

Te Kete Atawhai

MERCY BASKET



NEW BLOCK: Felicia Nasrun, Student Rep on the Board of Trustees (left) and Tara Spencer, Head of Liturgy, watch as North Shore MP Maggie Barry and Auckland Mayor Len Brown share the task of cutting the ribbon to open the Harkins Building, the new block at Carmel College on June 19. More details, back cover.



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First flat for homeless women opens in Wellington

The dream has been a long time in coming true, but for Sister of Mercy Marcellin Wilson and the Board of the Wellington Homeless Women's Trust good things are worth waiting for. Over many months, they have worked with others in Wellington to provide temporary accommodation for homeless women in the Capital.

THE DREAM HAS NOW TAKEN SHAPE, WITH SIX BEDROOMS in an apartment block just off Manners Street in the central city. The scheme will house up to five women at a time, for a maximum of three months. A house manager will occupy the sixth room.

A blessing of the facility took place in the first week of June and occupants were to be accepted from June 14. The opening lines of the blessing were, "We come in the hope that these premises will fulfil the promises and dreams our Board has cherished for many

years. These rooms are now at the disposal of any woman who believes that her life could be better." Marcellin believes that all Mercy people will want to share in that prayer.

The accommodation consists of communal living in a women-only space, where support will be offered to assist them to address the various causes that have made them homeless. The women will also be helped to access other available services, including support to find more permanent housing and to meet some of their personal needs.

The project is being organised by the Wellington Homeless Women's Trust, chaired by Rongotai MP Annette King; the trust has been researching for more than two years to acquire a suitable property and has finally secured a two-year lease on



SISTER of Mercy Marcellin Wilson (left) with MP Annette King and Sr Raye Boyle, at the opening of the flat for homeless women in Wellington ... 'a dream come true'.

the premises.

The trust's founding members include Marcellin Wilson, as well as Compassion Sister Catherine Hannan and Sr Raye Boyle of the Little Company of Mary. The trio joined forces with others in the community, after becoming aware of the unmet needs of two women being evicted from their boarding house and of homeless women sleeping rough behind St Anne's Church in Newtown.

It was Police Constable Petra Solia, a former pupil of St Catherine's College, Kilbirnie,

who phoned about the evicted women. "On the night she rang, Petra said she knew the Sisters of Mercy would help," Marcellin recalls.

The Newtown parish called meetings to learn about homelessness, inviting those involved in downtown ministry and the city's night shelter to advise them. The discussion identified a need for short-term accommodation for homeless women which the Trust Board was prepared to respond to.

To support the venture, the trust is completely dependent on donations which can be made to Kiwibank Account No 38-9014-0567519-01; cheques should be made to The Wellington Homeless Women's Trust, PO Box 1784, Wellington 6140. Donations can be made online at www.homeless.org.nz

Spiritual Life Centre relocates after earthquake

Rosary House Spiritual Life Centre in Christchurch has relocated from premises near Hagley Park which were badly damaged by earthquake to a new venue, two city blocks away and still close to the centre of the city.

FORMERLY A MERCY COMMUNITY residence, the gracious two-storied building at 22 Gracefield Avenue has undergone extensive earthquake repairs and is tucked away from the busyness and noise of the demolition and rebuilding which is now such a feature of central Christchurch.

Two Sisters of Mercy, Mary Gleeson and Anna Clarke provide spiritual direction from the non-residential centre, where space is also available for others in the city who have lost their own spiritual direction venues. "People who come here are provided with a sense of solitude which is consistent with our objectives of promoting spiritual development," says Sr Anna Clarke. "The Sisters of Mercy are delighted to be able to re-establish this important ministry

in a very suitable and stable environment.

"The centre is also available to those who wish to have a day of prayer and reflection, and to individuals who wish to make a personal guided retreat," she says. "We are able to provide room space for small group programmes run by ourselves and others, while for bigger groups there is still access to the Mary Potter Community Centre a short distance away.

"An annual six-day non-residential retreat is offered at Villa Maria College in Upper Riccarton."

A copy of this year's programmes at the Rosary House Spiritual Life Centre is available on request by emailing roho@xtra.co.nz



RELOCATED: The new premises for Rosary House Spiritual Life Centre, at 22 Gracefield Ave in Christchurch.

New Zealand Mercy helps Chileans who fall through the crevices

Meet Sister of Mercy Margaret Milne. Originally from Wellington, she has spent the last 20 years or so working among the very poor in Santiago, Chile, where her focus is on community health nursing, caring for the dying and the chronically ill.

SHE HAS FORMED A GROUP OF WOMEN volunteers to support her, working with a social worker and two physiotherapists. The community health programme she has founded is called 'Fallen through the Crevices', and reaches out to stroke victims and people who suffer from chronic illness, through a rehabilitation programme that contacts up to 30 - 40 people each week.

In Renca, the sector of Santiago where Margaret is working, the public health system cannot cope with the huge need for rehabilitation of those with severe injuries and chronic health problems.

"Many people, including family members of those who are ill, do not understand the problem of immobility and the harm it can do, even over a short period of time," Margaret explains. "Few receive adequate treatment, medical attention or sufficient family support. Without resources many remain confined to bed, immobile and subject to skin breakdown and bed-sores.

