



Volunteer News

Quarterly pānui – March 2025

Kia ora koutou

Welcome to our March issue of Volunteer News.

I would like to start off by acknowledging the sad news of our Community Service Manager Jane Denley's recent passing.

Jane was a respected and valued member of the Whānau Āwhina Plunket team. She worked in South and Mid Canterbury for 23 years and more recently across Canterbury, Nelson Marlborough and the West Coast. She was a huge champion for her team, her region and Community Services mahi nationally. We have been truly fortunate to have had someone of her calibre with us and have valued Jane's leadership, effort and commitment to improving outcomes for whānau.



With 2025 flying by, we've been kept busy with lots of exciting mahi happening across the motu to share with you. Between launching our very first immunisation clinic up in Whangārei and opening a beautiful new hub for our East Auckland families, it's all go here at Whānau Āwhina Plunket!

In this edition, we give some insight into our time at Te Matatini – the popular festival of traditional Māori performing arts that was held in Ngāmotu/New Plymouth. It was a privilege to be in a space where we could engage with Māori whānau, and our staff thoroughly enjoyed being immersed and embraced by te ao Māori.

We also acknowledge a group of our fabulous volunteers who dedicated more than 300 hours of their time to support our staff with a Christmas fundraiser that saw a significant amount of money raised for Plunket. We wouldn't have been able to do it without you!

Ngā mihi nui,

Fiona Kingsford, Chief Executive.



whānau āwhina
plunket

Latest News

Supporting whānau at Te Matatini



We were thrilled to have a presence at the 'Olympics of kapa haka' – Te Matatini in Ngāmotu/New Plymouth recently!

During the multi-day event, around 750 people visited our stall which offered a chilled, relaxed space for whānau away from the hustle and bustle of the crowds. We had a nappy change and breastfeeding area, activities for tamariki, exciting giveaways and freebies, plus support available for any child-related concerns or questions.

With an estimated 2.5 million viewers online and an audience of around 70,000, Te Matatini is a major event in the Māori cultural calendar that has continued to grow in size and popularity since it began in 1972.

“Te Matatini aims to contribute positively to the overall health and social wellbeing of whānau, which aligns strongly with our own vision for Whānau Āwhina Plunket.”

– Hera Black (Pou Whakarae - Chief Advisor)

Read more about what whānau thought of our space on the [Te Matatini website](#)

A focus on our volunteers

Keeping kids cosy

Playgroup Coordinator Paula Gonzalez from the Onehunga Playgroup in Auckland had the pleasure of meeting with the Knitwits group from Parkside Village - Metlifecare Retirement Village.

She gratefully received a generous donation of beautiful handknitted items for the upcoming winter season. The kind-hearted group has been gifting their creations to share with tamariki in Onehunga for over seven years now.

We are so appreciative of the Knitwits' continued support – they bring warmth and joy to so many pēpi, tamariki and whānau who need it the most.



The power of playgroups

Our latest fundraising appeal focuses on Plunket playgroups and how they're the village that every whānau deserves. Alana Smythe, one of our playgroup coordinators in South Auckland, shares her journey of how she first became involved with our playgroups when her son was born and she was looking for some connection.

Now, a number of years later, Alana runs multiple playgroups because she's passionate about creating a welcoming and supportive space for whānau.



Alana (left) with Plunket whānau



[Read more](#)

On the move to Botany Town Centre

Attending a Plunket appointment will be even more convenient for many Tāmaki Makaurau/Auckland whānau, with the opening of a refurbished new clinic space in the popular Botany Town Centre shopping mall.



A dawn blessing was held in early March with local iwi Ngāi Tai ki Tāmaki and Plunket's Chief Executive Fiona Kingsford in attendance. Staff took part in waiata (song), shared kai (food) and it was great to see representatives from Asian Family Services in attendance.

Clinical Services Manager Joanne Udy says it is hugely important that we ensure access to our services is as seamless as possible for whānau.

“Located in the heart of East Auckland, Botany Town Centre is a really ideal place for us to be. The mall has parent facilities, ample parking and more than 200 stores including supermarkets, so whānau can get their shopping and errands done or even just enjoy a coffee at a nearby cafe when they come in to see us.

“Well Child appointments, drop-in clinics, B4 School Checks and playgroups will be available in our new premises. We will have capacity for other providers such as midwives to use the space too. We've recently shifted from the Pakuranga Plaza and it's great we are now situated in a central area that sees a lot of foot traffic. We're excited to support whānau here.”

More from Whānau Āwhina Plunket

A festive fundraiser

In the lead-up to Christmas, the Hamilton Plunket team and 60 of our fabulous volunteers ran a gift-wrapping station at the Chartwell Shopping Centre. 330 hours of volunteer time went into it and just over \$14,000 was raised for Plunket!



Community Services Coordinator Rebecca Jones-Gaylor (left) with Linda Jackson from the Chartwell Shopping Centre.

Did you know...

We've seen some great statistics come through for the period of October to December 2024! We are so thankful for your hard mahi and dedication which makes so much of this work possible.

Our active volunteers contributed over **2,000** hours of their time.

We had contact with more than **25,000** whānau through planned group activities.

Through a client's eyes

There's nothing better than hearing first-hand from whānau how the work we do truly makes an impact. Check out some of the latest feedback we've received.

“Every visit with my Plunket nurse is awesome. All of my five children have received love and support. Christmas 2024 we couldn't afford presents, so our Plunket nurse referred us and surprised my kids with some. Thank you for your service and hard work caring for children in New Zealand.”

– on our Plunket nurses

“We love the swimming lessons organised by Plunket at Hawkesbury pool which are very well organised. The ratio of instructors to children is the best you will get anywhere, and the subsidy Oceana Gold provides means the lessons are accessible for many local families who may not normally do lessons due to price/travel.”

– on our water confidence classes in Otago

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