



# Thrive

whānau āwhina  
plunket

Your impact on the future of New Zealand whānau  
Spring 2024

## Kia ora



Since our last issue of *Thrive*, we have seen heavy rains and heartbreaking floods in the Dunedin region, the original home of Plunket. We are extremely lucky and very grateful that our Dunedin hub, currently undergoing renovations, has been left largely untouched and will still open as planned before the end of the year.

Our thoughts are with the whānau who have been affected by the floods.

In September, we honoured Mental Health Awareness Week. I continue to be in awe of the vital work my staff do in the mental health space for whānau. Their work and the services we are able to offer provide support to new parents in times of crisis, and also in the day-to-day joys and challenges of raising children. Throughout this issue of *Thrive*, we look at some ways Plunket is able to be there for caregivers, so they can be their best for their tamariki.

We also touch on *Dunk it for Plunket* and some of our brilliant Dunkers (fundraisers) and fantastic partners from this year's event. We interview a long-serving volunteer and spotlight a committed donor. And in case you missed it, we share some rather big news about an immunisation pilot programme that we are beyond proud of...

Thank you, as always, for your support of Plunket. We hope to continue being there for whānau wherever and however they need us most.

Ngā mihi nui,



Fiona Kingsford, Chief Executive.

**P.S.:** As we approach the end of the year, stay tuned for a beautiful story about a courageous māmā and her gorgeous little girl this Christmas.



## Our services continue to make a difference to maternal mental health

September was certainly a busy month! Our teams celebrated Mental Health Awareness Week with engaging activities across the organisation that allowed us to touch base with colleagues and tune into our own sense of mental wellbeing.

This topic is a big focus for Plunket. My teams have contact with around 1,760 whānau every single day, thanks to our varied services across the motu. Being trusted faces in trusted places is something we take great pride in; it means we are engaging with parents constantly and can see firsthand the difference that mental wellbeing makes for families and their tamariki, particularly maternal mental health.

Māmā Chelsea shared her story with us. When she found the courage to get herself and wee baby Mikey to Plunket's Onehunga Playgroup, she found a support network she could rely on and her whole world changed for the better.

*"For the first time in a long time I didn't feel alone. I didn't have to put on a front. It was okay not to feel okay."*

*Everyone was kind and it was a relief to talk to real people sharing similar experiences."*

*"I'd been suffering from postnatal depression; we'd moved suburbs, my husband was back at work and I had no friends close by. So, when my Plunket nurse suggested I attend the playgroup it was a big step – but I'm so glad I did. I found my support network, my tribe, at the Onehunga Plunket Playgroup."*

Fast forward 18 months, and Chelsea is a regular at the playgroup. Mikey also absolutely loves going and seeing his little playmates, showing just how important Plunket's playgroups are for child social development, as well as maternal mental health support.

Playgroups and parent groups are not funded by the government – they operate entirely because of you, our generous donors.

Thank you for directly supporting mums like Chelsea.



## Dunk it for Plunket was a (Tim Tam) slam dunk!

We were absolutely blown away by the incredible effort of our Dunkers (fundraisers) during September's *Dunk it for Plunket*!

All sorts of Plunket supporters across the motu got together over a cuppa and dunked some bickies while raising funds, thanks to the Arnott's Dunk Kits (boxes of goodies to host a morning or afternoon tea with). Or they got creative and dunked things like basketballs, or even dunked themselves into ice baths and the sea (you may have seen my [brisk Wellington Harbour dip](#)!).

Together, you helped us raise almost \$150,000! These funds will keep our vital community services going strong, so we can be there for parents and help future generations thrive.

There were so many brilliant Dunkers, it's hard to spotlight one or two. A top individual Dunker has to be Clare Green, a creative fundraiser who 'dunked it her way' for Plunket by dunking paintbrushes all September long to create beautiful artwork for friends to purchase.







*Cromwell parents and bubs enjoying an Arnott's bikkie and play time.*

A Community Team that topped the leaderboard was Cromwell Mums & Bubs who kept increasing their goal after each playgroup and every Mums & bubs Pilates catch-up because of local generosity! Workplaces that stood out were HOOP that literally shot basketballs through hoops for Plunket in their office, and the team at Vidak who had never baked before in their lives but bravely held a bake sale for a good cause.

For the first time ever, we approached schools to *Dunk it for Plunket* and were amazed at some of the efforts, like from Future Focus Terrace Views ECE. They used their Dunk Kit to treat parents at drop-off in the morning and the wee ones dressed up and 'had a coffee' too. See Courtney and team in action in their gorgeous video. It's no wonder that they smashed their fundraising goal!

We also absolutely have to spotlight Marsden School in Wellington. Our brand ambassador, Isla, got together with some fellow Marsden students to get Breakfast TV reporter, James Fleury, into an ice bath at the end of a dunking obstacle course! A super creative way to *Dunk it for Plunket* and 'dunk it their way'.

Thank you to those who dunked it for Plunket this year, and to those who sponsored a Dunker by donating during their event or online. *Dunk it for Plunket* brought friends, whānau, colleagues and schools together this year over a hot cuppa, a lot of fun, and a shared love for Plunket. It's truly amazing to see such a unique and joyful fundraiser growing into an iconic national event.

If you fundraised this year and would love to participate next year, please email [supporters@plunket.org.nz](mailto:supporters@plunket.org.nz) to ask to be added to the VIP Dunker 2025 list!