"Now in its fifth year, our community rehabilitation programme includes home visits, where therapy is offered to people who are too ill to come to our centre.

"Care plans are developed and therapy is given by our volunteers or sometimes by a willing family member. Follow-up occurs on a weekly basis, and daily therapy, with exercise and massage, is the key to slow but sure progress."

It costs around NZ\$1800 a month to provide up to 120 sessions of physiotherapy for a patient; transport for two patients to a central city hospital with a rehab centre can cost \$780 a month, for three visits each week. "Funding for even part of these expenses would be wonderful," says Margaret. "It's a huge challenge."

A Chile Support group has been operating by Sisters of Mercy in New Zealand. "The funds we have received help to provide physio sessions and to buy wool for blankets which are knitted locally for elderly and abandoned folk. The last lot of blankets went to elderly people who had lost all their belongings in a huge fire near Valparaiso.

"The chain of support is really impressive. Raffles and fund-raising in Aotearoa mean that resources are sent to me to buy wool.

Blankets are knitted by an elderly Chilean woman, and then presented to those in need."

Lately, Margaret has been raising funds through a recycling scheme. With local volunteers she has been collecting plastic juice and soft-drink bottles for a company that lends her a huge bag to fill. With labels and tops removed, the bottles are washed and squashed. The company pays a small amount for each kilo.

"The return is not great," says Margaret, "but there are lots of bottles out on the streets and in local rubbish dumps. The scheme has a two-way benefit – providing ready cash, and raising consciousness about the environment. So it's really a great result. "I put a sign up on our fence, with a large cardboard box nearby, and it gets filled daily."

Margaret has earmarked future funds to help a local woman with long-awaited surgery, to create a fund for animal treatment (the problem of stray dogs in Chile is of epidemic proportions) and to support the community rehab programme, 'Fallen through the Crevices'.

New Zealanders who wish to contribute to the Sisters of Mercy Mission Support Group can send their donations to Sr Clare Vaughan, 15 Guildford Tce, Thorndon, Wellington 6011. A receipt will be provided for tax purposes.



SISTER of Mercy Margaret Milne... daily therapy vital for bed-bound patients.

Alternatively, donations can be sent to Sr Mary Boyes, 2/14 Wharenui Rd, Upper Riccarton, Christchurch 8041. Mary has worked over several years to promote, publicise and organise funds for Mercy's ministry in Chile.



PHYSIOTHERAPISTS offer treatment to the victims of stroke and chronic illness, in a country where the public health system cannot cope.

Focus on young dads a new response for this Mercy ministry

A programme for young fathers, being piloted by Te Waipuna Puawai, is breaking new ground for this Mercy ministry whose focus has been on strengthening women and their children.

TWP'S MANUKURA OR MANAGER, PUAMIRIA MAAKA, EXPLAINS that the introduction of a service focused intentionally on men involved a decision which took some time to reach.

"We have a decision-making tool, with critical questions, that our board uses when it is considering new services. We worked through this process, until we were satisfied that the decision was consistent with our mission.

"One of the reasons for adding this focus was that for at least the past seven years, the women alongside whom we've been working have asked us to respond to the needs of their partners. This became more pronounced as we began working with young mothers.

"Another reason for our getting involved was that there was no other local provider offering tailored services for young fathers. And there was no other provider willing to risk establishing a new service, or to seek funding to support it."

Enter Rhodri Curran, who last year was living in Hawkes Bay, having just finished his degree in social work. "I've had a passion for working with young people for a long time, so when this job came up I applied, not expecting that I had much chance of getting it.

"I came up to Auckland for the interview and remember being impressed – not only about the job but about the Sisters of Mercy and their way of working with people to effect change.

"As a new social worker, I knew there was a lot to learn on the job. But I think my ability to build strong relationships and engage with people has helped. I believe strongly that the 'helping' role is key to any intervention. So while I was learning the ropes, I was

able to connect not just with my clients, but also with those in the community and at Te Waipuna Puawai."

As well as piloting an eight-week programme for young fathers, Rhodri has also been offering one-on-one support to those who seek it, working with upwards of 15 young fathers at a time. After his first six months on the job, Rhodri saw some common themes emerging. He brought these together, to see if a programme would be accepted by young fathers.

"They agreed, and informed me of the areas they wanted to work on. The eight-week programme has covered parenting, healthy relationships, communication, cooking, nutrition, budgeting, money management and child development. These were the areas identified by the young fathers in a focus group held in December last year.

"At each session, we ask participants to evaluate the content, to suggest what needs to be changed or retained, what should be added or discarded. We try constantly to stay relevant to what the young dads are seeking.

"At the end of each eight weeks, an evaluation will be led by an experienced colleague, who will document their feedback. We hope that one outcome will be to see how these young men feel more confident about their responsibilities as fathers."

Rhodri says the goal is to produce a programme run by the young men themselves. "I've been up-front with these guys, about some of them stepping up as facilitators in the future. My hope is that a couple of them will be helpers in the next programme, and that finally they'll be facilitating the process themselves.

