Thrive

Your impact on the future of New Zealand whānau | Winter 2025

whānau awhina plunket

Kia ora,

I hope between the last issue of *Thrive* and this one you've found ways to enjoy the cooler weather!

Matariki was a big highlight for me recently, with Plunket staff across the motu celebrating with each other and the whānau we serve. Now, I'm finding myself rugged up indoors with a hot cuppa and my nearest and dearest, including plenty of snuggles with my new grandson, of course! He has already had his first couple of Plunket checks, and his parents have even called Plunketline for help with a nappy bag. I've really enjoyed seeing Plunket kaimahi helping my loved ones in such a supportive way.

For some, having friends and whānau around for support isn't possible, so Plunket's services are even more vital. That's why we're pleased to announce that our in-home volunteer programme is going to start expanding across the country, so that Plunket can be right there for parents who just need a little extra help. We talk about *Giving People Support* (GPS) in our current appeal and volunteer, Marlene, who has helped mahi, Elly at home with twins. Read on for an update on how we're bringing this scheme – we could use your help in spreading the word.

In this issue, we also announce more immunisation pilot clinics opening! Future locations are set to open this month and in September. This pilot programme is showing us and Health New Zealand just how beneficial caregivers find having vaccinations rolled into Plunket-supported trusted services. The result is a multi-purpose, time-saving initiative that brings these ones together more easily and safely.

In other exciting news, the final results of the BestStart Butterfly Appeal are in; hear from an amazing supporter in her twenties who has decided to leave a gift in her Will to Plunket; and we chat with a super star volunteer in Auckland who has been helping pregnancy to Whānau Ariki and Kōrero Pūtake programmes for years. Read on for all these and more in *Thrive*.

"Thank it for Plunket…"

Thank you for taking the time to read about what's been happening here at Plunket. We so value your support, and we really want to show you how impactful that support is at the frontline. So, if you ever have a question about something or think we could add some specific topics of interest to *Thrive*, please reach out – this newsletter is for you.

Ngā mihi nui,

Fiona Kingsford, Chief Executive.

P.S. Yes, someone did say "Dunk it for Plunket" - it was me. Because this year, I'm aiming to raise double what I did in 2024, and also complete what we're calling an extreme dunk! Specifically, a bungee jump off the Auckland Harbour Bridge! I'll be bungy jump about 20 years ago and vowed I never would again…but it's for a great cause. You can sponsor me online or sign up yourself to get creative and dunk anything – or anyone – you like in September!

Our winter appeal is still going, so we can keep our services going in the year ahead…

Thank you so much for your support during our current appeal.

In this winter's campaign, we're sharing Elly's story. Elly is a loving māmā of twin girls, but the nature of her husband's work has him out of the home for long periods. Elly's twin girls are now 3 and weren't have a lot of local friends or family, and she's been starting to become a regular feeling. This is where Plunket's *Giving People Support* programme came into play - volunteer Marlene started visiting Elly and the girls every week. She offered practical help, like feeding a baby or helping Elly get to physio appointments after she unfortunately broke her foot. But truthfully, it was the simple act of sitting with Elly on her couch at home that became the highlight of Elly's week. Because even the strongest parents need company and connection.

So far, the appeal has raised just over $45k. But we need to raise $75k if we want to run our services as planned in the year ahead. It will also mean that we can keep rolling out the in-home volunteer programme in other places across the motu.

Plunket has the statistics and the reports (for the *Giving People Support* programme) and can see how valuable it is." South Canterbury Plunket's *Giving People Support* Coordinator, Juliana Sergeant, says. "It's a great service. Bit by bit, town by town, it will keep growing nationally."

Please **spread the word** about our winter appeal so that we can see Juliana's hope for *Giving People Support* and similar programmes come to Fruition across the whole country.

Marlene visiting Elly and her twin girls, Adalyn & Freya, for music and play.

A forward-thinking donor imagines an Aotearoa without Plunket…

Mils Morath is just around the corner (September), a time for people to write a Will for the first time (50% of people in New Zealand don't have a Will currently), or update their Wills with any new additions, including a charity. We recently talked to Jessica Black, a Southland born, Waikato-based supporter in her twenties who has included a gift in her Will to the Plunket Foundation.

Jessica describes herself as a "former Plunket Baby and Playgroup". She, and her mum spent hours volunteering at their local Plunket while raising Jessica and her three siblings. This personal Plunket experience, along with her particular line of work – Jessica is an economist who understands the importance of intervening in children at the beginning of their lives – meant that Plunket was a natural fit when choosing a charity to gift in her Will.

"It's really important we back organisations like Plunket," says Jessica. "I want so much from Plunket these playgroup interactions as a child."

And the assessment in Jessica definitely comes out when she discusses the gift itself.

"One of the reasons why I decided to leave a gift to the Plunket Foundation is because it's an endowment fund. The gift you leave is then invested and grows over time. I think that's amazing because it means your gift will live on way longer than that initial contribution."

