



Thrive

whānau āwhina
plunket

Your impact on the future of New Zealand whānau

Summer 2024 - 2025



Kia ora

I hope you've been able to relax and enjoy some uninterrupted time with friends and whānau this summer. It's hard to believe that our school-aged tamariki are back into the thick of things this week! All our playgroups for the littlest ones are also in full swing again, as well as our various clinical services and other vital programmes for families across Aotearoa.

But even during the holiday season, my teams were there for caregivers when they needed us. PlunketLine, our free 24/7 helpline, is a reliable resource for parents looking for help and advice, even if not currently a Plunket client. In December alone, our experienced kaimahi (staff) delivered 281 breastfeeding video conferences and 99 sleep video conferences to parents requiring that extra support during the Christmas season. The PlunketLine team was able to assist with other questions and queries too, no matter how urgent or unusual! We have a heartwarming PlunketLine story further on in this issue of *Thrive*.

We also have an update on our Christmas appeal and the amazing duo of māmā Kelly and her daughter, Quinn; we spotlight a superstar volunteer, Rory Foley, and some of our corporate partner Christmas elves. We also have some very big news from Dunedin, and an update on our immunisation pilot programme from Whangārei that we're beyond proud to share with you, our incredible supporter community. Finally, our Annual Report 2024 is now available if you'd like to see other detailed updates from the year.

Your help over the summer season and in the year ahead is absolutely pivotal. Without your generosity, we simply can't be there for tamariki and their whānau in as many places and in as many ways as we are.

So as always, thank you.

Ngā mihi nui,

Fiona Kingsford, Chief Executive.



P.S: I'm joining some of my team at the Round the Bays Auckland fun run and walk this March! I'd love to see you at the finish line and chat about all things Plunket!



Your support this Christmas season has helped Plunket continue in 2025, and in the years to come.

Thank you so much for your amazing support during our Christmas appeal. Your donations will help us continue being there for new parents like Kelly, and their wee ones like Quinn - where and when they need us most.

Because of your support, we have managed to raise nearly \$104,000 over the holiday season. These funds are crucial. They keep our clinics and hubs running smoothly, help fuel our vehicles so our nurses can visit families, and make sure our playgroups and parent groups are warm and welcoming thanks to fantastic teams (and comforting tea and coffee!). Those are just a few examples of how your donations keep Plunket's trusted faces in trusted places.

The story of strong māmā, Kelly, and her 'heart baby', Quinn showed that it's okay to ask for help – and receive help – in those early, difficult days as a parent. We're honoured to have been an important part of Kelly's support network, and to help her with things that many parents face whether their child has a significant health issue or not, like a lack of sleep and worry around baby's growth.

Now, Kelly and Quinn are positively thriving. "Quinn and I are living our best lives," says Kelly. "It's not always easy, but the main thing is that she is an extremely



happy kid and I feel like the luckiest māmā in the world. Not a day goes by where she doesn't crack me up with laughter!" Quinn's health is also in a really good place. "There are no more feeding tubes, less appointments and being 8, she can tell me if she feels off, which obviously isn't the case when they are babies," continues Kelly.

"That's why Plunket nurses are so special – they know babies inside out! I am extremely grateful to be living in New Zealand with the wraparound support that we had."

Plunket's new one-stop hub in Dunedin is enriched with local history

On the 7th of November, we proudly opened our new Whānau Āwhina Plunket Hub in Dunedin. The new hub has been fittingly named Kotahitaka (togetherness), as it brings all our services under one roof.

We are so grateful to you, our donors and funders, who have helped make this happen. Our property projects receive no Government funding, which means your generosity has been the key to this vital new hub in Ōtepoti Dunedin.

It is now a welcoming and safe space for whānau and tamariki. There is new carpet, new heat pumps, new furniture, double glazing, painting and decoration, new appliances and new lighting throughout the five clinic rooms, large community room, beautiful kitchen and bathrooms, and a spacious garage for storage.

The five rooms within Kotahitaka reflect Plunket's strong connections with Dunedin. One is named in honour of the Ellison whānau – Thomas Rangiwahia Mutu Ellison (Tommy) was the first 'Plunket baby' in 1906, and the family still supports Plunket today. In fact, Tommy's grandson, Matua David Ellison, was present at the hub's opening ceremony to deliver a special blessing!



