

Karanga Atawhai

The voice of Whānau Mercy Ministries FEBRUARY 2025



Spotlight on our Volunteers

Parma - Te Waipuna Puawai

Parma has always been a hardworking person. Since arriving from Fiji, he has built experience in the food industry and warehousing industry. But after losing his job, Parma was in true need of kai support, which brought him to TWP.

Determined to contribute to his community and countless whānau who he holds a relationship with, Parma asked if he could become a Kai Hub volunteer. Since then, he has become a helpful part of our processes on Wednesdays, and he has found a feeling of belonging with the work and the social network the Kai Hub provides. He has explained it gives him a purpose to wake up in the morning, a responsibility to clear the Pataka area every day after his walk.

"I feel proud because it's something for me to do and I get to meet new people. TWP team gave me hope, and confidence. I always look forward to coming on Wednesday and being part of the Team."



Parma is interested in doing more, is happy to be a volunteer and feels very accepted by the staff here in Rānui. "Very friendly place, humble not only to myself but to people who stand in the line."



Introducing Julie Conder - recently appointed to the role of Kaihāpai

Julie Conder has extensive experience as a manager and advisor within the charity, local government and iwi development sectors, both in Aotearoa and the UK. She has worked on a variety of programmes including development of major capital projects, implementing community support services, and setting up systems for policy, governance and management. Julie is delighted to bring her knowledge, experience and skills to the role of Kaihāpai with Whanau Mercy Ministries Trust as a key part of giving effect to her own commitment as a Christian.

Volunteering – ‘an act of giving freely without expecting payment’

In this issue of *Karanga Atawhai* we ‘shine a light’ on the generous contribution of volunteers in some of our ministries. They aim to leave the world a better place through their sacrificial service. Folding t-shirts in the Hospice Op Shop is as important as the Palliative Care specialist at the bedside. The two may never meet each other but their contributions are inextricably linked.

‘When you give to someone in need’ said Jesus, ‘do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing’. Volunteering is not done for the personal thanks or accolades. The reward is in seeing the impact that our individual or combined efforts have had on those experiencing hardship or need. As Catherine taught, ‘It is for God we serve the poor, and not for thanks’. (Familiar Instructions, p. 140).



What are the numbers?

Te Korowai Atawhai Mercy Hospice is an amazing place which would not be able to provide the services it does without the huge volunteer ‘army’ of 611 registered volunteers who willingly support the incredible team of 173 staff. As a result of their combined efforts, in 2024:

1,672 patients received hospice services in the community

986 patients cared for by Family Support and allied health services

270 patients were admitted to the inpatient unit.

To help the staff deliver these services, volunteers undertook:

- Over 400 patient transfers to medical appointments.
- Over 1,000 trolley services
- Over 40 life stories documented for whānau
- Over 735 hours of reception duties
- Over 360 hours of gardening.
- Over 75 hours of car washing

In addition, over 34,000 hours staffing the Mercy charity stores which raised an amazing **\$2.152m**. Even if they were paid minimum wage, their contribution would cost **\$800,000**.

It would literally not be possible to provide all these amazing services without the generosity of the volunteers.



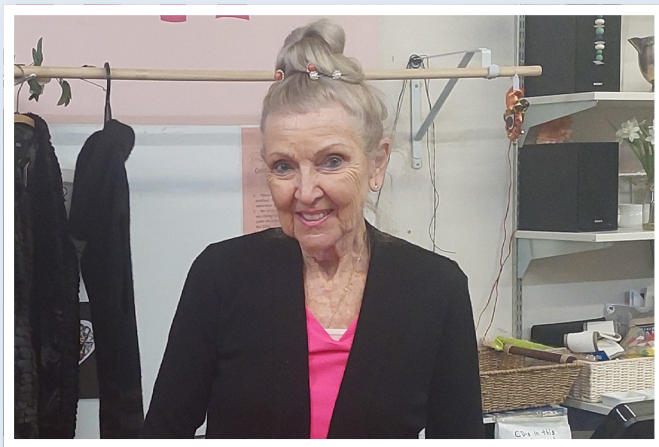
The Benefits of Volunteering!

Volunteering, often seen as the backbone of a thriving community, plays a pivotal role in enriching our societies on multiple fronts. Beyond the immediate impact of helping those in need, volunteering provides profound benefits that permeate economic, social, and individual layers of society.

Economic Benefits

1. Boost to Local Economies: Volunteers often contribute skills and time, which can be particularly beneficial in areas lacking specific resources or financial capabilities. By supporting local initiatives and non-profits, volunteers help to sustain services that might otherwise be reduced or eliminated due to budget constraints.

2. Career Development: For volunteers, the experience gained can be immensely valuable in career progression. It offers a platform for acquiring new skills, enhancing one's CV, and networking with professionals in various fields. Moreover, volunteering introduces individuals to real-world applications of their skills, which can be a persuasive asset in the job market, indicating a well-rounded and socially responsible character.



