



**Christchurch
City Mission**

Te Whare Mihana Ki Ōtautahi

CHRISTCHURCH CITY MISSION

Impact report

2023

Our City at Heart.



Impact report

2023

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Cover Photo: Helping people like Wayne who attends our day programme and sings in our choir is why we are here.



When I think of the impact the Christchurch City Mission has had on our community in 2023, I am encouraged by what has been achieved in taking lives forward. At the same time, I also reflect on what might have happened had we not intervened to support those in their time of need. We are there for people at their time of crisis, but we are also there to support them as they develop skills to cope with life on a daily basis, such that they no longer need our immediate support. However, we do ensure that they are always aware that the Mission is still there for them in the future should they need us.

From time-to-time people come to us with donations to support our clients and they tell us they were once a client and now they can give back. Those occasions are heart-warming, to know the impact we have made, and the fact that these clients have become independent and that they are keen to support those who currently need help.

One of the big opportunities we faced in 2023 was bringing our new facilities into full use – the transitional housing, a new venture for us, the much larger and much improved fit-for-purpose food warehouse, and the new self-serve foodbank. Being able to use these new facilities has improved our processes, made us more efficient, allowed an increase in our services, and given our staff and volunteers much improved working conditions. I often talk about my pride in how the Mission's staff and volunteers are passionate about their roles. These new facilities have added a greater energy and enthusiasm for the work we do.

The continuing challenge we face is how to deal with the increasing complexity of problems among our clients. And how to cope with the increasing numbers who come to us for support in all our services, especially our Social Work, Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drugs sections.

Looking ahead to this year, 2024 will be one of consolidation as we develop and fully use our new and existing facilities and work programmes. We will finetune how we operate to maximise the good we can do from the support we get from our very supportive donors, corporates, trusts and foundations, and those who use our op shops, café and catering services. I know that the staff and volunteers are fully committed and passionate about their roles and together we will meet the challenges with focus and enthusiasm.

In Grace and Service

Corinne Haines
Christchurch City Missioner

A YEAR OF CARE

putting people first



2,578
people helped by our
mental health/addiction services



21,061
hours gifted
to us by
volunteers



415
youth helped by
our mental health/
addiction services

762,600



meals provided by
our Foodbank



438
men and women
slept in our
emergency shelters

1,239



group sessions run
by our community
development team

\$11,900
average debt
per client helped
by our financial
mentors

\$\$\$



1,109
men and women attended
our day programmes



5,000
approaches for help
to our social workers



The old way – this is how all people used to get their food parcels from us.

DIGNITY WITH *our foodbank*

The man who had come to us for food was shocked that he had to do this and how quickly his life had unravelled. He and his wife had both worked and they had young children. But his wife was seriously ill and was in hospital. He couldn't work because he needed to care for the children. He and his wife had no annual leave or sick leave because of Covid. They also didn't qualify for Government help because of their past employment. He had unpaid bills and no food.

Getting a food parcel had a huge impact on their lives and was

maybe the first good thing that had happened to the family in some time. More than anything, when they were given the food they knew others cared about them while they got over their setback.

In 2023 the economic downturn and rising costs stretched family budgets. Many more families turned to us for food support. We lifted our efforts as much as we could to help and by the end of the year, on average, we had increased food parcels by 200 a month, which equates to feeding hundreds more people.

The Christchurch City Mission operates by far the biggest direct food parcel supply service in Christchurch and in 2023 we began a new era of service by significantly changing the way we give clients that food. We launched a new self-serve foodbank during the year as part of our redevelopment at 275 Hereford Street.

Our foodbank clients are assessed, then can opt to use the new self-serve foodbank where they choose the products they need, rather than us giving them a standard food parcel. We still do pre-packed boxes



The new way – this is how our self-serve foodbank clients collect their food now, able to choose what they need.

