

Mission News

Winter 2024

Missioner's message

For the people who come to the Auckland City Mission – Te Tāpui Atawhai for support, winter can be unforgiving. The cold, wet weather brings additional layers of hardship for those experiencing poverty, and a constant struggle to stay well.

The harsh reality is that good health is almost impossible when you're sleeping rough and soaked to the bone; if you're living in damp, drafty accommodation through the coldest nights; or if you have to choose between seeing a doctor or buying food for your family.

The extraordinary doctors and nurses at the Calder Health Centre provide affordable, trauma-informed care for Aucklanders in greatest need - so anyone can get the medical care they need.

But we know that good health is about more than medical treatment. Just as important for living well is having a safe place to call home, meaningful social connections, a sense of purpose - and enough kai.

Right now, I am deeply disappointed about this government's decision to cut funding from community food providers, resulting in immediate hardship for families in need.

We have asked the government for help. That help has not come. And now we are faced with the appalling reality of turning away hungry families. Now more than ever, we need your support to respond to the depth of suffering in our city.

Thank you for standing with us.

Helen Robinson
Missioner – Manutaki



Nourishing body and soul at the Mission



We take a holistic approach to health and wellbeing so people can get the wraparound support they need.

- ◆ Nutritious kai to nourish the body and ease the stress of food insecurity (read more on page 2)
- ◆ Community activities like kapa haka classes and gardening workshops to build self-esteem and social connections (page 2)
- ◆ A welcoming community where everyone can belong (page 2)
- ◆ Warm, safe homes where people can live well and feel secure (page 3)
- ◆ Medical care for people living in poverty or the streets (pages 4&5)
- ◆ Alcohol & Drug Withdrawal (detox) services to help people safely break the cycle of dependency
- ◆ Opportunities for learning and employment, from computer literacy classes to tailored job connections.

Supporting Wellbeing at the Mission

A Community of Care

“The Mission is my family. The people here have always got a smile for you. They’re here for everybody.”

Christopher (pictured below) has lived a colourful life. Always creative, he’s a talented pianist who hopes to one day turn his life into a musical! But his body has sustained extensive injuries from childhood abuse, years spent living on the streets and alcohol use.

Christopher comes to the Mission for medical treatment, food and company. “I come here because I often just feel so alone these days.”

“Loneliness is a huge health issue for many older men especially,” says Linda Murphy (pictured below) from the Mission’s Calder Health Centre. “The isolation can be quite dangerous. Social connections are an essential part of being human and being healthy.”

Christopher says “Linda’s been the most incredible support. Every time I’m here, she makes a point of coming out to check if I need help with anything.”

Seeds of Wellness

In addition to food parcels, the Mission has been exploring other initiatives to help people access food.

Over the last year, we’ve given out over 1,000 māra kai (food garden) starter kits to people who come to the Mission for food support. The kits include planter boxes, soil and seedlings. We’ve also held regular workshops with Garden4Health at our foodbank, where people can learn about growing food at home.

The whānau taking part have been enjoying the fresh food they’ve grown. One mum reported: “I’ve already started relishing fresh vegetables from my garden, and I’ve stopped buying from the market.”

Growing kai has also enhanced her wellbeing in other ways: “I’m thoroughly enjoying tending to my garden! This has been a therapeutic experience for me - caring for my plants is like witnessing children grow and flourish.”

A Home for Healing

At Te Ao Mārama, an apartment building the Mission manages in central Auckland, we provide 60 permanent homes for people needing social housing.

“Many of our tenants have never had their own proper, safe home before. The housing we provide here is often a first step for people who have been living on the street or been couch surfing,” explains Wendy Wilson (pictured below), Senior Tenancy Manager at Te Ao Mārama.

“We opened Te Ao Mārama eighteen months ago, and the tenants are becoming a stable community and really making it their home.

“Some of the tenants keep their flats absolutely immaculate, which is particularly remarkable given that they have moved in straight from the chaos of living on the streets. One young gentleman plays chess and the chess board is always set up in his room ready for guests. He loves his flat and he’s really proud to be able to welcome guests to his home. Whenever someone visits him, he’ll pull out a plate of biscuits for them.”

Poverty is Forcing Difficult Choices



With the cost-of-living crisis ongoing, we’re seeing families forced to make difficult choices every day. Whether to see the doctor when they’re unwell, or buy food for dinner. Whether to pay for heating on the coldest nights or send their children to school with lunch.