Toni Jenkinson, Retail Volunteer.

Social Benefits

1. Creating Compassionate Communities: Volunteering nurtures the development of compassionate communities by bringing everyone together, no matter their background or beliefs, for common goals. This breaks down social barriers, encourages interactions among diverse groups that might not otherwise engage with each other. This diversity of interactions strengthens social cohesion, builds mutual respect, and creates more inclusive communities.

2. Enhancing Social Welfare: By addressing community needs directly, the efforts of volunteers significantly enhance social welfare. Some volunteer programmes can directly contribute to the well-being of society. Volunteers can make a substantial difference in areas such as companionship, which can greatly improve the quality of life of an individual.

3. Promoting Civic Engagement: Volunteers are often more informed and involved in civic activities. By participating in volunteering activities, individuals gain a deeper understanding of community issues and are more likely to engage in voting, activism, and other forms of civic participation. This heightened engagement promotes a more democratic society, where citizens are actively involved in shaping their communities.

4. Mental and Physical Health Benefits: For volunteers, the act of giving back has been linked to improved mental and physical health. Engaging in altruistic activities can reduce stress, combat depression, and provide a sense of purpose. Physically, volunteering has been associated with lower blood pressure and longer lifespans, attributed to the positive emotions and physical activity often involved in volunteer work.

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15 years' Service in Retail: Toni Jenkinson, Retail Volunteer

My name is Toni and I've been a volunteer for Mercy Hospice at one of the retail shops for 15 years. I started off by feeling that I was just part of the furniture. Working the till and tidying clothes racks. Over time, I've become a friend to so many customers and I sometimes feel part of their families. I see them when they're happy and when they're sad. I hear all the news and each week I ask them how their families are doing. I feel so privileged that I can help Mercy in this way and to meet such wonderful people. I love every minute of my time in the shop and can recommend this experience to anyone. Giving is so rewarding and what I get out of it, is such happiness.

Bravery Across the Seas: The First Mercy Sisters in Aotearoa

Dave Mullin, Ko te Hapai O

In April 1850, a small group of Sisters of Mercy arrived from Ireland to New Zealand, leaving behind everything familiar to answer a call of faith and service. This call was from Tangata Whenua, Wahine Māori, less than 10 years after the signing of Te Tiriti. Their journey was one of immense courage, navigating not only the treacherous seas but also the future state of uncertainties of life in an unfamiliar land. In today's global world it is hard to conceptualise the courage and commitment this would have taken, for journey to the other wide of the world knowing that a return journey to home was unlikely.

Led by Mother Cecilia Maher, these pioneering women arrived in Auckland, carrying with them Catherine McAuley's vision of mercy and compassion. They faced immediate challenges—poverty, isolation, and the hardships of colonial life—but their determination never wavered. They set to work establishing schools, caring for the sick, and responding to the needs of the vulnerable, especially women and children, embodying the spirit of mercy in action.

Today, Whānau Mercy Ministries and its ministries walk in the footsteps of these courageous women, and all the walking sisters. WMM ministries continue their mission by providing education, healthcare, housing and social services to those most in need. Whether through educating, housing provision, healing, supporting families, advocating for justice, or offering compassionate care, we uphold the Mercy legacy in practical and meaningful ways. Inspired by the faith and resilience of the original Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa and all the circles of mercy that have flowed since, we are called to respond to today's challenges with the same spirit of courage and commitment.

175th Anniversary

The 9 April 2025 is a very special day as it will mark 175 years since the first Sisters stepped onto Aotearoa in Tamaki Makaurau. The congregation will lead the celebrations, and we hope to report on the key messages in future editions of Karanga Atawhai.

Click the link to listen to the first webinar in our **'Let's build up Whānau Mercy'** series.



Anna Nicholls RSM speaks on the topic **'What inspiration can we glean from the story of Catherine McAuley in the Jubilee Year of Hope?'**

Important Dates for Whānau Mercy

8 - 9 March 2025 - Jubilee of the World of Volunteering designated by Pope Francis' as part of the Jubilee Year of Hope

9 April - Aotearoa Mercy Anniversary
Celebrate the arrival of the first Sisters of Mercy in Auckland in 1850

18 April - Good Friday
"Christ was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, he suffered and was buried"

20 April - Easter Sunday
"On the third day, he rose again, according to the Scriptures"

22 April - Global Mercy Earth Challenge
Join local initiatives to help keep our Papatuanuku ki Turangi - Earth Promise

Click the links to find out more about volunteer opportunities at Mercy Hospice and Te Waipuna Puawai.



Te Ngākau Atawhai - Heart of Mercy: In Aotearoa, the Mercy Cross, central to Catherine McAuley's spirituality, is supported by a pair of koru. The koru represent the unfolding of new life and link our Mercy story to the spirituality of Māori and the ancient lore of this land.

Karanga Atawhai is the newsletter of Whānau Mercy Ministries, a Ministerial Public Juridic Person (MPJP) under Canon Law.

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