Trail**, Bruce Hopkins has been a wonderful ambassador raising funds and the public awareness and profile of GRG in the media, effortlessly discussing the big issues facing so many of our families. The journey on the trail so far has been anything but effortless though!

Battling a nasty cellulitis infection that took him off trail for 17 days in recovery, the sad loss of his brother and father's ashes and camera along the way, Bruce has also endured long exhausting days walking through challenging terrain on the trail from Cape Reinga to Waitomo to date. If you haven't yet seen where the Te Araroa trail takes him, I urge you to look at the trail maps on the [official website here](#). It is certainly not for the faint of heart and will give you a new appreciation for the challenge Bruce has set himself.

Bruce has learned he is "not a tramper", and yet he is pushing his body, mind and spirit to the limits for our cause in an epic adventure that along the way is bringing him in touch with some of our wonderful families and caregivers. On behalf of Bruce, thank you and all his trail angels along the way for your support. To follow Bruce on his journey, follow [his Facebook page](#) and/hear his [Radio NZ podcasts](#). God bless you Bruce on behalf of us all at GRG. Kia kaha!

This year also saw a big change in our sector, involving the new Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki. As a contracted provider working with and supporting families with vulnerable children, their mandate to ensure the wellbeing and best interests of children is at the centre of its decision-making, is critical for most of our families.

So too are the new Government's big promises to reduce child poverty. [Earlier this month the Prime Minister](#) said "the Families Package, and [her] Child Poverty Reduction Bill, will have a significant impact on families who are struggling to pay for the basics for their children and will ensure the public can track [the Government's] progress."



We hope this will also materially help the thousands of grandparents and whanau caregivers who have stepped up to raise someone else's child and for whom the ability to meet their needs on extremely limited incomes is a daily struggle. Nearly three-quarters of our member families are now raising their grandchildren full-time because of their parents' drug abuse. Most of those families – because of methamphetamine addiction.

In addition to more accurately identifying measures for child poverty and investing in programmes and initiatives that will make a difference to families most in need; we implore this new Government to seriously tackle this societal problem too. The damage to New Zealand families because of methamphetamine use is a known factor in why so many children must be removed from their parents' care and a cause of family breakdown, child abuse, neglect, crime, family violence, and mental illness. That fact is evidenced by the increasing numbers of grandparent and whanau care families turning to GRG for support because of it. Our membership is at nearly 4000 families nationwide with 780 families joining GRG in 2017 alone – mostly because of this filthy drug. For our part, our mission to ensure better access to professional and financial support for our families and helping them achieve positive long-term outcomes for them remains our number one priority in 2018's work-plan.

At Christmas time, however, it is also time to

reflect on the blessings we have. Despite the difficulties, we hear so many stories from grandparent caregivers like the one in this month's Grands Reflections from the grandmother who is raising two little girls whose family has been devastated by methamphetamine. The resilience of the human spirit and those moments acknowledging the "gift" that children are in our world, and the commitment of our member families to raising their grandchildren and tamariki in a safe and loving home environment is what

makes it all worthwhile. To all of you amazing grandparents and whanau caregivers, may the spirit and joy of LOVE be with you all this Christmas and our best wishes for a happy year ahead!

<https://www.teararoa.org.nz/>
<https://www.facebook.com/BruceHopkinsTeAraroa/>
<http://www.radionz.co.nz/tags/Bruce%20Hopkins>
<https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/government-committed-major-progress-child-poverty>

Income Support News

We have been advised by the Ministry for Social Development/W&I that the new Government has proposed a number of welfare changes that will take effect from next year. Details are still being worked through and we will advise you once we have some certainty and more detail from them.

However the proposed changes are scheduled for 1 April and 1 July 2018 and include:

- Changes to the Accommodation Supplement
- The introduction of a Winter Energy Payment
- Changes to Family Tax Credits.

A short note about the Winter Energy Payment has been added to their website following a number of inquiries.

<https://www.workandincome.govt.nz/about-work-and-income/news/2017/winter-energy-payments.html>

Free Respite Camps

Hi GRG members

Stand's partnership with GRG is now 8 years strong and we love having your wonderful mokopuna participating in our KidzaCool Adventure holiday programme.

We have a short satisfaction survey we need to do after the stay to provide feedback to our funders

on the value of this service but have recently been experiencing a low return rate from caregivers. We really do value your feedback and to ensure the service can continue would like to encourage you to complete the survey.

You can talk to any of our friendly staff at your regional office if you have any queries about how we can make this easy for you to do.

Here are the 2018 dates for Stand's KidzaCool Adventures programmes at their seven regional villages

- 15 -19 January (Please note: Christchurch dates are 23-27 January 2018)
- 16–20 April
- 9 -13 July

www.standforchildren.org.nz

The 2018 dates, application forms and contact details are on our website
www.standforchildren.org.nz

Many thanks

Veronica Bennett / National Manager Business Dev
Stand Children's Services Tu Maia Whanau





I've been thinking...

