



NEWSLETTER - OCTOBER 2014

DATABASE: 5735 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



Be Aware

I was in the local supermarket with my baby grandson whom I raise, a woman whilst shopping said to me how gorgeous he was, I glowed, when I went to my car after loading him in to his car seat and putting my groceries into the boot a man approached and said I had dropped my wallet on the ground, I stopped to look and at that moment this woman was trying to remove my grandson from the car. I screamed and with that they left, we were lucky, shaken I reported this to CYF.

GRG Trust advises: be aware, and in some circumstances where drugs particularly are involved with the parents, drive with your doors locked and if home alone with the children keep your doors locked. Sadly we say this is not the first case we have heard of and they use distraction. And even worse we know of a grandma who was beaten in an attempt to grab the baby. Be alert, be very alert.

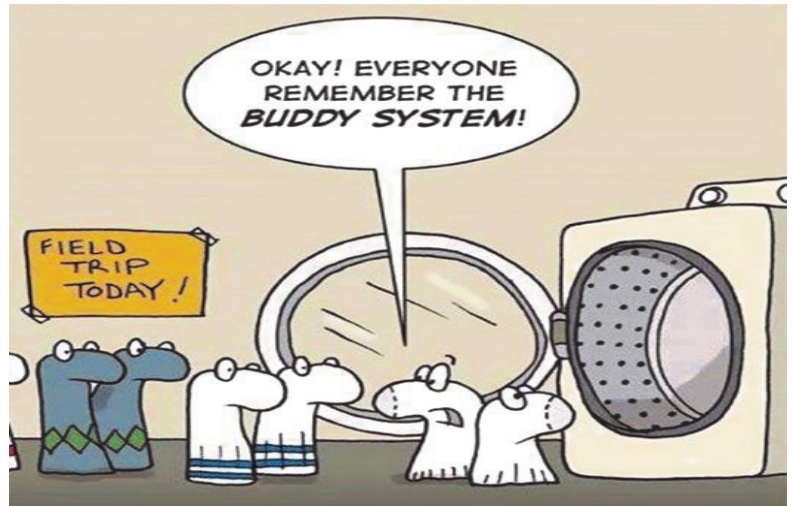


Things that make you go Umm:

Having been married for 47 years there has always been one thing that has made me go Umm. This strange thing continues through the generations and is now happening for the grandchildren we raise.

SOCKS, missing socks to be clear, the two of them go into the washing machine but only one comes out. This event does not discriminate at all, be it Pop's, grandchildren's or indeed my socks. Where do they go? Does the washing machine disintegrate them and wash just one of them down the sink? Is there a secret trap door inside the machine that just

collects one sock from each pair in demand for payment? Or indeed have we been invaded by some worm like alien creature that lives in our machines and has a liking for just one sock? Well whatever is happening I have had enough! Pop's socks now are all the same colour and brand as so are the grandchildren's and mine. And yet they still go missing! But now we do not have to throw the odd one away. These socks need educating!



Sibling Caregivers:

About a year into my relationship with my partner, we were so happy to move out of the city and into our own 2 bedroom rented house. We spent 2 weeks feeling like we had 'made it', I was 20 and he was 22 and we both had jobs, we were making enough money to support ourselves and some to spend on luxuries.

About 2 weeks after we moved in, we got a call from his Mum saying that CYFS had started investigating her due to claims she was abusing her kids (my partner's half-brother and sister). My partner told her to bring them down the country to live with us until it had all died down and I was excited! We had an extra room and I thought it would be so much fun! I had dreams about how I would spend heaps of time with them going over schoolwork and how they would become best in their class and be so thankful that they were living with us. I thought they would be so glad to get out of that house with their Mum who was unreliable and sometimes cruel, and into this wonderful home we had created which was full of support and happiness.... how wrong I was!

The first thing I discovered was that they were not happy to be living with us at all. Imagine that! Being ripped away from their Mum, (at ages 6 and 10) to live with their brother and a stranger, about 500km away without any warning. How ungrateful.

The second thing I discovered was that my partner was not who I thought he was. We came from opposite ends of the spectrum when it came to childhood experiences, his being a childhood full of domestic abuse, drinking, gang violence, suicide attempts, taking care of his siblings, and general instability. Up until then I had never seen this side of him who was cruel and verbally abusive on a daily basis. We had many arguments about this and I came to understand that this was his version of parenting, as he had learnt it. My partner had really become the 'father' at the age of 12. He was the one who would drop the kids off to school in the morning. He was the one who would stay up with them at night when they couldn't sleep. He was the one who would discipline them when they did something wrong. He was the one who would try to talk his Mum out of attempting suicide, and hide his brothers and sisters in the bedroom when his mother's boyfriend beat her up.