“ when they were given the food they knew others cared about them... ”

when that is the preferred option, but this new service has created some moments of joy and surprise when people have discovered they can get help with food by choosing what goes into their parcel by “shopping” at our new self-serve foodbank.

Dignity comes from being able to choose their own parcel and this creates a level of engagement in the process of accepting food. It offers greater mana and respect, and we know the impact of this helps lift the self-esteem of our clients. When self-esteem rises, a

lot of things in their lives start to improve as well.

On a practical level, we also know families who choose their own food are likely to eat more of what we give them. So, it’s a more efficient way of meeting a family’s needs, for them to choose what they know their family will eat.

The staff and the large group of volunteers who support the service are enjoying working in the new made-for-purpose building. None are missing the long days in the basement that doubled as a

carpark and the cramped upstairs space where parcels were handed down from a ramp to the clients.

This change in our foodbank process is part of our continual evolution to ensure our services change to deliver what our community needs. It’s why in our 95th year we remain relevant, effective, and always caring.



OUR IMPACT

on homelessness

The young woman pointed to the space in her flat's family room where she and her partner stood when they first walked into the flat. "I started getting emotional," she remembered. "I didn't believe it. I was thinking, 'It can't be real. This cannot be real'. I couldn't cry then, but I cried when everyone left."

For this young person, this is the impact of finding yourself in a flat after living for months in a car on the Christchurch streets. The person who had knocked on their car window one morning and started the process of finding suitable housing was our City Mission Outreach worker, Josh.

The wider impact we have on the lives of the homeless in Christchurch is immense and is covered particularly by the work of our emergency shelters, transitional housing, Outreach service and social workers. However, it also includes the work done by our other services that clients can access, once they come to the Mission for support.

The City Mission Outreach Service goes to people who are rough sleeping on the streets. In 2023, we made 1,968 one-to-one contacts with these men and women. Many people who sleep rough take a long time to build trust. We invest in and accept this process, and where we can build up trust, it can be the beginning of their journey with the

Mission. There are those who for many reasons prefer to stay on the streets. We still support them as best we can, often with the supply of sleeping bags. Last year we provided 137 sleeping bags.

Once homeless people come into our system the first contact is often with our men's and women's emergency accommodation shelters. Each night, 365 days of the year, we can offer accommodation for 15 men and 12 women. We are a genuine emergency shelter where people can turn up at 5pm for a free bed and care. In 2023, our emergency shelter beds were used gratefully by 283 men and 155 women. These are people who were in crisis and had nowhere else to go.

2023 saw the introduction of our newest facility to look after people struggling to find accommodation

in Christchurch. Our new transitional housing building we call Whakaora Kāinga completed its first year of operation in December 2023. This brand new 3-storey building has three apartments with a total of 14 beds. Residents are former homeless people, many of whom will have stayed in our men's and women's emergency shelters on our site. They are with us for three months where our new communal living model includes heavily structured support, along with courses and learning and development activities designed to lift residents' confidence and skills and remove barriers which previously have prevented them from successfully moving to permanent accommodation.

In 2023, we had 24 residents successfully move to new homes thanks to their stay with us.

City Mission Outreach worker Josh does his rounds of the inner-city streets in the mornings to check up on rough sleepers.





Volunteers and staff working hard to deliver 1750 extra special Christmas hampers to our targeted clients the week before Christmas.

CHRISTMAS, *the busiest week of the year*

“Hope this helps,” we said to the woman who came to the Mission for a Christmas hamper food parcel on her mobility scooter. She parked it in the forecourt near our bike stand out of the way of cars coming and going as others collected their hampers.

“It really will,” she said. “I’m on my own, my mum and dad are dead. I’m alone, everything is so hard. Thank you so much.” And then she turned back to see how she could carry her food and Christmas treats on the scooter.

Across the road cars were pulling into our donation centre bringing food to fill the boxes. A perfect cycle of caring and sharing. The week before Christmas 2023 was by far our busiest week of the year.

