

Te Kete Atawhai

MERCY BASKET

Uganda visit of a
lifetime for Carmel
College teacher



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- ◆ Mercy teacher helps these kids to win with World Cup banner – page 6
- ◆ Kiwis raise funds for Mercy Global Action with a 'good cuppa' – page 10
- ◆ Mercy centre opens doors for women searching for a new life – page 12



Keeping hope alive in our world today

TENA KOUTOU, NGA MIHI ATAWHAI – GREETINGS TO ALL IN MERCY!
As Congregation Leader of the Sisters of Mercy in New Zealand and Chair of Mercy Ministries Trust, we are delighted to welcome this first edition of Te Kete Atawhai, offering a quarterly snapshot of some of our current ministries.

In a year that began with the devastation of a second major earthquake in Christchurch and which ended with the excitement of World Cup Rugby, mercy has remained the business of our lives, working to keep hope alive and to make a difference where it is most needed.

In just a few pages, we glimpse here some of our major ministries at work. Education is reflected in a sabbatical visit by a teacher from a Mercy college to Uganda, helping to renovate and update classrooms in that nation and returning to remind her own students of how blessed they are to live in this land of plenty. There are short pieces from two of our colleges in Wellington, focusing on students' outreach to those struggling from one need or another.

Healthcare is highlighted in how one of our aged care facilities has worked to develop a uniquely Mercy approach in the care it offers, tailored to the needs of individual residents and helping them to know that, despite the losses and limitations of age, they are still persons for whom choice can make a difference as each new day unfolds.

And community development is featured in two stories from an agency that is empowering women who have felt marginalized to

make choices of their own, moving forward and helping their whanau to do the same. In future issues we look forward to covering activities from other Mercy Missions especially those in Tonga and Samoa.

Te Kete Atawhai is a basket filled with many rich blessings, as Sisters of Mercy and their lay companions share the mercy they have received to enrich other lives. As the Young Vinnies leader at St Mary's College notes in this issue, time is one of the most valuable resources we can give to another, and making a difference to other lives can be 'loads of fun' as well.

Wherever you are, and however you are called to share your gifts, we wish you all the blessings of knowing what it is to give and receive mercy.

Ma te Atua koe e manaaki e tiaki.
Naku iti noa na



Anne P Campbell rsm
Congregation Leader



Reuben O'Neill
Chair, Mercy Ministries Trust

Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand Congregational support for charitable works - 2010/11

Congregation's contributions to charitable works

Support of Congregation's facilities	992,549
Charitable works outside Congregation	255,208
Pacific missions	558,157
	<hr/>
	1,805,914

Charitable funds administered within Congregation

Distribution from charitable funds	26,730
	<hr/>
	1,832,644

Financial support provided from Congregation's resources

Funds raised by Congregation's facilities	
Fundraising, grants and donations	4,213,922
	<hr/>
	\$6,046,566

Congregation's total support for charitable works

COVER IMAGE: Carmel College teacher Michelle Wansink, with three-year-old Nathan, son of a local artist in the village of Bujagali Falls in Uganda, where Michelle worked to refurbish classrooms during her visit to the African nation earlier this year. "Nathan was very bright and active, and was my special friend during my stay," says Michelle; see story, page 4

Haere mai ki te Kete Atawhai

WELCOME TO THIS FIRST EDITION OF Te Kete Atawhai, a new publication aimed at helping the Sisters of Mercy, their partners in mission, companions and associates to keep in touch with what's happening in Mercy ministries throughout New Zealand and in Tonga and Samoa.

Designed in Christchurch by La Fabrica, this quarterly bulletin replaces Mercy Focus Te Hononga Atawhai, a four-page newsletter produced in Auckland by Mercy Ministries since 2006. That was after five years of the publication being called Mercy Link, changed to avoid confusion with a faith-based relief agency which had begun operating in Australasia.

The image of te kete, a basket filled with the plenty that comes when we share our talents and resources, is one we hope will

capture the spirit that flows in our Mercy ministries of healthcare, education and community development. We're aware of how often our Mercy stories prove the truth of the Maori proverb, 'Na to rourou, na taku rourou, ka ora ai te iwi' – 'with your basket and mine, the people will thrive.'

Our focus in this issue is on the difference that Mercy makes to the lives we touch – enrichment for older people in our aged care facilities who discover that, with a little bit of help, life can still be lived; empowerment for women and families, especially for those who feel there are gaps to be filled and chances to recover; and opportunities for teachers and pupils in our Mercy schools, to share our bounty by reaching out to those who have less.

This edition of Te Kete Atawhai is being

mailed and emailed to a list of readers which has been compiled from contacts made over the years by the four regional foundations in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin before the Sisters of Mercy came together as one Congregation in 2005. It has taken time to combine the lists and check the addresses. In the process, we've also asked people to indicate if they would prefer to keep in touch by email or online, in an effort to save paper and costs.

If you know of someone who would like to see future copies of Te Kete Atawhai, please don't hesitate to let us know. Email our editor Dennis Horton, at DHorton@somauck.org.nz or drop him a line at Mercy Ministries, PO Box 6015, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1141.

Mercy Crew – reaching out to those in need

When Jenny O'Brien was appointed four years ago as Director of Religious Studies at St Catherine's, the Mercy college in Kilbirnie, she found that the same girls were involved in a range of volunteer efforts such as Young Vinnies, Amnesty International and Caritas.