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Sibling Caregivers [continued from page 2]

At 20, I had never really thought about how I would like to parent, but I knew that this was not it. I could sense my partner knew it too, but didn't really know any alternatives. The first rule I put in place was no physical violence. Not even a smack. Or I would be gone. The verbal abuse was extremely hard to stop, I feel like that's something which gets ingrained into your whole being and is hard to define and extract from your system.

The first few years were really hard. We clashed constantly about parenting choices, I was always too soft, and he was always too harsh. We weren't receiving any money for the first year, we had no idea about any kind of support we should be getting, and in any case, we thought they would be with us for a couple of months. The kids went to school with small dirty clothes (they had only been sent with a small bag each and these are pretty much all the clothes they had for the first year), we ate mince and bread every day for dinner, and I struggled to keep on top of the cleaning while working and studying.

Slowly we started communicating better. I got harder on them and my partner got softer. My partner apologised for the years of abuse he had put them through when they were little. He couldn't take it back, but he realised that he could change now, and try to make it up to them. I was extremely proud of him for that, I feel that at 12 you are pretty much a product of your immediate upbringing, you really have no choice but to repeat what is being done to you. The kids struggled at school and were sometimes in trouble, but mainly they are good kids who try their best.

Having our own 2 kids a couple of years later, we found we were pretty much on the same page and have had very little arguments. We look at our experience with taking on his half-brother and sister as a blessing, as it allowed us to get out all our differences and prepare ourselves for our own kids. We know we have made mistakes in their upbringing, and if we were to go back and do it again, we would definitely do things differently, but we can only apologise now and try our best to give them what they need.

We have sporadic communication from their mother. I used to be angry at her and blame her for all of our problems, but I have come to realise that she is a product of her own upbringing, and we have always tried to talk to the kids about her and make them know that she does love them, she is just sometimes incapable of seeing through her own cloud of depression. I think they know that she loves them, and are beginning to understand her illness as they get older. They never really knew their father and were upset when he passed away a couple of years ago. He had been in prison most of their lives but they still mourned the idea of him and were upset they never really had a chance to form a relationship with them.

7 years have gone past now, the eldest is 17 and in year 12 at college, the youngest is 13 and in year 9 at boarding school (and I have finally finished my degree!). They seem to be mostly happy, and doing pretty well. They are not top of the class, and I'm not sure that they are thankful that they came to live with us, but I can honestly say that without our input they would have had a very different life.



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Sibling Caregivers [continued from page 2]

They have had a very difficult life, but I am hoping that we have shown them that they can use that to define what they don't want in their own lives, and what they do want for themselves. I am very proud of my partner for becoming the man and the father he is today, and my hope is that we have ended the cycle of abuse for this family, or at least given them some alternative ways to parent their own children without threats and violence.

Singing a song

I parent my 5 and half year old Grandson who has been diagnosed ADHD and we have just started him on a very low dose of medication. This shows how his brain can now get thoughts in order and the result of loving attachment of grand-parenting.

Last night he was doing his usual "play quietly in his room" before he put himself into bed to go to sleep. He yelled out he was going to sing me a song (I am really sad that you can't all hear it.)

It went a bit like this : (in a talking/rhythm voice, while twanging at a "stretchy" pulled tight like a double bass string, between the top and bottom drawer handles on his cabinet.)

*Nan, I love you so much, I love you so much, so I hug you lots, and
kiss you lots
and I love you all the time
Nan- I love you, I love you, I love you when you bring me more
things
I love you when you buy beyblades for me, and I love you
I love you doing stuff with me and I love pencils so much
and drawing lots of pictures with Nan, And everything I like and
can, yes I do
You're special and so cool
special and so cool, special and so cool, special and so coo-ool,
special and so cool*



Unsupported Child Benefit info:

Absence from New Zealand

The child (that Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit is paid for) can be absent from New Zealand and continue to receive payment for the first 28 days of an absence if it does not affect the caregiver or child's qualification for Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit.

When the child remains in New Zealand and the caregiver is absent from New Zealand, Orphans Benefit and Unsupported Childs Benefit payments can continue to be paid. The child must continue to meet the definition of [dependent child](#) and the caregiver must continue to be the [principal caregiver](#).

Exceptions

- When the caregiver qualifies for Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit but they have not been resident and present in New Zealand for a continuous period of 12 months at any time, payment must stop for any period the child is absent from New Zealand.
- When the caregiver and child are going to a country which New Zealand has a reciprocal agreement with Orphans Benefit may continue in certain circumstances. For more information about these reciprocal agreements, contact Senior Services – international.