Our foodbank normally does about 350 parcels a week and in that one week we handed over 1,750 standard food parcels along with special parcels with extra treats for Christmas.

Those Christmas week food parcels would feed about 6000 people three meals a day over several days. The huge impact we have on helping people at the most stressful time of the year is well recognised by the people of Christchurch.

There is no way we could do this on our own. We need our financial donors and food donors to help fill those boxes and we also need our volunteers to get the parcels to the people. In an average week we might have about 140 volunteers working across all our services but

84 extras joined us in in the big Christmas week and we welcomed and appreciated every one of them.

Again this year we used a voucher system to target our Christmas hampers to go to those who need them. The vouchers went to individuals and families we had looked after over the year and who would need a hand at Christmas.

Traffic management was in place in Hereford Street so we could receive and deliver food safely and efficiently, while we worked across two sides of the road. We saw many smiles, heard many expressions of thanks, and we saw the relief on the faces of clients as they realised they would have a Christmas after all.



OUR IMPACT

on youth

We are a social welfare agency for adults, but many people don't realise how much we do to help young people in times of need. Our services have a huge and direct impact on the lives of thousands of young people. We are very proud of that.

BACKING THEIR EDUCATION

The nervous single mum, Kate, arrived at our offices for her assessment. She had come to the Mission asking for help in getting a school uniform and shoes for her son who was starting high school. This was a struggling family which was trying to get ahead and needed a little help to keep that going. Kate had studied, gained a qualification and a part-time job but she was in debt which included a student loan.

The family lived in a Kainga Ora home, and Kate couldn't pay the power bill and the problems were spiraling. The City Mission helped her with a food parcel from the foodbank, some financial advice – but another important way we helped was to make sure her son

got to go to his new school as an equal with others, in the correct uniform that he could wear with pride. We helped out with the cost of his uniform, shoes and stationery which could have cost her over \$900. These were costs that would have crippled her family, who also had two other children, but our vouchers made this purchase achievable.

Our social worker said: "Kate was incredibly thankful, very gracious, very humble. She was making every effort to pay off her debts and she left deeply relieved." Our Back to School Programme helped 189 families in 2023 by providing 268 uniforms to local children.





Children should not grow up in families who are worried about how to feed them. We fed thousands of children in 2023.

FOODBANK SERVICES

It is hard to imagine kids going hungry in Canterbury, but it is a real and regular occurrence. Our foodbank is on the frontline of helping refill family cupboards.

On a daily basis, the biggest group of young people we help are those who belong to families who have come to us in a crisis seeking food support. When families come to us for food they are interviewed and assessed for need by our foodbank team. Part of that assessment includes asking about family size and children. While the children don't necessarily come to our buildings, we know they are benefiting from the support we give their parents.

Our assessment data reveals that 40% of people our foodbank fed in 2023 were children aged 0-17. A third were children aged 12 and under. The impact of our help to children through our foodbank is best understood if we consider what life would be like for families without the food support from the City Mission.

Imagine 25,000 children not getting the 305,000 meals our foodbank supplied in 2023? This is amazing impact that we can only do with the help of those who support us with money, food and volunteering of their time.