Being healthy, warm and nourished should be a reality for everyone, not a wish list.

For families who are struggling, food support from the Mission can be a lifeline in those weeks when household income doesn’t cover all the bills. A food parcel can take away the stress and shame of hunger and allows whānau to be productive at school and work.

We are greatly concerned that the government has cut funding to foodbanks at a time when one in five people can’t afford enough food. Without government funding, the number of food parcels we can provide at the Mission from 1 July has fallen from 50,000 to 20,000 annually and we face the reality of turning away families in need. This will push people even further into poverty.

More than ever, we are grateful for your support to help Aucklanders in greatest need.

Find out more at www.hungryforchange.co.nz

“It’s really important to know that there’s somebody there for you who does actually care. It saves people’s lives.”
-Christopher

“I feel physically better when I’m in the garden, and from eating the food we’ve grown.”
-Gardens in home participant

“You can’t take someone off the street, put them in a flat and expect it all to be hunky dory, because they’ve never known that. It can be a long process, and we provide people with the support they need to settle.”
-Wendy

Across Te Ao Mārama, HomeGround and other sites in the city, the Mission provides permanent housing for 206 people in total.

What makes Calder special?

We know that homelessness and living in poverty can take a huge toll on people's physical and mental health. For people trying to survive day to day, accessing the medical care they need can seem impossible. Not enough money, no home address, literacy issues and cultural differences are just some of the barriers they face.

At the Calder Health Centre in HomeGround, we offer low-cost, trauma-informed medical care so anyone can get the healthcare they need.



Who are our patients?

Almost all the 2000+ patients enrolled at Calder experience, or have experienced, homelessness or significant trauma and have multiple complex health conditions. Research shows that sleeping rough reduces life expectancy by over 25 years.

“The patients that I work with, on average, present with seven different health problems. They might have heart disease, along with cancer and respiratory problems. At the same time, they might be struggling with their mental health or be using drugs or alcohol to cope with the trauma in their lives. So we are dealing with really complex health issues.”

- Aimee Caudwell, Outreach Nurse (pictured left)

Accessibility

Low Cost

At the Calder Health Centre, the price of a doctor's visit is just \$17.50 and we offer a payment plan to spread the cost, so our services are accessible to anyone. Nobody is ever turned away because they can't pay.

“At my old doctors, my bill was up to \$200 and they wouldn't see me anymore because I couldn't pay. I don't think I would be able to see a doctor if I couldn't do the payment plan here.” - Eunice, Calder patient

Non-judgmental care

We take the time to build respectful relationships with all our patients, understand their stories and earn their trust.



Longer appointment times

Because our patients have complex health needs, appointment times tend to be longer than in a typical general practice. Appointments often last 30 minutes or more, depending on the care required.

“Nobody has ever given this much time to understand my health needs before.”

- Sione*, Calder patient

*name changed for privacy

Holistic care

We offer a range of health services at Calder:

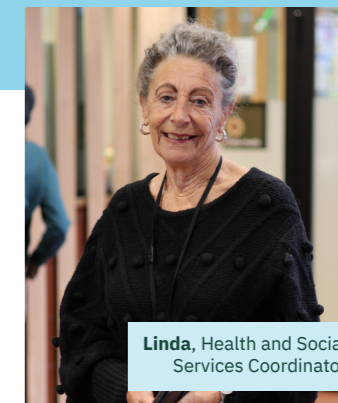
- ◆ A team of **GPs and nurses** experienced in responding to the health impacts of living in poverty, sleeping rough and harmful substance use.
- ◆ An **Outreach Nurse**, who takes healthcare out to people living on the streets or vulnerably housed who wouldn't otherwise get the medical care they need.
- ◆ A **Health and Social Services Coordinator**, who can connect patients to any social support they need, accompany patients to hospital appointments and provide end-of-life care.
- ◆ A **Health Improvement Practitioner**, who can provide support with mental health, addiction and general wellbeing.
- ◆ A **Harm Minimisation Manager**, who works to reduce the harm experienced by people affected by problematic substance use.
- ◆ Regular podiatry, CADS (Community Alcohol & Drug Services) and surgical **clinics**, as well as pop-up clinics such as bowel screening.

