

LIGHTNING LIVES

FOR THE SAKE OF OUR CHILDREN TRUST

Official Newsletter November 2010

ABOUT US:

Trust Vision

Our vision is to see New Zealand become a place where our children:

- are safe from harm;
- have a sense of belonging, of feeling loved and valued;
- have access to the necessities they need to engage fully with life and realize their own unique potential.

Trust Mission

We aim to be a "voice" for the "voiceless".

We do this through **educating, promoting and raising awareness** of the **wellbeing** of our **children** in New Zealand and the need for **strong families and communities** to support them.

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She-wolves in sheep's clothing

After reading the article "She-wolves in sheep's clothing" by Elizabeth Willmott Harrop a freelance writer based in Christchurch I was very alarmed to be gain a new statistic to my brainwave "48% of child abusers are women" in NZ.

How can this possibly be you may be asking yourself (like I did) but the statistic is real and is supported by the Family Violence Statistics Report by the Families Commission 2009 which highlights that out of the 8,568 perpetrators of child abuse in 2006, 4,105 were women as compared to 4,463 men.

Now if you're a woman, a mother, an aunty or a grandmother like me (a mother) when I read this I was very saddened to read this as I just never thought mothers who are supposed to be the nurturers of their children would actually go about harming them and at this very high percentage.

Elizabeth Willmott Harrop has conducted detailed research with clear evidence of what is REALLY going on

in our Nation when it comes to caring for our children as parents, whether you're male or female.

Enough research has been conducted to further explain the factors and backgrounds to which many of the perpetrators stem from. What else needs to be said? Maybe what should be said is as simply as how the rest of the world see's us - New Zealand is a Nation that is not only good at rugby but we're also good at harming and killing our children... well done New Zealanders, take a bow.

Recently, I sat with my 2 year old son's Godmother discussing Harrop's article and I asked her quite simply "what can we as New Zealanders do about the problem of child abuse?" Her response.....silence at first said " Well, a lot has been done to date by raising the awareness of the problem in NZ, we now read/hear and about this more in the news". Ok, not



exactly the response I expected but then I threw her a curve ball question and asked her " What can YOU do as an individual to save our children from dying?" Her response after a few seconds was "I can only assist where necessary if I see a child being mistreated or harmed interfere and take notice of the situation. children safe".

Now only if someone had applied this point of action when Nia Glassie was being abused so openly in her neighbourhood and community. Things may have been very different for her.

(continued on page 3)

ASPIRING LEADERS FORUM 2010

For the Sake of Our Children is once again pleased to have supported the 2010 Aspiring Leaders Forum *on faith and values* to discuss the values and principles that underpin leadership. Political, business and community leaders and 120 young delegates from across NZ gathered in Wellington from 22-25 July to listen, learn and examine ideas of leadership across all different sectors of society including community, arts, business, politics or sport.

Keynote speakers included economist Gareth Morgan, Theresa Gattung Chair of Wool Partners International, Jock Cameron ALF Founder National Student Leadership Forum Australia and Pacific Youth Strategist Nick Tuitasi QSM . (Continued on pg 4)

www.forourchildren.org.nz

A WORD FROM OUR FOUNDER:

Dear Friends,

48% of child abusers for

2006 were women. An

alarming statistic as we usually read in the media that men are the major perpetrators – usually the partner/boyfriend or step father in most cases.

About half of women who are physically abused by their partners also abuse their children, illustrating a key point: you can be a victim of violence and also a perpetrator of abuse. Child abuse violence is highly correlated to interfamilial violence – the cycle must be broken! I agree with the late paediatrician Dr Robin Fancourt's observation of "child neglect as perpetrated by society as well as by individuals".

Both Government and New Zealand as a Nation need to take a collective responsibility for the social conditions which provide a breeding ground for child abusers.

The Trust wishes to speak more with NZ coroners to rally up support to the work we do to promote how we can best keep our children safe from harm and neglect.

Arohanui, John Sax



Chairman and Founder —John

**HOPES FOR MY UNBORN CHILD....**

As you are nestled safely in my womb I can only imagine what life will have in store for you.

Each day as you grow in my tummy I pray you continue to grow healthy with strength and courage and that God will develop in you the wonderful character that only he knows of.

I know, and you will come to know, that you will be born precious to your dad and I and we will love you unconditionally. We will strive towards being the best parents one could ask for, and you will also have an older brother who will adore you from day one.

