



GRANDPARENTS RAISING GRANDCHILDREN TRUST NZ

Raising resilient and healthy children and young people through empowering grandparent and whānau care families since 2001

Are you raising someone else's child full-time?

GRG provides support, information, advice, advocacy services and caregiver education programmes nationwide to full-time caregivers who are raising a child not born to them. Membership and services are free. Call us on toll free **0800 GRANDS** or visit **www.grg.nz** to join.

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Welcome! Tena koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Malo e Lelei, Bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kam Na Mauri Namaste, Hallo, Bonjour, Hola and Greetings this month to our 6,300+ member families and all our non-member subscribers!

Financial support for raising someone else's child...

If you are raising someone else's child because:

- there has been a breakdown in the child's family, or
- their parents have died, or
- they are missing, or
- they have a long-term disablement

AND you are to be their principal temporary or long-term caregiver, from the date you apply to Work and Income for this support, then you are entitled to either the **Unsupported Child Benefit** or the **Orphan's Benefit** to help with the costs of raising the child.

The **Unsupported Child** or **Orphan's Benefits** are not taxable and they are not affected by your income or assets as a caregiver.

It is affected by any income the child might be receiving (e.g. ACC) and the child must be resident and present in New Zealand.

To qualify for it you must also be over 18 years of age, resident and present in NZ and you must not be a natural parent, an adoptive parent, or a step-parent of the child.

If these circumstances apply to you and you think you have been incorrectly advised or you realise now that you should be receiving this support, please contact us tollfree on **0800 472 637** or call our National Support Office on **09 418 3753** for a referral to our advocate, Tricia Corin.



Kate Bundle  
Chief Executive

## Kate's Last Word

Kia ora koutou katoa and a warm welcome to the 118 new client families who have joined GRG for support since our last newsletter. Spring has come and with it the promise (we hope) of sunny days after so much rain! It is also a time for new beginnings and so it is with mixed emotions that this is my last newsletter column for GRG.

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I will be leaving GRG on 6 October after nearly 25 years. It has been an incredible journey being involved with GRG in various roles as a volunteer adviser, trustee, employee and more recently as CEO since 2017. In 1999, as a family lawyer in my early 30's, I still recall one of my clients asking me to come along to a new support group in Birkenhead to help the grandparents better understand the Family Court processes and their rights.

Holding a newspaper advert in her hand and excitedly telling me about the public meeting she had just attended, she was a mix of both excitement and shock when she exclaimed, "Kate, there are hundreds, probably thousands of grandmothers like me out there raising fulltime and we really need help understanding our rights."

Sometimes life leads you in a direction that just feels right. Going along with my client to the support group (initially called Parenting Second Time Around) and meeting Diane Vivian, GRG's Founder, for the first time, was one of those moments in my life when I realised that beyond being a family lawyer, I was meant to lend my knowledge and skills in support of an important cause.

At that point I hadn't stopped to think about the fact that my mother and her grandmother had been raised by their grandparents and my own grandparents had played an integral role in raising me, including fulltime for two substantive periods during my childhood. Reflecting on that came later. Instead, it was hearing the incredible stories from the grandparents in Di's first support group and the injustices they experienced dealing with state agencies, the Family Court and legal aid processes, together with the impact that being a full time carer of their grandchildren was having

on their lives. That is what really got me. I saw the determination, love and sacrifice, alongside grief, despair and weariness on their faces. Even so, these amazing grandparents would walk over hot coals for the children to keep them safe and at huge personal cost to themselves.

At that time there was limited recognition of the needs of the children and their grandparents as non-statutory caregivers either financially or legally. I was inspired by Di and so many grandparents who shared her passion to advocate for change in policy, practice and legislation. Today, I am so very proud of the achievements that together, we have all made to ensure better financial and other supports for grandparent and whānau care families over past 25 years.

In 2001, GRG became a registered charitable trust and since that first support group in 1999, GRG has supported around 10,000 families. Significant achievements along the way include our groundbreaking research in 2005 that paved the way for further studies in 2009 and 2016 in which we were able to really highlight the socio-economic issues impacting grandparent care families and the needs of the children who, but-for their grandparents' care, would have gone into state foster care, most likely outside their whānau.

