



NEWSLETTER - AUGUST 2014

DATABASE: 5683 WHANAU CARERS

TENA KOUTOU, TALOFA LAVA, KIA ORANA, FAKAALOFA LAHI ATU, MALO E LELEI, BULA VINAKA, TALOHA NI, KAM NA MAURI, GREETINGS TO ALL!

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ Mitre 10 Community of the Year



FROM THE NATIONAL OFFICE EMPTY NEST

Oh my goodness me, for the first time in 45 years we will soon have no children/young people in the home. Except for the 6 months we had alone until CYF dropped the girl's on our doorstep 18 years ago. Grand-daughter now 23 is going flatting, I am in shock with a mixture of feelings racing through my heart and head, I know she will be OK this time as she has matured, unlike last time when she attempted this at 18 and got into strife and debt. We had to do the rescue job, for quite some time now; she has been working every hour the good Lord sends and saving money.

We told her she needs to clean out her room completely as this young woman is a bit of a hoarder and has never thrown away an item of clothing for the past 7 years, yes, I do hear the floor of her bedroom groaning with the weight and I am sure her big, double wardrobe is 'packed' to the gunnels. We asked her to pack up all the good clothing that she no longer required, I will wash it and share it amongst other GRG groups. Of which she was happy to do.

But what I was not prepared for was the state of the 3 year old 'new carpet' on her bedroom floor.



It is covered with big scorch marks where she has left her straightening iron going on the floor, the carpet is also covered in bright pink hair dye, coffee stains everywhere and I am sure rats could live in there for a year!!

Hope she has paid a healthy bond in her new abode, because it will be needed!

She saw her packed up room and promptly stated, 'no I am not moving now because I will get homesick' so I guess at 23 she is still not ready. (sigh) And no, I will not be doing any new carpet just yet!

- Granny

A MEMBER EMAILS

A heartfelt thank you to GRG for your support: Your newsletters were a big part in saving our family.

Five years ago I found myself in a very dark and lonely place. My beautiful grand daughter was only two and was living with her parents, my daughter and her partner. The relationship was violent and drug fuelled although I was blissfully unaware of the meth habit. After many police call outs to their house, hysterical middle of the night phone calls from my daughter and mad dashes to 'save' my granddaughter, I decided to take serious action.

I called CYPFS who told me because it was low to medium risk they had referred the 'case' to community social services. My daughter was an expert in working the system and managed to convince every agency that she and granddaughter were fine. I was constantly worried, couldn't sleep and my husband who loves the grandies was not willing to take on our granddaughter - exit husband. After six months husband returned when he realised that we had no choice, it wasn't just me being controlling. I'm sure God was looking down at me at that time as my daughter and her partner ended up in jail – best thing!

That's when I found GRG. I called up one desperate morning and it was so good to have someone on the other end of the phone, not judging, not asking yucky questions and not surprised with my situation. That was the only person to person contact I had with GRG but every month I read the newsletters, got tips and advice and found that I was not alone. I took every bit of information from those newsletters and after years of worry and suffering have now got full guardianship of my precious, now seven year old moko.

I look back now on this saga and realised that I was enabling all to continue with their really bad behaviour by paying for their food, power, childcare but I didn't know what else to do to protect my granddaughter. Now the threat of her being taken has gone, we are now happy and looking towards a brilliant future. Thanks again GRG for your amazing work. Please don't underestimate these newsletters.



By the way for those in the same situation, the Family Court system was horrible and very expensive even with an uncontested application. It was worth every cent though and having a good lawyer was very reassuring. I also was not aware of the Unsupported Child Benefit until I read about it in the GRG newsletters. WINZ workers did not tell me of this benefit until I asked eighteen months later.

- Nanny

DRIVING HOME with our shopping, I decided to pick up an old man hitch hiking with a large pack. He looked harmless enough and he was. He got in the back with our dog and spoke kindly to her. He introduced himself to both of us.

Obviously a back to nature type, he chatted about knowing a llama that was coming to New Zealand and how he was going to be giving presentation talks. Grandson 12 years has been listening quietly from the front seat pipes up excitedly and says to him. "So you have a talking llama. WOW!! Where did you get it"?

.... I smiled to myself realizing what my grandson was thinking. I leaned over and quietly said to him "Dear it's a two legged llama, not a four legged one..... I guess it's time to teach him about Tibetan llama's, monks etc. Bless a talking llama.



PRESS RELEASE

Social Development Minister Paula Bennett has today launched 'Common Ground', an exciting new addition to the Prime Minister's Youth Mental Health Project.

