

THE advocate

Good News!! Change is Happening!

You won't find many positive news stories in your local newspaper, and you don't often hear good news about family violence, but recently there has been good news to celebrate.

In July the Glenn Inquiry into family violence released their 'Stories of Change, Moving Beyond Violence'. 'Stories of Change' featured five individuals who shared their personal stories of change and highlighted the work of just three agencies. Aviva was one of those agencies and was chosen as an example of change, innovation and effective response to community need.

The Inquiry has provided an important opportunity to review at a national level what is and isn't working in the family violence field. Like many other agencies and individuals Aviva had been invited to take part in the research phase of the Inquiry, which took place over 12 months and led to the release of the 'People's Report' in June 2014. During that consultation phase the Inquiry decided that the approach Aviva had evolved over the last three years was worth highlighting. As you may know from previous newsletters, with your support we've developed a number of new services as part of a unique response to the long-standing problem of family violence, which remains one of the most significant

social problems for families and communities throughout this country.

Canterbury has seen an enormous amount of innovation in many areas throughout the last few years of upheaval, and the charitable sector is no different. Two of the three agencies featured by the Glenn Inquiry are Christchurch-based (the second being Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse) proving that the spirit of adaptation and perseverance that has been lived by the people of Canterbury and acknowledged in other areas of our community and physical regeneration, is also thriving in your social services sector.

Thank you for working with us to make that happen because, without the support from our community, we can do nothing. But by working together to support and evolve better ways to enhance the safety and wellbeing of so many individuals, families and communities we are taking an important step towards really changing the family violence landscape.

You can read the stories of transformation and watch all the Stories of Change at www.glenninquiry.org.nz



More Good News!

One aspect of Aviva's work that the Glenn Inquiry focussed on was the enormous potential of specialist peer support as a new model for working in the family violence field – harnessing the power of those with lived experience to motivate and support others, and

to remove the shame and stigma so unfairly attached to family violence. We're happy to report that the Todd Foundation, Ministry of Social Development and the Good Shepherd NZ Trust agree. Between them these three organisations are helping to develop and grow

peer support, for men as well as women, and thanks to them we can ensure that our two peer supporters, April and Sharon, remain with Aviva to keep providing support to others on the journey away from violence!

I Thought You Said 'Join Me for Dessert' ...

Ever thought about running 250km through a rainless plateau desert containing the driest place on earth and so rugged NASA uses it to test vehicles for Mars missions? No? Nor us!

But Aviva supporter Denis Kelliher has more than thought about it – he will be doing this desert ultra-marathon in the Atacama Desert in Chile this October! Denis will be donning his running shoes and backpack, containing everything he needs to survive for seven days in what is one of Time magazine's Top 10 Endurance Competitions in the world. We encourage you to support him as armchair spectators, because in doing so you are also supporting Aviva. Denis has set up a GiveALittle page (<http://www.givealittle.co.nz/cause/dkinatacama>) to generate pledges and all the money Denis raises will provide family violence services to children, women and men. Please visit his page and support this wonderful, crazy guy!



Image courtesy of Dreamstime

Your donations, fundraising and bequests provided just over \$200,000 (14% of our income) to support individuals and families in 2013/14!

Support for People Who've Experienced Sexual Assault

For the children, women and men who experience sexual assault, the effects can be truly devastating. It is so important that when you are ready to talk, whether immediately after or years later, that there is someone there to listen and provide practical and emotional support.

In July this year it seemed that Canterbury was about to lose that support when the Monarch Centre, which had operated the Safecare 24 hour sexual support service for 22 years, closed its doors. Fortunately, thanks to collaboration and commitment to the people of Canterbury who need this service, that support is still available and Aviva is proud to be one of the agencies providing it.

Since the end of July Aviva has been temporarily providing and co-ordinating what is now called the Sexual Assault Support Service Canterbury (SASSC), so that anyone who has been traumatised by sexual assault can continue to be supported locally. SASSC provides a 24/7 support and information line and supports clients during medical and/or legal visits. A Co-ordinator hosted by Aviva oversees the daily operation of the service, which is provided with the help of trained and experienced volunteers. START, an agency which undertakes sexual violence recovery work with child, youth and adult victims of sexual crime, helps arrange appropriate counselling for SASSC clients and

“I am not what happened to me, I am what I choose to become”

Carl Gustav Jung

works closely with Aviva's SASSC Co-ordinator. The service remains available on the same phone number (03 377 5402) as before to ensure ease of access for service users. With support from Ministry of Social Development (MSD) Aviva provides this service in conjunction with the Doctors for Sexual Abuse Care and the Police.