You will have grandparents who will pour their love into you and desire to spoil you, especially when your dad and I are not with you. And they will take every opportunity to babysit you when they can. You will have aunts and uncles who will give you guidance and allow you to spend quality time with your cousins.

Fortunately you'll never be exposed to physical abuse or being unloved. You will be safe from harm and sheltered in a warm home. You will be given every opportunity to fulfil your potential, you will be loved.

I hope you will have a special relationship with your dad and I. I hope you will always be open to talk to us about anything. I hope you will grow up to be a good person and be considerate of other people

around you. I hope you will live to have a purpose and make a great difference to the lives around you. I hope that one day you will become a great parent to your own children.

I pray New Zealand will become a safe haven for you to grow up in and that the values we teach you as parents will be strong ones you will pass onto your children. Your dad and I look forward to welcoming you into this world and loving you unconditionally.

When I read statistics that say "37 children on average are abused or neglected daily in NZ," I cringe for the safety of my unborn child.

When I read that at least 10 young children will die a violent death in NZ, I pray for the wellbeing of my unborn child when he comes into this world.

When I read that 17,500 unborn children were aborted in 1989, I can only ask the Lord to continuously protect my unborn child in my womb so he can grow to be strong and healthy.

When I read the coroner reports of children who have died as a result of child abuse and neglect in New Zealand, I cry and try to fathom how a parent or carer can inflict such cruelty on a helpless being.

I question what this Nation is coming too? Why are our children so unsafe in a Nation that is supposed to

protect our most vulnerable citizens? How is it that there is no uproar calling for the wellbeing of our children to be paramount? And if there is, how am I not hearing it enough?

In my work, as I continue to read more into why our children are dying I learn more about who the perpetrators of such crimes are and where they come from. I come to realise that my unborn son is very unlikely to experience such abuse and neglect because fortunately he will be born precious into a solid family with committed parents who will unconditionally love him.

I will have dreams and expectations in place for my son, encouragement and provide affirmation to lift him. Yes I will teach him right from wrong and values that will determine his character as he grows. He will learn to love and be kind to others around him and he will also learn to deal with life's difficult situations. These are my hopes as a parent for my son and for the all the children of this Nation.

Since this article went to print, our son Paula Metuisela was born. My husband and I are blessed and as a parents we look forward to the next chapter



QUICK NOTICES

The Trust we're pleased to recently support:

Southseas Healthcare Well Child Fun Day for Children and Families held in Manukau City in June.

Homes of Hope, Clubhouse 274 and Southseas Healthcare sending 40 young children to see Alice in Wonderland and Pinnocchio Pantomines During the school holidays in July and September.

**Connect with us on Facebook.
Keyword: For the Sake of Our Children Trust**

Linked to our Facebook page is our community page "Prevent Child Abuse and Neglect NZ"

**Check out our website
www.forourchildren.org.nz**

Send through your feedback or contact our office for further information.

**She-wolves in sheep's clothing (cont. from page 1)**

I want to highlight the desperate need for us as New Zealanders who are quite happy to fight for our foreshores, attack politicians if they spend too much of our tax payers money on supposed work trips with loved ones. Why do I not read or hear in the media of more New Zealanders defending the safety and wellbeing of our children – our most vulnerable children who are unable to be heard unless they are seriously hurt or killed!

Those who commit crimes against children particularly child homicide should be locked away for good. For those parents who are charged with such crimes should seriously not be

allowed to have more children born into the same violent environment. Government should realise the significance of this statistic that 48% of child abusers are women - ordinary women of this Nation.

For many "factors such as their own history as a victim of abuse, lack of social support networks, poverty and poor educational opportunities have collided to create a parent unable to live up to society's ideals of the all-nurturing, self-sacrificing mother".

A good start with our Government could be re-shaping our social policies to better promote the

opposite of the factors outlined ie., promoting the need for two parents who are committed to each other in a loving relationship to raise their children, promoting strong and stable families, promoting positive parenting policies.

Have your say, go to our website and send us your comments to the full article of "She-wolves in sheep's clothing" which can be found on our website. Share your ideas of what you could do to make a difference to a child's life in NZ.

Elizabeth Willmott Harrop is a freelance writer. She is based in Christchurch, New Zealand, and has a Masters Degree in Human Rights and Social Change.