In 2009, through our advocacy with Government, it was finally agreed that children being supported by the Unsupported Child or Orphan's Benefit (UCB/OB) should receive the same weekly support as children receiving the Foster Care Allowance.

Since 2014 there has been the additional supports (Establishment Grant, School and Year Start up Payments) and the opportunity to apply for an additional \$2,000 per year via the Extraordinary Care Fund and in 2018 the Clothing Allowance was

introduced, bringing UCB/OB recipients another step closer to achieving parity with foster carers in terms of financial support for the children in their care. Another significant win was additional support with the Holidays and Birthdays allowance introduced in 2021.

But it was the Government's agreement in 2021 to change the eligibility criteria for the UCB/OB to enable this vital support for children in the temporary care of someone other than their parents, following a family breakdown, that I am particularly proud of.

As an advocate for GRG, the injustices caused to so many grandparents and children denied support during this tough first year of care, all because WINZ determined they were "not likely to be the principal caregiver for at least one year" really rankled. Although it felt like an uphill battle making the point that this law was unjust, we finally got there in the end. It is with much respect and gratitude that I acknowledge the Honourable Tracey Martin, as the Minister for Children at the time, for her work in facilitating this important change in the law. She was a champion for our cause with the Clothing Allowance back in 2018 and again as the Minister, made a positive difference for thousands of children and their carers.

There is, of course, still much work to be done to ensure that irrespective of a child's legal status of care, our laws, policies, practices and community services are able to provide them with the financial and other supports they need in order to thrive and lead healthy and resilient lives.

## Welcome to Christina Howe

Although this is officially my last word as CEO of GRG, I have the pleasure of introducing you all to our new Senior Community Advocate | *Kaitaunaki a te Hapori*.

Christina comes to this new advocacy role with 7 years experience as a barrister and solicitor practising in criminal, employment, immigration, property, ACC, and family law.

Recently, she was a founding member of the Family Court Navigator service with the Ministry of Justice leading projects such as Enduring Powers Of Attorney (EPOA) workshops, Family Court Open Days, and extensive community education.

Christina's passion lies in all things family law related and she has a real desire to see change in this space. Of top priority for Christina for GRG members is making easy-to-use toolkits for grandparents going through the Family Court and pushing for a national register for EPOA's and wills.

Christina has been largely raised by her grandparents and credits them for who she is today. Without their love and support, she says she would not be the person she is now.

In Christina's spare time she has volunteered as Trustee for Single Parent Services and Hamilton Multicultural Services Trust. She has a cat called Mia and a sausage dog called Jemma. She enjoys spending time with her Nan, playing piano, spending money at book fairs, and commenting on how big her 'to be read' pile is getting after going to the book fairs! One thing she does not like doing is cooking so it's lucky her partner is a former chef! Christina is very excited to be part of the GRG family and to help in any way she can.



Christina Howe

I am delighted to be able to hand the baton to Christina to advocate for the needs of grandparent and whānau care families across the social services sector and to continue advocating for improvements and changes needed to legislation, policy and practice going forward. I know you will all make her feel welcome in her new role as a member of the GRG whānau.

## Goodbye and Thank you!

Over the years, I have had the honour and privilege of getting to know some of our members in particular our wonderful volunteer Support Group Coordinators who are the lifeblood of this organisation. Thank you all for the support you have given me in this role over the years.



To borrow a quote:

***'If I have seen further than others,  
it is because I have stood on the  
shoulders of giants.'*** Sir Isaac Newton

I have been empowered and strengthened as an advocate and leader of GRG over the years by these wonderful individuals who have given their time, knowledge, insight, experience and love generously in the support of our members throughout the length and breadth of this country. I wish I could, in this column, acknowledge each and every one of you by name, but you all know who you are. Thank you!

That said, there is one amazing grandmother amongst you all who I do want to single out for a special mention in my last column. **Cecilee Donovan**, our volunteer Support Group Coordinator for Kapiti and Wellington has been a tireless support for so many members since 2001. She has also been a fierce advocate for their needs, never shying away from holding government agencies to account in order to ensure grandparents and children get the support they need.

Cecilee is a true champion of the GRG cause and recently, when the portrait artist, **Deb Fabrin** offered to paint a special GRG person, I immediately thought of Cecilee. With some subterfuge I was able to photograph her while in Wellington late last year to commission this beautiful watercolour of Cecilee. On behalf of us all at GRG, thank you Cecilee for your indomitable and generous spirit of giving, commitment, humour, love and support shown to so many of us over the years!



