



Presbyterian
Support
Otago



June 2016

HOMELESS IN OTAGO

Homelessness: having no other options to acquire safe, secure housing. And it's happening right here in Otago.

Our Family Works team is seeing a major increase in requests for urgent housing assistance. In the first five months this year the Dunedin team alone has seen 26* clients seeking housing assistance; 20 of those people were already homeless; 14 of them were women, 11 with children.

Homelessness is defined as having no other options to acquire safe and secure housing. There are four categories identified by the Homelessness Parliamentary Working Group:

- Without shelter – “sleeping rough”
- Temporary accommodation – shelters, refuges, backpackers, hostels
- Sharing accommodation – “couch surfing”
- Uninhabitable housing – squats, dilapidated dwellings.

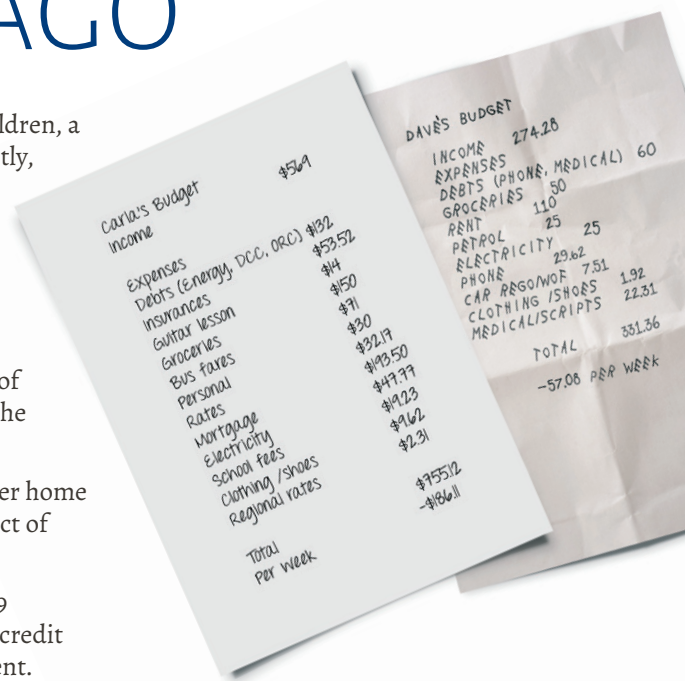
What's the cause of the problem? Why are we seeing more and more people in housing crisis? Before we dive into the research and statistics, let's look at the personal stories of two current clients seeking help.

Carla** has two school-age children, a mortgage and, until very recently, a job. Money was tight on a single wage but with careful management she was on top of her expenses. Then in December 2015 she lost her job. Her employer reduced staff and she was one of the unlucky ones to be shown the door.

Now Carla is at risk of losing her home and facing the very real prospect of dislocation and homelessness.

Her total weekly income is \$569 inclusive of benefit, family tax credit and accommodation supplement. Her weekly outgoings, including repayments to creditors, total \$755.11. She is currently going backwards by \$186.11 per week. If Carla doesn't find work soon she may be forced to sell her home. However, 2-3 bedroom rental accommodation in Dunedin ranges from \$220 - \$350 per week, at the lower end. As you can see from her budget (pictured), if she sells her home she will potentially be worse off in terms of weekly expenses, and have lost her only asset.

Let's look at Dave**. He's a single man living with mental and physical health issues. His total weekly income is \$274.28, the amount provided by



the WINZ Supported Living Payment. Dave lives in a boarding house; it's not ideal. Like Dave, many of the boarding house residents have mental health or substance abuse history. It can be a volatile place and there is no resident carer to support him, or others, through stressful 'episodes'.

Dave's modest expenses also overrun his even more modest income. He ends each week another \$57.08 in debt. Although not on the street, Dave is homeless.

The New Zealand Parliament Research Paper into Homelessness (July 2014) explored the demographics of the 'severely housing deprived'. These may

HOMELESS IN OTAGO cont.

surprise you; 49% worked, studied or did both. “Despite this, they had insufficient resource to obtain a minimally adequate home for themselves or their family”.

They were predominantly children and young adults, ethnic minorities, and either part of sole-parent families or not accompanied by a family. They are not the scruffy, aging, drug addicted men you see portrayed in movies. They are far less visible, far younger and more likely to be women.