CE Fiona Kingsford with David Ellison (holding a photo of his grandfather, Tommy)

Other rooms are named after the late Distinguished Professor Richie Poulton CNZM FRSNZ and major champion of Plunket's work; our first midwives, Mere Harper and Ria Tikini (who cared for baby Tommy) and Dunedin resident, Jean Nelson, a loyal supporter of Plunket for many years. Jean left a generous donation in her Will when she passed away in 2022 and it has contributed significantly to the brilliant new hub.

Jean lived a long and interesting life. A talented pianist, Jean began her career as a music teacher at primary schools, soon becoming a lecturer in music at Dunedin Teachers College (now Otago University). In 1951, Jean set out on an adventure of a lifetime: hitchhiking across Europe over five years. This wanderlust was a common theme throughout her life, alongside her involvement with the Youth Hostel Association.

At the heart of Jean's diverse interests was her love for humanity, especially for children. Jean never had children herself, but she loved them dearly. She was an avid photographer and won many awards for her portraits of children. Throughout her life, Jean generously gave to many

children's charities, including Plunket, with a strong desire to see tamariki and whānau thrive.

Jean Nelson's niece, Heather Hayden, was honoured to attend the opening ceremony of Kotahitaka to celebrate her memory.

Heather says, "I know that Jean would be so pleased to see the impact of her legacy at the Dunedin Plunket hub. Apart from her travels, she spent most of her long life in the same house in St Kilda, close to her local Plunket clinic. She often spoke highly of the Plunket ladies that she remained in touch with over the years."

"My Aunt Jean was a very special lady," continues Heather, "I'm so pleased her generous spirit will continue through the tamariki and whānau who benefit from the new Dunedin Plunket hub. She would have been honoured to be remembered in this way."

Catherine Caley, Plunket's Community Services Manager in Dunedin, can already see the positive impact of the new hub. "It has made a huge difference to the way our wider Plunket team functions," says Catherine. "With all staff now under one roof, we are a more cohesive team and can provide better outcomes for families. It's fabulous to welcome whānau into a

space that is bright, modern and inviting."

Our Giggles Playgroup on Monday mornings has started, and you can hear lots of laughter from little ones coming from the Jean Nelson community room. It's a lovely sound, and a reminder of the positive connection, care and wraparound support that Plunket can provide whānau in Dunedin with a hub like this.



Heather Hayden (left) with Whānau Āwhina Plunket's Chief Executive, Fiona Kingsford, standing outside the Community Room named after the wonderful Jean Nelson.

Q&A with volunteer, Rory Foley



Many of Plunket's programmes can only be offered to families thanks to the generosity of our volunteers. They give us so much of their time, energy and love – we're beyond grateful!

We sat down to chat with one superstar, Rory Foley, to learn a little more about him and what inspires him to volunteer with Plunket.

Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

I'm a construction specialist from South Canterbury and also a horror fan! I created FearNZ which is a charitable company that raises money for organisations, including Plunket so they can keep their community services up and running. From spooky maize mazes to abandoned prison and warehouse set-ups, my team and I scare people as a truly unique way to fundraise.

I'm also more than happy to grab my tools and visit a local Plunket clinic to fix a wobbly table or anything else that may need sorting!

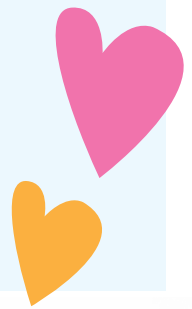
What do you enjoy most about your volunteering?

I absolutely love supporting the community, and Plunket has such a wonderful family feel to it. I enjoy seeing people connect and help each other, and I get to make new friends and witness the difference the organisation makes for a family. No two days are the same.

What is next for you?

I'm currently working on a top-secret project (so I can't say much about this yet!) which will raise money for Plunket while giving people of all ages a fun experience. Stay tuned...

If you would like to enquire about volunteering, please complete the form on our [website](#).



Whitcoulls and JB Hi-Fi get into the spirit of Christmas!