"I absolutely intend to paint myself out of the picture, so that this programme will be run by dads, for dads."

Puamiria is enthusiastic about how things are going. She says the young fathers' group fits very well with Mercy's mission, "because the restoration of women and children is inextricably linked to fathers, who will benefit from the same level of commitment and support we give to their women and children.

"Working with young dads is critical, if we hope to have an impact on families and communities, and to interrupt the inter-generational cycles."

The shift in focus has meant that TWP has had to change its vision statement, from seeking the restoration of "women, children and the earth" to an aim that is more inclusive. "But our mission statement needed no change," says Puamiria. "It continues to be 'Working together to strengthen women, families and communities'."

She agrees that the young fathers' group is a new area of work for TWP, "but it feels like a natural evolution, as we shift the focus on families of all kinds, to include dads, brothers and sons.

"The women we have worked with for many years want to restore their family relationships, and we are endeavouring to respond."



SOCIAL Worker Rhodri Curran with TWP manukura Puamiria Maaka... "working with young dads is critical, if we hope to have an impact on families."

Young dad finding his way forward

Rino Fong Toy is 19. He lives in Point England with his partner Santana and their two young sons, Lorenzo who has just turned two, and Emanuel who is one month. He is currently pursuing an NZMA course in cookery, five days a week.

HE LEARNT ABOUT THE YOUNG FATHERS group from his social worker, Rhodri Curran. "You learn new things here – things you don't know." He's now into the fifth of eight weeks; the group meets every Monday.

"It's helped me a lot," says Rino. "When I first started on this journey, I was struggling a lot with my family. It was hard. But it started getting easier when Rhodri became my social worker. He suggested I come to these sessions – on budgeting, parenting, relationships, cooking.

"I was always interested in cooking; it's my passion. When I met Rhodri, I wanted to jump on a course – not just any course, but one I really wanted to do. He helped me to get into the course. But it was my decision that I wanted to do it." That's a phrase that Rino repeats.

"I've been there for five weeks now. I've been cooking soups, stocks and vegetables. I'm going onto my next module – fish, orange roughly and salmon. And the one after that will be meat." Rino hopes to have a career in cooking, in a gourmet restaurant.

In the Young Fathers group, the topics he looks forward to most are relationships and parenting. "The course has changed things with my partner – heaps! It's made our life easier. We used to always fight and argue. When I started on the course, I learnt how to calm down, to take a situation and turn it around to a good result. I've learnt to have a positive outlook on our relationship."

Rino says he is less likely now to fly off the handle. "Even if we have an argument, I'm able to walk away and calm down, then come back and sort it out. Santana can see the difference in me; and she likes it."

He says that Lorenzo is learning to listen. "When he doesn't, I get frustrated. But the Young Fathers group helps me to not be so frustrated, to filter my boys' needs, to work out what they want.

"It was hard before, because I didn't know what to do. I didn't want to hurt them. The course has helped me a lot, to understand. I've learnt to respect other



RINO Fong Toy stands in front of the art work at the entrance of Te Waipuna Puawai, which celebrates the restoration of women, children and the Earth. The Young Fathers group which meets there is helping him to relate better to his partner and young sons.

people, to be grateful for everything that happens. The course has helped our family in heaps of ways."

He says his partner didn't push him into the course. "It was my own decision."

He credits WINZ with putting him in touch with Rhodri. "They referred me to a social worker. It's good that he came into our lives, because he's helped us with food, money problems, even getting a house. He's helped us with all of that."

Rino recalls that when his mother was alive, he had a good role model for parenting. "But my mum died when I was 16. It was hard. She was my everything. I was a good boy, never got into trouble, till my mother passed away. Then I was a bit lost, till I met my girlfriend. She picked me up, put me back on my feet. She's helped me a lot."

His oldest brother also helped to bring him up. "He was more like a dad to me. He's 28 now." Another brother has five sons. "He's the Man!" says Rino. "His partner does the house, and he does the kids, takes them to school, and drops them off every day. He's a good dad."

"Mum is still there, in my heart,"

says Rino. "Sometimes, when I'm at my brother's, I talk to her, because her photo is on the wall. I sit there and talk to her about what's happening and how I'm doing."

His family name, Fong Toy, was his nana's. "I don't know where it came from. It sounds Chinese, but my nana had the heart of a Maori. I stayed with her when I was young. She was as strict as!"

When the cooking course is over, Rino will probably go to a commercial kitchen. And when the Young Fathers course ends, he'd like to be a mentor. "If Rhodri asks me, I'll be there.

"I continue to see him on a one-on-one basis every week. We catch up, talk about the course, he asks me how it's going, and I tell him that I've passed all my assessments. He's a great help."

Rino's cookery course is run by NZMA in Panmure. From the three options of cooking, hospitality and bar-tending, and business administration he chose the first. "I've already got my knives, my black-and-white jacket and my chef's hat. It looks good," he says with pride. "You only wear it when you're cooking."

Mercy lives in the real world, says conference host

Plans are well advanced for the 11th conference of the Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association (AMSSA), being held this month at Carmel College in Milford. Hosting the conference as AMSSA's interim president is Carmel College principal Kath Deady.