With some of her friends now starting families, Jessica often hears about their Plunket nurse visits and how much her friends in rural Southland appreciate them, given how isolating life on the farm can be. She muses about what parenting could be like for them if Plunket weren't there. "Plunket's been around for over 100 years now, doing all these grassroots community-oriented services to support our tamariki, and I'd just hate to think what it'd be like without them We're just so lucky in New Zealand to have Plunket."

Using Footprint, an online Will provider, Jessica was able to create her Will in just 15 minutes. Reach out to Loren O'Sullivan if you'd like to take advantage of our 75% discount with Footprint: **loren.osullivan@plunket.org.nz**

Jessica Black, pictured with her Wahi Child Plunket book.

Read the full story

Dunk it for Plunket is back and biscuiter better than ever!

Dunk it for Plunket is back this September, and *registrations are officially open!*

Last year, Dunkers (fundraisers) came together with colleagues, friends and whānau across Aotearoa to share a cuppa, a yarn, and raise funds to keep Plunket's services going strong for generations to come.

Sign up today to host a morning or afternoon tea fundraiser at work, at home, with your community group or at school. Thanks to our friends at Arnott's, you can receive a 'Dunk Kit' - a host box jam-packed with goodies like the famous Tim Tam biscuits, their newest flavour, Strawberries & Cream!

The Kits also include Bell tea, Moccona coffee, Huggies wipes and other special surprises for 2025, Raising Funds for Whānau Awhina Plunket over a cuppa and a bickie (or three) - easy and delicious! It really is shaping up to be New Zealand's biggest fundraiser on the calendar.

Insider tip yes, there WILL be prizes again for fundraising superstars (or Super Dunkers, as we like to call them).

Our friends at Huggies have already kicked off the 2025 *Dunk it for Plunket* season nice and early, with an office morning tea where staff could also give kahu for absolutely nappy and wipe stock. A great extra fundraising mechanism! Some of the Plunket Fundraising team were able to attend and loved seeing everything in action. They also reflected on how important it is to have a great partnership, including mentioning about a recent visit Huggies legs renovation at Plunket clinic in 2009.

Ka pai, Huggies!

Head to **www.dunkitforplunket.nz** and get dunking!

KONA's Tarian Lowen (right) with Plunket's Kelly Doughty, Head of Fundraising and Olivia Linkers, Marketing Manager (left), surrounded by the absolute stock that will donated to 'Kay' at the first Dunk It for Plunket 2025 event.

We are pleased to announce the progress of our immunisation pilot programme with you.

Plunket is aiming to train up to 100 of our amazing nurses as vaccinators and will provide around 20 immunisation clinics across the motu. At the end of June, we opened two clinics in Paeroa, Te Awamutu, Tahape and the Wairarapa. These complement those already open in Whangārei, two locations in Hamilton, Kaikohe, Taumarunui, Whanganui and Tahape.

The new clinics kicked off their schedule of immunisation services with great community support, and a fantastic range of activities and giveaways for tamariki who got immunised, including books and drinks bottles.

Whānau at each clinic commented on the relaxed atmosphere and the feeling of being in a familiar environment, with familiar faces. They also really appreciated having recovery and play spaces for their tamariki after vaccinations.

The pilot is run in partnership with Health New Zealand, to help make immunisation more accessible to whānau and runs until June 2026. We will be rolling out more immunisation clinics over the next few months, check out our **website** to stay up to date.

Mānā Mya Tinsel- Marshall and her son, Te Pūtatara o Rehua with Plunket nurse, Kimpo Archer.

We have a winner! BestStart Howick takes top fundraiser award in BestStart Butterfly Appeal.

Each year our Star Partner, BestStart, runs an incredible appeal across the country to raise funds for Plunket's services. This year marked the 10th annual appeal and the final tally is officially in…$91,000! It's fitting that on a milestone year, the appeal raised the most it ever has.

BestStart's CE, Tony Rigall and Plunket's CE, Fiona Kingsford (both far left), with BestStart Howick staff and tamariki, and the incredible $91k cheque.

Of the 250 participating Centres, BestStart Howick took the top prize for the second time, with the award due thanks recently by visiting the fantastic Centre, with representatives from BestStart and Plunket. Tony Rigall, Our Chief Executive, Fiona Kingsford, and members of the Plunket Fundraising team got to spend time with the tamariki and saw BestStart's incredible early learning programme in action.

Tony Rigall, Chief Executive Officer of BestStart, was also in attendance. "At BestStart, we're proud to stand alongside Whānau Awhina Plunket. Our missions are closely aligned," said Tony. "Plunket supports tamariki in their health, and we support tamariki in their early learning. Together, we're walking alongside the same families, building stronger connections and outcomes where they're needed most."

Thank you again, BestStart.

Celebrating National Volunteer Week: Q & A with a passionate Auckland volunteer

A new Tamaki Makaurau volunteer, Raegan has drawn on her love for te reo Māori to revamp one of our Plunket playgroups in Wellsford!