Diane Vivian, Founding Trustee

From Christmases Past

Crepe Paper Decorations

As a child growing up we just simply could not wait for the day when we got home from school to find our Mother had put up the handmade decorations in the kitchen. Bright colorful ribbons of crepe paper danced across the kitchen ceiling. Twisted some and crisscross folded others. In each corner, hung a Christmas bell. They were flat and when you opened them up and clipped the clip, they presented as a most pretty bell. The Christmas tree of course was a real pine and took pride of place in the lounge. They even hung colourful lights outside the house. Not like the little ones you see today. These were the real McCoy; a full sized coloured light bulb. Christmas Eve all the Aunts and Uncles would come over. Blackberry Nip, Sherry and Pims come to mind. I suppose the men had a beer, but being a female child I was only interested in the Ladies (my Aunts) who were beautiful and teetered ever so carefully upon very, very high stilettos, and boy could they talk!

The children all played outside until dark and then we were allowed in to have brief visits with them all. How old was I then, perhaps 10, my, that was 58 years ago, I wonder does anyone put up decorations in their kitchen today?

Christmas time

This is a time for joy and relaxation, long hot summer days. But for many of our people it is a time of stress, for many reasons, lack of finances, access visits and never ending hungry children. I have included an article for you to read (below) thanks to Cherryl Smith for forwarding to me.

May I also say to you all please take care of yourselves too, you are so important, travel safe, swim safe, and plenty of sunblock.

Our office will be closed from (including ALL staff) 22 December 2017 - 8 January 2018. In an emergency situation only please call me on 09 4806530 or 0800 472637 from a landline and press 1.



Holiday Time

From Happier Holidays by Marti Smith, OTR/L
cta@childtrauma.org

The holiday season can be stressful for kids with trauma background. I rely heavily on these words of Dr. Bruce Perry: Lower your expectations and raise your compassions.

Raise your compassions: Many children who have experienced trauma will view holiday events differently than others. For example, some may be grieving the loss of their previous home and family. For others, the volume of new experiences during the holidays can be overwhelming - new scents, new people, new routines, new locations and new schedules. For children who have difficulty with transitions and rely heavily on familiarity to stay regulated, consider limiting the amount of new experiences during this time of year. Also consider that a child may have a history of disappointment: excessive drinking, lack of gifts, gifts with unrealistic expectations, failed appearances, and feelings of being left out are wired deeply for some children and can be exacerbated during the holiday season. Remember that events that happen only once a year aren't familiar to children. They haven't had enough years and repeated exposures to remember how it all plays out. For many, new is often anxiety producing.

Lower your Expectations: Traditions are often important because they provide a sense of continuity in times of chaos. For many children, however, these traditions are new and can actually be anxiety-provoking rather than comforting.

Therefore, allow children time and space to ease into new experiences. Prepare them by providing clear examples of what will happen and a framework for how things will proceed. You can also

provide safe spaces to regroup when they begin to feel anxious; you might encourage them to participate in a nature hunt outside or simply go to a less crowded room for some rhythmic coloring, headphone music, or even a few minutes of escape into an iPad. And try to plan events around their familiar schedules, making sure that they are well-rested and that they are allowed time for physical activity and sensory regulation.

Try and keep things as simple as possible and remind children that holiday changes are temporary.

These tips work well for adults during this busy time of year too! Hopefully, with compassion, realistic expectations, and preparation, everyone will have very "Happy Holidays"!

It has been a hard year, but.....(from our 2005 Newsletter)

Late this year my dearly loved husband passes away, this left me with the 3 grandchildren to raise alone. We did not have a funeral plan but fortunately the Undertakers were very understanding and have allowed me to pay off the bill weekly. But at 76 and on a pension and with 3

growing grandchildren to say things are toughwell enough said. A neighbour kindly arrived over the other day with a Christmas tree for us. I was humbled by this wonderful gesture.

The children and I walked to the local \$2 shop and purchased some tinsel and cheap decorations. We rummaged through the wardrobe and found the ones from last year, which were past their best but never mind. The smell of the pine wafts through the whole house, the sun catches on the tinsel and it almost has a golden glow. Each morning as I catch sight of this tree it reminds me of how lucky I am to have such caring neighbours and to top it off the neighbour also said he will take over the mowing of my lawns. And I have been told we will be getting a food parcel from the Salvation Army this year. We are indeed blessed.

Appropriate at this Time of Year

THE FOUR STAGES OF LIFE:

- 1) You believe in Santa Claus.
- 2) You don't believe in Santa Claus.
- 3) You are Santa Claus.
- 4) You look like Santa Claus!

Support Group Coordinator News

We are delighted to announce the appointment of two new coordinators, Deborah Williams in Waiuku, Auckland and Sophie Wilson-Kahika in Opotiki.

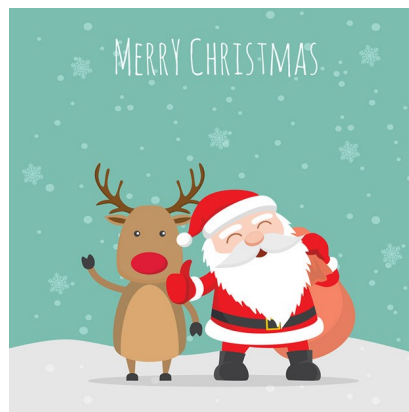
Deborah is a mother of 5 daughters and grandmother to 4 wonderful grandchildren, 1 of whom she cares for full time. She is an ex nurse and currently works as a manager in the retail industry. You can contact Deborah on 0274527598 or debs_45@hotmail.co.nz.