SO SHE INVITED THEM TO JOIN UNDER ONE UMBRELLA, naming them the Mercy Crew, with a distinctive badge and the aim of coordinating all the fund-raising and social justice activities undertaken at this small school, with a roll of just over 300.

Projects this year have included pancakes exchanged on Shrove Tuesday not for money, but for any kind of toiletry; these were packaged by the Mercy Crew and made available to refugees throughout Wellington, ready for any woman who arrives empty-handed.

Another fund-raiser this year came from the donation of enough rice bubbles to fill a bean bag. Mercy Crew members perfected the art of making chocolate crackles and selling them in the playground. The tasty treats helped to fund a range of worthy projects.

Other campaigns this year have included a 24-hour letter-a-thon, with letters written to world leaders, urging justice for victims of various forms of oppression; an Oxfam coffee/hot chocolate day raised awareness about fair trade, while a Lenten fund-raiser involved a Caritas promotion on behalf of a child in a Kenyan village.

The Mercy Crew have also organised a can drive for St Vincent de Paul, Christmas boxes for underprivileged children, made cards for lonely and isolated people, and hosted the annual Young Vinnies Mass this year.

"We're not a wealthy school," says Jenny, "but St Catherine's girls continue to find money and energy to work for those in need,



MERCY CREW LETTER-A-THON: Emily van Voornveld, Ella Jansen and Grace Jansen write letters to world leaders, urging justice for human rights victims. The students at St Catherine's College support Amnesty International's work for social justice on specific cases.

both in our local community and overseas. Our Mercy Crew shows the true spirit of mercy in action.

"We can change the world, by reaching out to those who are close at hand."

Uganda visit a 'life-time chance' for Carmel teacher



Spending four weeks as a volunteer in Uganda was "the chance of a lifetime" for Michelle Wansink, Learning Support Coordinator at Carmel College in Milford on Auckland's North Shore.

MICHELLE TRAVELLED TO UGANDA EARLIER THIS YEAR AS PART of a sabbatical provided by Carmel's Board of Trustees. She spent a month on the shores of Lake Victoria and the Nile River, working as a volunteer with Soft Power Education, a British and Ugandan NGO that builds and refurbishes classrooms in the rural region around Jinja.

While painting schools and living on site, Michelle was able to experience Ugandan life and schooling firsthand. "I was so humbled to be invited into the homes of some families, and continued to be amazed at the friendliness and warmth of these beautiful people. Though they live with very few material possessions, they just love to welcome visitors to their land.

"Many of our North Shore community donated money and stationery for me to take. It was so humbling to see one teacher overwhelmed when I gave her a small box of coloured chalk to use on the blackboard."

Teachers may have up to 100 pupils in their class; in fact, one first-year primary class had 180 children sitting at desks in front of the teacher. Michelle seldom saw a computer in use, as public schools in

Uganda have very few classroom resources. Textbooks are scarce and pupils often have to copy information from the board.

Uganda's government introduced universal primary education in 1997 but underestimated the significant increase in rolls and their pressure on resources and infrastructure.

Soft Power Education has worked in Uganda for the past seven years, improving primary school facilities. To date, Soft Power has worked at more than 40 schools and refurbished over 400 classrooms, as well as providing water tanks and pit latrines. The ethos of the agency, which relies entirely on volunteers and donations, is, "Tell me and I'll forget, Show me, and I may not remember. Involve me, and I will understand."

Michelle says she chooses to teach at Carmel College because her spirituality and faith are important to her. The sabbatical allowed her to volunteer in a Third-World country where she could experience poverty firsthand.

"The visit gave me a chance to enrich my understanding of social justice. I've come home, wanting to encourage more New Zealanders, especially on the North Shore, to join Soft Power and experience Uganda for themselves. This is an adventure, but most of all an unforgettable and heart-warming experience."

On her way to Uganda, Michelle was able to attend an Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools conference in Perth. This enabled her to meet colleagues from other Mercy colleges throughout the region, including Papua New Guinea, and to share a workshop led by a Ugandan woman with a dramatic story to tell. "It was great to have some prayer and reflection time, as well as to socialize with colleagues."



ABOVE: Helping to paint a classroom wall in a rural area near Jinja. LEFT: Carmel College teacher Michelle Wansink with youngsters of Bujagali Falls during her visit to Uganda earlier this year.... 'enriching my sense of social justice.'

To learn more about the Mercy World, visit the Mercy International Association website www.mercyworld.org and www.sistersofmercy.org.nz



180 years of Mercy

This month marks 180 years since Catherine McAuley and two of her companions from Baggot Street took their vows as the world's first Sisters of Mercy.

MEMBERS OF THE CONGREGATION SHE FOUNDED KEEP 12 December as Foundation Day, to remember the date when Catherine, Mary Anne Doyle and Elizabeth Harley took their vows after 15 months of preparation at the Presentation Convent at George's Hill in Dublin. The three returned to Baggot Street immediately after the ceremony; the following day, Archbishop Murray appointed Catherine 'mother superior' of the new Congregation and plans were made for another seven women to prepare for their reception as Sisters of Mercy.

December 12 is also Foundation Day for Sisters of Mercy in this country, Samoa and Tonga, marking six years since the four historic foundations in New Zealand became one Congregation in 2005. Companions and associates throughout New Zealand and the Pacific join with Sisters of Mercy in giving thanks for the Congregation and invoking God's blessings on its current ministries.

