



NEWSLETTER JUNE 2018

DATABASE: 7835 WHANAU CARERS

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

Reminders - Taking Effect from 1 July 2018

The second part of the Government's Families Package, which aims to improve incomes for low and middle income families with children, takes effect from 1 July.

The **Winter Energy Payment** will be paid automatically to everyone who is eligible. No one needs to apply. This year it will be paid from 1 July to 29 September. Single people will get \$20.46 a week, and couples or people with dependent children will get \$31.82.

NZ Super/Veteran's Pension couples who have separate bank accounts will get the full amount (\$31.82 a week) paid into one of their accounts. MSD has advised that they are unable to split the payment between couples' accounts.

There is a new **Best Start tax credit** for families with a child born (or due) on or after 1 July 2018. They'll get \$60.00 a week for each child until the child turns one, and for families earning under \$79,000 a year until the child turns three years of age.

The Working for Families **Family Tax Credits** are increasing. From 1 July 2018, the eldest child rate will increase to \$113.00 a week and the rate for other children will increase to \$91.25 a week.

If you receive the **Orphan's or Unsupported Child's Benefit** for children in your care, you will also get an increase, and you will also get a new Clothing Allowance for each child on the UCB/OB

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in your care.

Please Note: All changes to MSD clients' payments will be made automatically.

Timing of Families Package payments

The 1 July payment won't include the full increase as 1 July falls part way through a payment period. **Therefore:** For people on a benefit (paid on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday):

- Week beginning 2 July – people will get one day of Winter Energy Payment and any other Families Package changes
- Week beginning 9 July - people will get their full new weekly amount.

For people getting NZ Super and Veteran's Pension:

- 10 July – people will get 10 days of Winter Energy Payment
- 24 July – people will get their full new fortnightly amount.





Kate's Take...

From the CEO's Desk this Month

Welcome to Dana Youngman

It is an absolute pleasure to introduce you to Dana Youngman, our new National Support Office Administrator who joined the GRG team this month. Dana has had 20 years in the media industry, with various roles behind the camera but has been looking for the right move into the charitable sector for some time and as mum to two school-aged children, a role closer to home. GRG's vision and purpose and the complexities that face grandparent carers resonates strongly for her having been raised for a time by her Samoan grandparents in West Auckland during her youth. Dana has an [impressive list of credits in television production](#) including many well known shows such as *Maggies Garden Show*, *New Zealand's Got Talent*, *Whānau Living*, *Annabel Langbein: The Free Range Cook*, *United Travel's Getaway* and many more. She has created directed and produced for the new children's channel [HeiHei, the animated series](#) *Legendary Polynesia* and created and produced a documentary for Prime called *Life After Footy: Legends of the Pacific* which will air in mid-July 2018. In just two weeks Dana has skilfully taken to her new role with GRG, getting our new office into shape in preparation for our new National Support Office Opening with the Minister for Children on 29 June, while managing the 0800 calls and administration of the office. We are thrilled to welcome her aboard!

New SALT Workshops

In 2017 we relaunched our carer workshop programme under the SALT banner to become the SALT (Simply Acquired & Learned Techniques™) 4 Caregivers workshop programme. Following an initial pilot, this programme has been run with several Support Groups throughout the country with our 'trauma informed' care module developed specifically to cater for the grandparent care

dynamic. It has been very well received by participants with many comments that it is "exactly what we GRGs need." We are delighted to get this feedback and going forward, two trauma-informed care module workshops will continue to be run twice a month at different locations for our Support Groups.

We have also received feedback from you that you are seeking more education on parenting and educating your grandchildren about drugs and how to mitigate against the risks of them becoming drug users themselves.



This is especially relevant for grandparent and whanau carers who are raising children because of parental substance abuse. Children who were raised in part with drug using parents are in more danger than those who haven't been. Children living with grandparents will in many cases still have contact with parents where they may continue to see drug use around them. In some

cases these children and youth can also be exposed to a range of behaviours including inappropriate sexual behaviours, violence and crime. In these environments unhealthy attachment behaviours including co-dependency and dependency, impulsivity, lack of empathy, risk-taking and reckless actions and poor decision-making ability can eventuate.