Cecilee Donovan

A new chapter beckons for me but over the next couple of months I am first taking a long overdue break to concentrate on my children and family. Teenage years are important and with exams and the stress that goes with that, now is time for me to put family first for a bit before embarking on another role.

Finally, I would like to thank the past and present trustees and staff of GRG who have supported me and given their heart and soul to the GRG cause and to all the sector colleagues and leaders I've worked with to achieve common goals for the benefit of grandparent and whānau care families throughout the years. Each of you have enriched and inspired me.

To all our members, thank you for being champions for your children – for the sacrifices you make and the love you give them. God bless you all.

Kate

## Caregiver Education



### GRG's Simply Acquired & Learned Techniques™ **SALT** trauma informed care workshop programme

This programme has been developed specifically for grandparents and whānau caregivers to help them learn how to increase attachment in children who have experienced trauma, and how to:

- safely de-escalate conflict, develop self-regulation and
- increase the child's resilience, feeling of stability, security, and belonging within their whānau.

### Upcoming workshops: 10am - 2pm Venues confirmed on registration

Motueka	12 October	Mid-North/Kaikohe	17 October
Blenheim	13 October	Kaitaia	18 October
Whangarei	16 October	Auckland Central	19 October

**REGISTER NOW** at [SALT@grg.org.nz](mailto:SALT@grg.org.nz) or phone 0800 472 637

## Last call for nominations:

## Extraordinary Caregivers



## Excellence IN FOSTER CARE AWARDS

**Do you know an outstanding, extraordinary caregiver couple or sole caregiver that you would like to nominate for an award in recognition of their extraordinary commitment, not only to the children in their care but also the community?**

GRG is delighted to once again, collaborate with Caring Families Aotearoa, Barnardos, Open Home Foundation and new awards partner Kia Puāwai, (formerly Youth Horizons) to sponsor the Excellence in Foster Care Awards organised by Caring Families Aotearoa. Nominations for 2024 awards are open NOW and will close on Friday 20 October 2023.

These awards recognise 10 amazing caregivers or couples who go above and beyond for the tamariki and rangatahi in their care.

If you would like to nominate someone for this award, please contact Caring Families Aotearoa at: [events@caringfamilies.org.nz](mailto:events@caringfamilies.org.nz) or 0800 693 323 for help with the nomination process.

Or if you would like to discuss your nomination of a GRG member, feel free to contact GRG on 0800 GRANDS | 0800 472 637 or 09 418 3753

For more information: <https://www.caringfamilies.org.nz/excellence-in-foster-care-awards/>



## SAVE THE DATE 8 October 2023 REGISTER ONLINE

[www.zontarun.org.nz](http://www.zontarun.org.nz)

\$15 Adults \$10 Students Registration on the day: \$20 cash only

**Can't make it on the day?**

**Do a Virtual Run/Walk Around NZ, around the World!**

We understand that some of you may not be able to make it on the day to Christchurch, however we know you'd love to participate in this run/walk fundraiser.

Get your friends together and register \$15 pp and go for a 5KM walk or 5KM/10KM run in your town or city so you don't miss out on a fun day.

**Post your images from your Virtual Run/Walk and be in to WIN \$100 for your charity of choice!**

# Tricia Advocating for You



Tricia Corin  
**Specialist Advocate**  
**Income/Financial**  
**Support**

This month I provide a guide for caregivers receiving the Unsupported Child or Orphan's Benefit on the Extraordinary Care Fund and tips for applying for a grant to help support the children in your care.

## What is an Extraordinary Care Fund grant?

An Extraordinary Care Fund (ECF) grant is non-recoverable financial assistance granted to caregivers who are caring for a **child who is experiencing difficulties that have a sufficient impact on their development or for a child who is showing promise.**

The ECF grant is non-taxable.

## How much is it?

In each funding year, starting on 1 July and ending 30 June, you can apply for eligible costs for up to \$2,000 per year for each child in your care who is supported on the Unsupported Child or Orphan's Benefit. (UCB/OB).