World Cup a winner at this Mercy-founded school

It's been a big year for Sister of Mercy Kilisitina Vaeatangitau. On the staff of St Anne's School in Manurewa, she is the only Sister of Mercy teaching fulltime in a Catholic primary school in New Zealand



Sr Tina Vaeatangitau with some of her class at St Anne's School, Manurewa, one of them holding a photo of the welcome banner made by their syndicate.

THIS YEAR MARKED HER SILVER JUBILEE, WHICH SHE OBSERVED with four celebrations – the first in her homeland, Tonga, a second with other jubilarians in Auckland, a third in Christchurch and a fourth on Mercy Day at the school where she teaches. "It's been a very special year for me!" Sr Tina says.

But with its 45 percent Samoan roll, the big event at St Anne's School this year was undoubtedly the World Cup Rugby. The school won third place in a competition called the Mega Welcome Words, designing welcome signs big enough to be seen from aircraft flying to and from Mangere International Airport.

"The organizers asked schools in the area to design a welcome sign for each of the visiting teams, written in their own language," Sr Tina explains. "We chose Tonga. Our Year 5/6 syndicate got the task, constructing a banner with 12 letters, each of them about eight by three and a half metres.

"Malo e lava mai was the message; the letters were white, the background in red. Our banner was displayed in Totara Park. We came third, out of 20 schools in the Manukau area."

On the last day of the term, her syndicate held its own mini World Cup; each of the six classes had learnt a national anthem, with different haka and a day-long schedule of games. "The day before, we had a visit from a group of 35 Catholic school principals from Australia who teased us about the World Cup. I sent them all to Room 9, where the children were able to sing the Aussie national anthem – they were most impressed!" Sr Tina reports.

She loves teaching, especially in a Decile 2 school which draws its pupils from areas of high socio-economic need. "I believe in young people. That's why I'm still teaching. I believe they are the future – of the church and of the country. I feel I can make a difference in their lives.

"We have to work hard to lift their performance. It's quite challenging. Parents are very supportive, but they don't always have the resources and skills to help," Sr Tina notes.

"Every year, we have to come up with new ideas to really push these kids. And it's working. At St Anne's, we are keeping up with higher decile schools in the area, in terms of academic achievement."

"If you go back to Catherine McAuley, you'll see that her main concern was to work with the poor and marginalized – that's why I came to this school. When you see a child's face light up, for whatever you can do, it's quite fulfilling. I do believe in them. I make sure they know that I believe in them."

Sr Tina says she feels for migrant families in New Zealand who sometimes miss out. "I understand their struggle."

Some children come to school without breakfast. "It's not that they don't have food at home; it's more about management of resources. Parents may both have jobs, cleaning jobs perhaps. One has to go to work early, before the other gets home. And sometimes kids are left with no supervision. So they get up and come to school – not that they don't have food; but they haven't eaten.

"We're proud people. I have to say to our teachers, 'don't jump to the wrong conclusion; don't think they have no food.' We've got staff who visit families, letting them know that we have breakfast here. We provide it in a discreet way. We don't make a big thing of it. We just watch out for the kids who come to school early, with no breakfast, and we invite them to come in and have some."

Sr Tina knows that the same families will donate generously for fund-raising at school. "We've been brought up in a society where it's the practice to give and share. It's part of our culture to give, it's beyond reason or logic.

"We can be misjudged. These are sensitive issues. There's a balance to be achieved; but you have to be able to walk with people, not judge them from a distance."

Founded by the Sisters of Mercy in 1952, St Anne's can boast of having had a Sister on its staff ever since. "The main thing that



TONGAN mega welcome banner, made by Year 5/6 Syndicate at St Anne's School, Manurewa, and displayed during the World Cup Rugby competition in Totara Park in Manurewa. The letters are big enough to be seen from the air.

attracted me here was that the Mercy charism was still so much alive here. When I was interviewed I could see the picture of Mother Cecilia Maher on the wall, and I felt at home straight away."

Principal Philip Cortesi is deeply committed to Mercy and nurtures the school's close links with a Mercy primary school in Fusi, Samoa. "Since 2005, I've been going back and forth with Philip to Fusi, helping teachers and pupils there.

"But it's been a help to understanding our own pupils and families from Samoa, to see at firsthand the environment from which they've come. It helps me to relate to them."

Villa Maria Student Dances in Prague

Hannah Watt (Year 9) never dreamt she'd be ballet dancing in Prague at the age of just 13.

HANNAH'S BALLET SCHOOL, Canterbury Ballet, was invited to the prestigious Prague Dance Festival and Competition in July. After a gruelling audition of 70 hopefuls, Hannah was chosen along with nine other students – eight of whom were full-time dance students. She was the youngest member of the dance crew that ranged in age from 13 to 21.

About 700 dancers from round the world took part in the week-long event which also included classes and three days of performances. The Canterbury



Ballet troupe had real success at the Prague Festival gaining second place for Choreographic Excellence and the Director's Award.

It was a great honour and one that Hannah cherishes. "I've been dancing since

I was four years old and this trip was like a dream come true," she says. "I dance six nights a week for four hours and just love it. It's my hobby so it doesn't feel like a chore at all."

Farewell to Whaea Rangi

After 13 years as kaiarataki on the mission team at Mercy Ministries, Rangi Davis has resigned.

SHE AND HUSBAND KINGI HAVE RETURNED AS matua atawhai to one of the boarding hostels of Hato Petera, the Catholic Maori college in Auckland. She is now the Tumū Arataki of the Mana Wahine Taumatatanga Trust, which she helped to establish on the North Shore, running programmes for Maori women and men, and to support the land claims of her own hapu in Orauta, Northland.