So what’s the answer for Dave, Carla and the many others facing severe housing deprivation? There is of course no ‘silver bullet’, but there are a number of areas

where our Family Works team would like more support and greater community effort.

1. More support for families and individuals facing relationship and personal challenges. Our Family Works team’s experience tell us that the sooner we can support a family, the less likely it is for family breakdown to occur, resulting in less demand for crisis housing.
2. A larger pool of temporary, emergency housing suitable for parents and children. Temporary accommodation for 3-6 months would allow sufficient time to secure appropriate permanent housing for families. Too often people

are forced into taking whatever property is available in a crisis situation, and it is rarely adequate in the longer term.

3. A higher standard set for all rental accommodation to ensure warmer, safer, energy efficient housing for all tenants - a housing Warrant of Fitness.

While talking with Deb Gelling, Family Works Social Work Supervisor, for this article, she was called away to meet with a young professional woman who had walked in, very upset, seeking emergency housing. The problem is real, and growing.

* At time of writing

** Names changed to protect identity



WINNING VOLUNTEERS

Presbyterian Support Otago volunteers and staff celebrate winning the 2016 Trustpower Dunedin Community Supreme Award (from left) Judy Hayes, Peter Dewhirst, Michelle Gerwitz, Godfrey Dodd, Jo Scott, Lyn Peterson, Mary Phillips, Su Anderson, and Olwen Dewhirst, all of Dunedin. Photo courtesy Otago Daily Times

Presbyterian Support Otago won the supreme award at the 2016 Trustpower Dunedin Community Awards on 27 April.

The award recognises the efforts of 500 volunteers across Dunedin working in areas like the Buddy Programme, Shop On charity shops, YouthGrow programme,

Enliven programmes for older people and Family Works food bank.

Congratulations also go to our Buddy Programme volunteers in Alexandra and Cromwell for their win in the Trustpower Central Otago community awards. This is well deserved recognition for the important work you do for children and their families in the region

Thank you to all the wonderful people who help us help people in Otago. You make our community a better

place. Thank you also to Trustpower and the Dunedin City Council for the recognition and the \$1500 prize money.

We look forward to representing Otago at the national awards in Rotorua in March 2017.

If you would like to join our winning volunteer team, register your interest at psotago.org.nz or call Michelle Gerwitz at **03 477 7115**.

Even making a cuppa together ends up in a laughing session for friends Leonie and Jan.



SHARING GOOD TIMES

To meet this South Dunedin pair one would think they have been mates from way back. The quick retorts, lively banter about news of the day, and constant stream of laughter has 78 year old Leonie McCutcheon describing her friend as cheeky and tiring.

Tiring! "Yes. I'm so tired out with laughing, I have the best sleep of the week the night following Jan's visit," she laughs.

Leonie is talking about her Enliven Visiting Volunteer, Jan Hannah.

Jan has been an Enliven Visiting Volunteer for 15 years, the last two of which have been visiting Leonie in her own home for a catch-up over a cuppa.

"We have great rapport so it's just like visiting a friend," says Jan. "It's something I build into my week and I just can't imagine not doing it."

For Leonie, the boot is on the other foot. Until recently, Leonie was herself a volunteer for 14 years.

"I now understand just how important a visiting volunteer service is to someone

ACCESSORIES LOUNGE

A first in Mosgiel! Shop on Taieri, 135 Gordon Road, has proudly launched The Accessories Lounge. This wonderful little shop within a shop, stocks gorgeous shoes, hats, scarves and gloves. Everything you need to add a little splash of colour to your winter wardrobe. Open Monday to Friday, 10:00am – 4:30pm

like me who can't get out and about. The people I visited were always so grateful, saying what a difference I made to their day, and here I am saying the same things to Jan. It really is the highlight of my week."

Leonie also finds great comfort in having Jan accompany her to hospital appointments.

"To have Jan there to help me find the right place, safely, and be my eyes and ears so that I remember what the doctors have told me, is very comforting."

Jan, who is also on the Enliven Visiting Volunteer programme's advisory committee, encourages everyone to think about companion volunteering, whether in someone's private home or in a residential care home.

"You really do get a lot of enjoyment out of these visits," she says, listening to Leonie's trade-mark laugh as she interjects with a witty remark.

