



THE VOICE OF

**COMPASSION**

Te Reo o te Pūaroha



Adele pictured in front of her Compassion Housing home.

## Compassion Housing: Home is where the heart is

When the Sisters of Compassion purchased the first pensioner housing units for the Compassion Housing project, they never thought that 23 years later the housing problem in Aotearoa New Zealand would reach its current magnitude.

Rising property prices, along with the cost of living, and shortage of available and adequate housing has put pressure on so many people in our community. As a result many people, not least the elderly, are unable to find the peace of mind secure housing offers.

In 2000 Compassion Housing, following our values of giving compassion, faith, and dignity to the elderly, disadvantaged and poor, was recognised by the Community Housing Regulatory Authority as an approved community housing provider to administer affordable homes to older people who are unable to afford market rents.

The first homes purchased in 2000 in Upper Hutt began a programme that would expand to other towns. After having purchased the Horowhenua District Council's community housing portfolio in 2017 in partnership with Willis Bond, Compassion Housing currently owns and manages 208 units across Levin, Foxton, Shannon, and Upper Hutt, and has benefited more than 700 people since its inception.

For the Sisters of Compassion, the mission is to provide quality, comfortable and affordable housing; to respect people's right to independence; to offer friendship, encouragement and help to lead active lives; and to advocate for access to health, social and public care. Fulfilling this mission is part of the work we do every day.

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### IT'S A **NICE, WARM** HOUSE

Unable to work due to vision problems after a stroke and multiple blood clots that have hindered her health, Adele applied for a house with Compassion Housing.

It was in April 2019, when the landlord of her former home in Levin notified her that she had to leave the property. It began a time of uncertainty and worry, as she had nowhere to go. "I was pretty desperate, I didn't know where to go, or what to do," she recalls.

Although Adele had lived in different places, this time the situation was different and more complex. "I had health issues and when you've got health issues and you're feeling stressed, it makes it worse."

Without much hope and despite her belief that they were "just for seniors," she applied, thinking she would never be accepted. Soon after, she was surprised and relieved to be selected to occupy one of the houses in Levin.

"That's how I got it. I'm still here and happy. I like talking to people and living in a community," says Adele, reassured that she has a safe place to be and to receive visits from family, friends, and sometimes the Sisters of Compassion.

“ It's a good place, it's a nice, warm house. ”

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### IT'S BEEN A REALLY **GOOD EXPERIENCE**

Bridget has been living in one of Compassion Housing's units in Upper Hutt for almost eight years. "I'm on a pension, I was looking for affordable accommodation while I was taking care of my mother at the time."

"My mother died two and a half years ago. She was 92 years old," says Bridget, who recalls the relationship she and her mother formed years ago with the Sisters of Compassion.

"I used to live in Island Bay, where we also ran a dairy, and we used to go up to the Home of Compassion. There were children there, this is in the 1970s, and it was the orphanage. I remember we used to buy a big box of ice cream and cones and take them to the children and the sisters."

"One day, a child asked me: 'Have you seen my mother? I told him, 'One day she will come'. It was so sad," she recalls her visits to the orphanage at Our Lady's Home of Compassion.

As fate would have it, she would later be the one to receive visits from the Sisters of Compassion in her current home. "I remember a very nice lady. Sometimes she came and stayed for an hour," says Bridget.

At 74, she is happy to live in her quiet home which is well looked after by the management, and with many services such as pharmacies, supermarkets, and health services close by.

“ It's been a really good experience. They're all nice people here. ”





## MESSAGE FROM SISTER MARGARET ANNE

Tēnā koe,

Some of you are aware of the sinking feeling on receiving a notification to leave your property, or your comfortable accommodation. It becomes a time of uncertainty and anxiety. Our newspapers are full of stories of people having to leave their rented accommodation.

Your generosity and support have enabled the Compassion Housing team to provide accommodation to pensioners within the Upper Hutt and Horowhenua Regions. Thank you for your support.