At a farewell to mark her retirement, colleague Dennis Horton acknowledged to Rangi's generosity of spirit. "It's been her own sense of the dignity of every person Rangi has worked with that has allowed her to honour the mana even of those with whom she may be odds.

"For Rangi, there has always been a gracious way of meeting them more than half-way. Mana-crunching is something I've never seen her indulge in. She learnt, I suspect from her tupuna Dame Whina Cooper, that love conquers all and that the best way to beat your foes is to win their hearts."

Presentations included a specially carved pounamu necklace from Congregation Leader Anne Campbell and a gift from Mercy Ministries Trust, presented by board chairman Reuben O'Neill. Around 100 Sisters of Mercy, partners in mission, family and friends attended the evening function at the end of August.

Rangi's work has included lessons in te reo Maori me ona tikanga and close involvement in Treaty education for Sisters of Mercy and those involved in Mercy ministries. She has worked especially at Carmel College and St Mary's College to help Maori students develop awareness and confidence in playing a leadership role in tikanga and te reo Maori.



Rangi Davis ... building mana

In Mercy healthcare facilities, she has provided training for staff in culturally appropriate practice, assisted in the selection of candidates for the Maori nursing scholarship at Mercy and Mercy Ascot Hospitals, and offered a Maori perspective on death and dying for staff and volunteers at Mercy Hospice Auckland.

In Mercy community development agencies like Te Waipuna Puawai and Te Ukaipo, Rangi has played a lead role in developing programmes and courses, offering counselling as part of her diploma in Psychosynthesis, for the empowerment of Maori women and others.

This year, she planned and coordinated a one-day workshop for Mercy social workers and provided cultural supervision for some of them.

In 2001, she spent three weeks with Sisters of Mercy in Samoa, supporting them in a review of mission resources. Her work with other agencies includes teaching a module in Christian Maori theology and spirituality for teachers seeking leadership roles in Catholic schools, and contributing a Maori perspective on grief and dying at a course run by Auckland University.

Highlights for Rangi would have to include a series of mountain retreats with all Auckland's Sisters of Mercy in 2002, a trip to Mercy's motherland and Baggot Street in 2003, and the forming of the Pou Atawhai Mission Team in 2004. "It was a great gift to witness the great aroha that the Sisters have shown to each other and to me. They encouraged me strongly to claim my identity as a Maori woman. The spirit of Catherine McAuley was never far from sight."

Last sister retires from hospital

The last working Sister of Mercy at Mercy Hospital in Dunedin has retired from her pastoral care role there..

By Eileen Goodwin, Otago Daily Times

SR CHANEL HARDIMAN, WHO IS IN her late 70s, was honoured at a farewell function at Marinoto House in Dunedin last month.

She entered the Sisters of Mercy novitiate in South Dunedin, aged 20, in 1953.

She told her guests much had changed during her career. Technology altered "everything", in terms of equipment used and the job's demands.

"Once we had to put thermometers in test tubes to sterilize them, and lift patients manually."

When Marinoto Clinic started, in 1990, sisters ran every department, including

administration, the theatre, kitchen and laundry.

She had been involved with developing the clinic, having travelled to Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane in 1987 to research possible hospital projects.

Sr Chanel said she was lucky to have had professional development opportunities in Auckland, Christchurch and Wellington.

She moved out of Marinoto in June – the last sister to do so – after taking up residence there in 1969 as part of a group of sisters who staffed the new Mater Hospital (now known as Mercy).

Her favoured area of care had always been palliative. She also enjoyed visiting



discharged patients.

Attending the farewell last month was the executive director of the Mercy International Association, Mary Reynolds of Dublin. Sr Mary said she was delighted she could combine her visit to New Zealand with the farewell.

By working in private health, the Sisters of Mercy aimed to bring the rich and poor together, she said.



Young Vinnies – 'our time is the most valuable thing we can give.'

Balancing school work with action for social justice can be a challenge. But Sana Witheford-Smith who led the Young Vinnies group at St Mary's College in Wellington this year, says the biggest lesson for her was that actions speak louder than words.

"OUR PROJECTS WERE BASED ON THE idea that time is the most valuable thing we can give. I think that volunteering is part of a well-rounded education. It's a practical expression of Mercy, and all our students should do it," says Sana.

"Being the Vinnies leader has helped me to communicate and relate to others. It made me realise that volunteering is easy, and that people should just get out there and do it!"

The Young Vinnies are all volunteers; the group is student led and driven, with support from a couple of teachers, including Kate Lucas, who teaches Religious Education and French. "Vinnies aim to develop projects that will improve life for those less fortunate than themselves," said Kate. "Our students realise they are in a privileged position, and that by giving time, effort and money they are contributing to the Mercy spirit."

Funds have been raised this year for earthquake victims in Christchurch, and to support young mums through the work of

Pregnancy Help. "A small group of Vinnies students put together 20 hampers full of essentials for small babies," said Sana. "Staff at Pregnancy Help were very grateful and put on a morning tea for us."

The support was about recognizing the challenges faced by young mothers, Kate Lucas explained. "Our students heard Caroline and Situla at Pregnancy Help talk about their work in the community, and could see at firsthand what happens there."

A group of Young Vinnies visited Spratt House, an aged care facility in Karori, to sing for residents. Vinnies also joined with boys at St Patrick's College for a car-wash and sausage sizzle. Junior Vinnies made cards and saved stamps for the Leprosy mission.