"Common Ground has been designed as an online 'first stop' for anyone concerned about a young person's emotional wellbeing," Mrs Bennett said. Including a website, a free phone line, social media channels, and links to other services and resources, Common Ground seeks to make sure people get the information they need when it comes to youth mental health.

Around one in five New Zealanders experience a mental health issue during their teens, and many of these issues like depression or anxiety, can continue to affect them throughout their lives. Adding to the development of Common Ground was a series of interviews carried out between MSD and people who'd sought help on behalf of a young person they were concerned about.

A common theme in these interviews was that many people were unsure where to even start looking for help, and that they were unsure what signs they should be concerned about or not. This is where Common Ground will make a difference, by being a first point of contact for parents, caregivers, siblings and friends to go to, and get the support they need.

"Common Ground is also a fantastic example of government working alongside community organisations to develop an effective solution to the tough issue of youth mental health," Mrs Bennett said.

"Smart and innovative ideas like this will go a long way to keeping the conversation around youth mental health issues going, an important part in making it easier for young people to get help."

The Common Ground hub is available here: www.commonground.org.nz

NEW 'KIDS' ON THE BLOCK

A natural encourager, optimist and energetic person I have worked out that I have a large amount of rubber built into me, this has enabled me to bounce back when faced with the adversity and challenges of my journey so far! Thank you to all of you who have been putting stories in this newsletter, encouragement is one of the things we never get enough of in this life.

I have 3 older girls from first marriage, 28, 25 and 21. And two children, from my second, 12 and 6. My 6 year old was born when I was 40yrs old and had a challenging and sickly first 3 years of life. Half way through this time our middle daughter (then 20) who had suffered from mental illness and drug addictions for years announced she was pregnant, AGAIN, she had lost two pregnancies before... We knew it wasn't going to be easy but we had hope in her ability to clean up, and get herself together to rise to the challenge and joys of parenthood, as I had myself 22 years prior.

She desperately wanted a child of her own, even though in many respects she was still a child herself at least mentally and emotionally. To top it off she was in a relationship that was violent and focused around getting wasted.

Baby was born 1 day before her 21st, and we have them both live with us in our already busy household for an agreed 3 months at least to make sure the bonding happened and skills were learned. She moved out when baby was only 6 weeks old against our advice and wishes. And back into the violent and drug fuelled relationship.

There began a 4 year roller coaster of CYFS, police, short stints in jail for her partner, and moving her and baby back home 4 more times every time things broke down. We did everything we could to keep mother and child together during this time, living in a constant state of hope versus reality and disappointment. We were involved daily, there were many agencies involved, offering help, guidance, courses, counselling and support.

Mid 2013 it became apparent that things were getting worse, every time we picked our wee girl up she would beg not to go home....we put in the last and final notification ourselves to CYFS making it #5 on their list.

This was the hardest thing I have ever had to do, to have to make the decision and choice to fight for the baby and not my daughter anymore which I had done for 10 years....it was clear that despite the promises, tears, and seeming desire to keep their daughter they just couldn't and wouldn't make the changes to their lifestyle and her safety. We removed her in Jan this year and CYFS ruled in a LONG and ugly FGC that she would not return to her parents care. Appointed and approved us as full time carers and offered to pay for us to seek the legal boundaries to make this permanent.

6 months on and 'baby' is a happy and adjusted member of our family and developing better each day, we have had to fight to keep her and although the court granted us additional guardianship last month, parenting orders are pending this month. She has had surgery to take out tonsils and put grommets in so she can hear better and she has a wee way to go to mature enough for school in Feb but we are encouraged by many people in our lives, family, friends, your organisation and our Faith.

I have learned many times over through other trauma in our lives prior to this that investment in children and family is more important than fancy things, and that love, laughter and the cuddles make all the drama, sleep loss and stress worth it. She snuggled into bed with me the other morning and said she wanted to keep me and poppa for ever and ever with a delicious contented look on her face. These are the moments that give us the fuel and the energy to continue on this bumpy and unpredictable road.

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Her mother has 3 supervised visits a week, mostly supervised by family. Despite her inability to look after herself, she is still wanting unsupervised access. The father has only seen her once in 5 months and is also going for unsupervised overnight access. We pray that the judge sees the truth and takes on board all the FACTS in the very detailed and ugly social workers report into consideration, we pray that we can give this child long term stability, love and safety that she deserves and that the justice system is fair and just in this instance.

