



# Volunteer News

## Kia ora koutou

This month, we celebrate Te Wiki Tūao ā-Motu – National Volunteer Week from the 15-21 June.

I'd like to acknowledge the collective energies and efforts of all our remarkable Plunket volunteers across the motu. Every day, more than 600 of you give your time and skills to our communities, and we simply couldn't do what we do without you. Please take a minute to watch a short [appreciation video](#) I posted on my LinkedIn.

The 2025 theme is Whiria te tangata – weaving the people together. It celebrates the power of volunteering to create connection; strengthening

Quarterly pānui – June 2025

the fabric of our communities for a stronger and more inclusive Aotearoa New Zealand.

In this issue of Volunteer News, we catch up with Raegan Robinson who truly embodies this year's theme. She is one of our fabulous playgroup volunteers who has revitalised our Wellsford playgroup in Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland. Renaming it Tākaro Tots and incorporating her passion for te reo Māori and preschool learning, there's been lots of great feedback since it started in March. Keep reading to learn more about Raegan and her wonderful mahi.

Ngā mihi nui,

Fiona Kingsford, Chief Executive.



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## Dunk it for Plunket coming soon

Registrations are now open for 2025 and you're invited to ***Dunk it for Plunket!*** It's super easy to ***sign up***. We'd love you to grab your colleagues, friends, whānau, community group or school to fundraise so little lives can thrive.

Thanks to our friends at Arnott's, you can receive a FREE 'Dunk Kit'. This is a box jam-packed with favourites like the classic Tim Tam, Bell tea, Moccona coffee, Huggies wipes and fun activities to make your morning or afternoon tea fundraiser extra special.

... OR you can get creative and 'dunk it your way'. The possibilities of things (or people!) to dunk are endless.

**Our website** is stacked with inspiration and downloadable materials to support you while you Dunk it for Plunket! You can also read through some incredible stories that show how your support really does make a huge difference.

And if you can't Dunk it for Plunket yourself this year – you can still help by spreading the word with your local businesses, schools and community groups. Please reach out to Community and Events Fundraising Specialist, Jo Bailey, with any questions or ideas: [jo.bailey@plunket.org.nz](mailto:jo.bailey@plunket.org.nz).



## Proud to be a Plunket volunteer



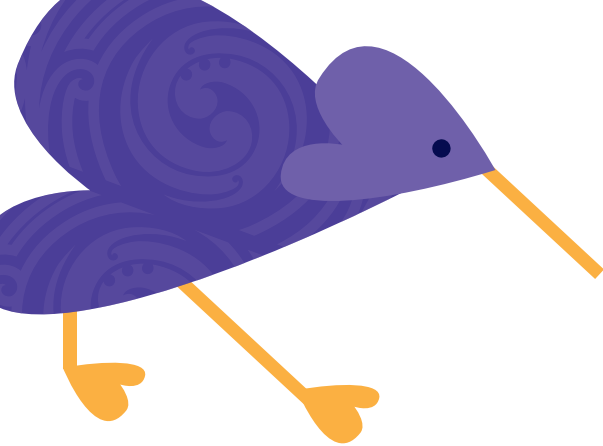
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### Proud to be a Plunket volunteer

To help you celebrate National Volunteer Week, we've created a special virtual badge! Here are some fun ways you could share it:

- Add to your Facebook or Instagram profile photo using a temporary frame
- Share as part of a short 'Proud to be a Plunket volunteer' post on your social media
- Share in your Facebook community groups/pages to inspire others to volunteer

[Download Badge Here](#)



## Supporting whānau with sleep

A free online sleep consultation with Plunket supported one whānau struggling with sleep deprivation to get back on track.

"Because our daughter would only feed back to sleep at night, she wasn't getting enough restorative sleep. This made our days together really difficult. I was getting basically zero sleep, so I was miserable and in turn made my partner miserable," says māmā Jessica.

"I had a lot of anxiety around sleep and the lack of it. I used to dread bedtime! There was so much advice online that it was overwhelming trying to sift through it to find something that might work for us."

After visiting the Whānau Āwhina Plunket website for advice around infant sleep, Jessica saw online sleep consultations were available. She called PlunketLine and spoke with a Plunket nurse who organised a referral.

"The sleep consultant really listened to us and validated how I was feeling. She helped us to move away from feeding pēpi to sleep at bedtime and for all naps, which is something I did not see as possible before engaging with Plunket."

"We were still assisting our daughter to fall asleep, but it meant my partner was able to take some of the load off me, which was the most helpful thing for us. Implementing the tips we were given meant our daughter started having longer stretches of sleep overnight and became a much happier baby during the day."