*Isla, James Fleury from Breakfast TV and Marsden students on the dunking course.*



## A group of incredible Partners made *Dunk it for Plunket* a success

*Dunk it for Plunket* couldn't have happened and raised as much as it did without the support of some amazing partners.

A huge thank you to:

- Arnott's, who supplied the delicious biscuits in each of the Dunk Kits (boxes of goodies for Dunkers), ran in-store promotions of their Plains range with 10 cents of each packet sold going to *Dunk it for Plunket*, and also ran several in-house events to raise thousands;
- Huggies, who added handy baby wipes to each Dunk Kit, ran multiple office fundraisers to reach their own goal, in-store activations at select Woolworths stores to drive awareness of *Dunk it for Plunket*, and of course contributed the very generous Double Dunk Match Fund of \$20k to double the impact of donations;
- Bell tea and Nescafé coffee for making sure each Dunk Kit was stacked with hot drink options;
- NXP for the super fun Dunkability Rating Card;
- EPack, who lovingly packed and sent each Dunk Kit;
- Our public and internal prize providers, Mocka, Arnott's, Spark Health, Scully's, Orba Shoes and JB HiFi;
- Paramount NZ for engaging their franchisees in morning and afternoon teas, and donating generously.

And to all our corporate connections who got stuck in and dunked it for Plunket with silent auctions, internal competitions and bake sales – thank you. We are so appreciative.



Warehouse foremen and cookie curators, Tommy and George, with finished Dunk Kits on packing day at EPack.

## Q&A with Volunteer, Leanne Kirk

We are always grateful for the selfless support of our volunteers, people like Leanne. She is involved in the Home Visiting programme, one of our impactful community services that whānau benefit from in some regions across the motu. Home Visiting isn't government funded, so we rely on incredible donor support and volunteers like Leanne to make it possible.

### 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?

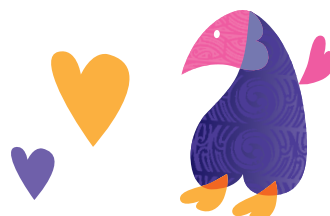
I am thoroughly enjoying spending up to six weeks supporting families who have new babies or young children, for 1-2 hours

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.

If you would like to enquire about volunteering, please complete the [form on our website](#).



## Pamela marks decades of being a Plunket supporter, with a gift in her Will

September was Wills month in New Zealand, an annual spot on the calendar for people to think about the legacy they want to leave. After providing for loved ones, many decide to leave a gift in their Will to a charity close to their heart.

Pamela chose to include a gift in her Will to the Plunket Foundation because of her long association with Plunket playgroups and a passion for looking after children.

As a nanny, Pamela regularly visited her local Plunket playgroup and saw the benefits for tamariki and whānau. Once retired, she became a regular volunteer at Plunket playgroups, giving parents the chance to connect with each other and create happy memories for their children.

*"I'd sit with the children so the mums could sit and talk. Mums get very isolated with a small child, so I'd keep an eye on the children for them. One lady at the playgroup told me, 'My boy really loves you. He talks about you all the time.'"*

Having seen the benefits of Plunket playgroups and knowing how heavily they relied on donations, Pamela decided to donate to Plunket on a monthly basis.

*"You can't make a better investment than in children," says Pamela, "because they're the future. If you bring them up right, they'll have a good life. You've got to make happy memories for*

*them. If you don't have good memories, you've got nothing to build on."*

In thinking about the future, Pamela made the thoughtful decision to care for the next generation by including a gift in her Will to the Plunket Foundation. Not having any children herself, she's thrilled to help Plunket give children in New Zealand the best start in life with this gift.



Pamela enjoying a rather sandy tea party at a Plunket playgroup.

## Other Plunket news from across the motu

- **In October, we made a huge announcement. To increase access and boost immunisation rates, Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora and Whānau Āwhina Plunket will pilot the delivery of childhood immunisations at a select number of sites across the country.**

This is an exciting but natural next step for us to train our specialist nurses and healthcare workers to begin offering childhood immunisations, alongside our existing services.

We warmly thank a generous donor who helped our team present our business case to Health New Zealand | Te Whatu Ora. When the news was announced on October 9, our donor was elated. *"I was driving when I heard the RNZ interview with Fiona (Plunket's CE) about immunisations, and I have to say I let out little yips of delight!"*

The first site will be in Whangārei, and it is expected to start administering childhood immunisations by the end of 2024. The next sites will be established and operational in Kaikohe, Hamilton, Taumarunui, and Whanganui by March 2025. The rollout of this pilot programme demonstrates our commitment to making it easier for whānau to get their tamariki vaccinated on time, to engage with whānau who are not enrolled in primary care, and in areas where immunisation rates are low.

For more information, you can [read our full article](#) or watch the [1News video coverage](#).



Associate Health Minister, Casey Costello, Health Minister, Dr Shane Reti and Whānau Āwhina Plunket Chief Executive, Fiona Kingsford.

- **In late September and early October, we teamed up with Dream South D and Sport Otago to offer three free, fun-filled Play Park events for tamariki.** Sport Otago's Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa Fund helped provide play equipment for the events, including some small pieces for whānau to take home with them afterwards!
- **Renovations at our community hub in Kaikohe are nearly finished.** For many years, our Whānau Āwhina Plunket building in Kaikohe has needed urgent repairs and renovations. As we receive no government funding for our property projects, we are thrilled to have raised over \$90,000 thanks to a few generous donors; one even gave an incredible match fund! Our newly renovated hub will open before Christmas, helping us improve health outcomes for whānau and tamariki in the Far North.