Stories of gratitude are reflected in this newsletter. I hope you enjoy reading them and note that your contribution supports this provision of affordable rental.

A place to call home is precious. Circumstances can change

in a moment. Call to mind the flooding of homes, landslips, and no communication earlier this year in our country. These events show us the vulnerability of housing for all people.

The Compassion Group aim to meet some of the needs that people face unexpectedly. Your prayers, volunteer time and donations enable us to continue providing support. Thank you for being part of a caring community.

Kia tau ngā manaakitanga o te Ariki ki runga ki a koe. May the Lord's blessings be bestowed on you.



**Sister Margaret Anne Mills**  
Congregational Leader



Recalling the words of Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert in the Spirit of kindness.

"Help one another and make use of the many little occasions to lighten a little, when possible, the burden of others."

**Sister Margaret Anne Mills**  
Congregational Leader

## NAVIGATING TE AO MĀORI

Maru Karatea-Goddard (Ngāti Rangī, Ngāti Rangatahi-Matakore, Ngāti Pīkiahū-Waewae) and Gabriel Tupou (Tongan, Ngāti Hauā, Ngāti Kirihihi, Ngāti Te Urunga me Waitaha-ā-Hei) have enjoyed working as Kaihautū Māori and connecting with staff, the sisters and the community.

Maru has a background in education and empowering organisations to learn about Te Ao Māori (the Māori world view). Gabriel has a background in community development and governance. They both bring their whakapapa (connections), aroha (compassion), wairua (spirit) and whakapono (faith) to the role of supporting staff in their shared journey towards learning about Te Ao Māori.

The term kaihautū refers to the person who stands atop a waka (traditional canoe) and keeps the kaihoe (rowers) in time by chanting in rhythm. It is therefore a role that keeps the staff safe and working together in unity towards a more enlightened understanding of manaakitanga (hospitality),

kawa and tikanga Māori (Māori practices) and mātauranga Māori (Māori philosophy and science). Maru says "our role is to be in the spaces and places within Te Ao Māori and the wider community on behalf of Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert – we take her with us wherever we go." Gabriel adds that "building up cultural capability is the internal facet to our role, to ensure our staff can be confident when walking in the Māori world or engaging in our Te Tiriti partnership setting."

*"Never forget that we were first instituted for the Māori, that we began in the bush, and that we are concentrated to their service by our vows. They have the first claim on our love, on our care. A Māori village was the cradle of our institute."*

- Meri Hōhepa



## I ENJOY MY LITTLE PATCH HERE

Kevin has been living in one of Compassion Housing's homes in Levin since 2015. The former carpenter and builder came to live here after the death of his wife, with whom he shared a home in Foxton.

"My daughter had a house here in Levin, and I moved in with her. Then later on about 2015, I decided to move out of where she was living," says Kevin. After applying, it took him five months to secure himself one of Compassion Housing's homes.

At 89 years old, he lives a quiet life after multiple operations and a stroke that affected him some time ago. He enjoys spending time in his small vegetable garden and receives frequent visits from his daughter during the

week. Occasionally the Sisters of Compassion visit him too. "They brought some veggies the other day. They are lovely people."

Kevin is happy and relaxed with this home and has no plans to leave.

*"I enjoy my little patch here, it's so nice and quiet and it's big enough for me. I'm happy."*





## AN ANXIOUS JOURNEY

Having left Christchurch, Johnny\* arrived in Wellington as a troubled man in his early thirties, wearing only the clothes on his back and totally unprepared for life on the street.

Difficulties accompanied him from an early age. He was born on a shearing table in a wool shed at Rukituri, a rural valley in Te Urewera, to a family of thirteen children but by the time of his birth, only seven had survived.

"My parents had many problems, so they gave me to people to raise me. The houses I lived in were built of corrugated iron walls and roofs. Some with no glass in windows or doors."