## When can you apply?

The ECF has 4 funding rounds each year. Applications can be accepted at any time during the year, but decisions will be made 4 times a year at the end of each funding round. **The next funding round closes on 1 November 2023.**

## Showing promise? Cost examples:

- Participating in a national Kapa Haka competition
- Attending a science academic programme or event
- Competing in a national sports competition
- Coaching, tutoring or mentoring
- Private music lessons and instrument hire or purchase

## Examples of experiencing difficulties

Courses or activities to:

- Develop self-esteem, physical capability, or social skills for example YMCA programmes
- Improve their ability to learn if they have learning difficulties
- Swimming lessons (if they haven't learnt to swim at school)
- Orthodontic work that isn't funded by the Ministry of Health
- Counselling
- You can apply for other costs not haven't mentioned here that fit the above criteria.

## Other costs covered:

The ECF is also available for covering other costs including equipment/tools related to the child's difficulties or where they are showing promise. On the next page is a table showing further examples of these costs covered by a grant and the limit of a grant for these costs.

## How to apply

### Step 1: Fill out an application form

Print and fill out the Extraordinary Care Fund Grant application form.

If you can't print the form, call Work & Income 0800 559 009 to post one to you.

### Step 2: Gather your documents

You'll need to provide:

- Proof of the cost you're applying for, for example:
- A quote
- The receipt
- A letter from an organiser asking for payment.
- Letters of support

**If you would like help or have any questions, please contact the GRG National Support Office on 0800 GRANDS**

### Step 3: Submit your application

You can get your completed form and documents to Work & Income by either:

- dropping these into your nearest service centre. You do not need to make an appointment.
- posting these to your nearest MSD service centre.
- Email directly to MSD via [extraordinary\\_care\\_fund@msd.govt.nz](mailto:extraordinary_care_fund@msd.govt.nz)

### What happens next?

- A panel assesses each application. They meet 4 times this year, but you can apply at any time.
- Work & Income will write to you to let you know the outcome of your application.

There may be other documents you need to provide if you're applying for help with technology, costs over \$2000, or orthodontic treatment.

### Letters of support

A letter of support explains how your child is showing promise or how they're experiencing difficulty. If you're applying for a cost that's:

- under \$500, you need one letter of support
- \$500 or more, you need 2 letters of support

The letter needs to be from an independent person, for example:

- A teacher
- Coach
- Other person of standing in the community

### Technology

If you're applying for help with technology, you need to provide documents:

- from the school with their recommended item, especially if they have a 'bring your own device' (BYOD) programme
- for anything that's significantly more expensive than what the school recommends, your letter of support will need to outline why it's needed.

You can apply for help with tablets/iPads/laptops every two years unless there are exceptional circumstances. See table below.

### Applying for costs over \$2,000

If you're applying for a cost that's more than \$2,000, you need to confirm how you can pay for the rest of the cost.

### Orthodontic treatment

If you're applying for help with orthodontic treatment, for example braces, you need to provide documents from the orthodontist with:

- the proposed treatment
- how long the treatment will take
- confirmation of any payments made so far and the balance owing.

### Cost Type

Laptops

Ipads/Tablets

Musical instruments

Music Lessons

Clothing and equipment for sports and arts

Counselling

Psychological fees/services

Development programmes

e.g. speech development, YMCA programmes

Extra tuition

Orthodontics

### Cost Guide

Secondary School level - up to \$1400

Intermediate School level - up to \$1200

Primary School level - up to \$750

Up to \$500

*\*You can apply for help with BYOD technology costs every two years unless exceptional circumstances exist.*

Up to \$900

\$150-\$250 per term

\$500 to \$1200

\$60 to \$120 per session

initial assessment \$125 to \$180 per hour

\$45 to \$130 per session

\$400-\$880 each term

Up to \$2,000 per year



# Merle's Support Group Update

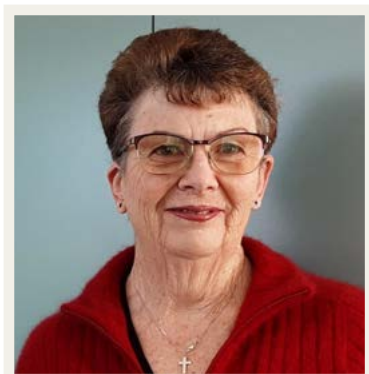


Merle Lambert  
**National Support  
Coordinator**

I am delighted to share photos from various support group initiatives and fundraisers throughout the year in this newsletter and welcome our new coordinator for New Plymouth and farewell our Hamilton North Coordinator.