Another recent appeal saw over 50 shoe boxes filled with Christmas gifts to be sent to children in different parts of the world.

"Our focus this year was on practical volunteering," says Sana. "We introduced the idea of 'small-scale projects' with an emphasis on being

actively involved in our community, seeing the difference we can make in people's lives.

"Vinnies have really made a difference, and we've had loads of fun while we were at it. Our biggest lesson was to see that actions really do speak louder than words."

ABOVE LEFT: Young Vinnies at St Mary's College in Wellington (from left), Anna Whitmore, leader Sana Witheford-Smith, Ellen Sanders and Joanna Viernes. "Our time is the most valuable thing we can give," says Sana. ABOVE RIGHT: Young Vinnies at St Mary's College with buckets to raise funds for earthquake victims in Christchurch. 'Actions really do speak louder than words,' says Sana Witheford-Smith who led the Young Vinnies this year.

Mercy Pilgrimage – Early Foundations

The discovery of gold on the West Coast of the South Island in 1864, led to a dramatic increase in the population. In a year the population in Hokitika had risen to 50,000, as families from beyond the gold fields began to join their fathers. Although there was already a school operating the Parish Priest wished to have a community of sisters who would undertake the education of the children.

On 15th October 1878, eight professed sisters and two postulants arrived on the SS "Taratua" from St

Xaviers Convent, Ennis, Ireland. Because of extremely dangerous conditions their boat had to stay outside the treacherous bar for over twelve hours before it was deemed safe to come up the Hokitika River. About 11pm the tender guided the Taratua to the wharf where Fr. Martin and a big crowd of people were to give the sisters a rousing welcome. The Sisters were driven in carriages to their temporary home to be welcomed by the women who had prepared a meal for them.



International Good Cup of Tea in Aotearoa NZ

In her last moments Catherine McAuley directed that the Sisters would have a good cup of tea together in the community room, after she had gone. On the 11/11/11, the 170th anniversary of her death, Mercy groups throughout the world celebrated Catherine's life and work with a 'good cuppa'.



In Christchurch Sisters and the Villa community joined forces to bake up a storm of sandwiches, cakes and scones, for past pupils, Sisters and parishioners. The sunny day meant a great turn out of over 60 people, Catherine appeared in her habit and the event concluded with the group singing Suscipe. Over \$500 was raised for the Mercy International Centre.



GOOD CUPPA: The Auckland team with Sister of Mercy Judith Leydon dressed for the occasion in a habit similar to that worn by the foundress, with staff of Mercy Ministries in Auckland.

Mercy committed to caring for our Earth

Workshops exploring Mercy's commitment to care for Earth and its resources were held last month in Invercargill and Dunedin.

COORDINATED BY SISTER OF MERCY TERESA HANRATTY RSM, the two one-day workshops were led by Teresa Anderson rsm and Dennis Horton, who set the scene by reminding participants that a focus on cosmology and the environment was named by Mercy Global Action as a priority for 2011, in preparation for the UN's Earth Summit on sustainable development in Rio de Janeiro next June.

"In recent times, Sisters of Mercy have sought, both individually and collectively, to care for Earth and its resources," Dennis Horton said. "The ministries working on their behalf are strongly committed

to ensuring that all their actions and decision will enhance the life of the Earth."

He told participants that today, the cry of the poor is coming from Papatuanuku itself. "Life cannot be nurtured or enhanced on a planet that is dying. Care for our Earth is no longer an option, but an imperative for Mercy people everywhere."

He said that increasingly, the call to Christians to care for creation as an expression of their faith can no longer be seen as an option or a fad. "Pope Benedict's message for World Day of Peace last year was 'if you want to cultivate peace, protect creation.' He reminds us of our responsibility to protect earth, water and air as gifts that God has created for everyone."

The workshops included presentations of a Maori creation story and of a cosmic walk, dramatizing the ongoing evolution of our universe over a span of 13.7 billion years and highlighting the interconnectedness of all life.

"The truth is that there is only one Earth," the presenters noted. "We share the same air and water with all living creatures on a planet where these taonga are fragile, finite and ultimately

non-renewable. The air we breathe is the same air that has been here since Papatuanuku was formed. The water that sustains life on Earth is the water that has been here since the Spirit first hovered over it – and it's all we've got."

The workshops included clips from a locally produced DVD, Earth Whisperers, featuring New Zealanders who have worked to keep this land safe and unspoiled. One was Craig Potton, conservationist and photographer who helped to organize the Save Manapouri campaign in the 1960s.

Another was Kay Baxter, who led a gathering mission 30 years ago to save heritage fruit and seeds. In the year of the Chernobyl disaster she learnt that, apart from one type of onion, all this country's food seed was coming from northern Europe. "As the mother of four small children, I knew I had to do something," she said.

SISTER of Mercy Teresa Anderson leads a session at a Mercy for the Earth workshop at Holy Cross Centre in Mosgiel. The workshop was one of two held in the South Island last month, highlighting Mercy's commitment to sustainable development and care of the Earth.



Opening doorways to new life

Between 2002 and 2010, more than 100 women who enrolled at Te Waipuna Puawai, the Mercy community development centre in Ellerslie, gained a qualification giving them entry to one of two Auckland polytechs.

OF THOSE WHO GRADUATED at TWP in the seven years to 2008, 50% were in full or part-time employment; 17% were doing further studies; and 33% were homemakers, caring for pre-school or school-aged children.