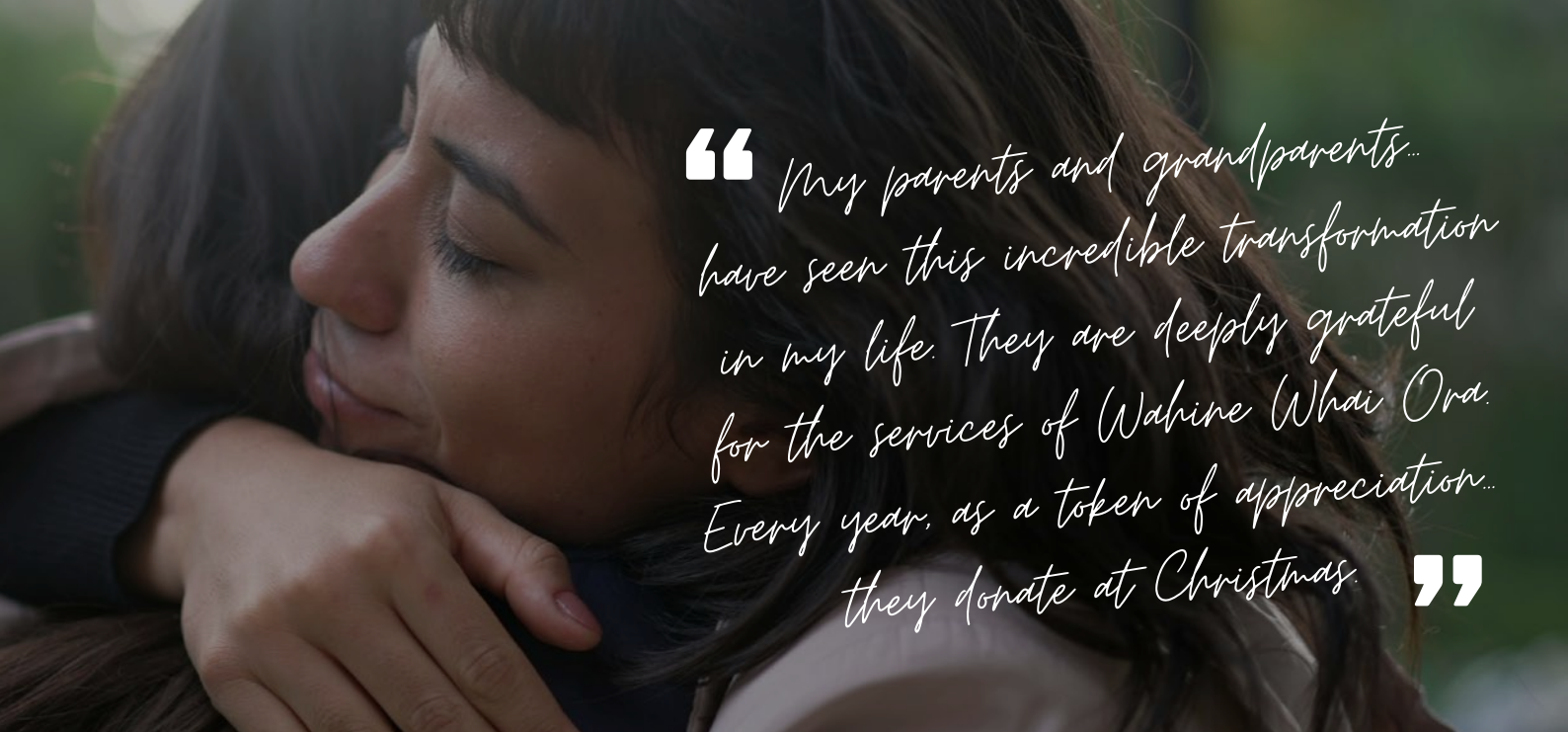
ADDICTION AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

Our three expert youth addiction and mental health counsellors offer an amazing free service for young Canterbury people at our Hereford Street site. These counsellors are trained in techniques such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Dialectical Behaviour Therapy, Deep Brain Reorienting Therapy to help young people manage their problems.

Most are referred to us from a central hub, which assesses the young people first to find the best place and people to help them. Others come from referrals from GPs, schools and even peer referrals. Because

we are experienced in helping people with addictions, we are a logical place to come for support. We handle everything from mental health, addiction and combined mental health and addiction issues.

The number of referrals our counsellors can take are limited by our available staffing resources. In 2023 415 young people aged 13 to 24 came to us for help. We believe that problems like anxiety, depression and addiction are best caught early and when dealt with early we have the best opportunity to get people back on track.



“ My parents and grandparents... have seen this incredible transformation in my life. They are deeply grateful for the services of Wahine Whai Ora. Every year, as a token of appreciation... they donate at Christmas. ”

Letter from a former client helped with her addiction problem.