## Welcome Jeanette Hinton, New Plymouth

As our new Support Group Coordinator for New Plymouth, Jeanette has been very much involved in the care of her granddaughter and has a background in early childhood education and experience as a teacher aid. She is passionate about the value of support groups where grandparents can share knowledge and wisdom in support of each other. In supporting the progress of her granddaughter, Jeanette has been proactive in seeking out relevant resources and support and will be able to use this knowledge and skill in advocating for grandparents needing that additional input to get the assistance they need. Welcome to the GRG whānau, Jeanette!



Jeanette Hinton

## Thank you Mirjam and farewell

I am sorry to announce the resignation of Hamilton North Support Group Coordinator (SGC), Mirjam Sole. Mirjam regrets having to step down from her role due to a change in her circumstances that has impacted on her being able to dedicate the additional time to what she sees as such an important role in providing the support to GRG members. We would like to thank Mirjam for her contribution to GRG and members and wish her every success for the future.

If anyone is interested in becoming a Support Group Coordinator in the Waikato region, please contact National Support Coordinator Merle Lambert on 021 246 0553 or [merle@grg.org.nz](mailto:merle@grg.org.nz)

## Support for the children in Ukraine

Tokoroa Support Coordinator, Debbie Newton and GRG member Nikki Mathieson knitted these gorgeous teddy bears for the children in Ukraine over the winter and we just had to share a pic of their beautiful handiwork! ❤️



## Grand Reflections

Our local support groups led by volunteers play such a vital role in GRG's support services and objective to empower grandparents and strengthen whānau. Throughout the year these groups engage in many local fundraisers and activities to support their group initiatives for their members, children and whānau to enjoy. There are many local community organisations and businesses throughout the country who also support them in many ways including sausage sizzles, pamper days, donations of food, time and expertise to name just a few of the supports. We are so grateful for their support.

On the facing page montage we share just some of the many photos we have from the past year of activities, fundraisers and supporters. Thank you!



## Other Handy Helpline Numbers

**EMERGENCY 111** for emergency services, fire, ambulance or police

**PLUNKETLINE 0800 933 922** for advice on child health or parenting from a registered Plunket Nurse

**HEALTHLINE 0800 611 116** for health triage and advice from a registered nurse.

**COVID-19 Healthline** concerns **0800 358 5453**

**'NEED TO TALK?' Text 1737**  
Get help from a counsellor

**LIFELINE 0800 543 354** or **Text 4357** – 24/7 confidential support from qualified counsellors and trained volunteers

**YOUTHLINE 0800 376 633** helping families and youth

**0508 CARERS (0508 227 377)** a 24/7 Caregivers Guidance and Advice Line.

**0800 WHATS UP (0800 942 8787)** is a free counselling helpline for teenagers and children run by Barnardos.

**DEPRESSION.ORG.NZ**  
Free text number 4202

## Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ

Established in 2001 as a registered charitable trust (CC20205), GRG supports over 6,200 grandparent and whanau care families nationwide, representing around 9,500 caregivers and over 16,000 children. Our vision and kaupapa is to empower grandparent and other whanau care families to achieve positive life outcomes, through providing support, information, advice, advocacy services and caregiver education programmes.

### Have your circumstances changed?

Our aim is to keep you informed and of what's happening, key information and opportunities that can help you. If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or you have changed address or phone number please update your details by clicking the button below or contact us.

**Update your member details**

**Can we help you?** Members ONLY services are available free of charge nationwide.

New members and existing members please call our Helpline 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637) or 09 418 3753

**Join GRG** or subscribe to our newsletter via our website or click the button below.

**Join GRG**

**Our Website**

**Donate**

Donating to GRG with One Percent Collective means that every cent donated lands in our bank account – they don't take a cut because they're a charity too! We get 100% and they handle all the admin. They even make it easy to claim a 33% rebate on your GRG Trust donations at tax time!



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. He rōpū manaaki, he rōpū whakarongo, he rōpū ake o mātou – We are respectful, we listen, we learn.

**Please pass this newsletter on to other grandparents and whanau caregivers who need support.**

Ngā mihi nui – Thank you to our funders for their support for our newsletter.



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### Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust New Zealand

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