THERE ARE CURRENTLY OVER 60 AMSSA MEMBER SCHOOLS throughout Australasia, seven of them in New Zealand. The conference occurs every two years and was last held in this country in 1999. "Some concern was voiced that year about our meeting in an up-market Auckland hotel, when the aim of our organisation is to be with the poor and those at the margin," Kath Deady recalls.

"Since then, all the conferences have been held at different Mercy schools in Australia. It may have been that when we last met in New Zealand, our schools didn't have the resources to host such a conference. But we certainly do now, and we're looking forward to hosting this one."

More than 150 participants, both adults and students, are expected at the four-day gathering. Many of the sessions will be held in Carmel College's new block which includes a performing arts centre that seats 160, a large covered atrium with break-out teaching and social spaces and a new library that has commanding views of Lake Pupuke.

Built on land that is closely linked with the Poynton family and the origins of Catholicism in this country, the new block will help to give the conference a local flavour, says Kath Deady. "We will start with a haka powhiri that will emphasise elements of both tangata whenua and Pasifika.

"Richard Puanaki, principal of St Joseph's School in Waiora, has written a waiata especially for the conference. We look forward to learning and singing this song.

"Our conference dinner will be held in the floating pavilion on the Waterfront, close to where the first Sisters of Mercy disembarked in 1850, before walking to the site of the cathedral where the conference Mass will be celebrated.

"We'll incorporate on the first day a tour of Mercy facilities in Auckland, including St Mary's Convent with its historic chapel and the urupa where the first sisters are buried, and Te Waipuna Puawai and the adjoining gardens in Ellerslie. Participants will get an idea of some of Mercy's local ministries."

A feature of the AMSSA conference this year is the involvement of two or three senior students from each Mercy college, including three from Papua New Guinea. Students from outside Auckland will be billeted with Carmel students and their families.

"The student programme will have a practical bent, with activities that include a competition which echoes a TV series. Students will attend some of the keynote presentations, and on the Sunday evening we hope to host a Trivial Pursuits event that will involve both student and adult participants. So there'll be a bit of friendly competition," Kath Deady explains.

"The suggestion from Australian schools is that we invite students from our Year 11, so that they will have another two years to contribute to leadership within the school. I'm hoping that a very explicitly Mercy way of leadership will emerge among these students."

The common thread which binds the three keynote speakers is their focus on aspects of Mercy, says Kath Deady.



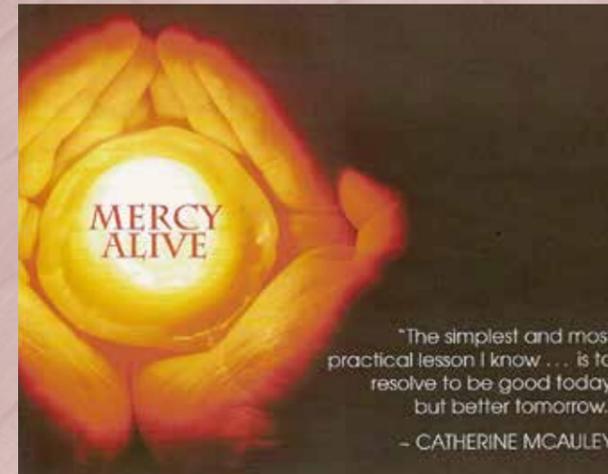
CARMEL College principal Kath Deady beside one of five large rocks in a courtyard outside the new building blessed and opened last month. Each of the rocks has been inscribed by an artist with the names of the school's core Mercy values – this one bears the words *Tika and Justice*.

Writer and peace activist Megan McKenna is renowned for her style of story-telling that echoes Catherine McAuley, "especially the joy that comes through in her presentations. It's joy that helps to create hope in our world today. And that's important for today's students, because they live with all kinds of threats which undermine hope," Kath Deady says.

Megan McKenna is also very strong on re-interpreting the biblical stories about women, empowering and affirming them in what they can do. "I think it's important that we offer these scriptural insights, because of what seems like a growing emphasis on literalism in our church today. It's important for our students to know that the vision of faith is bigger than the literal perspective."

US Sister of Mercy Marilyn Lacey, founder of Mercy Beyond Borders, has worked with those at the margins – refugees and asylum seekers driven from one country to another. "The title she was given by the Dalai Lama – 'an unsung hero of compassion' – certainly embodies the spirit of mercy."

Local bioethicist Deborah Stevens has helped to develop curriculum resources on stem cell research and cloning, euthanasia and climate change. "The bioethical dilemmas she deals with are going to be the ones which will try our students' faith. Getting the chance to debate these issues now, before they



THIS IMAGE APPEARS ON THE REGISTRATION BROCHURE for the 11th Australasian Mercy Secondary Schools Association Biennial Conference, being held this month at Carmel College in Milford, Auckland. The event is expected to draw 160 participants, including staff and students, from more than 60 Mercy colleges throughout Australia and New Zealand, Papua New Guinea and the Pacific.

