



BRAVE HEARTS NZ/MANAWA KAHA AOTEAROA

NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2022

***A New Zealand where the negative impact of substance abuse
is no longer an issue within our communities.***

Welcome, Tena Koutou, to our newsletter keeping you all up to date with what is happening.

A MESSAGE FROM ERIN

A very warm welcome those members who have joined us since our last newsletter.

Our in-person meeting numbers are down due to ill health and mental stress caused by covid as well as having been a very wet winter. We are hopeful with the return of daylight savings and summer on the way that you will be encouraged to come out again as there is so much more benefit in attending in person. We are also experiencing low numbers of trained facilitators in some regions so if you know of anyone or are keen to do this, we would love to hear from you.

I was privileged to attend Cutting Edge Conference in Ōtautahi in September. It was a great to be able to come together with others in the workforce and reconnect after three years apart...to learn and be inspired by others stories.

Adjacent Spaces panel discussion had Francois Barton, Business Leaders Health and Safety Forum, speaking about employers' concerns. 77% of employers surveyed specified meth use as their biggest concern.

Working with Whanau was part of the Concurrent Sessions - Melissa Roberts, Family Support CADs Auckland, spoke about the work Brave Hearts were doing and Andrew Munro and his team from Meth Help Odyssey session entitled "Meth use in challenging times" also spoke about the need for including the whanau.

It was encouraging to see that Brave Hearts is now more well known, acknowledged and recognized within the sector and that the importance of educating whanau is of great importance particularly if we want to get on top of this at a generational level.

We continue to advocate for needs of family/whanau – the ones who are often trying to help family members to move into recovery whilst at great need of supports in place for themselves. Remember we are here to help you.



New Board Member



We are delighted to welcome Andrew Munro to our Board.

Andrew has been the Meth Help Team Coordinator at Odyssey House Christchurch for the past four years. Prior to this, Andrew worked in Melbourne for seven years for Odyssey House Victoria specialising in alcohol and drug services for families and young people. He is a Clinical Social Worker and has a Master's Degree in Social Work from Deakin University, Australia. He has also worked extensively in specialist mental health services. Andrew is passionate about horse riding and enjoys travel and new experiences.

New Mount Maunganui Day Meeting!

This meeting will be of particular interest to those Grandparents Raising Grandchildren and for those who cannot attend evening meetings. Come along for a cuppa and kai and share or just sit and listen in our lovely welcoming space in our Mount Maunganui office. Meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of each month at 10.00am.

New Rotorua Support Meetings!

We are excited to announce we are starting support meetings in Rotorua on the 2nd Thursday of each month, beginning Thursday 10 November am 7pm at the Rotorua Library, 1127 Haupapa Street.

To find out more visit our website www.bravehearts.nz. Meetings details are updated at the start of each month. We also send regular emails regarding the upcoming meetings. If you would like to be added to our email list, please email us at support@bravehearts.nz

New Whakatane Support Meeting

Our new Whakatane meetings have started! They are held on the 3rd Tuesday of every month at Pou Whakaaro, 1 Bracken Street and facilitated by the amazing Michelle Brewerton. We have monthly speakers, so come along and share or just feel free to listen and learn in this wonderful, supportive group.

6 Friday, September 16, 2022, Rāmere, te tekau mā ono o Mahuru | www.thebeacon.co.nz NEWS

New support group for addiction

Cameron McCausland-Taylor
Staff reporter

A NEW substance abuse support service has started in Whakatāne.

Brave Hearts NZ provides support for whānau and friends of those struggling with substance abuse.

It was founded in 2016 by two mothers of children who had struggled with methamphetamine addiction, which sparked a passion to support others in similar situations.

Support group meetings have been held in Tauranga since 2016, with a number of Whakatāne whānau traveling to attend.

However, meetings are now being held in Whakatāne on the third Tuesday night of each month.

"It's very laid back and informal," executive director and co-founder Erin O'Neill said. "It's all about people sharing where they're at and supporting others."

"It's welcoming and inclusive, and people can participate how they want. There's a chance to introduce yourself, but if people just want to sit in a corner and listen, they can do that too."

Every so often, the group also invites speakers into the space including those with lived experience of addiction, or representatives from support organisations.

When Brave Hearts first began, Ms O'Neill said she noticed there was not a lot of whānau involvement in addiction. However, in time, whānau began noticing the importance of healing the entire whānau unit, not just the addicted person.

Ms O'Neill said a common theme was people wanting to "heal the addict". However, Brave Hearts instead equipped



HELPING WHĀNAU: Erin O'Neill (right) of Brave Hearts NZ, pictured with Glenys Taupo, is pleased a support group is starting in Whakatāne. Photo supplied

the things they enjoy doing, as well as teaching them how to be careful by going through what to do and what not to do in these situations."

Brave Hearts has seen huge shifts in the lives of some who attend the support group.

Ms O'Neill said one couple made significant changes with regard to their son who struggled with substance abuse.

"It took them a long time, but once they put things in place around their son they felt more empowered and in control. The person struggling with addiction picks up on that, realising that their loved ones won't always be there to run around after them and pick up the pieces. We then begin to see a shift in the addict themselves."

She said having such people attend group meetings was hugely beneficial, as they could share their story and support others to take similar action.

Family and friends can come along to our meetings and take their learnings back into the community. It not only benefits that family unit, but it benefits the whole community... It's hard in these smaller communities where everyone knows everyone. People are worried that they'll know someone at the meeting. But I think, well, wouldn't that be great? They are there for the same reason and can support and help each other."

Recognising there can be a huge amount of whākamā (shame) around attendance, Brave Hearts also use Zoom, with members welcome to attend with their cameras switched off.

One-on-one sessions can also be arranged.

The next support group is on September 20 at Pou Whakaaro House in Bracken Street, Whakatāne at 7pm.

whānau with knowledge and tools so they were more resilient and able to cope with the realities of having an addicted person as part of their whānau.

"Healing the addict is up to the addict themselves. Families take to learning

how to step back and support the addicted person in positive ways. It's really hard for people to pull back because it's your child or your partner.

"We teach our whānau to put their own oxygen mask on first and find out

how to step back and support the addicted person in positive ways. It's really hard for people to pull back because it's your child or your partner.

"We teach our whānau to put their own oxygen mask on first and find out



RESEARCH

In collaboration with researchers at Bethlehem Tertiary Institute, Brave Hearts have been interviewing families and whānau about the impacts of supporting a family member coping with addiction. This has now been completed and a summary of key findings will be shared with all members once available. We are hoping the findings will help Brave Hearts find ways improve and expand our services and to bring the important work we do to more families and whānau in need.

Brave Hearts NZ Regular Giving Program

A big thank you to all our very generous donors. We are grateful and appreciate that we cannot do this without your support.

A monthly pledge of \$25.00 would contribute to the cost of operating the 24/7 telephone hotline that is available to everyone in the community who needs help to cope with this horror.

A monthly pledge of \$50.00 would provide a counselling session for a family, giving them the tools to keep safe and the 'know how' to best help the addict.

A monthly pledge of \$60.00 would contribute to the costs of the group support meetings being held in your community.

A pledge or a one-off gift of any size would make a difference.

To make a pledge or a one-off gift online go to: www.bravehearts.nz

To donate by bank transfer:

Brave Hearts NZ

03-0415-0051504-00

Reference: Your Name

We would like to acknowledge our generous donors and supporters for their continued support, which enables us to offer our services free to the community.