Find out more about the Enliven Visiting Volunteers programme by calling Judy Hayes **03 477 7115** or visiting **psotago.org.nz**

PeOPLe STEPPING STONES

Learning to feel safe in exploring a new environment is part and parcel of the Stepping Stones experience

“Walking into Stepping Stones for the first time I had no idea what to expect or what I wanted to achieve. I just knew that I had to do something.”

Charlotte's* journey to the Stepping Stones door two years ago has been a long one. Like most people, she has had some challenges in her life. Unlike most people, she has faced those challenges with an undiagnosed mental illness, bi-polar disorder. But now that she has arrived, she has never looked back.

Stepping Stones is a Family Works programme for adults living with mental illness. The group supports people to learn new skills, enjoy social activities, share their knowledge and talents with others, and experience positive relationships with people in their community. As the name suggests, Stepping Stones creates a pathway from social isolation to inclusion and connection with the local community.

Based at Macandrew House, South Dunedin, Stepping Stones has been operating in the community since 1996. More than 250 people have participated in the programme over this

20 year period. However, it is not only participants who benefit from Stepping Stones, our community does too. Charlotte's story illustrates how.

Just three years ago Charlotte was in hospital receiving electro convulsive therapy (ECT) for her bi-polar condition, and struggling with alcohol addiction. It was a real low point in her life. It was also a turning point. With the support of her sister and Alcoholics Anonymous, she gave up drinking. But without work Charlotte was increasingly isolated at home. Her nurse encouraged her to visit Stepping Stones. Although it took a while to build up the confidence to do it, she arrived at Stepping Stones and immediately felt welcome and accepted.

Initially Charlotte remained quiet about her culinary skills. However, last year when the group decided to hold a fundraiser breakfast, Charlotte was keen to be involved. By now she felt confident enough to volunteer her skills and knowledge to help make the breakfast a success. She did a wonderful job and earned high praise from her friends. With this positive experience and encouragement under her belt, she began to think about new possibilities for her future.

Charlotte started looking for work. Handling the inevitable rejections was

tough but with support from the group, she persisted. Charlotte is now working part-time as a kitchen assistant in a care home in South Dunedin, close to her home. (She still volunteers to make lunch each week at Stepping Stones).

Stepping Stones has helped Charlotte and many others to move out of isolating, disconnected, unhealthy and often unhappy living situations, to more engaged, fulfilling and productive lifestyles.

The service provides a safe, non-judgmental and positive environment, where opportunities are offered and individuals encouraged to take them up. The programme is not time-bound and does not aim to “fix” people. The success of Stepping Stones over the past 20 years and into the future, lies in its acceptance and respect for people as they are, and in its capacity to connect participants with the community in which they live.

Here's to another successful 20 years for Stepping Stones and all who tread there!

* Name changed to protect identity

WHERE THERE'S A WILL THERE'S A WAY

...and it seems there's always been a Will.

The minutes of the very first Presbyterian Support Otago (formerly the Presbyterian Social Service Association) annual general meeting, 30 September 1907, record gratitude for our first bequest, £500.

"A little seed of good intention was growing in a good man's soul" state the minutes.

That good man was Francis Henderson. Henderson ran a general store near Loch Leven, Scotland, before settling in Broad Bay on the side of Otago harbour. He built a comfortable home there and, according to the minutes, lived a quiet, simple life. He was active in the growing Dunedin community and was an office bearer in his Church.

Two years after his death, it was found that he had gifted £500 "towards the establishment of an orphanage under the control of the Presbytery of Dunedin". This bequest became the foundation for Presbyterian Support Otago's first children's home in Clyde Street, Dunedin.

In the early 1900s, orphaned and neglected children were a great concern for the developing Dunedin community. Deaconesses Evelyn Macadam and Mary McQueen, and other church members, were taking children into their own homes. The need for an orphanage was pressing. The minutes note one particularly 'pitiful' case where three children, aged five, seven and ten years, were found huddled together with their mother who was dying of consumption. Something had to be done.

The timing of Henderson's gift was perfect. A property in Clyde Street was identified as suitable for a children's home. It was a house of 11 rooms on a

half acre section and was purchased for £1125. Establishing our first children's home in Dunedin would not have been possible at that time without Henderson's legacy.

The difference Henderson's legacy made to the lives of children living at Clyde Street is immense. Evelyn described life at Clyde Street as not that of an institution but a home. "Children returned from school rosy, happy and a little untidy, just as other children return to their homes and mothers."