Te Kete Atawhai joins with New Zealand's Mercy hosts in welcoming guests from across the Tasman and from other parts of the Pacific to this four-day event. Students from out of town will be billeted with local students and their families. We wish them a happy stay in this city and a warm welcome to this part of Aotearoa New Zealand. Haere mai e te whanau atawhai; welcome to Mercy's extended family. May Mercy be alive in your hearts over these days!

find themselves in the situation, is very important," says Kath Deady.

"Mercy is not just about the heart; it's about the head, too, and about clear thinking."

Kath Deady says the conference workshops will focus on both forming staff in Mercy and providing leadership opportunities for students. "These two things go together; if you don't have the first, you won't get the second."

She says it's easier for staff, many of whom are not Catholic, to buy into stories of Catherine McAuley and our Mercy pioneers, their heroism, compassion and sense of justice, than it is to get to grips with a scriptural or theological idea of Mercy. "Yet we have to do both. Because Mercy is not just about Catherine or Cecilia Maher – it embodies a much longer and richer tradition."

Kath Deady hopes the AMSSA conference will draw the attention of participants to some of the difficult issues that face New Zealanders and Australians today. "Even in the student programme, we'll focus on things like environmental sustainability and human trafficking, refugees and asylum seekers – all of which are issues we face today. I'm hoping the conference will remind us that Mercy lives in the real world and has something to say about these topics."

Refugees have been her best teachers

Visiting New Zealand this month is Sister of Mercy Marilyn Lacey, founder and executive director of Mercy Beyond Borders, a non-profit organisation which partners with displaced women and children in developing nations, seeking to alleviate their extreme poverty.

MARILYN IS A KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT THE AUSTRALASIAN MERCY Secondary Schools Association Conference on July 14. She has also been invited to give the annual Catherine McAuley Lecture, open to all and to be presented in the four major metropolitan centres (see details below).

A native of California and a Sister of Mercy since 1966, Marilyn has worked with refugees in the US, Africa and South-East Asia. She has dedicated her life to making the world a more welcoming place for people forced to leave their homelands because of war or persecution.

Marilyn believes that it's in being with the poor that we meet God face to face.

She is passionate about creating a better world for refugees and migrants, and has stood with displaced people for over 30 years. In 2001, she was personally honoured by the Dalai Lama as an 'Unsung Hero of Compassion'.

Marilyn holds a master's degree in social work and three honorary doctorates, although she insists that refugees have been her best teachers. She lives in California and works in South Sudan and Haiti.

In 2009, Ave Maria Press published her memoir, *This Flowing Toward Me: A story of God arriving in strangers*. Copies of her book will be available at her speaking venues throughout New Zealand. It is available from Pleroma Christian Supplies in Otane for \$39.99 – email webmaster@pleroma.org.nz

The 2013 Catherine McAuley Lecture, entitled *Mercy Beyond Borders* and open to all, will be given by Sister Marilyn Lacey this month. The venues and times are as follows:

CHRISTCHURCH: Mon 8 July, Parish Hall, 28 Cotswold Avenue, Bishopdale, 7pm – 8.30pm

DUNEDIN: Tue 9 July, Mercy Hospital, 72 Newington Avenue, Dunedin, 1pm – 2.30pm

WELLINGTON: Wed 10 July, Te Wāhanga Atawhai, 15 Guildford Terrace, Thorndon, 7pm – 8.30pm

AUCKLAND: July 11, Cecilia Maher Room, St Mary's Convent, 7 New Street, 7pm – 8.30pm.



SR Marilyn Lacey... meeting God face to face in the poor.

UN visit holds dream and grief for Mercy sister

Back from a week in New York to visit the United Nations, Sister of Mercy Bridget Crisp has her feet firmly on the ground. She comes to this interview from the garden where she has been harvesting cabbage and citrus fruit, for the twice-a-week distribution to needy families in her neighbourhood.

SHE SPENT A WEEK IN NEW York in May with a group of 10 – six sisters and four lay women who work for Mercy organisations, all actively involved in the justice area. The group took part in a UN Experience, organised by Mercy International and led by Irish Sister of Mercy Áine O'Connor who represents Mercy Global Action at the UN.

"The UN is truly amazing," said Bridget. "The dream of getting all the nations on earth together, to come up with solutions to global problems is stunning. We spent our first day in the main room of the General Assembly, as UN general secretary Ban Ki-moon addressed a high level session on human trafficking.

"At the same time, I felt a profound sense of grief, as I listened to the problems and tragedies that human beings inflict on others. Some of the dreadful stories from very brave women, telling what human trafficking has meant to them. The stories affected me quite deeply.

"Later I went to a meeting of the Economic and Social Development Committee, and saw what people are doing to the environment. Once again, I felt a sense of grief, at the power of human destructiveness. It was a memory that stayed with me.

"It left me wondering how Áine O'Connor, who represents us at the UN, can cope with that, day in and day out. I wondered at how she manages to process the heaviness of it all, and not allow it to overwhelm her."

Bridget has returned, aware that she needs to lift her game, "in terms of raising awareness within Mercy circles here and in getting them to highlight to Government what we see as important." And lobbying governments means collaboration, says Bridget, "working with other organisations, within our country or across countries, supporting each other."

