

Volunteer News

Quarterly pānui – September 2024

whānau āwhina
plunket

Kia ora koutou

It's a busy month for us here at Whānau Āwhina Plunket, with lots to celebrate. [Dunk it for Plunket](#) is currently underway – our biggest and yummiest annual fundraiser is seeing lots of wonderful engagement around the country.

It's Wills month too, where we acknowledge those special individuals who choose to leave a gift in their Will to the Plunket Foundation. Keep reading to hear from Pamela, one of our avid playgroup supporters.

We've also been really busy in the property space! Our teams are enjoying working from our Balclutha and Woolston clinics down south following much-anticipated renovations and upgrades, and we are thrilled to announce the opening of a [new Dunedin hub](#) later this year!

After locating a suitable building with enough space to provide a one-stop hub for whānau, we are looking forward to bringing the majority of our services in the area under one roof.

This is a fantastic opportunity for us and is especially exciting being so close to where Plunket originated in the small coastal town of Karitāne. There is now lots of work ahead of us as we undertake reconfiguration to suit our services and redecorate to make it our own.

Take some time out to enjoy this edition of Volunteer News – it's jam-packed with heaps of lovely content. We feature some truly inspirational individuals who have dedicated so much of their lives to supporting tamariki and whānau.

Ngā mihi nui,

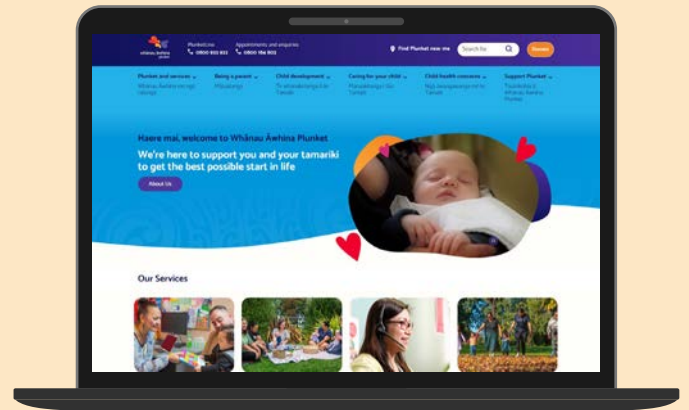


Fiona Kingsford, Chief Executive.



Celebrating a successful year!

- We increased our Well Child Tamariki Ora core visits by 22,453 – an 11% increase overall
- We had 72,016 contacts with whānau through our Community Services activity (includes, but not limited to, our social connection groups and playgroups)
- We introduced a new PlunketLine virtual sleep support service with over 1,032 consults delivered to date



New and improved website

Our [Plunket website homepage](#) has had a refresh!

It's been more than four years since our website was relaunched to showcase our updated branding. So to keep it looking fresh and up-to-date, and help our visitors find what they're looking for, we've made some key changes.

- A brighter look and feel, changing from dark purple to blue
- An attractive feature video that shows who we are and what we do
- A series of tiles to showcase our key services
- More imagery to improve interaction with our 'popular pages' tiles
- Predictive search offering suggestions of relevant content as you type
- Improvements to the top navigation and bottom footer menus so they display better on mobile

Latest news

BestStart Tawa South tops annual Plunket fundraising appeal



Children at BestStart Tawa South put their best creative artworks up for sale and sold tasty family meals for the annual BestStart Plunket fundraising appeal this year.

Thanks to their efforts and that of their whānau and the wider community, the centre was the biggest contributor to the appeal, raising \$1,772. Collectively, BestStart centres across the country raised \$68,000 during the appeal week – the highest fundraising year ever in BestStart Plunket Appeal history!

Whānau Āwhina Plunket Chief Executive Fiona Kingsford paid a visit to the centre to personally thank tamariki, whānau and the wider community for their generosity.

“We are truly appreciative of the efforts BestStart whānau have gone to, to support Whānau Āwhina Plunket. We know many whānau are facing financially tough times right across Aotearoa New Zealand with the cost-of-living crisis. It’s amazing what you’ve fundraised for us.

“Being a charity, Whānau Āwhina Plunket could not do what we do without the amazing support from organisations like BestStart. Thank you so much BestStart, and all the whānau and communities across Aotearoa who support this appeal every year. Together, you’re helping us to make a difference of a lifetime for tamariki,” says Mrs Kingsford.

BestStart is the Star Partner of Whānau Āwhina Plunket and runs the BestStart Plunket Annual Appeal, as well as supporting Plunket’s community services. During the nine years it has run the appeal, more than \$392,000 has been fundraised, making BestStart a significant funder of Plunket community initiatives.



CE Fiona Kingsford (left) with BestStart Centre Manager Tagi Ewens, kaimahi and tamariki.



Supporting the next generation

Long-time Plunket supporter Pamela Longrigg has always had a passion for children.

For many years she worked as a nanny, caring for 20 different children from newborns to toddlers. She would always make sure there was a Plunket playgroup nearby, so the children in her care could spend time socialising with others.

When she eventually retired, Pamela began volunteering at a playgroup herself!