I am in awe of you all, we all do the best with what we have every day and these children's lives are better because we chose to sacrifice whatever we had to, to invest what we can into a future generation of people. You are all making a difference and leaving a legacy. Bless you all heaps.

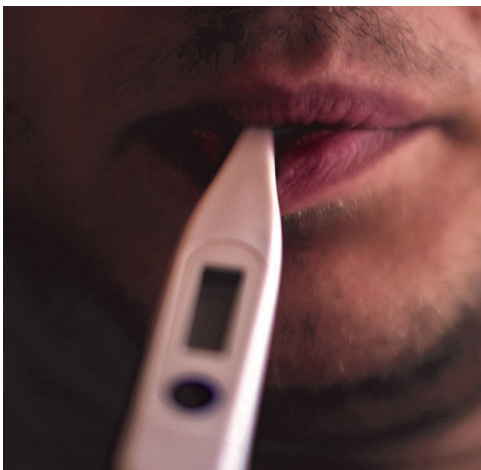
- J & J (Wellington)

HOW AMAZING ART THOU

I have been a member of the North Shore GRG group for nearly 15 years and over this period of time one gets to become great friends with the others attending and also due to social functions we in turn get to know the moko they are raising.

Very recently, one of our great grandparent members sadly passed away, leaving behind a delightful 16 year old great grandson. He is attending the local college and is doing very well. His wider whanau are now all living in Australia and he had no desire to go over there as he has established friends and wanted to finish his education at the same school.

Two of our group grandma's have immediately put up their hands to take him into their homes, so he can continue his education. This folks is our GRG family working at its best. Proud of them.....you betcha. Rest in peace Tuihana knowing your boy will be fine.



BLESS

Our darling 4 year old Grand daughter Nevaeh ask her Grandad "why is Nan so tired?"

His reply was "Your Great Grandpa is very sick and Nan was up all night nursing him."

"WOW!" she said, "Was he heavy?"

FREE CAREGIVER WORKSHOPS

Attachment and Resilience

05-Aug-14 Hastings 9am-3:30pm
12-Aug-14 Whakatane 9am-3:30pm
04-Sept-14 Ashburton 9am-3:30pm
04-Sept-14 Invercargill 9am-3:30pm
11-Sept-14 Hamilton 9am-3:30pm
16-Sept-14 Masterton 9am-3:30pm
17-Sept-14 Greymouth 9am-3:30pm

Understanding and Managing Behaviour

23-Aug-14 Waitakere 9am-3:30pm
02-Sept-14 Whangarei 9am-3:30pm

Identity and Belonging

30-Jul-14 Whangarei 9am-3:30pm
19-Aug-14 Rangiora 9am-3:30pm
20-Aug-14 Levin 9am-3:30pm
20-Aug-14 Nelson 9am-3:30pm
03-Sept-14 North Shore 9am-3:30pm
09-Sept-14 Lower Hutt 9am-3:30pm

Team Work

20-Aug-14 Ashburton 9am-3:30pm
04-Sept-14 Grey Lynn 9am-3:30pm

Working with Adolescents

29-Jul-14 North Shore 9am-3:30pm
06-Aug-14 Hamilton 9am-3:30pm
13-Aug-14 Timaru 9am-3:30pm
27-Aug-14 Rotorua 9am-3:30pm
10-Sept-14 Christchurch 9am-3:30pm
18-Sept-14 Manurewa 9am-3:30pm

Carer Families

26-Jul-14 Pukekohe 9am-3:30pm
31-Jul-14 Christchurch 9am-3:30pm
20-Aug-14 Dunedin 9am-3:30pm
21-Aug-14 Manurewa 9am-3:30pm
28-Aug-14 Napier 9am-3:30pm
18-Sept-14 Taupo 9am-3:30pm



Child Development

07-Aug-14 Tauranga 9am-3:30pm
17-Aug-14 Gisbourne 9am-3:30pm
19-Aug-14 Palmerston North 9am-3:30pm
21-Aug-14 Tokoroa 9am-3:30pm
18-Sept-14 Dunedin 9am-3:30pm

Legal Issues

29-Jul-14 Waitakere 9am-3:30pm
31-Jul-14 Cromwell 9am-3:30pm
05-Aug-14 Nelson 9am-3:30pm
27-Aug-14 Porirua 9am-3:30pm
04-Sept-14 Tauranga 9am-3:30pm

Maltreatment and Family Violence

06-Aug-14 Grey Lynn 9am-3:30pm
19-Aug-14 Pukekohe 9am-3:30pm

To Register:

Email caregivertraining@fosteringkids.org.nz
or phone Christine Williams toll free 0800 100849.
You can also register online via the website following the link: <http://schedule.fosteringkids.net/schedule.php>.