Aviva, START, the Police and other key stakeholders will be working in partnership with MSD over the coming months to develop a sustainable solution to ensure this critical community service continues to be available in the longer term.

If you or someone you know has experienced sexual assault recently or historically and would like to talk, please call 03 377 5402 any time, 24-hours a day.

Shine safe@home Success

In the last two years (July 2012 – June 2014), Aviva's Shine safe@home service has made 513 people safer in their own homes – 169% more than the Safe House made safe and 217% more people than originally funded. Those statistics are pretty impressive, but what really matters are the people behind those numbers – people like Karen.

“That was the first night, after many sleepless nights, that I was able to sleep knowing my house was safe and secure. I truly believe if I did not have the support from the Police Safety Team...and Aviva ... to have my home truly secured I would not be here today.”

Karen Shine safe@home client



Kate takes on the paperwork.

“She wrote ‘you saved my sanity in my darkest hour’. That is where it pays off.”

Kate Jones

Aviva Family Support Worker

Passionate About People

Kate Jones is one of Aviva’s Family Support Workers and also our Group Education Co-ordinator. When you make a donation to Aviva, it often goes to help pay for the skills and services of talented and caring people like Kate, who every day listen to, support and advocate for children and women living with and leaving behind family violence. The support you enable her and her colleagues to give is literally life changing – sometimes, even life-saving.

Kate has worked at Aviva for 18 months, her first role since graduating with her degree in Social Work. It’s not a profession that will make you rich, but for Kate who had “always had a passion for helping and supporting other people” it was a perfect fit. Through her studies she had learned a lot about family violence and although it is “challenging”, Kate also finds it “really rewarding.”

As a Family Support Worker Kate meets with women and children, assessing where they’re at as a family, supporting them to set their own goals and exploring what will help them to move forward, free from violence. She puts women in touch with practical support (e.g. Work and Income or lawyers), draws up safety plans with clients and helps answer our 0800 AVIVA NOW Support and Information line.

Kate also co-ordinates our specialist family violence education programmes for children and women in Christchurch. She interviews and assesses children’s and women’s readiness for a programme, rosters the group facilitators (including herself), orders resources and arranges transport to and from school for children attending the Tamariki programme.

Whilst learning all of the ‘behind the scenes’ work required to make the group happen has been challenging, Kate “just love(s) facilitating both groups. I get inspiration from the women, how strong and open they are, and with the children, the best thing is the check-ins to see how they are doing at the start of each session. They come up with some cool things; it’s nice for them to have a place to share that.”

Supporting people who’ve experienced the trauma of family violence is not the easiest day job. “The support line is one of the most challenging aspects of the job” says Kate. “You have no idea what is going to come up when you answer that call. It could be a referral, or it could be someone in a crisis and when that happens, you’ve just got to remain calm. It’s a lot of responsibility. People want immediate fixes and you can’t give them that, but you can give them suggestions on where to next. Certain stories can be hard to deal with, especially hearing about what children have been through or witnessed. You have to train yourself to switch off, but sometimes you can’t just leave it at the door. That’s where we’re really lucky here – we have a great team and we

can check in with each other and talk it out together.”

The other side of the coin though is that “you get to see people change; it can even be the way they talk. They start off lacking confidence and putting themselves down. Even after a few appointments they change the way they speak about themselves. It’s so worth it all when a woman comes to you saying ‘I wouldn’t have been able to do this without you.’ I remember one woman that I supported the whole way through – I took her first call, then she became my community client and then she was in the group I facilitated. In our final session we all write messages for each other and in my card she wrote ‘you saved my sanity in my darkest hour’. That is where it pays off.”