Once he was old enough, Johnny decided to leave. "The day I left the house, I told my mother, 'I will never forgive you for giving me up for adoption'. She cried and said, 'If all else fails, don't forget him', pointing to the sky." Looking back, he reflects, "I wish I'd not said that to her. I was a young, brash kid, full of hurt and hate and ignorant of the difficulties my parents were experiencing trying to feed, clothe and house us."

**"I have travelled the length and breadth of this country searching for love, peace of mind and happiness."**

Johnny was fuelled by unhappy memories of being sexually molested by an uncle at four years old. "I protected my uncle for fear of exposure, shame, ridicule, and/or persecution, but hid the fact from my wife too, which was to cause me to break down."

"Consequently, my marriage broke down because of my preference for men. My family suffered and my wife too. Because of my inability to deal with my past, my marriage ended."

Johnny's difficulties in dealing with his childhood trauma also affected his work life, as he couldn't work and hold onto jobs. "I got to a stage where I'd get a job, and by the afternoon I had quit," he recalls.

On the verge of total collapse and suicide, he decided to check himself into a mental health facility in Christchurch to deal with the problems stemming from his childhood. "That was probably the best thing I've ever done."

Johnny's inability to find a job meant he had no means to afford a place to live and no money to eat. Without many other options, Johnny ended up living on the street. "I didn't know how to survive on the streets. I slept under bridges, bushes, or in abandoned buildings. Gradually, I began to socialise with people in similar circumstances and get to know where things are." That's how he started frequenting the Compassion Soup Kitchen.

After many years of coming to the Compassion Soup Kitchen, Johnny highlights the support it offers to those who need it most and are looking for a place to be fed and have companionship.

**"I feel safe and very welcome, and the food is lovely. That's what keeps me coming back, it's like a magnet."**

"When I come here, I feel relaxed around the sisters and kitchen staff," he reflects, recognising that the Compassion Soup Kitchen has become a way of life for him.

*\*Name has been changed to protect their identity.*



Congregational Leader, Sr Margaret Anne Mills at our National Poetry Day event.

## EVENTS AT COMPASSION

We've had a variety of exciting events at Our Lady's Home of Compassion.

### AUGUST

We enjoyed Dedications and Postscripts: Celebrating Jacquie Sturm – a poetry night where we honoured the work of this iconic Aotearoa poet, whose family have connections with the sisters through Hiruhārama, Paekakariki and the James K Baxter Trust.

### SEPTEMBER

We celebrated the annual Bee Awareness Month, where our beekeepers came in for an educational day of buzzy fun.

### OCTOBER

Here at Our Lady's Home of Compassion on 1 October, we held our annual Celebration Sunday, in collaboration with Wellington Ecology, Justice and Peace group. Two weeks later, we celebrated our traditional Anointment Mass.

We also enjoyed the Wellington Jazz Festival, and Wellington Heritage Week for which we hosted an exhibition about the reservoir, and a music performance sampling audio from the site.



Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert's Icon rests on the altar at the Anointment Mass at Our Lady's Home of Compassion.



Educational resources from the Bee Awareness event.

## INTRODUCING BERNADETTE



My name is Bernadette Delaney and I have joined the team to manage our bequest programme here at Our Lady's Home of Compassion.

I have been working with the Sisters of Compassion for four

years, starting off as Front of House at the Compassion Soup Kitchen, then as a Fundraising Coordinator. I am excited to be in this role and look forward to getting out and about and meeting some of you.

Born and raised in Wellington, I have known about the Sisters of Compassion from an early age and remember going to the

annual fairs at St Joseph's in Silverstream, which were always a lot of fun.

My background is in nursing, and I enjoy working with people and communities where I can make a difference and am so happy to be here.

This role is a great fit for me, as I love being able to thank people for their generosity and talk with them about the lasting legacy they are leaving.

If you are thinking of including a gift for the Sisters of Compassion in your Will, get in touch with Bernadette Delaney on **(04) 282 1966** or send an email to [bernadette.d@compassion.org.nz](mailto:bernadette.d@compassion.org.nz)



## TRANSFORMATIONAL FUNDING

As the Greater Wellington region's community foundation, Nikau Foundation has a mission to build healthy, thriving and resilient communities, ensuring everyone has the tools and resources they need to flourish.