The morning's emails have included one about raising awareness on fracking, in preparation for a global event on October 18. "I need to raise awareness on the issues of fracking, and work out something we can do in October that connects with the worldwide drive."

The environmental focus of Mercy Global Action includes climate change, the rights of nature and mining. "For New Zealand and the whole of the Pacific, climate change is a big issue, with sea levels rising and the effects of this on water supply and agriculture.

"We have Sisters of Mercy working in Tonga and Samoa. All the



NZ Sister of Mercy Bridget Crisp outside the UN General Assembly building in New York – "an amazing place, but huge grief over what humans do to one another and their world."

Pacific Islands are affected by sea levels rising through climate change. It affects our region more than those in the Northern Hemisphere."

Bridget acknowledges that New Zealand is a small country. "But while we think of ourselves as being on the fringe of the larger world, we are respected as a nation, and even as a Government, in terms of the decisions we've made, hoping that other nations might follow suit.

"In terms of moral decision-making, we've sometimes punched above our weight. And we need to continue to do so, because on the global stage we are known for the integrity and quality of our decisions. There's an expectation that New Zealand should be doing so again."

Bridget works in the permaculture garden at Papatuanuku ki Taurangi in Ellerslie. Lately she's been harvesting cabbages, spring onions, navel oranges and mandarins to distribute to needy families without enough food. "Food security is an issue I believe we need to address.

"I'm aware that I'm constantly in touch with people who are struggling with issues that come before the UN, and which our Government is obliged to address. My work here keeps me connected with some of the people who are among the most vulnerable in New Zealand."

She also works as a relief teacher at McAuley High School in Otahuhu, "a college that is connected with families that are vulnerable in terms of work, food and housing. The UN experience is likely to surface in whatever I'm teaching."

Mercy comings and goings



MRS Catherine Ryan, the new principal of St Mary's College in Wellington, was welcomed to the school with a powhiri at the beginning of Term 2 in May. She replaces Mrs Mary Cook who had been principal for the last 18 years. Mrs Ryan was previously deputy principal at Sacred Heart Girls' College in Hamilton; her teaching career has focused on English and the performing arts.

BACK from a Mercy Ethos programme in Dublin earlier this year are Lynda Smith, CEO of Mercy Hospice Auckland, and Mary Curran, Principal of St Catherine's College, Kilbirnie. The pair joined 14 Australians, two Canadians and one from Papua New Guinea in the event. Its focus was to offer an immersion in the life and times of Catherine McAuley, and a chance to see how her qualities and achievements can be translated into today's world.

"To journey with others from the global Mercy network who are also involved in Mercy ministries was a joy

and a privilege," says Mary Curran.

"The differing perspectives we shared enhanced my understanding of Catherine's courage and dedication.

"My challenge now is to raise our awareness here at St Catherine's of the legacy left by the early women of Mercy. To ensure that our young women are part of a college community that educates them to be the best they can be. To live with a dignity and compassion that ultimately makes a difference for all."

The timing of the programme "was perfect" for Lynda Smith, appointed almost a year ago as CEO to one of the first hospices in New Zealand. "It felt important for me to go back to Dublin, to learn about our heritage and the strong commitment the Sisters of Mercy have for caring for the sick and the poor.

"Tracing Catherine's footsteps was inspirational. We learned that her strength, tenacity, drive and leadership spurred the Sisters of Mercy to spread their mission.

"To have dedicated time to be immersed in the Mercy story and to explore the challenges and opportunities of today with other Mercy leaders was a true gift," says Lynda. "I came back to New Zealand with a much greater understanding of Catherine's legacy, and with the knowledge and tools to continue her work."

MRS Kath Deady, principal of Carmel College since 2003, has announced that

she will retire from that post at the end of the current school year.

Mrs Deady announced her decision to resign two months ago, in advance of this year's board of trustee elections. "I wanted to resign to the Board I have worked with so fruitfully for the last three years and longer, and to alert prospective new Board members that one of their first tasks will be to appoint a new principal."

She hoped that her announcement would allow a smooth transition for the start of the 2014 school year. Mrs Deady said she had no intention of "winding down" and that she would continue to work with her usual commitment for the remainder of the year. Carmel College would "always have a special place in my heart," she said.

AFTER 12 years as mission director at Atawhai Mercy Assisi in Hamilton, Sr Teresa Anderson is relinquishing that post this month, allowing more time to devote to her new role as coordinator of Papatuanuku ki Taurangi Earth Promise Centre in Ellerslie.

Teresa has spent two days a fortnight at the residential aged care facility in Hamilton, supporting its commitment to Mercy values among staff and overseeing the activities of its mission team.

Teresa continues to work as a member of He Waka Tiaki, the mission team of the Sisters of Mercy Ministries Trust, with particular responsibility for Mercy-founded primary schools.

Bridget is also on the diocesan Justice and Peace Commission, serves on the board of Monte Cecilia Housing Trust, and knows that all these areas of advocacy impinge on one another. "There's a depth and complexity that tie all these areas of human life together."