Sophie is raising 6 grandchildren and loves keeping busy

You can contact Sophie on 07 2625136 or wsophie71@yahoo.co.nz

A New Sanity Saying in our Home

In dealing with all the internal and external issues in raising our grandchildren which often come on a daily basis, my husband and I have a new saying, "this too shall pass" . Issues may be swapped for something slightly different on a different day, but that too shall pass. *Tired out.*



Grand's reflections...

Life

Today I had a very beautiful photo pop up on my face book page. It was the older of the two granddaughters I am raising by myself.

It warmed my heart because it showed a very cute two-and-a-half-year-old with her little back pack on, ready to go off to day care one morning, (along with her sister who was fifteen months old at the time).

Now she is ready to start the Ready Set Go! Programme for new entrant students at the school she will be going to next year.

Such a lot has happened since then;

We shifted four times. (Rentals kept getting sold and I was in the position of not being able to live in the family home as it had been contaminated with P).

The girls' father passed away (drug induced suicide).

I completed the last semester of a post graduate degree (I still don't know how!) and continued to work full time.

My marriage settlement was worked through. Thankfully I have now been able to pay off my debts.

I sold the family home where their mother was born (a home birth) after having it decontaminated and renovated.

I gained additional guardianship of the girls through the courts. (I highly recommend this process – it gives you full rights of guardianship and makes things so much easier in decision making for the children).

We now thankfully have our own permanent home.

The girls have blossomed from two very clingy, traumatised little people, into confident and happily mischievous young ladies. I still see a counsellor every fortnight that has supported me through this traumatic, stressful, crazy time. She has been my

person to bounce things with in my management of the behaviour issues the girls have - which we will continue to work through.

Day care has also been so supportive during this period. To me, they are the other parent, and it is important that we effectively share and discuss our management strategies and information about the girls, so they have consistency of care.

My personal social life has been pretty much on hold for all this time, but I am now beginning to have occasional night off, as the girls are now happy to stay with an aunty after she came to stay with us.

My friends have stayed in touch but time to talk without the girls around has been a challenge.

Thank goodness for work, as I am surrounded by amazing people, who make me feel a valued member of the team. They contribute a lot to "filling my cup" so I have more of the best of me to give for the girls. This has helped me keep sane through the difficult bits.

My other daughters have been very supportive, and uncles have stepped up to give the girls the

positive male role modelling they need. Life looks very positive right now and I am able to really enjoy the gifts these two little girls bring into my life. Love, laughter, seeing life through fresh eyes, a new perspective, being silly... scooting...the list goes on. I stand in awe of the human spirit.

Would you believe it?

I was born to behave, for sure: All morning I've been sitting out in the sun painting flowers on stones for the grand and great grand kids to hide at the botanical gardens for other people to find over the holidays. Not exactly the wind in my hair, my bike between my knees and the road beneath my wheels but for today, painting my flowers is probably the next best thing. At least I'm still breathing, that's got to be a plus.

Pauline Sloane.



Garrison Keillor an American author wrote the following;

Nothing you ever do for children is wasted.
They seem not to notice us, hovering, averting our eyes, and they seldom offer thanks,
but what we do for them is never wasted.



Thank you for your support for GRG!

Give a little to GRG via our secure DPS payment system on our website at www.grg.org.nz or at <https://www.givealittle.co.nz/org/grg>

givealittle
from the Spark Foundation

Can we help you?

Members ONLY services are available nationwide
Caregivers Toll free helpline
0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637)
For landline caregivers only

Or

TEXT 4 SUPPORT

TEXT your name to 027 398 0388

We will call you back.

New members and general information please call 0800 472 637 or 09 418 3753 or join via our [website at www.grg.org.nz](http://www.grg.org.nz)

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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.

Disclaimer: Opinions or views expressed in this newsletter shall be understood as reflecting those of the author as quoted and are not to be taken as given or endorsed by GRG.

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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



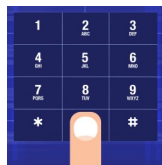
[Anti-bullying](#)



0800 456 450

www.powertoprotect.net.nz

Thank you to our Sponsors and Funders supporting GRG's Support Services throughout New Zealand including this newsletter



SUPPORT GROUP CONTACT NUMBERS

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 4183753

* Telephone Support ** Telephone Support and Meetings

Auckland: North Shore**	Diane Vivian (temp)	09 480 6530	di@grg.org.nz
Papakura/Pukekohe**	Sharon Warne	027 419 4777	warneysvision@hotmail.com
Waitakere**	Debbie Hall	09 818 7828	debron@xtra.co.nz
Waiuku	Deborah Williams	027 452 7598	debs_45@hotmail.co.nz
South Auckland**	Virginia Peebles	09 277 7514	
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