



# hands on

Stories, ideas & news from Kids Friendly | ISSUE 20 | November 2011



## Missional Hearts

Visiting a church where being Kids Friendly is truly part of their DNA is a thrill for me, and so last week was particularly "thrilling" because I got to visit one of our finest Kids Friendly churches, Clevedon Presbyterian. I was hosting Steffan Morris, of the Presbyterian Church of Wales, who wanted to see Kids Friendly "in action".

We were welcomed by the delightful sounds and sights of 30 toddlers and their mums enjoying their mainly music session run by family workers Lynette and Fran. Willing and friendly volunteers showered us with the customary Clevedon hospitality of freshly brewed coffee and home baking. After showing Steffan around and sharing her and the church's vision for connecting with and serving children and families, Lynette ushered us in to chat with Rev Mark Chapman, Clevedon's minister of 36 years. His story and heart for mission is uplifting and inspiring. "Our church is a mission centre not a parish. The parish model, (which many of us were trained for,) only works in societies where Christendom prevails. A mission centre prioritises the needs of the "non-churched" while honouring and meeting the needs of the existing congregation," says Mark.



Kids Friendly churches embrace this missional approach as they seek to identify and meet the needs of children and families in their communities while nurturing and discipling the children and families of their congregations.

"Is there one key pre-requisite for becoming a Kids Friendly church?" asked Steffan. "If a church fails to connect with and serve its community's children and families, it cannot call itself a Kids Friendly church," I replied.

There is no one way to be a "Kids Friendly" church. It differs according to context and culture, but common to all Kids Friendly churches is a missional heart. Kids Friendly churches embrace being "Kids Friendly" as a value and ethos that guides everything they do and informs and influences their decisions and strategies.

"Let your heart be broken by the things that break the heart of God" was Mark Chapman's parting words to my guest from Wales.

Too many churches in the Presbyterian Church of Wales and our country are missing children. This (I believe) breaks the heart of God. Let's keep striving to correct this.

May the stories from some of our missional Kids Friendly churches inspire and encourage you in your mission.

God bless.

Jill

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# Back to school

## 24-7 Caring

A big sister role is Danii Taripo's description of her job as a Redwoodtown School community children's worker.

Danii, is the children and youth worker for St Ninian's Presbyterian Church in Blenheim. Part of her role is working in the local primary and intermediate school under the 24-7 programme operating in more than 30 high schools around the country, but Danii is the first to offer this service in a full primary school.

The aim of the 24-7 programme is to build strong relationships between young people and the wider community and help young people realise their full potential.

Quite a challenge for an 18-year-old, but Danii says she just tries to be a good example in the things she says and does whether working with children in the school or at the church.

"I'm not quite a parent, not quite a teacher, not quite a friend, but it's not often I find someone saying: 'you don't understand'. It's not that long ago I was 10!"

Danii was raised by her dad and says her sister, six years her senior, was always a good role model. "She is my hero. I like to think I can motivate people in the same way she motivated me."

Danii spends 10 hours a week at Redwoodtown School, joining pupils in the playground at morning intervals and lunch times.

She is there to talk with children, play games with them and organise activities to bring different groups and ages together and teachers and children are loving it.

Danii also leads holiday programmes at St Ninian's, the Sunday children's programme and plans to start an after-school programme next year.

"Danii's role is to be Jesus with skin on – that is, to be the message of good news to children at school and in the community rather than simply talking about it," says Rev Brendan O' Hagan.

"Our church has prayerfully explored possibilities to serve the local school and community and it is amazing how God has opened the doors of opportunity for local mission. Our relationship with the school has become a

mutual partnership with us working together to maximise Danii's involvement and influence in the school. Her contribution is so valued that from 2012 the school will assist financially to employ her in the school."

"As I reflect on where we have come from and where God is leading our Parish in mission, I am reminded of God's word that declares that 'God is able to do exceedingly, abundantly more than we can ask, imagine or think, according to His power that is at work within us.' (Ephesians 3:20)"

**Thanks to The Marlborough Express for the photo and extracts from their story.**



## Befriending Your Local School

I took a group of CWM delegates to visit the "Children's Carehouse", a mission initiative of the Paeroa Cooperating Parish. Our guests were welcomed by the Kapa Haka group from the local primary school. I chatted to a lady standing next to me and discovered she was the school principal. I thanked her for allowing the children to come out of school to welcome us, to which she replied: "Oh I would do anything for this organisation." Sensing her approval, I asked: "Are you a Christian?" "No" she replied, "but I am enormously thankful for the way Christians have impacted the lives of the children and families in this community." I asked her how she felt about churches approaching her school to see how they could help. "We love it", she said. "The Paeroa Cooperating Parish's involvement with our school opened the doors for other churches. We now have the Baptists doing our gardens, the Catholics helping with reading programmes and the Anglicans teaching our kids to knit!" There's sure to be a school in your community awaiting your friendship.

**For more ideas to connect with your local school refer to the "Adopt a School" booklet from Churches Education Commission.**

# Back to school

## Lovely Ladies in Mission

by Margaret Rogerson

Last year Cheryl Harray spoke at our St Margaret's service (Queenstown) about being "Kids Friendly". She shared an inspiring story of St Andrew's, (Invercargill) involvement with a local school and the subsequent revival of their church (see Hands On 17 for their encouraging story).

Cheryl encouraged us to get involved with the new Remarkables School here in Frankton.

I met with the Principal, Deborah Dickson, and offered our help. She was very excited at our offer and suggested we assist with the children's reading programme.

18 people are involved in this "ministry". A different team of 6 people help for one hour on three mornings a week. (Quite manageable when you share the load!)