“The staff at Calder have their compassion button turned up and their prejudice button turned down.”
- Dr Bruce Arroll, Calder GP

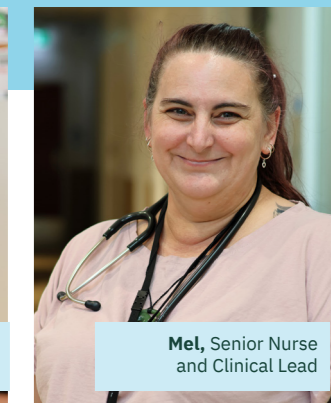
Integrated social services

Calder is one of the few general practices in Aotearoa which is fully integrated with social services.

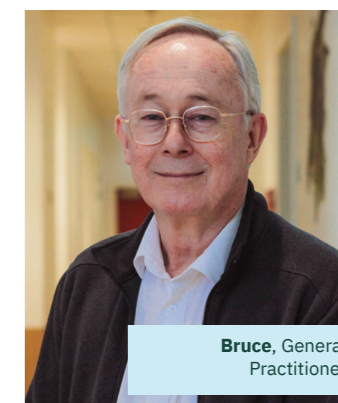
This means we can connect our patients to all the wraparound support available at the Mission – from occupational therapists and Rongoa Māori practitioners to our alcohol and drug withdrawal services and community dining room.



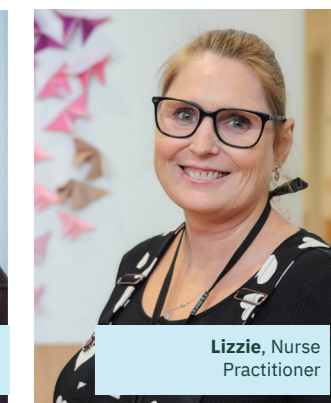
Linda, Health and Social Services Coordinator



Mel, Senior Nurse and Clinical Lead



Bruce, General Practitioner



Lizzie, Nurse Practitioner



Ragitha, Calder Practice Manager



Trish, Harm Minimisation Manager

“Originally I came to the Mission for the doctors. And then I discovered the food at Haeata. I started coming in every morning so I would have one meal a day and get healthier.”
- Christopher, Calder patient

Thanks for being part of our community

Gifting Kindness



We have been blown away by the generosity of two of our youngest supporters!

For the last three years, 8-year-old Hiram has chosen to support Aucklanders in need on his birthday. Instead of birthday presents, he asked his friends to give non-perishable food for families who are struggling.

Over the Easter holidays, Year 7 student Ethan put a leaflet in every letterbox on his street encouraging his neighbours to donate food for the Mission. He collected 66 food items for our food parcels!

A huge thank you to Hiram and Ethan for your kindness!

◆ Feed it Forward

Help us provide nourishing food for Aucklanders in need, by organising a food collection in your workplace, school or community group. It's an easy way your community can come together to make a difference. Find out more at aucklandcitymission.org.nz/feeditforward

A Caring Cuppa

We are so grateful to our partner Dilmah for their generous support this year. They donated all the tea for our Christmas hampers, as well as tea for our food parcels all year-round! So families who receive food support from the Mission will be able to warm up with a delicious cuppa this winter.



Volunteers from Fulton Hogan packing Dilmah tea in our food parcels

◆ Interested in volunteering?

We are looking for individual volunteers who can commit to helping out in our community dining room, food banks and retail shops on a regular basis. Find out more at aucklandcitymission.org.nz/volunteer

Family2Family

Thank you to everyone who supported the Mission through the annual Family2Family Foodbank Appeal, by donating food at their local New World store. Almost twice as many bags of food were donated through the Appeal this year, and in addition, New World donated \$67,000 to us through Family2Family. Your generosity is helping families in need to put food on the table this winter.

We are truly grateful to New World for their ongoing support of our food services. And to Chelsea Sugar, Essano, Oi, Edgewell, Dilmah and Griffins for supporting the Family2Family campaign.

A Winter Feast for the Community

Last month, 15 business leaders came together to create a magical celebration of great food and community at our annual Cook-Off fundraiser. Led by top chefs Michael van de Elzen, Petra Geller and Gareth Stewart, they cooked a delicious 3-course meal for 150 Mission guests, many of whom are experiencing homelessness or struggling to put food on the table.