Will the Real Patch Adams please stand up? Athalia Bond

Laughing their Way to Health – Clown Doctors Therapy bringing healing to Children

One of my favourite movies when I was a teenager (was Patch Adams – the story of an irreverent trainee doctor who used humour to connect to his patients. But few people know this was based on a true story – Patch Adams really existed and he founded the Gesundheit Institute – a holistic health care practice where one of its core principles is "Care is infused with fun and play" These ideas were and continue to be a little bit revolutionary but some of these principles are starting to move their way deeper into mainstream medicine – most pointedly through the work of Michael Christensen who founded the first clown care programme in New York in 1986 – designed to bring joy and laughter to sick or suffering patients. And now this philosophy can be seen poking it's "red nose" around in Auckland's Starship Children's Hospital in the form of it's latest RED NOSE "Clown Doctors"

Profiling an organisation that works to provide laughter as therapy to sick children may seem like an interesting direction for "For the Sake of Our Children Trust" but this organisation captured my attention. Children's Wellbeing is a catch phrase for us at the Trust – what is conducive to the wellbeing of children? Wellbeing goes beyond protection from harm. It is a holistic word that looks at the whole life of a child – their environment from go to whoa. It is not just about providing a safe and healthy environment for the child but it must take into consideration the fact that we cannot always protect our children from everything in life. It must take into consideration reparation and restoration and providing the best environment for our children to heal – whether that is in heart, mind or body.

The Red Nose Organisation working in Christchurch and Auckland's Starship Hospital do an amazing job at helping to create an environment to promote the wellbeing of hospitalised children. A team of special trained therapists dress up as clowns and use (cont'd on page 4)

In Memory of

Hail-Sage McClutchie
September 27 2009



22 month old Hail-Sage's death from serious head injuries is still a mystery not only to her maternal grandmother but also to the police still investigating this homicide case.

No one has been charged with her death and this has infuriated the grandma who raised Sage from the day she was born.

Grandma who wishes to remain anonymous wants justice saying "she didn't deserve to die like that...especially a child who can't fight back".

Sage was on life support, but brain dead, after suffering head injuries.

No-one knows anything "its very unusual no one is saying nothing" says Grandma. Sage was a happy, bubbly girl, she had a cute cute giggle. Someone needs to pay for this "I want whoever did this to be brought to justice"



ASPIRING LEADERS FORUM 2010 (CONT'D PAGE 1)

All keynote speakers this year allowed our delegates to see an in-depth picture of the journey and struggles which they faced in their lives.

28 MPs hosted a small group in their office where delegates had the opportunity of have some "off the record" time and ask the curly questions.

The young leaders also conducted community service to include the Ronald McDonald house and Habitat for Humanity, among others.

Our Chairman John Sax was

not only a small group facilitator but also one of the 8 seminar speakers who shared about business and legacy leadership.

FSOCT continues to support young aspiring leaders each year as we believe these young people can and do make a difference in their communities. In doing so, the lives of children can be positively impacted. Children require great role models and good leadership by example.

We look forward to 2011 and encourage our supporters to

think of leaders in your own community and seriously consider nominating them to attend a forum and meet with like-minded people who are passionate, concerned and courageous enough to make a difference in New Zealand.



Will the Real Patch Adams please stand up?

(cont'd from pg 3)

humour, pranks, jokes and tricks, as therapy to chronically and acutely ill children. Visiting each patient directly at their bedside, they support the sick and suffering offering cheer and vitality which can be key to regaining balance and an ability to cope with the situation.

The work of RED NOSES Clown doctors draws on a large body of evidence indicating the importance of implementing humour and the arts in the healing process. Although not easily quantified, there are definitely recognisable benefits and positive impacts from the clown programmes. These include physiological, emotional, psychological and social improvements.

Studies have shown that some of the therapeutic benefits of laughter include lowering blood pressure, reducing stress hormones, increasing muscle flexion, and boosting immune function by raising levels of infection-fighting T-cells, disease-fighting proteins called Gamma-interferon and B-cells, which produce disease-destroying antibodies. Laughter has also been shown to trigger the release of endorphins, the body's natural painkillers, and produces a general sense of well-being – vital to recovery for sick children. There is also evidence that laughter therapy can help reduce the use of painkillers in the post-op recovery period for children.

The benefits of laughter are enormous – and while we may not always be able to protect our children from everything that life will throw their way – developing a sense of humour in our family life – and teaching them to look on the brighter side of things can go a long way to promoting their wellbeing – not just now but also in the future. So why not give this a try at home? Put on a red nose the next time your kid is sick – or teach them to have a little laugh when they trip over and graze their knee. Laughter really is the best medicine.

The most wasted of all days are ones without laughter.

E.E. Cumings

Seven Days without Laughter makes one Weak.

Mort Walker