Christmas is a wonderful occasion for enjoying time with friends and whānau, and for supporting the communities we work and live in. Two of our amazing partners, Whitcoulls and JB Hi-Fi, truly got into the Christmas spirit with their creative, seasonal fundraising initiatives.

Whitcoulls continued their tradition of donating \$1 for every pack of Plunket greeting cards sold, raising a total of \$5,029 over the holidays!

And JB Hi-Fi's sales of their cheeky Kiwi Christmas wrapping paper have also helped support Plunket's work with children and their whānau, with total donations to be tallied soon.

A huge thanks go to the Christmas elves at Whitcoulls and JB Hi-Fi!



Sasha of JB Hi-Fi, Pukekohe with a sample of the super fun wrapping paper print (left), and one of the cute greeting card options specially designed by Whitcoulls for Plunket.

PlunketLine, breastfeeding support

Having access to expert advice and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week - even during the holiday season - is a huge help for caregivers. That's what PlunketLine provides. It's our free helpline which celebrated its 30th birthday last year!

For Laura Crutcher, receiving quick specialist breastfeeding support from PlunketLine was an enormous help. "I was exhausted, I had a fever and could feel the rock-hard lumps," she says. "I knew it was mastitis but wasn't quite sure what to do about it."

"I thought about going to my doctor, but with my husband away that was going to be a mission to wrap up baby Fergus and my toddler to get us all there."

Instead, the Whangārei mum called PlunketLine for support.

"The nurse was so lovely. She listened and explained everything I needed to do and also emailed me information that included

handy diagrams showing what steps to take to get some relief."

"It makes me tearful thinking back to that time.

I'm so thankful for the help I received from PlunketLine right when I needed it most and before the mastitis got any worse.

"When you've got a wee baby it's not always easy to get out of the house. Having Plunket nurses you can call at any time for support really makes a difference."

We're proud to be there for whānau like Laura and Fergus, even over the phone. Your support makes this possible.



Laura Crutcher with baby Fergus, both now doing well and thriving.

The 2024 Annual Report is here!

We hope you enjoy seeing the impact of your generosity in these newsletters. For a deeper dive into what has been happening within Plunket over the last year, please check out our latest Annual Report. It includes amazing examples of the important mahi (work) that our staff are doing for families in Aotearoa each day.

The latest Annual Report for the 2023/2024 financial year is available [here](#).



Other Plunket news from across the motu



- In November, we celebrated 100 years of Plunket in the Hurunui District, Canterbury! A special event was held with original committee members, volunteers, kaimahi past and present, and friends of Plunket in attendance. The very first Plunket nurse in the area worked in Waikari out of the council rooms, so holding the celebration in the Amberley Library, also a council facility, was a perfect fit.



Community Service Coordinators, Andrea Kennett (left) and Sarah Lowrey, beside a cabinet of local Plunket historical artefacts.



- In December, we officially launched the immunisation pilot programme, with the first in-clinic immunisations taking place in Whangārei on December 4th. Little Amara-Lee Taka was the first to be vaccinated, seen above with her māmā, Sarah-Lee and with Plunket nurse and vaccinator, Trish Beresford. This is a remarkable milestone for Plunket, further increasing our ability to offer wraparound care to tamariki now, and in the future.
- We also completed renovations at our Kaikohe clinic before 2024 came to a close. We are thankful to the incredibly generous donors who helped make the amazing changes to this space possible. As the Kaikohe clinic is also one of our immunisation pilot sites, the beautiful renovations couldn't have been finished at a better time.



Plunket kaimahi at the newly reopened Kaikohe clinic were joined by CE Fiona Kingsford (second from left), Community Services Manager, Clare Green (fourth from right), Head of Community Services, Melanie Laban (second from right) and GM of Service Delivery, Denise SHERA (far right).

- A few Plunket kaimahi and supporters are lacing up their shoes and participating in the 2025 Round the Bays series soon! We've got a small but growing team for the Auckland event on Sunday March 2nd. The other places and dates are Wellington on February 16th and Christchurch on March 30th. **Sign up** if you'd like to join in the fun and fundraise for Whānau Āwhina Plunket, and please feel free to reach out to Jo Bailey for support: jo.bailey@plunket.org.nz



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