New caregiver applies for benefit

Where a new caregiver applies for Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit, you will need to obtain verification from the previous caregiver that the child is no longer in their care.

Applications for Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit

If the new caregiver meets the all qualifications, and there has been no change in the circumstances of the child's parents, then Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit can be paid to the new caregiver.

When any application for Orphans Benefit or Unsupported Childs Benefit is granted, entitlement to an Establishment Grant can be considered.

For more information see:

[Qualifications](#)

In some cases the grandparent for example my encounter ill health and no longer be able to care for the child concerned, this is where the above information could come in.

Our Office Manager

We would like to introduce you to Kelly Vivian, she is our new Office Manager for GRG National office, her hours are 9.30am – 2.30pm daily. The office telephone number is 09 418 3753 / txt 0275 225705 her email is kelly@grg.org.nz She is the person you will contact if you have a change of address, require GRG brochures, or for anything 'office' related, we welcome her to our GRG family.



Our Office

Rawene Chambers: Ground floor 17 Rawene Rd Birkenhead Auckland 0626



These lovely ladies are some of the North Shore GRG support group at their local meeting at the new GRG Office in Birkenhead. We also had a couple of GRG visitors from West Auckland and Tauranga. In total we had 22 attend - some declined to be photographed .



For those who have children under CYF care:

CYFS Caregiver Entitlement Changes:

Some changes to caregiver allowances and payments for Child, Youth & Family caregivers have come into effect and some will come in shortly. These changes have been implemented to improve flexibility, and remove the need for caregivers to seek reimbursement for small costs relating to day-to-day purchases. The changes are:

20 August 2014

All caregivers will receive a payment of \$20 per fortnight per child to cover small cost items i.e. additional school stationery, school outings, presents for a friend's birthday party or a koha. You can still expect larger costs to be met by discretionary payments. When needed, caregivers who are on their first placement will receive a \$350 set-up grant. This grant will help to buy items that may be needed like safety gates, cupboard locks or bedding.

1 October 2014

Clothing Allowance payments stay the same, but will be paid every four weeks instead of every three months. This will make it easier for you to buy clothing for the children in your care and you won't be expected to keep receipts.

When discussed and approved prior to travel commencing, you will be reimbursed at \$0.77 cents per km of travel over 40 km per week when it is to do with meeting the needs of the children in your care. Caregivers can also apply for one-off assistance for long trips over 40 km. Day-to-day travel costs below 40km continue to be covered as part of the foster care allowance payment.



KidzaCool Adventures:

www.standforchildren.org.nz Next respite care camps will be in January 2015. They run 3 free camps per year. For our members, GRG Trust NZ is your referral Agency.

Northern Region, Phone 09 437 9050 * 26-30

January, 13-17 April, 6-10 July:

Auckland Region, Phone 09 534 4017 * 19-23

January, 13-17 April, 6-10 July:

Midland Region, Phone 07 345 9097 * 19-23 January, 13-17 April, 6-10 July:

East Coast Region, Phone 06 867 5614 * 26-30 January, 13-17 April, 6-10 July:

Central Region, Phone 06 364 8069 * 19-23 January, 13-17 April, 6-10 July:

Christchurch Region, Phone 03 332 2541 * 19-23 January, 13-17 April, 6-10 July:

Southern Region, Phone 03 446 8119 * 19-23 January, 13-17 April, 6-10 July.



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



Anti-bullying



0800 456 450

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Grandparents want you to know?

Huffington Post USA: There are nearly three million grandparents raising over five million grandchildren in the U.S. --[officially](#). Those figures represent grandparents that have legal, physical, and financial responsibility for their grandchildren. But if you include grandparents who are head of households that include both birth parents and grandchildren, the figure climbs to seven million. And once you understand that all of those situations are vastly underreported, you begin to get a better picture of an enormous and growing sociological trend with serious implications for the future.

From *Raising Our Children's Children: Room In The Heart*:

Situations where grandparents have informal custody of grandchildren remain grossly underreported. Some grandparents conceal the fact that they have children in their care ... to avoid interference by social service agencies that may take the children from them. Some fear reprisals from drug-involved children and keep a low-profile while doing their best to keep grandchildren out of harm's way. Grandparents who don't want to rock the boat, don't tell.

What are the reasons? The economy has a lot to do with the need for families to band together to make ends meet. Beyond that, reasons are varied. As you chip away at the smaller percentages of those caused by divorce, illness, death, and job-loss, one overwhelming reason grandparents most often need to step in and totally take over the responsibility of raising their grandchildren becomes frighteningly clear: substance abuse. Millions of grandparents are rescuing their grandchildren from a life of neglect, chaos, and abuse at the hands of addicted parents. These are families from every walk of life, of socio-economic strata, of size, shape, and color. Make no mistake, they are families like yours and mine.