Partnerships are vital, says Bridget. She draws attention to the recent endorsement by the Leadership Team of the Sisters of Mercy in New Zealand of a submission to Government by the Salvation Army, on the exploitation of workers on foreign charter fishing vessels.

"New Zealanders generally imagine that trafficking doesn't happen here, but it does, in many different forms – our fisheries, the sweatshop scenario, and prostitution. It's a case of being aware when it happens, and of how best to respond to it.

"Sisters of Mercy are working alongside others, to ensure that the work is fruitful. We're very skilled at that. Increasingly, we are using conference calls and Connect sessions with other Sisters of Mercy around the world."

The Connect system, provided by Fraynetwork, a Mercy communications agency in Melbourne, enables a sharing of documents as well as conversation, as if participants were meeting together in a boardroom.

Bridget feels the need to be in touch with Sisters of Mercy in the regions where issues like mining and fracking occur. "I need to work collaboratively with sisters on the ground, because they are the ones who live in the community and know what's happening.

"There are social issues that have to be addressed, especially when people's livelihoods are involved in a region that depends on mining. So it's not just an environmental issue, but a social one as well.

"Advocacy is daunting," Bridget agrees. "It's a step up for me. I know I have to be more proactive. But I can't do this on my own; I won't have all the information. That's why it's important to involve other sisters and Mercy companions, who can contribute their wisdom and experience to these topics of global importance."

Mercy Young Adults – learning to care for Earth

Rose Anne Fata-Leone is in Year 13 at McAuley High School and joined the Mercy Young Adults group this year. She describes what belonging to this group means to her.

I HEARD SO MUCH ABOUT MERCY YOUNG ADULTS FROM LAST year's senior students and often wondered what this group was all about. So when Sr Salome invited Year 13 students this year, I jumped at the opportunity and was the first to join up. We began to have meetings at school, and more joined as they understood the focus of the group.

One Saturday in March, we had a reflection day at Te Waipuna Puawai, the Mercy community development centre in Ellerslie. The night before, our Mercy Young Adults group met at Sr Salome's house in Papatoetoe. It was an important occasion, as I got to meet members who had been part of the group during the previous year.

We began with a beautiful liturgy, organised by Sr Akenese, who had almost every member of the group taking part. As a group, it is important for us to be involved in community outreach and to work as volunteers in Mercy's ministries. We listened to presentations about how we could help in the aged care facilities of the Sisters of Mercy, and how we could help with gardening at Te Waipuna Puawai.

Our task here is to ensure that Te Waipuna is a welcoming, clean and safe environment for visitors and for those who come seeking healing of all sorts from this beautiful centre. We were introduced to these ideas as a group, and the process let us see what we can do to help others in our communities.

Another activity on our reflection day was to grow in our appreciation of Papatuanuku, Mother Earth. During this session, we were invited to walk outside in the gardens that surround the building, sensing the beauty of the environment. For me, this was a special moment, as it made me realise the beauty and wonder of God's creation. Seeing the beauty of nature, hearing its sounds, and smelling its aroma in a very quiet environment on our own was a very gifting and warm experience.

Another activity of the day was focused on learning to trust others. We went outside and formed a large circle, in the centre of which a candle was lit. While we were in the circle, we all had to hold onto a piece of rope that was placed in front of us. We all had to lean back and trust that the other individuals would hold the rope tight enough so that we would not fall back. The exercise helped to develop and strengthen the trust we had in each other. We also learnt from this exercise that doing things as a group is much more successful than doing things on our own.

The reflection day was an enriching experience for me. I left Te Waipuna Puawai feeling motivated to share in community outreaches and to engage in voluntary work. The feeling of being spiritually healed by the spirit of God was just overwhelming. It gives us the courage to go out into the world beyond to do good for others, knowing that the work we do is expressing the love of Jesus for all.

Another opportunity I received as a member of the Mercy Young Adults was to attend an Edmund Rice Conference, held at St Peter's College on a weekend in May. Five other members of our group joined me; it was an amazing experience for us all.

We listened to presentations by an environmental group, concerned with what is happening to life on Earth. We were shocked, as we witnessed the devastation being done to the planet by the way of life humans are pursuing. Mother Nature is being destroyed and God's creation ruined, because of the choices we make.



FLASHBACK: Mercy Young Adults at their commissioning ceremony last year ..., "we'd heard so much about the group that I jumped at the chance to join up."

Overall the Edmund Rice Conference was a very good experience for me, as it gave me a wake-up call to take action because Mother Nature is under such threat and our Earth is losing its beauty. Earth is losing its capacity to be home, because of the way we live today and the way we treat the natural resources we are blessed with.

So far this has been a great year for me as a member of the Mercy Young Adults group. Being exposed to these experiences does make a difference in my life. I am being constantly reminded of the privilege of being alive, but to live a healthy life I must take account of the environment in which I live.

I must consider my surroundings and ensure that what I am exposed to today is what my descendants will also enjoy. From these experiences, I've learnt that I must take action and make a change in the way I live, not only for my own good but for the good of others and for generations to come.

