

Christchurch Women's Refuge

02 March 2011

MEDIA RELEASE

Family Violence Services Still Operational and Still Essential

Christchurch Women's Refuge is fully operational and able to support Canterbury residents via its free 24-hour 0800 1 REFUGE phone line, from its Rangiora office and from its temporary Christchurch offices in its Safe House.

"Family violence actually escalates in line with disasters such as this" says Acting Christchurch Women's Refuge CEO Lyn Boyd, "so family violence services are even more essential now than ever."

Christchurch Women's Refuge maintained 24-hour telephone support throughout the recent earthquake and its Safe House has been fully inspected and assessed as safe for occupation. Crisis and early intervention services are now available as normal and recommencement of women's and children's education groups will be reviewed in line with the Ministry of Education's decisions regarding the re-opening of schools.

"Right now there is so much violence and grief around that it's hard to believe that some people actually choose to add to that trauma for their own families, but that is the disturbing reality" says Ms Boyd. "We saw it after the last earthquake and we expect to see it again in the coming weeks and months. Police have already recorded significantly higher than usual levels of family violence incidents, so it's important that we work together to ensure that especially vulnerable families in our community are well supported."

Fortunately local families have still been able to access the specialist support they need. In the week since the earthquake Christchurch Women's Refuge has been working closely with other Christchurch refuge services and the National Collective of Independent Women's Refuges (NCIWR) to provide a co-operational service that ensures no family is left in crisis or unsupported. "The NCIWR has been very supportive at this time, ensuring that local refuges have essential resources to keep operating. Where services in Christchurch could not be provided, they have been made available by alternative refuges in New Zealand" says Ms Boyd.

"We at Christchurch Women's Refuge have ourselves been very lucky. The Boxing Day aftershocks resulted in our Cashel Mall offices in the CBD being 'red stickered' and we moved all operations to our Safe House. We have been very fortunate to have an alternative site to work from and resourceful enough to become fully operational again within a week."

For any concerns related to family violence, please contact the 24-hour free-phone, 0800 1 REFUGE. For other enquiries or to support Christchurch Women's Refuge, call 353 7400 or go to womensrefuge.co.nz

--ENDS--

For further information contact:

Lyn Boyd
Chief Executive Officer (Acting)
M: 027 445 0034
T: (03) 353 7400

Christchurch Women's Refuge

Facts About Christchurch Women's Refuge

- Christchurch Women's Refuge is the first Refuge established in New Zealand (1973) and the first established outside the United Kingdom.
- Many women contact Christchurch Women's Refuge directly. However, Christchurch Women's Refuge also proactively contacts many more named on Police Reports of Family Violence.
- Christchurch Women's Refuge provides approved Ministry of Justice education and safety programmes for women and children. We are also a Child, Youth and Family approved provider.

Our Services:

Early Intervention Services

Support, advocacy, assistance with accessing essential services and professional referrals.
Creating or linking to inter-agency collaborations and networks

Prevention Services

Ministry of Justice approved women's & children's group, & women's individual, education programmes.
Community liaison, education and partnership
Research and service development

Crisis Management Services:

A free 24-hour crisis and support line, and emergency residential services in our Safe House.

Key Statistics

In the year 1 July 2009 to 30 June 2010 Christchurch Women's Refuge:

- responded to over 3940 calls on our Crisis and Support line
- assisted 81 women and 91 children with safe accommodation in our Residential Safe House.
- worked with 407 women and 569 children through our community-based services (group and individual)
- followed up more than 2,400 women named in Police Reports of Family Violence to ensure their safety and that of their children.