We are currently looking for volunteers to help with children’s transport on Wednesday mornings from 8.15-9.30am and 11.30-1pm for the 10 weeks of each term. If you could do both or either driving shift, please email enquiries@avivafamilies.org.nz for a volunteer application, or download one from www.avivafamilies.org.nz. You’ll need a clean, full driver’s license and a clear Police record.

May Appeal and Fundraising

On behalf of the many hundreds of children, women and men who are on their journey to overcome family violence, we want to thank all of you who gave up your time to take part in the May Aviva street appeal, and those of you who made a donation to ensure support services are there when they are needed.

Almost 120 people took to the streets over the weekend of 16 and 17 May and together helped raised \$18,310! Big 'thank you's' also go to the awesome people at Z stations in Christchurch who sold coffees at the netball courts; Canterbury Netball who collected for us during their Saturday games; all who attended Ladies Night at Addington Raceway, and the many local businesses who generously gave awesome auction items for that event. The weekend made almost \$25,000 in total, thanks to the generosity of so many people!

The money you raised will go to services such as the 0800 AVIVA NOW phone line. This free support and information line has experienced huge increase in demand since the February 2011 earthquake, when calls increased by 50%; that elevated level of demand has been sustained ever since. Women and men who want to change their lives and those of their children for the better, or concerned family members, friends and colleagues all use this number to call us for support or advice. Approximately 30% of our clients refer themselves to our service through the 0800 line, which is an essential service but one for which we receive no funding. During our appeal month of May, our 0800 AVIVA NOW line received 389 calls for support, the highest monthly total we've ever recorded. Thank you all for making that support available to all those people who called for it.

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Shirley Boy's High School students raised funds at Bunnings – thanks guys!

Affordable Finance Helps Create Safer Futures

Access to affordable finance is on the rise!

You might have recently read the great news that some low-income Auckland families will soon benefit from a new initiative offering access to low and no interest loans. Affordable credit and/or loans for families who need it most is an important step in achieving financial independence and that's why Aviva, with support from the Good Shepherd NZ Trust and Kiwibank, is also currently piloting a No Interest Loans Scheme (NILS) for Canterbury people who have experienced family violence.

Since February Aviva has been providing access to no interest loans of up to \$2,000 to people who are on low incomes and are current or past

clients of our agency, or five other referring partners. So far nine families have secured loans that are significantly improving their lives, enabling them to become more self-sufficient and financially independent. Unlike the parent scheme in Australia, loans issued via NILS in Christchurch can be used for bonds so that people can secure a new rental property – an adaptation of the scheme that recognises the challenging local housing environment. Loans have also been used for car registrations, enabling people to meet work and family related travel obligations legally, and to purchase furniture and

whiteware. All loans are supported by intensive budget analysis and advice as this helps to ensure that those benefitting from the loans are not only creating safer futures, but ones that are more financially secure for the long-term.

Recently The Salvation Army joined the list of Christchurch referral agencies, which also includes Family Help Trust, He Waka Tapu, START, Barnardos, and Relationships Aotearoa. If you or someone you know could benefit from a No Interest Loan, contact us on 0800 AVIVA NOW to discuss the criteria or visit www.avivafamilies.org.nz.

Facing up to Family Violence

What comes to mind when you think of family violence, of a person who frightens or controls their family? Chances are that you have a picture in your head of who that person is, where they live, what they do for a living.

The reality is that the power and control that is at the core of family violence – whether it is emotional, psychological, financial and/or physical – doesn't know any geographical or professional boundaries. Your neighbour, colleague, or friend might be living with family violence – or using it.

Cameron knows how true that is. An intelligent, professional and articulate man, his may not be the face you'd associate with the words 'family violence'. But Cameron has started his own journey away from behaviours that have damaged his relationships with the people he loves the most – his family.

"Things had been difficult for a while. We had our kids quite early in our relationship, whilst I was still studying, and it was a real strain financially. We now have four children under seven and, although money is not tight any more, things were still really stressful at home. But really, it was more than that; I know I have a lot of anger and aggression that I have to address. I know I have a way of going about things, even at work, and it's not the best way.