As for my outreach into my community in South Auckland, I am very interested in healthy living. Once a fortnight, I volunteer my services to the Herbal Life nutrition centre in Otahuhu, helping to make healthy drinks like green tea and aloe drink and to serve these to those who seek help with their health problems. I enjoy this voluntary work, and although it may sound small to some, as a Mercy Young Adult member every volunteer service I perform I do in the name of Mercy and for the good of humankind.



MERCY Young Adults ... "learning to see the beauty of God's creation, and our need to care for the Earth that God has entrusted to us."

Mercy valets honour dignity of women and children

By JASMINE, CAROLINE and TARA

Kia ora, greetings, talofa!

Our Mercy Young Adult group is the one that volunteered to help Sister of Mercy Marie Brown. Our task was to prepare vehicles and baby car seats for the women and their young children she supports.

When Sr Salome asked if anyone was interested in volunteering for this service, the three of us put up our hands. Jasmine has a car, and she was very confident she could get us to Sr Marie's place.

Well, 10 minutes after we should have arrived, Sr Salome got a call to say that we were lost! After a number of calls and text message, we finally managed to find our way to Waddell Avenue in Glen Innes.

Sr Marie is the most exciting and amazing person to work with. She's really cool, very friendly, and so concerned about our welfare. Before she gave us work, she bought us food and wow – what a treat! Thanks, Sr Marie.

We cleaned the vans, we washed the car seats, we polished them and finally, we had two white vans that looked as good as new! We were very proud of our work and we thoroughly enjoyed what we were doing.

As we reflected on our service, we realised that it was not so much the joy we gave Sr Marie and her group of women, but it was discovering that in doing these simple tasks for others, it brought more happiness and contentment to our hearts, knowing that we can make others happy.

By providing a clean, travelling environment for those young children and their mothers, it was the most effective way we could say to them that we truly respect their human dignity and that they are special.

Our group is ready to give Sr Marie our service anytime she needs us. It's great to be a Mercy Young Adult!



MERCY Young Adults with Sr Marie Brown (second on left), ready to clean vans at Te Waipuna Puawai in Glen Innes.



By PALEPA IOANE – for her team of Meressappinni Pupualii and Victoria Falesoani

Last year, we had the wonderful experience of being welcomed into the Mercy community. Through our commissioning we were recognised as young adults of mercy, ready to be involved in social justice both locally and globally.

Through the Mercy Young Adults, our goal is to work towards helping those in need. We gather each month with our coordinator, Sister Salome, to brainstorm ideas of how we as a group can pursue this mission for justice. Our discussions have led to our helping out at various Mercy ministries, one of them being the Changes Charity Store in Onehunga.

It is now more than a month since we began volunteering at Changes. Each Saturday morning, at least two of our group have volunteered for three hours, starting at 10.30.

We are greeted by the manager with a smile as we walk through the doors of the store. Once we have put away our belongings, we return to the shop floor to see what needs to be done. On our first week, the manager for the day was there to guide us, showing us our various tasks as volunteers.

When we're not on the shop floor, we're in the back room preparing stock; this includes sorting donated clothes into their different categories, such as shorts, pants and tee shirts. We've even developed our own system for recycling, with one person standing on the top of the stairs and throwing down whatever needs to be recycled to the one waiting below, next to the bins.

On the shop floor it's totally different, because as well as performing our duties we are interacting with customers. We greet them as soon as they enter the store, and compliment them on whatever they try on. Sometimes we think of ourselves as 'fashionistas', offering customers advice on which outfits suit them and which don't.

Our jobs on the shop floor include steaming and pricing clothes, as well as paying special attention to garments that need extra care, such as removing lint. We have also learnt how to brush and polish shoes, as we would never do for our own! We wipe down glassware, children's toys, books and CDs with cleaning sprays, using a different one for each item.

And of course, we help out by ensuring a clean store, by dusting and wiping down shelves and stands. It may sound like a lot of work but, believe it or not, we enjoy doing it! One of our favourite tasks is to change the mannequin's dress and decide on what goes on display. Recently, we've upgraded to working the cash register. At first it was nerve-racking, because there was a lot to remember and we were dealing with the customer's money. But with the help of our managers, we soon got the hang of it.

For all of us, the best part of our day, and also another favourite job, is to greet with a kind smile and later to thank those who come to donate their gifts to our store. It's at that moment we realise that we're not just working at some shop, but are volunteering at an op shop which fulfils its mission by responding to families who have unmet needs.

BOOKMARK: Copies of this bookmark, with its QR code in the bottom right corner, will provide instant access to the new website of the Sisters of Mercy New Zealand.



THREE YEAR 13 STUDENTS OF CARMEL COLLEGE, MICHAELA Fraser, Emma Moxley and Gemma Edwards, enjoy the comfort and space of the large atrium, a feature of the new building which was opened and blessed last month. The new building has been named after Tony Harkins, chair of Carmel College Auckland Ltd since 1998. Features include a new library, which bears the name of Sr Monica Costello, Carmel's second principal.

The atrium honours the late Maureen Langley, chair of the Board of Trustees between 1993 and 2004. A performing arts centre which seats 160 is named the Collene Roche Theatre, after Carmel's previous principal for 13 years; she taught music and performed as a classical singer. The project was funded largely by parent contributions, with additional fundraising.

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

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