



URBAN NEIGHBOURS OF HOPE - NEW ZEALAND - December 2016 - Issue 1

Working on the street is like a roller coaster. It comes with many highs, but it also has lows. The highs come with celebration. Festive street parties, lots of food, speeches, laughter and comradeship. These are great times on the street. A reminder of God's goodness and the partnership of working together towards His Kingdom on Earth. Examples of highs are listed below, they include the opening of our new neighbourhood building - Manu Tukutuku.

But working the street also brings lows. And these lows are often places of darkness, sadness and loneliness. The lows are harsh and are a brutal reminder that life can be very unfair, that life can not be controlled and that, as humans, there are limits. There is something deeply spiritual about honouring the limits of our existence as human beings - physical and spiritual beings within a world of time and space. There is something about establishing rhythms that allow a place for rest (the challenge to stop, even with the demands from the street), for listening (and choosing not to speak and offering to solve all problems), for reflection (to still oneself and recall the day seeking to learn and see God at work), for wisdom (from our elders and those that have walked before us) and prayer (staying connected with our Creator).

It's in both places - the highs and lows - that we find our place on the street. And that place is a sweet reminder of God's love for us. It's a space where we can sit, no matter what is happening around us, and be embraced, immersed in the profound understanding that we are His creation, and what God creates is good, very good. God sees us, and what He sees makes Him smile.



Opening of Manu Tukutuku: We had the privilege of unveiling the name of our new 'Randwick Park Sports and Community Centre' called 'Manu Tukutuku'. The name chosen by our local community and endorsed by Mana Whenua, symbolises what our new building represents ie. the hopes and dreams of our community, a place where they could fly yet be anchored to the community. 'Manu' can mean kite or bird. Tukutuku means to unravel and to let go. The mono pitch roof of the building was deliberately designed in connection to the Manurewa Kite story of Tamapahore and Tamapahure and historical events relating to flying. The imagery of how a kite or bird glides in the wind, displaying its freedom and liberty yet connected to the land relates to our community journey.
www.randwickpark.co.nz



Bounce for a Cause: Our Bouncy Castle social enterprise business has been a great accomplishment with many bookings over the Christmas season. Earlier this year we were offered a reasonable grant from a Trust that was closing down. The money was to be used for 'youth at-risk'. Instead of spending it on camps and programmes, we wanted something far more sustainable, something that would help produce an income. WOC decided to buy the business. Now, WOC is learning how to run a small business, youth are gaining work experience and a steady income has enabled WOC to help pay for camps and pay some wages.
www.bounceforacause.co.nz



WOC Graduation: Every year we are blown away by a small group of young adults that have dedicated their lives to the young people in Randwick. They commit every Monday night to leadership development and discipleship, and then, another night to run a weekly youth project. They run three weekly youth programmes. Every year we like to honour them with a special ceremony - we give taonga (certificates, taiaha and greenstone) that symbolise their leadership development. And, with those that have committed four or more years, we present a white feather, signifying them as a leader and also symbolising a commitment to pass the leadership DNA onto the next generation.



Stepping Stones: Creating small stepping stones into employment is a huge task for us with unemployment at 11% in Randwick; almost double Auckland's statistics. Our mowing business, a partnership with Downers, has now successfully run for a year. We started with one local park and now mow all parks in Randwick. We also care for the grounds at the local primary school. We employ 5 people, all are part-time and 2 are casual. We are currently researching a model of 'best practice' for projects like ours. We hope that other neighbourhoods might be able to apply our learnings and become successful in being sub-contractors to Downers. Auckland Council have approached us to support a community group in Papakura. We hope that in the future they may become sub-contractors.



Family in brief: Atawhai completed InterMission, a Certificate Level 4-5 one year course at Carey College, averaging a B. This is a major accomplishment for him. Kataraina finished her BA in Maori and Sociology at Auckland Uni. Both Atawhai and Kataraina will attend a full-immersion Maori course next year. Paihere is in his last few months of his building apprentice. He finished with one company and is now building new houses with a new company. All kids went flatting this year, which they loved. The boys flat finished up - so they are back home soon - which means our food bin will decrease dramatically.



Dave & Denise: Change both expected & unexpected has taken us on a journey emotionally and physically. Much hope and enthusiasm has coincided with much sadness and uncertainty. Our own children move out and then the boys move back in. Their confidence and independence brings a smile but their absence leaves a gap.. Esther and Wilson join us and then sadly we have to farewell them. Studying theology part time is one of love and hate as essays become due. January 2017 we celebrate 25 years of marriage. We can never say we don't live a full life. We have managed to hang in their together despite grumpiness, challenges of our personalities, boundaries,,expectations and a faithfulness of love and commitment to each other before God.



Eric and Anna Mailau are moving to Wellington: Eric and Anna have fulfilled their UNOH apprenticeship requirements and are now full members of UNOH. After discernment, they are following their hearts desire to return to Wellington in early 2017, where they will pioneer a new UNOH presence. Eric, Anna, Elsie and their foster son will be dearly missed in Randwick Park. They have become significant role models, especially with the youth and with neighbours. We wish them all the best and celebrate their journey into a new neighbourhood. It will be exciting to see what develops over the years.

Prayer needs:

1. A solo mum has just heard the terrible news that her sons leukaemia has relapse. Please pray for her and her two sons. She has a strong faith and a very positive outlook to life.
2. Pray for Eric and Anna as they prepare for their move to Wellington. Pray for their foster child and all of the paper work that needs to be sorted. Pray for the new neighbourhood that they have been invited to join and for the UNOH work they dream to start.
3. Please pray for us. 2016 wasn't the easiest. Pray for Dave as he balances the mowing business (especially staffing issues), neighbourhood responsibilities (uniting leadership and developing a shared Randwick Park vision for the future), with youth work (the leaving of the Chan's and Mailau's has left a big gap) which local leaders are filling and with his dads declining health.
4. Pray for Denise as she balances her studies, caring for our foster daughter and developing a possible social enterprise using recycled native wood.
5. Pray for wisdom with the many, often complex, situations we find ourselves in.

'If we wish to love the world in God's way, then we will freely choose to work in solidarity with "the lowly ones." 'Our aim will be to empower them to become agents of change in society.' Donal Dorr

For empowerment to occur, the whole of life must be impacted. This involves not only a new sense of self identity, but also a new set of common purposes. Empowerment seeks to build both that individual ego and the community. But empowerment also involves the social and economic realities of life. It involves the move beyond poverty and seeks to provide people with great choices and opportunities to live with dignity. But there is also a profound spiritual dimension to the empowerment process, for the self cannot be built without reconciliation; and economic progress cannot prosper unless it is undergirded by moral values.

The long road to participation in empowerment, is to be preferred to the short road of charity that may finally lead nowhere.

Resist the Powers (1995) - Charles Ringma

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

Blessings - Dave and Denise XXXOOOXXX