"It came to a head recently when I really lost my temper and got violent with my partner. She reached the point where she wanted me out of the house, so I left. It was the best thing to do. I knew I needed to do something, to change something, but I was unsure where to go or what to do. I got information on programmes and on ReachOut from several people – my GP and even my partner – but was unsure which would be best. Should I do an anger management programme? That felt a bit intimidating, to walk into a group of people – what if I knew someone there? I had felt a little overwhelmed but fortunately Ramon from ReachOut responded within 48 hours and he was very passionate; he just listened to me and I found that I actually wanted to talk to him about what was happening.

"After I moved out, I just wanted to pack up and leave town. The rapid response of the service was one of the best things because I was in a fight or



Image courtesy of I-Stock

flight stage – it was very intense. You're not thinking straight after something like that happens and it's not the best time to make major decisions. Maybe Sarah and I might have defused things on our own, but having access to someone like Ramon really helped. I really think that I landed on my feet because I got a phone call from this guy and he showed empathy at the first contact; it wasn't an administrative call – there was a connection.

"He just listened to me and I found that I actually wanted to talk"

Cameron

current ReachOut client

"It's early days for me – I've only seen Ramon three times so far, but it's already helping. I'm learning things like stress management techniques, but the main thing for me is my increasing awareness of why I'm getting angry. It's allowing me the time and space to think about why I get so upset and stressed. I can calm down and think about the future. Before I was very angry a lot of the time, but now Sarah and I are able to

talk more; Sarah is getting support too, which is great for her. We're having one-on-one conversations more now rather than just relating through the kids or watching TV. I hate TV, but before I'd do anything to avoid talking.

"At present we're working towards making the best decision for the kids. I could go and get my own place, go off fishing etc, run away from the reality. That would be great for me, but not for my kids, not for the future. My dad left when I was 16; he didn't maintain a real relationship with us kids and he later told me he regretted it. I want to make sure that I'm there for my kids, and that I can be the father they need. Long-term change is hard, but I hope that my behaviours will change. I've got to put my pains and hurts and anger aside and think about what's best thing for everybody, especially my children."

ReachOut is Aviva's support service for men and provides individually tailored support to help men develop safer, healthier relationships with their family – and themselves. Do you or someone you know need support too? At Aviva we support anyone who is using or experiencing violence. The journey to a violence-free future doesn't need to be travelled alone; just call 0800 AVIVA NOW – we're here 24 hours a day.

Thanks to our Supporters

As usual, we want to take some space to thank everyone who has supported the children, women and men who use our services.

Here are some of the wonderful funders who have invested in better futures for Canterbury people:

- The Todd Foundation – investing longer-term to develop peer support for men and women
- Christchurch Earthquake Appeal Trust UK – investing in ReachOut in Christchurch, specialist support for young men, and crisis support for women and children
- Canterbury Community Trust – for investing in salaries and overheads to support our Transformative Response to Family Violence
- Lottery Grants Board – contributing to wages and training for several staff
- Good Shepherd NZ Trust – for enabling the continuation of peer support to those on their journey to violence-free lives

• Canterbury Community Trust Need Help Now Fund – providing wages for our Shine safe@home Co-ordinator

• Christchurch City Council – for investing in salaries to support our Transformative Response to Family Violence

• Dublin St Foundation – helping to pilot an in-school relationship education programme

• The Strathlachlan Fund – contributing to Safe House expenses

• Keith Laugeson Charitable Trust – providing education programmes for three children

• Community Organisation Grant Scheme – contributing to frontline services

• ANZ Staff Foundation – helping provide a peer support training programme

Thanks for some amazing support in goods and/or monetary donations to the Dove Trust, Un Cadeau Charitable Trust, Quakes and Ladders, 4 Avenues, Z Good in the Hood, NZ Federation of Graduate Women, EQR Blenheim Rd, Inland Revenue Department, PGG Wrightson and Lions Riccarton/Waimairi.



We know there are many more people and organisations that have offered support over the last few months. We can't name every one of you but please know that your support is essential to everyone who comes in our doors and is very much appreciated.

Receive the Advocate by Email

Please help us reduce costs by choosing to receive The Advocate by email. Contact julie@avivafamilies.org.nz or call (03) 378 3847

Like us on Facebook

Aviva Families and Reach-Out Canterbury have Facebook pages. Check us out and 'Like' us to keep up to date on what each service area is doing and to share your thoughts with us.



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Charities Commission Number CC 30026

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