Q: Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

A: I grew up in the Bayview area, in the little town of Mangawhai. I now live with my partner and five tamariki in Wellsford. I love arts, crafts and baking, and have a passion for working with tamariki under five. When I saw an ad earlier this year looking for a Plunket playgroup volunteer, I thought 'this would be great fit for me as I stay at home mum.'

Q: Tell us a bit about Tākaro Tote!

A: Tākaro means 'play' in te reo, so Tākaro Tote encourages tamariki and whānau to embrace and practice te reo Māori in a playful, fun and welcoming environment.

I am Māori myself and believe all children can find a sense of belonging in both speaking the language and with tikanga Māori (customs and traditional practices). Tamariki truly thrive in bilingual environments.

What I enjoy most about the playgroup is watching all the tamariki - not just my own - learn new things. The way their eyes light up is amazing.

Q: What has feedback been like from the local community?

A: We've been running since mid-March and have seen great attendance. We usually have at least 10 tamariki each session. We've had lots of lovely feedback from parents and caregivers, as well as the local children's librarian.

Q: Do you have any future plans for the playgroup?

A: At the moment we are still working on building capacity, so we would love for people to spread the word!

If you know of any families in the Wellsford area who would love the fun of Tākaro Tote, please let them know they're more than welcome to come along to the next session – they run on Wednesdays, from 10.30am till 1pm at 90 Rodney Street. And if you'd like to volunteer, **we'd love to hear from you!**

Plunket news from across the motu

At Whānau Awhina Plunket, our mission is to give every child in New Zealand the best possible start. A big part of succeeding in that mission is planning and delivering services and programmes that suit our growing and changing populations. That means continuous innovation so that we can wrap care around families and the various degrees they require in balance. Thank you for helping this become a reality.

We're pleased to provide you with updates on how we've been making that happen over the past few months:

- In June, Plunket formalised an exciting, landmark partnership with The Asian Network Incorporated (TANI). The plan is to work together over the next 18 months to strengthen support for Asian whānau with young children, particularly in the areas of maternal mental health and parenting.
  Our shared commitment to health equity, cultural inclusion, and delivering our services in a collaborative way will mean improved, culturally responsive care for Asian families across the motu. This is a big part of our vision for the future of tamariki health and wellbeing in the generations to come.

Our CE, Fiona Kingsford, and The Asian Network Incorporated CE, Vishal Ram signing the strategic MOU in Auckland together.

- Also in June, our Pregnancy and Parenting Education Team in Christchurch ran our very first course specifically for the Rainbow community!

We had 14 people attend the free two-day programme - seven parents-to-be, each with a partner or support person. The programme, which ranged from newborn care to mental-wellbeing and rainbow-specific parenting topics, was rated 'very important by the participants and delivered exceptionally well by our Pregnancy and Parenting Education facilitator, Kirsty Wilkinson.

"A few years in the making, this pregnancy and parenting course was delivered with care, inclusivity and with the unique needs of our diverse whānau in mind — and the feedback has been positively heartwarming," **says Pregnancy & Parenting Programme Manager – Tessa Taylor.**

We have been busy spreading the word about our fantastic, free PlunketLine service. Our 24/7 phone and video support is a resource that some caregivers haven't heard of but could certainly benefit from.

Our lactation video consultations, for example, are a great way for a struggling mum to seek advice, support and tips from our lactation breastfeeding journey. Being able to receive expert support from the comfort of their own home is amazing for a new mum.

Watch the video about our unique lactation consultations **here.**

PlunketLine
0800 933 922

Tamariki Tidbits: fun facts you may not know about little ones!

Did you know that a newborn pipi has more bones than you?

A newborn has around 300 bones, while most adults have 206. Having a bunch of smaller, softer bones gives babies extra flexibility. After all, they need to curl up in the womb before arriving earth side! Their smaller bones eventually join together to create the larger bones they need to thrive.

Words from whānau that you help by supporting Plunket:

"There are moments in motherhood where you feel completely lost, exhausted, overwhelmed and questioning if you're doing it right. I'll never forget one of those nights when my pipi just wouldn't settle. I had tried everything - rocking, feeding and singing softly, but the crying wouldn't stop. I felt like I was failing.

Then, in the quiet of the night, I called PlunketLine. A warm, reassuring voice answered, instantly making me feel less alone. She listened, calmed my worries and suggested a small change of holding my pēpi differently after feeding. I tried it, and just like that, the crying eased, the little body relaxed and sleep finally came.

That moment has stuck with me, not just because it saved a long night, but because it reminded me that I wasn't alone in this journey. Parenthood is full of uncertainties, but knowing there's always a caring voice ready to help makes all the difference."

If you would like more detail about these new stories, please contact the Fundraising team supporters@plunket.org.nz or call 0800 20 55 55.

whānau awhina plunket