Māmā Jessica and her daughter

## A Polyfest success

We are incredibly proud of our kaimahi who braved the wild weather to support whānau at this year's April ASB Polyfest event in Manukau, South Auckland.

Our stall offered attendees a welcoming and comfortable space to feed and change pēpi, as well as a play area to keep little ones occupied with toys, colouring, bubbles and more. Plunket nurses and community Karitāne were on hand to offer support and advice on child health or parenting topics – and we had some great freebies to give away too.

Principal Pasifika Advisor Vienna Masoe says while it was a big job to get everything organised, it was well worth the effort. The team worked so much and gained valuable insight into where we can improve as an organisation.

"To be part of one of the largest Pacific festivals in the world, catering up to 100,000 visitors, was truly incredible and perfectly timed for Plunket. The diverse range of cultural groups represented allowed us to immerse ourselves in the community."



From left: Clinical Leader Krystle Leavasa-Avaui, Community Karitāne Rupi Ye, Principal Pasifika Advisor Vienna Masoe, and Recruitment and Retention Partner Michael-Rita Cowley.

"For Plunket to be there was another step towards our commitment to better serve Pacific communities and other populations. The many stakeholders who were willing to team with us on the ground speaks to the numerous opportunities we have ahead."

## A special offer for you

Whānau Āwhina Plunket and **Haven Financial** both believe every family deserves a brighter future, so have joined forces to support whānau through life's biggest moments. Families across Aotearoa are now being offered access to free financial wellbeing check-ups and tailor-made services across insurance, KiwiSaver and mortgages.

As part of our exciting partnership, all Plunket volunteers will also have access to this free offer. It includes a complimentary Will Kit to help protect your family's future too. Find out more and request your free financial wellbeing check below.



Plunket volunteers can enjoy a free financial wellbeing check with a friendly Haven adviser.



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## Celebrating Mary Anne Eyles

Congratulations to the amazing Mary Anne Eyles of Napier who has been awarded a King's Service Medal for her dedication to the community!

Mary first became a member of the Plunket Society back in 1976. She has held various positions across 17 years including as Secretary, Vice President and President of the Palmerston North branch and as a member of the New Zealand Plunket Executive. She also established the Plunket Tots and Toddlers course and helped manage the Plunket Karitāne Family Centre.

"I started volunteering with Plunket because I went to a coffee morning," Mary says.

"I was a new mum and needed to meet some people when we first moved to Palmy, and that was just brilliant."



Mary Anne Eyles (left) with the Governor-General of New Zealand, Dame Cindy Kiro.



## Passionate volunteer launches Tākaro Tots

We catch up with new Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland volunteer Raegan who has drawn on her love for te reo Māori to revamp one of our Plunket playgroups in Wellsford!

### Can you tell us a bit about yourself?

"I grew up in the Kaipara 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 a great fit for me as a stay-at-home mum."



### Can you tell us about Tākaro Tots?

"Tākaro Tots (tākaro meaning 'play') encourages tamariki and whānau to embrace and practice te reo Māori in a fun and welcoming environment. I am Māori myself, and believe all children can find a sense of belonging in 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."

### What has feedback been like from the local community?

"We've been running since mid-March and have seen great attendance. We usually host 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."

### Do you have any plans for the playgroup looking ahead?

"At the moment we are still working on building capacity, so we would love for people to spread the word! I am looking forward to Matariki where we will celebrate with some crafts and baking."

## Plunket's home help service continues to grow

Our Giving People Support (GPS) program is seeing great success thanks to our team of amazing volunteers and Plunket staff who make it possible.

A much-needed home-help service for whānau beginning in South Canterbury 13 years ago, it has now spread to North Otago and more recently Blenheim, along with an existing version in Dunedin and Auckland that was inspired by GPS.

The goal is to continue getting the service available in even more areas.

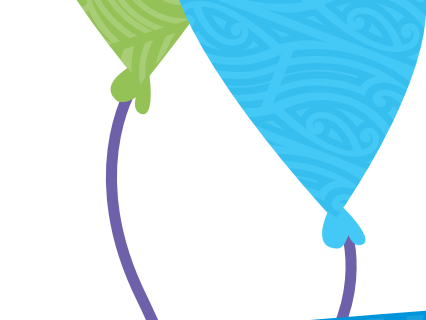
"Nationally Plunket has backed the service now, they've got the statistics and the reports, and they can see how valuable it is," says South Canterbury Plunket GPS Co-ordinator Juliana Sargeant.

"We have secured quite a bit of funding as well through companies and grants where they have seen the benefit of it. It's a great service... Bit by bit, town by town it will keep growing nationally."

[Read the full story published in the Otago Daily Times earlier this month.](#)



Photo credit: Connor Haley (The Courier Newspaper)



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