Last year, TWP delivered services to 123 new referrals; 249 of its clients were enrolled in Manukau Institute of Technology courses and 388 in other courses. Around 45% of TWP's clients were Maori; 30% Pacific peoples; 18% Pakeha; the balance were mostly refugees and new migrants. In the same period, a total of 98 pre-school children attended TWP's early childhood centre.

These facts emerge from an extensive report on TWP's community-based project 'He Ohaki Mai – Legacies in the Making,' undertaken by consultants Frances Hancock and Gerard Cotterell.

For more than a decade, the project has sought to guide low-income Maori, Pacific, refugee and migrant women living in Glen Innes and Panmure to foundational tertiary studies, leading to higher education and more skilled employment.

The project involves a wrap-around service delivery, supporting mothers and children to 'learn under one roof but in different spaces' at the purpose-built facility in Ellerslie.

The authors say that responses to their survey from participants in TWP's programmes show high levels of satisfaction, with growth in confidence and self-esteem, learning new things and earning credits towards qualifications listed among goals achieved.

The wrap-around support provided by TWP's 10 fulltime staff and over 30 volunteers, while costly in terms of time and resources, is seen as crucial to the centre's success. Respondents from government agencies say that TWP has been able to work successfully with families whom other agencies struggle to reach, notes the report.

"Tailored to particular needs, this approach enables women and their whanau to overcome considerable challenges and to achieve significant personal goals, in some instances for the first time in their lives. Without the hands-on, down-to-earth, practical and flexible approach of TWP, some women may not have achieved their goals."

The report quotes a focus group of TWP clients, talking about the difference the agency has made to their lives. "TWP empowers and encourages women to better themselves and their whanau. It helps women to look after their kids and to grow healthy relationships in families."



MANUKURA (manager) of Te Waipuna Puawai, Puamiria Maaka ... Mercy means empowering women to better themselves and their whanau.

"It also helps to create community, enabling women to get to know each other as well as to work and learn together. TWP reduces the need for government agencies," the focus group argued.

Feedback from the centre's clients and external stakeholders show "extraordinary levels of satisfaction," the authors note. "Findings show the TWP is successfully working with whanau that other agencies struggle to reach."

Mercy is about "whom we work with – women and children," says TWP's manukura or manager, Puamiria Maaka. Mercy also defines "where we work – among those who have greatest need."

And, she insists, mercy is also about "how we work – supporting women and families in moments of crisis, and assisting them to create crisis-free lives in the future by acquiring new skills and by building healthy relationships with themselves, family members and the community at large."

The difference Te Waipuna Puawai is making

- Women begin to see and think differently.
- Women are supported to make fundamental changes and to take a path to independence.
- Women plan a new future for themselves and their whanau/family.
- Women embrace opportunities to learn and develop skills.
- Women are better able to manage their lives.
- Te Waipuna Puawai is doing things government cannot do and working with whanau that government agencies struggle to reach.

'Angel' of mercy helps solo mum to believe in herself

Solo mother Marie Kaukura has wanted for years to be a social worker at school, helping youngsters of the present generation not to miss their chances of a good education.

SHE LEFT SCHOOL AT AGE 13, TO LOOK AFTER THREE YOUNGER siblings when her parents split up; her dad was at work, and there was no else to look after her sisters when they were sick. Soon after, she left home and lived as a street kid for three years, to avoid her father's violence.

Today, after finding her feet at Te Waipuna Puawai, the Mercy community development centre in Ellerslie, she's more than halfway through a three-year Bachelor of Applied Social Work at Manukau Institute of Technology.

Marie says her own childhood is part of the reason she wants to be a social worker in schools. "If I can help even one child to avoid falling into the gaps I fell into, by taking advantage of the opportunities they have right now to develop their talents and skills, this will be good.

"If I'd had a counsellor or social worker at school, it wouldn't have taken me this long to get where I am. I'm keen to get out there right now, but I can't until I've finished my degree. But I'm proud of having got this far."

Marie's journey began when her own daughter got into a spot of trouble as a Year 9 pupil at McAuley High School some years ago. "I went to see the social worker at McAuley, and she directed me to Te Waipuna Puawai in Glen Innes.

"She drove me there herself. I filled out some forms, and the next thing I was enrolled at TWP's centre to do MIT's Certificate in Social Services."

Taught by MIT tutors on the TWP site, the certificate took Marie a year to complete. "TWP was much better, closer to home. The centre provided transport, so I didn't have to bus to Manukau, and I could get home in time for my kids when they finished school."

Early in the journey, Marie met her namesake, Sister of Mercy Marie Brown, whom she now calls her 'angel'. She was the first nun Marie had ever met. "From the start, she was so warm; it was easy to tell her about things, she never judged me. It was because of Marie that I realized I could do this. She assured me that I could do what I wanted."

Coming to Te Waipuna Puawai was like coming home, says Marie. "As soon as I came through the door here, it was like I was hit with something, overwhelmed with so much love. A lot of the women who come here say the same thing: 'Every time you come through that door, it feels like home. We've felt very safe here – a new beginning.'"

Marie has four children. Her eldest is now in Year 12 at McAuley High School – "a good girl now, doing really well"; she has two sons, one 15 and the other 10, and her youngest daughter is now nine. Sometimes they laugh at her about being a student.

"Oh, mum, you're a bit old to be at school. You shouldn't be doing this at your stage.' So I say to them, 'Yes, I should be past this. But I'm letting you see that you can do it differently – go to school and get the education you need while you're young.'