Together, the business leaders raised over \$200,000 for the Mission.

Thanks to St Matthew-in-the-City, Inspire, AlSCO, Dilmah, Fonterra, Skills Ignite, The Street Choir and MOLS for helping make the Cook-Off such a success!



Business leaders from AlSCO, ASB, Built Environs, Chapman Tripp, Dilmah, Downer, Fonterra, Foodstuffs (Four Square & New World), NZI, Panasonic, Rinnai, Simplicity, Spark and Woolworths took part in the Cook-Off in June.



Our chefs preparing food in the kitchen

Stepping up for the Mission!

The Big Mission Home was a huge success again this year – despite the weather! Over 200 participants, including corporate teams, church groups, families (and dogs!) braved the rain on 23 March, walking 17km to HomeGround from all corners of Auckland. It highlighted the challenges faced by people living on the streets – rain or shine - to access the basics of life, like food, shelter and medical care. Thank you to everyone who stepped up!

And thanks to Mercury and their customers who took part in a special Big Mission Home step challenge in March - walking 17,000 steps in a week.

With your support, we raised \$147,000 through The Big Mission Home this year!

I just walked 17km
to support people in greatest need!



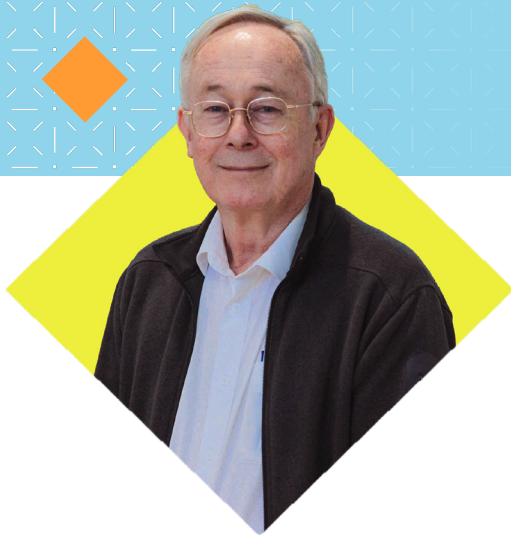
@aucklandcitymission
#thebigmissionhome

Skye Aiono was back for her second Big Mission Home – this time with husband Poe.

The Food Show

◆ Calling all foodies!

We'll be at the Auckland Food Show from 25-28 July. The Mission is privileged to be the official charity partner, so come and say hello to our team, and help us restock our shelves for winter. Please consider donating \$3 when you get your ticket at foodshow.co.nz.



Meet Dr. Bruce,

GP at the Calder Health Centre

Bruce joined the team at the Calder Health Centre in January this year, after 32 years as a GP in Manurewa. A serendipitous series of events led brought him to the Mission, starting with an inspiring talk by Auckland City Missioner Helen Robinson.

“I heard Helen speaking about the Mission’s work at the College of GPs conference last year. She was amazing. Later that day, I heard a programme on the radio about homelessness. Then one of the Calder doctors asked me to come and do a locum here while she was away. I came in, met the staff here and really admired what they were doing. It felt like the universe was calling me!”

Bruce is working at Calder two days a week and he’s been getting to know the people we work with: “There’s an honesty here that’s refreshing. I see a lot of resilience in the patients, because for many of them just surviving is tough.”

“This population needs a clinic like Calder. It provides a safe harbour for people with complicated health issues who would struggle to get the support they need at other general practices. The complexity of medical problems is far beyond what you’d see in most other practices and yet we are funded the same.”

“Many of the people we see have lots of unresolved trauma and the team here make a huge effort to make sure they’re not retraumatizing people. So our patients feel safe with the staff here.”

“This is a special place.”

“You realise how hard being a rough sleeper is on the body – the stress of trying to navigate the streets and find food and places to sleep. So, when we see patients who are in their 30s or 40s, they’ve essentially got the body of a 50 or 60-year old.”

How to donate...

You can make one-off or regular donations to the Mission online at aucklandcitymission.org.nz

Bank deposit: Acc no: 12-3011-0520064-00
Particulars: WA25
Code: Donor ID or Surname
Reference: Donation

Phone: (09) 303 9209
Text NOURISH to 4499 to donate \$3

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a little normal