We continue to rely on the generosity of people who, having considered the needs of their family, make provision for a gift to Presbyterian Support Otago in their Will. For over 110 years the Otago community has given. Like Henderson, you can make a difference in the lives of Otago children today and into the future. For further information about leaving a gift in your Will contact Richard on **029 1200 132** or visit psotago.org.nz



Mary McQueen (second from right) and Evelyn Macadam (right) with some of the children they took into their lodgings at 100 George St, Dunedin, 1906.

REFUGEE SUPPORT

Family Works and our three charity shops, Op Shop on St Andrew, Shop on Carroll and Shop on Taieri, are supporting the Red Cross in resettling Syrian refugees in Dunedin. 'Shop On' gift vouchers are gratefully accepted by the new citizens who will use them to purchase warm clothing and household items. A great introduction to op shopping and our friendly team of staff and volunteers.

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS

The search is on for 40 enthusiastic, caring people to staff our new Aspiring Enliven Care Centre in Wanaka. There are openings for care workers, activity coordinators, registered nurses, housekeepers, kitchen and administration staff. Training/familiarisation starts in September and the doors open 3rd October. If you, or someone you know, would like to work with our wonderful Enliven Wanaka team visit psotago.org.nz/jobs and register your interest on our Job Enquiry form.

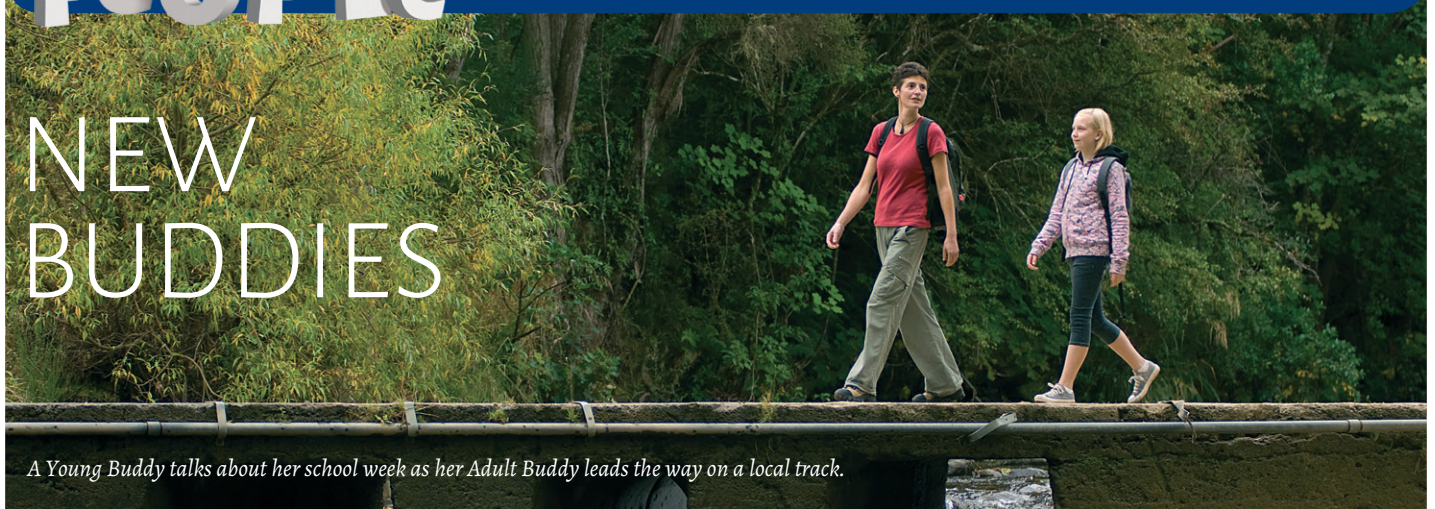
TGRW 2016

What a great day it was! More than 460 people enjoyed the rare opportunity to walk the Taieri Gorge rail line. The sun shone, the views were spectacular and the people happy!

Whilst the final calculations are still underway, proceeds from ticket sales and raffles are expected to exceed \$19,000! All proceeds from the event will support our youth development programmes - YouthGrow and the Buddy Programme.

Thank you Lions Club Dunedin South, Dunedin Railways, ticket holders, volunteers and sponsors for your generous support and making this event such a huge success.

NEW BUDDIES



A Young Buddy talks about her school week as her Adult Buddy leads the way on a local track.