My book, *Raising Our Children's Children: Room In The Heart*, deals with the core group of caregiving grandparents -- the ones that are struggling to rescue and raise grandchildren on their own. Here is what they would like you to know.

1. Grandparents are often near or at retirement age, yet are starting over again with the huge financial responsibilities of raising young children, most of whom suffer from tragic and damaging effects due to addicted parents. They are children who may have been born addicted themselves, or have Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, failure to thrive, neurological issues, Reactive Attachment Disorder, ADD, ADHD, PTSD, developmental delays, abandonment issues, rage disorders... any or all of these problems plus many more.
2. After they have managed to save their grandchildren from harm, grandparents don't know where to turn for help. In fact, the little help available is scattered among agencies that differ from state to state, county to county, court to court, and can change with adjustments in local and federal funding. Each grandparent must frantically hunt and scratch and reinvent the wheel every single time. For many, if not most, there is no help at all.
3. The foster care industry will provide financial benefits and services to grandparents if they join "The System" and become licensed Foster Care providers. For many, financial struggles force them into that situation though the last thing they want is to be under the thumb of the very bureaucracy from which they fought to save their grandchildren!
4. Involvement of Child Protective Services and/or Departments of Social Services should be a blessing, but too often it's a curse for caregiving grandparents. There is an inherent lack of comfort with or outright distrust of

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Grandparents want you to know?

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those agencies among grandparents and kin. Although there are many good foster care homes, in general the whole system is fraught with problems. Most family caregivers want to keep clear of any involvement with untrustworthy bureaucracies they fear may result in loss of custody.

There are many systemic reasons why the child welfare system/foster care industry provides a barrier to grandparents and so often fails to protect children. Currently those systems exist within an unworkable directive that drives them toward a narrow view of "family reunification." This mindset serves to undermine what is in the best interest of the child by unintentionally taking away stability, safety and security in the quest to drive the child first into, and then out of foster care, back to addictive and/or failed parents and often back into foster care again. Grandparents and other kin are frequently used as merely a way-station rather than a "family reunification" destination. CPS will initially drop children off at grandma's doorstep, but after that, family members must fight to keep them, or become part of the system to do it. Foster care is a self-sustaining industry, the more children under their umbrella, the bigger their budget; for grandparents, it's join or lose.

Director of Baltimore City Department of Social Services, Molly McGrath Tierney, had this to say - and much more - at [TedxBaltimore 2014 Rethinking Foster Care](#).

I run a well-oiled machine that does an outstanding job of taking other people's children. It does it with absolute efficiency. I regret that this success does not also result in us actually helping people. Now the abuse and neglect is awful for children, it's terrible for children, absolutely! When we also then take them from their families, we're digging a wound so deep that I don't believe we have a way of measuring it. This dismantling of families, has enormous consequences...

5. If and when grandparents finally manage to maintain custody and eventually adopt grandchildren, they become the children's de facto parents. Usually, children quite naturally transition to calling them mom and dad. As in any adoptive situation, the roles override the biological connection or *lack of* biological connection. Grandparents want you to accept interfamily adoptions in the same way traditional adoptions are accepted. They want you to "get it."

Finally, grandparents want to know some things too: Why isn't there a national policy that supports them in their efforts to keep their grandchildren safe and their families together? They would like to know why child welfare agencies are so married to the foster care industry -- a troubled, overburdened bureaucracy at best -- at the expense of keeping children permanently within their own family group. They want to know why these issues are barely on the national radar. They want to know why society neither acknowledges nor values what grandparents and other kin do. Even now, when we have a president who was raised by grandparents, they would like to know what it would take to raise awareness.

From *Raising Our Children's Children: Room In The Heart*,

When I began this book, my goal was to offer grandparents and grandchildren a look at what others have been through and survived... and I hoped to raise awareness in others who may not realize the depth and complexity of this growing trend while providing a common sense outlook onto the issues.

We are all inexorably wound together as individuals, as families, as communities, and as a society. We must take care to value, accommodate, and, at times, assist the variety and diversity, each unique facet, in the noble work - the blessed art - of family. Millions of grandparents and millions more grandchildren want you to know.

Remember this article and book talked about is USA driven and some of their laws are different to ours, but I makes interesting reading.



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

We are respectful, we listen, we learn

He rōpū manaaki, he rōpū whakarongo, he rōpū ako mātou

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 someone else will talk to you.

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

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