



YWCA Christchurch *Update*

**Newsletter
March 2007**

Greetings

Greetings Friends and Supporters of the YWCA Christchurch

We especially greet and thank all those groups and individuals who responded to our request for donations in kind or money for the upgrade to the Women's and families Shelter at 285 Hereford St. during last winter.

The bedding, furniture, furnishings, utensils etc. and generous support of the service for homeless and transient women was a significant factor in the YWCA Board's decision to take up its option and continue the long term lease of 285 Hereford St. for the next 3 six year terms with the Landlord (CCC). That lease option is secure for 18 more years.

This year, in addition to inviting your continuing support for women and programmes at 285 Hereford St (details in newsletter and in the website), we are inviting community support to send two women to the World YWCA Council 2007 in Nairobi, Kenya in July – "Changing Lives Changing Communities". (details on the YWCA World and National websites). www.ywca.org.nz or www.worldywca.info

The first of this year's 1883 Luncheons will be held Saturday 19th May at Riccarton House in Riccarton Bush – the topic will be the "International Women's Summit" – 4-7 July "Women's Leadership Making a Difference on HIV & AIDS". Speakers and times to be confirmed. Attendance will be by ticket only and as spaces will be limited please notify us early using the response form or website if you want to purchase one or more tickets or a table for 4.

The second of the 1883 Luncheons will be in October and be a report back from that International Women's Summit and the World YWCA Council Meeting by an attendee. Date to be notified.

We have been active with submissions to the CCC – Long Term City Council Plan, the draft Community Development Strategy, the draft Social Housing Strategy and a critique of the first year reporting of progress on the "Safer Christchurch" strategic policy implementation.

We also remain updated and involved through our President with NCW and submissions on local and national Sustainable Development as this is the UN Decade for Education on Sustainable Development 2005-2015. A special emphasis, which links with the YWCA internationally, nationally and locally, is Freedom from Violence.

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YWCA CHRISTCHURCH

*Empowering women across
three centuries*

Younger Women seeking shelter

YWCA Women’s Shelter in Hereford St, Christchurch is experiencing an increase in young women seeking shelter. 43% of the women staying at the shelter were under 20 years of age. The YWCA provides a qualified Social Worker experienced in working with young women. Of the families, 30% of all the mothers have been / are teenage mothers. 71% of young women who stay are pregnant. The Shelter is usually full with stays averaging from 8 days to 13.5 weeks. We have to turn away some callers when there are no rooms available or the caller can find alternative support.

“Community Development Centre”

The blessing ceremony of refurbished space at 285 Hereford Street was held on 10 November 2006 concurrent with the visit of World & National YWCA & Pacific Island Guests attending the HIV & AIDS P.I. Fono (see page 3). We also held a training session for the visitors and presenters in the Centre on 10th November.

1883 Group

The inaugural year of this group was 2006. We are grateful for the generous support of its members. To join, please see page 4.

Two luncheon meetings were held last year at Riccarton House. Jan Arnold , mountaineer, mother, medical practitioner and guide spoke about climbing Mt Everest with her late husband Rob Hall in 1993. Ann Dysart, Manager of the Community Relations Team, Ministry of Social Development spoke about the work to support strong families and launched the booklet ‘Parenting Programme - Alternative Discipline’ compiled by Tufuga Lagatule a Life Member of the YWCA of Aotearoa and Consultant to Christchurch YWCA Board. 2007 events—see letter first page.

1st Pacific Women HIV/AIDS Fono held

Over 80 people attended the YWCA and Pacific Women Fono on Saturday 11th November 2006. The theme of the day was 'Break the Silence—Signs of Hope'. For fuller report please see website: www.ywca.org.nz/christchurch

The YWCA Christchurch was pleased to welcome Lisa Hayes and Tarusila Badburgh Board Members on the YWCA World Executive from New Zealand and Fiji respectively.

Zoe Bake-Patterson, spoke of her work for the Pacific Island AIDS Foundation in Rarotonga. She said that Pacific peoples were private and many held incorrect views and stereotypes on who can catch the virus, "we must dispel these myths and stigmas with information". Given the low population numbers, the low number of recognized cases of HIV/AIDS actually has a huge impact on Pacific Island nation populations. Low numbers of people are being tested and no anti-retroviral treatment is available in the islands.

Trusulia Badburgh works as a Youth Officer for the Ministry of Youth and Sports in Fiji. She said that the reality of sexual exploitation, denial, low literacy, poverty and unsafe sex means that everyone must be involved in the fight against this disease.

Marama Smith is HIV Positive and as (Maori) Tungata Whenua of Aotearoa is an advocate for people living with HIV/AIDS. After living for many years with a 'living to die' attitude she discovered her traditional upbringing, and supported by her spiritual strength and whanau, plus access to anti-retroviral drugs, she has a new perspective on life.

The participants took part in workshops and among the conclusions declared that testing is not an end in itself. There are mental health considerations and ongoing support needs.

Talking about the realities of sexual behaviour without blame or shame will develop understanding and lead to support of those living with HIV/AIDS, and limit the spread of the virus.

Spreading the message is up to all of us. The responsibility is ours as individuals and as a community.

Tina—10 years of supporting women

Tina will celebrate 10 years involvement with the YWCA Women's Shelter in July. "I started as a volunteer when I was doing a training course with the Y" she says. After a year I applied for the job of Accommodation Support Worker and have been on the job ever since". Tina currently works the weekday night shift, making sure the women and children are safe. "I'm someone to listen to their problems. I don't give advice but can help point them in the right direction" says Tina. She tries hard to motivate the women to get help, training or what ever they need to make a difference in their lives. "I don't do it for them, they have to help themselves but I find options, phone numbers and encourage them. We have opened a resource centre with computers which they can use."

It's what I
wanted to do with my life

Tina says that that her own personal life experiences as a young woman helped her understand the underlying issues many of the women face. "I love it, its never been about money, this is what I wanted to do" says Tina. "I've even delivered a baby, but mostly its pretty hard work as the women need assistance to motivate and to help themselves."

Thanks Tina and congratulations on 10 years of making a difference for women.



RESPONSE FORM

Name:.....

Address:.....

Email:Ph. No:

- Yes I would like to become an 1883 Group member and receive regular updates by email / post (delete one)
- Yes I enclose an annual donation to the Association (please nominate a specific programme or general YWCA activities).....(details)
- Yes I would like to assist as a volunteer - please supply possibilities by email / post
- Yes I would like a ticket / tickets held for the Luncheon on 19th May