This year the Compassion Soup Kitchen was awarded two transformational grants from the Foundation: one for staff training from Nikau's Margaret Neave Endowment Fund, and another towards upgrading the IT system from the Kevin and Julia O'Connor Endowment Fund.

In the modern world, technology has permeated nearly every aspect of our lives and the Compassion Soup Kitchen is no exception. New computers and improved internet access will play a pivotal role in the Compassion Soup Kitchen's impact on Wellington's vulnerable community. Computer access for guests will help improve digital literacy skills, whilst new

computers will make volunteer coordination and inventory management easier for staff.

The second Nikau Foundation grant from the Margaret Neave Endowment Fund will have a long lasting impact on the care, safety and welfare of staff, volunteers and whānau. Staff will be trained in a range of subjects including New Zealand Sign Language, first aid, mental health first aid, conflict awareness, and safety and fire warden and extinguisher use.

Nikau Foundation's grants exemplify the enduring power of generosity and community support. By investing in the Compassion Soup Kitchen, they are not only providing tangible resources, but also sending a powerful message that everyone deserves dignity, nourishment and opportunities for growth.

Thank you

TO THE FOLLOWING TRUSTS AND FOUNDATIONS FOR YOUR SUPPORT THIS YEAR

COGS • Knights of the Southern Cross Charitable Trust • Nikau Foundation • Tai Shan Foundation • Te Papa Helping Hands • The David Ellison Charitable Trust • The Jeff Jacks Charitable Trust • The Kingdom Foundation • St John's Op Shop Trust • Vavasour Charitable Trust Board • Wellington City Council • Wellington Community Fund

## DONOR PROFILE

### Science with compassion

#### NIWA

At NIWA (National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research) they say that "every year, the spirit of Christmas enters the hallowed halls of science."

That's why every Christmas, a team of workers voluntarily goes around the campus and the organisation's offices with collection envelopes

looking for contributions from the people who work there.

"Each year we choose Compassion Soup Kitchen as the main recipient because it has a long history of manaakitanga, of helping people in Wellington and beyond, guided by the spirit of Mother Suzanne Aubert and her legacy of compassion."

Since 2015, NIWA's consistent support, including some of their staff who have volunteered with us, has been important to the Compassion Soup Kitchen.

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

### Following a path of service

#### Sofia Roberts

From her early years, Sofia Roberts heard about the life of Meri Hōhepa Suzanne Aubert. "My mother always told me about Suzanne Aubert, growing up, and encouraged me to volunteer at Our Lady's Home of Compassion."

A few months ago, she began volunteering at the Compassion Soup Kitchen. "I go in the mornings and spend a few hours with the breakfast team. It's usually pretty basic tasks, like serving soup, bread, pastries, sandwiches, coffee, and washing dishes."

Sofia says it is surprising how many people the Compassion Soup Kitchen feeds and the relationship the staff have with those who come in. "It is heart-warming to see such practical action to help others and to see the immediate effects of voluntary action."

"Giving food to people is such a simple service, but it is also a display of manaakitanga, community, and connection."



## DONATE NOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

### WAYS TO DONATE

Website: [www.compassion.org.nz](http://www.compassion.org.nz)

Phone: (04) 383 7769

#### Online Banking

Account Name: The Mother Aubert Home of Compassion – Trust Board

Account Number: BNZ 02-0500-0017474-00

## GET IN TOUCH

Address: 2 Rhine Street, Island Bay, Wellington 6023

PO BOX: Sisters of Compassion PO Box 1474, Wellington 6140

Email: [islandbay@compassion.org.nz](mailto:islandbay@compassion.org.nz)

Phone: (04) 383 7769

### NEWSLETTER

If you would like to receive our e-newsletter, please email your details to [donations@compassion.org.nz](mailto:donations@compassion.org.nz)