A TREAT

A few weeks ago I had the great pleasure of going to 'The Big Sing', where high schools from all over



Auckland enter their choirs to perform a wide range of styles at the Auckland Town Hall over a few days. I was so proud of my granddaughter singing with her school choir so beautifully. I know how much time and effort the girls and teachers had put in for weeks beforehand. Seeing so many choirs, it struck me how much time and effort collectively all these choirs would have put in.

Some images that come to mind are of walking amongst groups of young people warming up their voices in harmony as they made their way into the hall. They were obviously proud of themselves and their school, by their dress and the way they related to each other. Then as each choir performed they applauded each other with such enthusiasm as only this age group can. The schools sat together in the audience waiting their turn, it was lovely to see whole school groups give other school choirs a standing ovation. After the concert, singing teachers were applauded by their pupils as they walked amongst them in the foyer. Such generosity we don't often see in our competitive society!

My last image is of being drawn to the noise coming from a bus outside. A bus full of boys doing the haka inside the bus! Their positive energy was infectious to everyone watching, brings a smile to my face as I remember it.

This occurred during a week of sad and dreadful news about a few teen's behaviours and attitudes. So it was unexpectedly wonderful to see hundreds of happy young people enjoying each other's company through music.

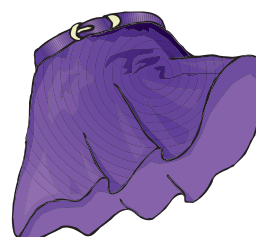
IT BEGINS THE TEENAGE YEARS

My two 12 year old granddaughters, Taisha and Tayla, wanted some girl-time alone in town and maybe go to the movies and have lunch perhaps and do some window shopping...not to mention look, with their eyes wide open, for any boys (I mean girls) loitering around that they knew from school.

A plan (to give me a break from kids of course) hatched while they got dressed and dressed again and then dressed once more this morning.

Both insisted they'd be sensible and that both were too old now to have to follow Grandma around EVERY SINGLE DAY of the holidays. All their friend's mothers let their girls go in to town on their own and now that they are 12 going on 13 they should be allowed to as well.

I agreed that they could go to the movies but first they had to remove the skimpy outfits they had on hidden under their winter tracksuits and put the strappy sandals they had in their bags back in the wardrobe. Sneakers would do just fine and sulking and the slamming of doors was not going to be a part of my morning routine. I would also meet them at Burger King half an hour after the movie ended. Deal or no deal!



- Pauline Sloan

SOCIAL SECURITY BILL FOR PARITY WITH FOSTER CARE

The Select Committee has reported back to the House with **unanimous** support to pass this Bill into law. This has not **yet** been passed into law and is unlikely to be, before the election.

We are highly delighted to hear of this support from the Select Committee, and indeed thank each and every one of you who made submissions and who appeared before the committee. The most important thing at the moment is that we get this passed into Law!!! Therefore we MUST bide our time until this happens.



WHAKATANE

GRG's next coffee morning is 14th August at Reap House in Whakatane from 10 am till noon.

All are invited for us to discuss warmer homes and computers in homes.

FREE STUFF!

- GRGs go to www.sampleco.co.nz and enter your details. They will send you a sample of goodies – we got a lot of snacks and breakfast food. A lovely selection of goods. The only hitch is that you have to use a non rural postal address.
- www.asksharegive.org.nz is a great site for free stuff, ask for, or give away stuff.
- Check out www.pickfruit.co.nz for free community fruit.
- Visit www.freestuff.co.nz for all sorts of free stuff.

OOPS!

The husband of a dear friend offered to come and fix my vacuum cleaner. He rang and asked if he could come earlier than the arranged time. I told him “yes, come as soon as you can because I have nothing on right now”.

There was a gasp and a silence and then a realisation of what I had just said.....

He asked how long it would take for me to get presentable or should he bring his wife!
My reputation is ruined!



Give a Little for GRG
<http://www.givealittle.co.nz/org/grg>



Anti-bullying



0800 456 450

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)

Members support Manager: Di Vivian

New members and general information ext. 1

Landline users only. Auckland callers (09) 480 6530

Disclaimer: Any article, services offered may not have an endorsement from Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ, discretion is advised.

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)

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.

www.grg.org.nz or www.kin.org.nz or

www.raisinggrandchildren.org.nz

Email: office@grg.org.nz

Postal Address:

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



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