"When I study, they study too. Before, it wasn't like that in our home. Now they sit and study with me. It's good. They ask me for help; they didn't do that before."

Asking for help is a lesson Marie had to learn. She went on a retreat with other Maori women from TWP. "At first I thought it was about getting away from everything. But when I got there, I was able to share things I'd never shared with anyone before – in front of heaps of people. On the marae, with everyone present, it was easy.

"What I took away from the retreat was the realization that I don't ask for help. I'm more a person who wants to do things for myself, and I don't want anyone to know that I need help. But just a week ago, I knew I needed to ask for help when I was stuck with an assignment."



MARIE KAUKURA..... 'Sometimes, you need to ask for help.'

"You need sometimes to put your pride aside. I remembered the marae stay, and I kept hearing, 'just ask'. So I picked up the phone and rang a friend, who's also a tutor. 'I'm stuck on this, could you help please?' "Sure, Marie, come around and we'll work on it."

Being at TWP has helped Marie to discover who she is. "It's helped me to be aware that I'm not dumb, that I can do things. I have friends here if I ever need to call on them."

Marie does some voluntary work at TWP, on behalf of Child, Youth and Family once a week as part of her studies – "work experience, applying some of the knowledge I've gained from my course. It builds up my confidence to put what I've learnt into practice."

There are others from TWP doing the bachelor's course at MIT – "we call ourselves the TWP people, and we're known at MIT as coming from TWP. There's a real sense of community amongst us. If someone needs a hand, we'll offer it."

Mercy Care – ‘you matter as a person’

It's over two years since Don Ingham came to live at Mercy Parklands. He had been for three weeks in Middlemore Hospital, after suffering a severe stroke.

"I WAS IN A MESS, AND WASN'T expected to last very long." But on the day for this interview, he'd just had his first driving lesson in a battery-operated wheelchair.

Now 80, the former principal of Howick College puts a great deal of his progress down to the physiotherapists on Mercy Parklands' allied health team.

"I know that Jeffrey (the Filipino mobility therapist) has been a particular help to me. When I was feeling sorry for myself and didn't realize it, he lectured me. And I thought, 'here's a great turn-around, for the headmaster to be lectured by a young man from another country.' But he stirred me up.

"I owe Jeffrey and his colleagues so much. They've helped me with exercise, but more with believing in myself, believing that I could manage, by trying hard. They gave me faith in myself. These young ones have brought a wisdom beyond their years."

Don is full of praise for the staff who organize the recently formed men's club. "They're special people, doing a wonderful job. They help us to get outside ourselves."

One trip that stays in Don's mind was a "magnificent" visit to the huge rugby ball on Queen's Wharf. "I had an idea about the ball, but I was completely wrong. I thought it was going to be about rugby, but



Don Ingham with OT Catherine Heaney.... "they gave me faith in myself."

instead it gave us a fabulous view of New Zealand."

Don watched the World Cup games on the large TV screen in his room. "I saw virtually all the games, and was very happy with the results, although like four million others, I was a bit anxious about the outcome. It was a great success for a small country."

Among the best moments he recalls from his 40 years of teaching was the prize-giving at the end of his first year as foundation principal

of Howick College. "It gave us the chance to see how and why we differed slightly from other schools. There were four in the area, all doing a good job. But Howick College put the main emphasis on its students. We let them make mistakes, because this is how we learn.

"We were the second college in Auckland to abolish corporal punishment. That made a difference to students' lives. I remember interviewing prospective students about why they had chosen our college. And they said, 'because there is no violence here.'

"Now that was an exaggeration, because at a school with 2000 students, there's bound to be some violence. But the school had made it very clear that violence was not acceptable. And we had less violence than schools where corporal punishment was still in use."

Past pupils still drop in to see Don. "The first to come here was Jim Peters, who did such a great job as principal of Western Springs College. He was in my first form class. I remember him very clearly. Nothing is more satisfying to me than to see a former pupil going ahead, as Jim Peters did, taking up my philosophy of education."

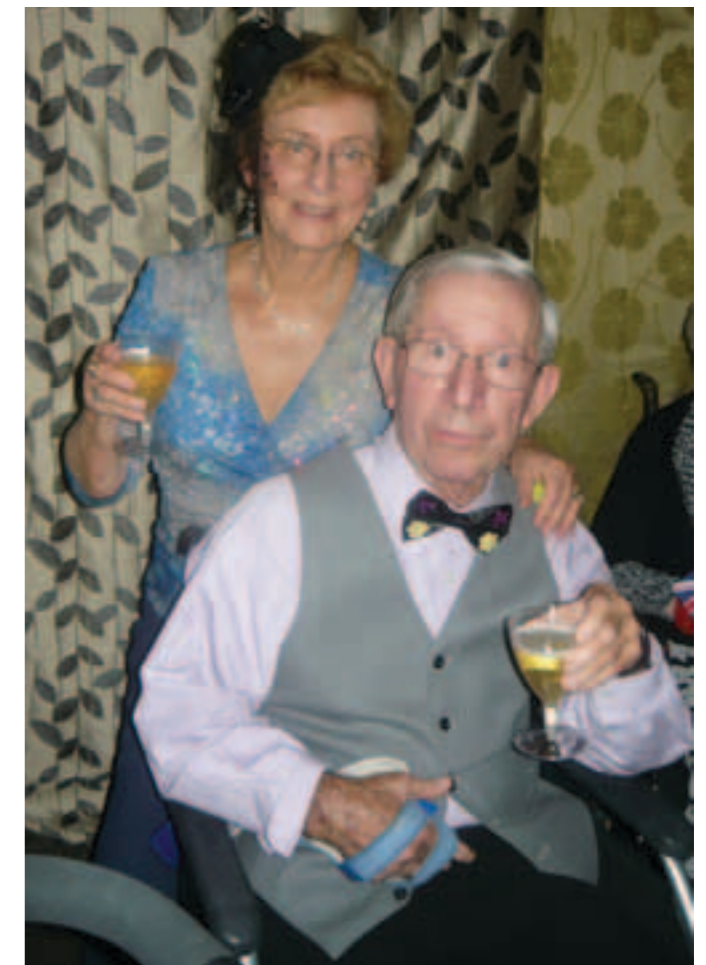
Some of the staff at Mercy Parklands refer to Don as 'the principal'. "I get asked a lot of questions by younger ones, and I try to give an answer, and I think I've helped some of them."