“I’d sit with the children so the mums could socialise. They can feel isolated with a small child sometimes, so I’d keep an eye on the little ones for them.”

Eventually, Pamela decided to donate to Plunket on a monthly basis.

“You can’t make a better investment than in children, because they’re the future,” she says.

Pamela also enjoys using her creativity to make quilts for babies, and toys for toddlers including dolls with handmade outfits. She donates many and sells them at local markets.

Empathy is one of Pamela’s greatest qualities, reflected in her thoughtful decision to care for the next generation by including a gift in her Will to the Plunket Foundation. She says it was an easy decision to make.

“Children are my thing. I’m thrilled to help Plunket give every child in New Zealand the best start in life.”



A focus on our volunteers



Well done Meredith

We are incredibly grateful for Meredith Jones who has been the most active volunteer at our Blenheim branch this year. She's helped to set up group gatherings, wash dishes and support our fabulous \$1 op shop.

At the recent Volunteer Marlborough awards, Meredith was proud to receive 'Most Improved Volunteer'. Ka pai – what a fabulous achievement!



Remembering Andrée Talbot

The late Andrée Talbot was a leader, volunteer and honorary life member of Plunket. Throughout her more than 20 years' service with our organisation, she created a legacy that we are forever grateful for.

Beginning as a volunteer in Devonport, Auckland in 1996, Andrée quickly moved into leadership roles within Plunket, initiating our transition into a charitable trust and overseeing the Plunket Electronic Health Record project.

Before she passed away from breast cancer in 2019, she gave a generous gift to Plunket, setting up the Andrée Talbot Fellowship to help grow, engage and recognise Plunket volunteers. This fund has given professional development opportunities to community services kaimahi across the motu, helping them to better manage volunteers.

Community Services Manager Clare Green met with Andrée's whānau to tell them about the impact of the Fellowship over the past four years.

"I was honoured to receive an award from the Fellowship which meant I could attend a two-day conference in Melbourne where I learnt about best practice for volunteers. This knowledge has been invaluable, as we look to better engage and recognise volunteers at Plunket."

Andrée's incredible leadership and generosity is reflected in Plunket's mahi today, where the Fellowship partially funded our Community Services hui in the southern region in March 2023 and 2024. This was a fantastic opportunity for kaimahi to connect in-person and have discussions which provided new ideas and opportunities to further support whānau and tamariki in our community.

Pictured above: Community Services Manager Clare Green (left) with Andrée Talbot's whānau.

Making a splash

Our baby and toddler water confidence class in Gisborne is lucky to have Jocelyn Hanky helping out!

For five years she has been supporting little ones and their whānau by welcoming them to the pool, helping gather their belongings after the session and supervising the children while their caregiver gets changed.

Families love these swim sessions and it's volunteers like Jocelyn that help to keep them running smoothly.



More from our volunteers



Q&A with volunteer Leanne Kirk

Can you tell us a little about yourself?

I live in Dunedin and am retired. I am a wife as well as a mother of two adult children who both live overseas. I recently became a grandmother for the first time which I am very excited about!

Volunteering has always been a part of who I am. I was involved in various committees as my children went through their schooling years. I have held an active role in the children's program at my church and I take the opportunities offered to me to help where I can, such as planting trees.

What inspired you to become a Plunket volunteer?

I was looking for an organisation where I could help support young families in some capacity. When my children were younger, I used to be involved in my local Plunket committee which I really enjoyed. I've now been volunteering with Plunket for over a year.

What does your role encompass?

I am thoroughly enjoying spending up to six weeks supporting families who have new babies or young children, for 1-2 hours a week. I assist by doing light housework, watching babies so their caregivers can have a few minutes to themselves – anything that is helpful and makes things a bit easier for the family that day.

What do you enjoy most about your volunteering role?

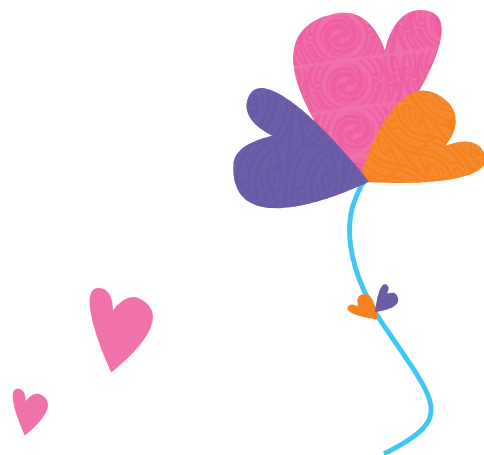
I love being able to relieve some of the stress for families, as well as interact with babies and young children. It is a wonderful privilege to support people who need it the most.



Inspiring others

West Auckland kaimahi ran a stall at the Unitec Volunteer Expo which saw an incredible 250+ students in attendance. We received expressions of interest from 39 students keen to volunteer! Many migrant students hadn't heard of Whānau Āwhina Plunket before, so it was great to share our mahi and inspire them to support our organisation.

Community Services Coordinator Sarah Gracie-Compain, Community Services Coordinator Team Leader Francois Kayembe and Community Services Manager Clare Green.



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