OUR IMPACT

with wahine

On Christmas morning 2023, Ally woke in a house with her excited young children. This might be normal for most mums, but it was the greatest blessing and happiness for Ally, because the previous Christmas she had been alone because her children had been removed from her because of her meth addiction.

The City Mission team helped Ally turn her life around after serious addiction problems and become a fulltime mum once again. She attended our Wahine Whai Ora women’s day programme, which helps women manage addiction by working in groups and with individual counselling. Ally had been hurt badly by meth including being imprisoned and losing just about everything, including her kids.

But we – our expert staff and her fellow women programme clients - were an important part of her change and recovery.

When family life is hard, women are often affected the most deeply and can be the toughest to support because they are so caught up in the lives of others.

To maximise our help to women, we operate a number of women-specific services which give them space and time to focus on themselves and their future.

Wahine Whai Ora runs both in the mornings and afternoons every weekday and has a regular roll of about 170 women. Roughly 20 new women come in every month to replace those who leave, but if a client leaves they know they are always welcome to return if life gets tough. As with all addiction clients, the impact affects family and friends. That is also the case with recovery – many, many more people are happy and relieved to see the results of our work with their family member and to get their loved one back.

We also offer other women-specific services, - the women’s emergency shelter and the women’s drop-in day programme.

The shelter is literally the last resort at night for local women who have nowhere else to stay. Our 12-bed unit is open 365 days a year and more than 155 women found safety with us the last year. Many come to

us because of a crisis and they are now homeless after leaving abusive and violent situations. Many have lost care of their children, many have been turned away elsewhere because of addiction problems, but we take in everyone if we can do so safely. Many of our shelter residents also join the women’s day programme alongside others who have their own place to stay but come to us for company, support and our life skills courses.

Our women’s day programme lifted the wellbeing of 635 of Christchurch women and significantly improved the lives of some women who came to us in the worst circumstances. Our safe and welcoming space and our staff and volunteers help women heal through the wide-ranging courses we give women. We give them new skills and more importantly, new confidence, self-belief and a sense of belonging.

A YEAR OF CARE

in action

“

I don't even know how to begin to thank you. I don't even know where I would be without the Mission. Actually, I do know. I would be under a bush. My children would be in Oranga Tamariki, and I would be just so hopeless and destitute. When this place showed me love, it made me look behind me and see where I need to give my love to, and it's to my kids."

(WOMEN'S DAY PROGRAMME – CLIENT)

“

I didn't believe it. I was thinking, it can't be real. This cannot be real. And then I couldn't cry but I cried when everyone left. We were so used to being squished up in a small car and there is so much room here. I was so happy, we were constantly saying our top two things were we had a shower and we had a fridge. I couldn't believe it."

(OUTREACH SERVICE – COUPLE LIVING IN CAR HELPED INTO SOCIAL HOUSING.)

“

The team at the Mission saw me at my lowest point and all they asked of me was to turn up and try to continue with my learning. For me this isn't just about learning new skills, it's also about the people I'm with when I'm here. We have formed strong friendships and bonds."

(LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT HUB – CLIENT)

“

If a service such as yours did not exist I think I would be on a major downward spiral, possibly leading to suicide. I know I did not want to carry on with my drinking. Thorpe is a gift to start a journey towards sobriety and recovery."

(THORPE HOUSE RESIDENTIAL DETOX UNIT – CLIENT)



**Christchurch
City Mission**

Te Whare Mīhana Kī Ōtautahi

Thank you!

FOR YOUR REMARKABLE SUPPORT

Dear city mission, thank you
for everything you've done
for me and my family.
Thank you for helping out
with other families and trying
your best to help them.
I want to thank you
personally too!

Beautiful handwritten letter of thanks from a young girl of 9 years,
whose family received food from the Mission last year.

citymission.org.nz

ove,