Mercy Parklands has helped Don to keep up the social contacts, says his wife Hope. "When Don developed Parkinson's, his neurologist said that patients who made the most progress were those with people around who kept them stimulated.

"I knew that when he came here, some of the things being offered were not his cup of tea. He doesn't like sing-alongs, or going to old-fashioned entertainment. He's not one for sitting over cups of tea. He enjoys the odd happy hour with his G and T, although the 2.30 start he finds a bit odd.

"But the men's club has been a great initiative. Suggestions he has made have been acted on. That's made him aware that he needs to get involved.

"It's the individual care that makes the difference," says Hope, "the fact that you're seen not just as another resident, but as a person in your own right. When Don went back into hospital after being here for a few weeks, one of his Mercy Parklands care-givers, Salote Kuruduadua, actually visited him. That's how it goes here, you matter as a person."



Don Ingham and wife Hope, dressed in their best for a Music Hall event at Mercy Parklands.... "Mercy means you matter as a person."

'Mercy care' a winner at Mercy aged care facility

A new way of providing residential aged care has earned a Mercy aged care facility in Ellerslie a 'Highly Commended' award from the New Zealand Aged Care Association.

AWARDED AT THE NZACA CONFERENCE in August, the presentation was made to Waiatarua Mercy Parklands for its development of Mercy Care, involving a shift from a medical to a life-based focus.

Mercy Parklands OT and Allied Health Manager, Helen Delmonte, explains the shift. "Our aim here is to ensure that all residents feel recognised and valued as unique individuals.

"We've undergone a culture change, from tending to treat older people as though they were all the same, to valuing each resident as an individual, able to make choices of their own and to know the satisfaction and sense of purpose that

comes from those choices."

The new person-centred focus reflects Mercy core values, especially the dignity of every human being, and the healthcare philosophy of the Sisters of Mercy which urges that residents share as fully as possible in decisions that affect them.

The first steps in this change process followed Helen's becoming a master practitioner in the Internationally recognised Spark of Life approach for people with dementia. "We were inspired to adopt the Spark of Life approach as the basis for a change of culture that would fully support our model of care."

Staff at all levels of Mercy Parklands

were introduced to the Spark of Life.

"It's an approach that helps to grow a compassionate culture – one that lifts the human spirit, breaks down barriers, and brings out the best in everyone."

In the past year, several person-centred care practices have been introduced, with a focus on enhancing outcomes for residents and their families, as well as for staff and the facility. "These initiatives include clubs for people with dementia, one-to-one friendships between individual staff and residents, and family focus meetings," Helen explains.

So what's new at Mercy Parklands? A men's club now meets regularly, so do

art and gardening clubs. The Pastoral Care team has developed The Ark, which offers liturgical services especially geared to small groups of residents with dementia. A technique called "bathing without a battle" has been introduced, aimed at reducing stress between residents and staff over this vital aspect of patient care.

Youngsters from the local community are being encouraged to interact with residents; 'move and groove' exercises are shared with children from a neighbourhood kindy, while college students visit and assist with activities, as part of their social awareness and career choice programmes.

As master practitioner for the Spark of Life, Helen Delmonte takes a lead role in training staff in person-centred practice. Clinical Manager Margi van den Heever also plays a part in linking Spark of Life to clinical services and in seeing that staff

know how these changes relate to their professional development and career options.

CEO Ann Coughlan has given the Mercy care focus her full support. "Our goal here is to create a centre of excellence in clinical care, ensuring best practice within a clearly defined framework. Early feedback from residents and their families shows they are very willing to help us to move forward."

SPARK OF LIFE leader Helen Delmonte (left) with Mercy Parklands resident Moira McKeown... 'Mercy Care' is person-centred, tailored to individual needs.



Like Catherine McAuley, a Global Citizen is someone who is:

- Outraged by social injustice
- Acts locally while always having an eye on the global

Meet the Global Citizen in YOU.

Te Kete Atawhai is a quarterly newsletter produced by the mission staff of Tiaki Manatu Mercy Ministries Trust, for Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.

Editor is **Dennis Horton**, who can be contacted at:

DHorton@somauck.org.nz

Ph (09) 360 7874

PO Box 6015, Wellesley Street, Auckland 1141.

Te Kete Atawhai is designed by La Fabrica Design Studio in Christchurch – www.lafabrica.co.nz – and is printed in Christchurch by Verve Digital using sustainable practice print methods.