In response to your feedback, our new SALT 4 Caregivers workshop module addressing these concerns is called "Drug Proof" and will be run by Christina Stroud. Christina spoke at our 2016 *Hear Our Voices Summit* in Auckland presenting a compelling and informative session on 'What Every Grandparent and Whanau Caregiver Needs to Know About "P"'.

This issue unfortunately remains extremely pertinent for grandparents because our members have said that where the parents' drug use led to them raising their grandchildren, in 86% of cases it was methamphetamine that put them in that situation.

Christina is a highly experienced learning facilitator and drug rehabilitation expert who is passionate

about ensuring our grandparents, parents, whanau and next generation of children and youth are educated and informed to make positive life choices when it comes to drugs and that they are empowered to avoid that path to drug abuse and addiction that has destroyed so many lives.

There are tell-tale signs of children more disposed to trouble and signs of increasing trouble that you can be alert to. DRUGPROOF will address the concerns of carers and provide strategies and new behaviours that they can adopt in parenting their children.

The workshops which will be held between **10am and 2pm** will be **limited to 12 participants** and our first three workshops with Christina will be held at venues to be confirmed on the following dates:

- Hamilton—Tuesday 7 August 2018
- Rotorua—Wednesday 8 August 2018
- Tauranga/Mt Maunganui—Friday 10 August 2018

If you are a member interested in attending one of these workshops or you would be interested in attending a workshop in your area, please contact our National Support Office Administrator— Dana Youngman on 09 418 3753 / 0800 472 637 or via email at Dana@grg.org.nz .

Brave Hearts

If you are struggling with the impact of a loved one's addiction get in touch with



Brave Hearts on 0508 BRAVE HEARTS or see their website at www.BraveHearts.nz

They have an established Support Group in Tauranga and more recently set up in South Auckland with interest growing in other areas to establish local groups. [Please see their website](#) for more information on when their next meetings with guest speakers are on in July.

Mental Health and Addiction

In last month's newsletter I included a link to our internal membership survey on the mental health and addiction issues. Within five days we received comprehensive survey responses from 96 people. Thank you to all of you who participated.

Your insight and experiences were extremely helpful in informing our submission that was sent through to the Mental Health and Addiction Inquiry Panel on 5 June 2018. Our submission is also available for you to read on our website under our [Submissions on Law and Policy section under our "What we do" tab or here.](#)

National Age Friendly Forum—19 June 2018

This month I attended the Office for Seniors' National Age Friendly Forum at Parliament. The Government is developing a new "Positive Ageing Strategy" with public consultation from June through August.

With 70% more people over the age of 80 than there were in 2001, our local councils and central government are focusing more on ensuring our communities and facilities are in a strong position to deal with this change and the demographic shift in the make up of our population.

There is no doubt that we are living and working longer than previous generations and it is estimated that our current population of those aged 65+ will increase from 750,000 (15% of the population) to around 1.3M (22%) by 2036.

Many of the initiatives that have been identified to



create age friendly communities involve the physical community spaces—e.g. fixing up footpaths, installing more park seating, improving public transport options etc., but it is the psychological well being of our aged community that is also important. From the grandparents raising grandchildren perspective we know you are all superheroes, but we also know that with your role comes significant personal cost, emotionally, physically and financially. Issues such as respite, disability support, housing, legal costs and access to justice for the children in your care are all significant issues for our members. If you have thoughts on what this Government's new Positive Ageing Strategy should look like we encourage you to [have your say](#) before 24 August 2018. Check out the discussion document and other resources at www.superseniors.msd.govt.nz or [Facebook.com/OfficeforSeniors](https://www.facebook.com/OfficeforSeniors). You can also email a submission in Word Format to them at ageing_population@msd.govt.nz.



I've been thinking...

Diane Vivian, Founding Trustee

Let's Talk Turkey!

We are often at the bottom of the cliff. We are often charged with damaged children who act out in ways that we cannot understand. Yet we are judged like we have done the damage. We are thrown into this life and expected to heal all. Often those in 'power' blame us for something over which we have no control. We are under huge stress trying to normalise the lives of precious ones, juggle family dynamic, Courts, Work & Income and lawyers. Sometimes with no support or limited finances.

Due to past abuse and neglect, some children are acting out. And let's be really honest here; they can lie, accuse and in some cases fabricate stories, but also many have flashbacks of a previous life. But to them this is a reality, they are reliving a past. Not their fault, but it places us in a vulnerable position. And convincing they are. They can portray this is happening now in real time. Their reality, not actual, or maybe in their mind it is and it is happening again, but past flashbacks, but who believes it?