We then decided to also take morning tea to the staff of 19 at the end of each term.



Our people love the children and the experience of being involved in our local community, and the teachers report a marked improvement in the children's reading.

The team of helpers have been labelled "The lovely ladies", although Keith Robertson, a minister and an ex-headmaster is also in the group!

Later in the year a group from the church unable to assist with the reading programme made up 54 Resource kits for the new entrants.

My role as convenor of our school's ministry is to go to the school each morning to check there are enough volunteers and

everyone is happy.

It's wonderful to see our mostly elderly church members using their skills in this way. With lots of prayers and encouragement we have made a start at connecting with and serving our community. We know we are making a difference and wait on God to see what next.

## Painting the Town Purple



Taneatua children and families are blessed with Aroha at the town's new "Purple Playgroup". The community playgroup is Aroha Black's response to God's calling to serve her community. The sixth child of loving parents and ministers of Te Aka Puaho's (Maori Pastorate) church in Taneatua, Aroha has been involved in children's ministry all her life, first as a recipient and then since her teenage years, as a leader. As well as running the children's ministry at Taneatua, Aroha is a primary school teacher, wife of Anaru and mother of 3 year old Jasmine. When she decided to take a break from teaching this year to spend time with Jasmine, she noticed how many parents there were in her community with nowhere to meet other parents and very few resources for their children. She started the Purple Playgroup in the hall of her church, known as the "Purple Church" by the community because it is painted bright purple.



"There are many social challenges in Taneatua and unemployment, drug and alcohol abuse, suicide and poverty plague our community. I want to create a place of safety and joy for parents where they can be encouraged in their role and benefit from relating to other parents. We are blessed with Nanny's (grandmothers) and Koro's (grandfathers) from our church who come along to help. They are also great role models for our parents," says Aroha. The playgroup has been running since February and within weeks it was obvious that once a week would not be enough. The playgroup now operates twice a week and Aroha is working with Kids Friendly Advisor Jackie Coleman to secure funding for this ministry so that resources can be purchased and sessions can be increased.

"The Purple Playgroup is resource poor but rich in Aroha," says Jackie and Aroha trusts that God will provide.

## Little Becomes Much



We've all been moved and shaken by the Canterbury earthquakes. For the children of St Ronan's of Eastbourne the devastating February quake, followed by the Japanese earthquake and Tsunami in March, translated their empathy into a desire to respond.

Like the little boy who offered his lunch to feed the five thousand: "Here is a boy with five small barley loaves and two small fish, but how far will they go among so many?" (John 6:9), the children of St Ronan's "Power Hour" first offered what they had.

"We decided we wanted to give our offerings from Power Hour to help the people in Christchurch," says 10 year old Amber-Rose Sales, "but then it grew into something bigger!"

Friends Amber-Rose, Mia and John Warman and Bridie Bagnall were soon joined by Sophia and Leo Cotsilinis. In April they discussed the idea of putting on a fete to raise extra funds and involve the whole church.

"We wanted to make the things ourselves to help raise more money," says Mia, 10. "We came up with lots of ideas. We made biscuits, fudge, cupcakes, cards, and we even grew plants and seedlings to sell." As well

as this, people could give a donation to have a photo taken as an "angel" and to float a prayer candle at the "prayer wishing well".

After making posters and advertising the event for several weeks leading up to the fete, the children decorated the morning tea room with red and black balloons and set up their stalls.

"It was amazing the way the congregation rushed into morning tea after church and immediately over to the stalls," says Power Hour coordinator Susan Connell. "It was like the first day of sales after Christmas! The children were stunned at the response and the amount of money that was raised."

All in all the children were able to present a cheque for \$639.20 (including \$150 from mainly music) to St Paul's Trinity Pacific Church in Christchurch which was badly damaged in the earthquakes. They also packed and sent a box of goodies, including Sunday School prizes, a Bible, craft materials and 20 knitted beanies (from the St Ronan's Beanie Knitters group).

The congregation at St Paul's were overwhelmed by the generosity and love they received from the



children and the whole church of St Ronan's. "Words fail to express our gratitude and appreciation for what the Power Hour children have given our congregation," says Rev Lapana Faletolu of St Paul's.

Like the miracle of the loaves and fishes, little becomes much when placed in the hands of God.

## Big Hearts for Mission



The people of Knox Presbyterian Church Waitara have big hearts for serving their community and helping families and young people. Each week nearly 200 children and youth attend one of the many programmes run by the church. Preschoolers and their families attend, 'Rainbow' playgroup on Thursdays and 'Sparklers' on Sundays. Out of this has grown regular "nights out" for young Mums, and 'Toolbox Parenting'.

Dynamite Bay adventure style programmes for primary aged boys and girls run on Tuesdays with the help of small group (whanau) leaders who mentor and disciple their charges. Regular Dynamite Bay camps are also run in the region each year to train young leaders and create opportunities for kids from around the mountain to connect with each other.

"It's wonderful to see so much leadership for ministry come out of these camps," says Jennie McCullough, Children, Youth and Family Worker.

Many young people also participate in our church and children's programme on Sundays. Captain Tuatara's Holiday Club runs for a week each holiday and offers local kids an adventurous experience in a Christian environment. Reaching out and equipping youth is also a key focus at Knox with intermediate and high school youth groups operating.

"Sustaining and leading all these programmes takes an enormous amount of resources, but thankfully we have a very supportive church and community. Leadership is also provided by our young people who have come through our programmes and been identified for leadership training."

"Our long term vision is that Waitara will be impacted by the way our church serves its community. We aim to equip and support families and help young people grow to become positive influencers in our community, country and even internationally," says Jennie.