Watching the joy her daughter gained from being an Adult Buddy while a student at the University of Otago persuaded Wanaka resident, Linda, to join the Buddy Programme.

Linda and her partner, Mark, have now completed Buddy training and are about to meet their Young Buddy.

“Semi-retirement means we now have the time and energy to become reliable friends

to a young person and we are really looking forward to sharing a little bit of our lives with him or her,” says Linda.

“Our own children have flown the nest so it will be lovely to support a Young Buddy in their interests.”

Linda said she was impressed with the practical training and support provided by the Buddy Coordinator, Sharon Bell, the friendly support from other Adult Buddies, and the fact that the time she and Mark spend with their Young Buddy will not mean costly outings.

“Activities are in the realm of everyday things, many of which we would be

doing anyway, so there's no expectation of us having to spend extra money each week,” adds Linda.

“We were surprised to learn the programme needs another 100 volunteers throughout Otago to meet current demand – that's a lot of children missing out on a positive friendship. We really encourage people to join like-minded volunteers in making a difference in a child's life.”

If being an Adult Buddy sounds of interest to you, please call Family Works on **03 477 7116** to find out about a programme in your area.

BUILDING LIFE SKILLS

No matter what your income, there are priorities you need to make if you are to avoid costly consequences.

This is one of the more important lessons in the youth budgeting course taught in Dunedin by Family Works. This principle is more important, and a lot easier to understand, than the intricacies of the Credit Contract and Consumer Finance Act, or the Consumer Guarantee and Fair Trading Acts, laughs social worker and budget advisor Jan Hughes.

Jan employs role play to get many messages across to the teenagers in the YouthGrow and South Dunedin courses.

Participants take on the role of retailer or consumer, and debate the rights and responsibilities each has in various transactions.

Sessions discussing Christmas hamper traders versus grocery store Christmas Clubs, and the difference between needs and wants, also generate lively discussion.

“There are many traps to fall into if you are living on a tight budget and it's satisfying to know that we're giving these young people the tools to make wiser decisions” says Jan.

“I didn't realise how much a credit card really costs. They're so easy to get, but you can be paying them off for years. It's pretty scary,” says one young participant.

Preparing young people for life as an adult is just one of the youth services we provide

in Otago. None can be fully undertaken without community support. Thank you, your help is making a difference.



Qualified budget advisor and social worker Jan Hughes during a budgeting session at YouthGrow.

WINTER APPEAL

As Otago settles into its coldest season the number of people seeking our help increases dramatically.

Family Works counsellors and social workers are seeing a growing number of families, including many working families, seeking help. Household incomes that kept families afloat in the warmer months do not meet the costs of feeding, clothing and warmly housing a family during Otago's winter.

We help by providing an emergency food parcel, counselling, budget advice, support to find crisis housing, or by providing winter clothing.

Anyone can call or walk through our doors to find the comfort and support they need.

Our Enliven services for older people are also stretched at this time of year. Many older people in our community become increasingly isolated over winter and rely on our visiting volunteer programme to remain socially connected.

You can help people in our community through the cold months ahead by supporting our winter appeal.



\$40

Family food parcel



\$80

Budget advice and mentoring



\$160

Training and support for an Enliven visiting volunteer



\$800

Social worker support for a family in housing crisis

YES! I WANT TO HELP VULNERABLE PEOPLE THIS WINTER.

Please tick

- \$40 Family food parcel
 \$80 Budget advice and mentoring
 \$160 Training and support for an Enliven visiting volunteer
 \$800 Social worker support for a family in housing crisis

My gift is

\$

- I have left a gift to PSO in my will
 I would like more information about leaving a gift in my will

Please tick payment method

- Cheque Credit Card
 Internet Banking

Card number



Name on card

Expiry date

Signature

Internet Banking PSO Account Number:
06 0901 0005597 00

My contact details are

Name

Address

Phone

Email

Please return this form to:

Fundraising Team
 Presbyterian Support Otago
 FREEPOST 845
 PO Box 374, Dunedin 9054

(All donations are receipted. Gifts over \$5.00 are tax deductible. Charities Commission number CC 20878)

Complete the attached form, or go online to make your donation psotago.org.nz



OCTACAN 2016



**YOU
CAN!**
#OCTACAN

**23 JUNE
7:30 AM - 2:30 PM
THE OCTAGON**



FILLING OUR FOODBANK