To give a personal example: Our one went to the neighbour and asked could she live with them, alleging we did not feed her, beat her and provided her with no clothing. She told the school teachers this too. Fortunately, we had a long-standing relationship with this school and the neighbour. They knew us well. Today we live in a world where many do not know their neighbours.

She threw all her clothing in the bin every night as she did not like the smell of it. Many of you will remember I have shared her story over the years. But if not, what? You can see where allegations can lead. This type of scenario adds to an already stressful situation, when we are trying to do our best. This is not just RAD (Reactive Attachment Disorder) children I must say. Any child who suffers from Post-Traumatic Stress can do the same, as we sadly found out. I cannot say how stressful this situation was for us. This type of scenario is also particularly relevant for children with ADHD, Asperger's and other conditions.

6 steps to protect yourself from false allegations while raising a child with reactive attachment disorder



Written by [Keri Williams](#), brave mom, author, and RAD

A sweet little kindergartener, with a *Blues Clues* backpack and big brown eyes, Devon went to school every morning with a hungry belly. At least

that's what he told the bus driver, his teacher, and the cafeteria ladies. When I got the call from his school, I was positively indignant. Not only did Devon eat breakfast every day, but he usually had seconds.

Within a few years, Devon's lies had become dangerously calculated deceptions. "I'm gonna hurt myself and tell them you did it. They'll arrest you," he'd say coolly, before punching himself in the jaw. Other times he'd twist the tee-shirt he was wearing round-and-round, cinching it against his neck until it left a puffy, red ligature mark. He'd accuse me of strangling him.

Unfortunately, many children with reactive attachment disorder are capable of false allegations. "Due to early trauma, children with reactive attachment disorder feel safe when they can manage their environments and push away people who try to get close to them," said Institute for Attachment and Child Development Executive Director Forrest Lien. "False allegations are one way for them to achieve both."

Even if we understand the diagnoses and social histories that prompt our children's false allegations, however, being lied about can be infuriating and hurtful.

A child's allegations, however outrageous or unlikely, will be investigated. This unwarrant-

ed disruption and family upheaval is collateral damage, necessary to make sure children who really are abused get the justice and safety they deserve. “By law, police officers or child protective service workers investigate all allegations of child abuse, as they should. Child abuse allegations need to be taken seriously,” says Institute for Attachment and Child Development Executive Director Forrest Lien. “But it’s also extremely harmful for children to falsely accuse adults of abuse charges, not only for the family but the child.” The consequences of false allegations can be devastating if our children manage to convince a guidance counsellor, therapist, or police officer they’re telling the truth. Parents can unjustly face jail time and lose their children without reason.

Here are 6 steps you can take to protect yourself and your family if your child makes false allegations against you:

- 1. Keep a daily log.** I use small notebooks that fit easily in my purse and document conversations with social workers and teachers, write notes after therapy appointments, and record details of any behavioural incidents. I also write down what my son eats for breakfast, what activities we do, and what time he goes to bed. The key is to be consistent and document even the mundane. Your log will be much less credible if you only log when an incident occurs.
- 2. Gather documentation.** To establish a pattern of behaviour, keep school disciplinary records, ask people to follow up on calls with an email, and, if your child is admitted to a treatment program, request their records when they are discharged. These documents may have mistakes or minimize your child’s behaviours so comb through them and request any corrections. Discuss false allegations with your child’s therapist. Your child may admit the truth to them and this can be documented.
- 3. Don’t lose your cool, or your credibility.** When a therapist, teacher, or others bring an allegation to your attention, listen. Breathe. Keep the frustrated tone out of your voice, don’t jump to defend yourself and never exaggerate. Sometimes you’re going to find yourself in a she said–he said and your credibility will be everything. A non-defensive response might sound like: “Gosh, I fed Devon eggs and toast this morning, but thanks for letting me know that he told you he hadn’t eaten. If he ever does miss breakfast, I’ll be sure to email you so we’ll be on the same

page.”

4. Use video/audio recordings (sparingly).

This is a tricky one that can backfire. First, remember that your words and actions on any recording will be judged, probably more harshly than your child’s. Second, you may be accused of provoking your child by recording them, especially if they scream at you to stop. In a few instances, I’ve been successful flipping my cell phone recorder on without my son seeing it. Give that a try.

5. Don’t go it alone. If things are spinning out of control, call a family member or friend to come over to act as a witness. Sometimes you may have to resort to desperate measures. For example, my son currently lives in a group home and I’ve refused to have visitations with him unless we are in a room with cameras and a staff member. We’ve had to cancel and reschedule visits because of this, but I cannot risk being alone with him.

6. Have a backup plan. Have a contingency plan so your other children do not end up in foster care if social workers remove them during an investigation of a false allegation. My sister and her husband have agreed to take my children if this should ever happen to me. It’s a worse case scenario, but you need to be prepared with a plan.

Though my son has hurled devastating false allegations against me, I’ve been able to avoid the worst potential outcomes by being proactive and meticulous about documentation. It’s extremely sad that I’ve had to do so. Yet, it’s a devastating reality that many parents of children with reactive attachment disorder must face to save their families.

Thank you to Keri Williams for this piece and more to come. Keri lives with her family in Charlotte, N.C. and is working on a memoir about raising her adopted son. She blogs at www.RaisingDevon.com. Find Keri on Twitter @RaisingDevon.



Grand's reflections...

Whew

Feeling overwhelmed and struggling with this thing that is my life these days. Actually, I have no life. Work, chores, kids, school, homework, grocery shopping, cooking...there are not enough hours in the day. Feeling defeated. It's been a challenging week, but I look into those eyes and feel their wee warm arms around my neck and I know all will be well. One day at a time I guess.

You never know

So I was checking out our local Op shop for grand's birthday, I normally never talk about my situation but the shop assistant asked was I buying for my grandchild? 'Yes', I said 'I am raising a beautiful boy.' She said, 'I'm retired and raising my grandson so I understand!' And with that she gave me a huge discount. You know I am starting to think if we stick together we could make a huge difference— I really appreciated her help it

made me smile all day! 😊

Laugh out Loud!!

All of us here know just how daunting life can be while living under the circumstances that brought us to be grandparents raising our grandchildren. More often than not, we encounter the darker side of the brutal effects our individual situations imposed upon our precious innocent grandchildren. We have to make a conscious decision to make the most of every single thing in each moment of every day. But occasionally, unexpectedly life gives us a little unforeseen blessing....that tiny little instantaneous morsel of sheer joy that validates and rewards us for all we are doing and sacrificing for ourselves and our loved ones.

Last night, Grand-dad was watching his

favourite Netflix show in the living room and preparing dinner for all. Once dinner was ready, he decided to treat us with dinner in the living room and placed her plate on her little princess table and called her from the room to eat. She promptly responded and sat at her table waiting while he was running to and fro getting my and his plate. While waiting, she gets the TV remote and changes the channel and keeps telling him "look, look at what I did".

But in his frenzy to get everything needed for our dinner, what she is saying and has done goes totally unnoticed until we all gather to join hands and say our blessing for dinner. It is then that he notices that she is beaming with pride to have successfully changed the channel on the TV. She proudly says again, "see, see I changed the channel". Looking astonished, he says to her, "girl, have you lost your marbles changing the channel off of my show I was watching?" She replies, with all

sincerity and absolute innocence, "What marble?"....we both began laughing so hard and continued to while holding hands, laughing all the way through the saying of the blessing. I so wish I could have gotten the moment on video.....it is most often that the little things, moments and ones in our life bring us the most precious joy!



The School Chat

Car chat with Grand-daughter 11 in the car this afternoon, she said to me out of the blue, then proceeded to tell me where babies come from and how

they are made is absolutely disgusting! I didn't bat an eyelash, just kept driving. Never ceases to amaze me what kids talk about in cars. Think it has something to do with the non-eye to eye contact.

Support Group Check-in this Month

Lower & Upper Hutt Members

Date: Friday 6th July 2018

Time: 10.30am

Where: Pomare Community House,

Address: 55 Farmer Cres, Taita, Pomare

Theme: "Lets Dance"...Meet Michael John, bringing dance into your community...

Morning tea is provided...

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>



Thank you for your support for GRG!

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 the GRG 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

www.grg.org.nz



Thank you to our Community Partner— Suncorp and to our generous Sponsors, Funders and private donors supporting GRG's Support Services, Information Resources and Carer Education programmes 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

| | | | |
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