



iosis
transforming
family life for good

Turnaround

The Iosis Newsletter – March 2021



Stacey's story ... from meth addict to caring mother

When Stacey (32 years) went to Merivale last year with her three-month-old son, her other four children, aged from five to 18 years, were in foster care. Stacey was hooked on meth, which she started taking when her violent partner was sent to prison for assault.

As a young mum without a good role model, Stacey didn't know a lot about parenting. "There was no routine – the kids slept when they were tired and they ate when food was offered. They didn't go to school. I swore at my children and didn't even realise there was another way."

Another way – a better way

The six months Stacey and her son spent at Merivale changed everything. Merivale is our residential parenting programme for mothers with a background of abuse, addiction or domestic violence. Mothers receive counselling and attend a range of life skill, self-development and parenting classes.

"To go to a place which is non-judgemental and where they say to leave your past at the door and concentrate on what's ahead ... it's life-changing. It has been incredible to see how the children respond to me now that I communicate with them differently. I've also seen now how important a constant routine is and that they like it."

Stacey now has a sponsor to call on should she start to feel vulnerable and her great progress means her children can come back to live with her. "We are all so excited," says Stacey. "My kids know I love them and that I'm able to care for them. What could be better?"

Continued overleaf

Inside...

Page 2 CEO's message

Page 3 Getting your finances sorted

Page 4 Celebrating Jillian Parsons



PAGE 3

A message from our CEO

The theme of this newsletter is 'a new year, a fresh start'. And I truly hope and pray that 2021

really will be a fresh start and a more stable year for all, especially the families we work with, our staff and our community.

For Iosif, our focus in 2021 is to deepen our understanding of the communities we serve and the cultures

that are important to them. Another key project this year is the development of our Hutt Road site. We'll share more about this in future updates, but this important project will make a huge difference, allowing Iosif to better serve more families in need in our community.

Finally, in March, we celebrate 15 years of Iosif. That's 15 years of helping families, couples, parents and children learn new skills, overcome huge challenges and transform their lives for good. I pray that we can continue this vital work for the next 15 years and beyond – and my heartfelt thanks to all those who make it possible!

Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters - CEO



Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters

The services that helped Stacey turn her life around

For most of our clients, the complex nature of the challenges they face requires wraparound services that work together to create positive change. Stacey is a wonderful example of the benefits of this multi-tiered approach.

Stacey's older children were cared for by an Iosif foster carer while she was at Merivale. They've also met with one of our children's counsellors, plus Stacey is working with an Iosif social worker to ensure the smooth transition of her children back to her care.

AOD (Alcohol or Drug) Early Recovery Skills Programme

A 10-week programme designed to help addicts

overcome substance abuse, learn about recovery skills and discover new support networks to maintain change.

Non-violent Communication (NVC)

A discussion group offering tips and strategies to help parents learn to manage their children's behaviour and gain the skills to parent their children in a positive and loving way.

Women Supporting Safety Programme

A 10-week group programme for women dealing with the effects of domestic violence, who are seeking support and encouragement to move forward with their lives. 🌀

Prayer needs

- We pray for the families we serve in the community as they face this year, many with ongoing challenges
- We pray for school children as they return after COVID-19-related disruptions.
- We pray for our social workers as they carry the load while we are short-staffed.

New year, fresh start: getting your finances sorted

- By Karen Smith, Financial Mentor

2020 was a tough year for many people. Add the expenses of Christmas into the mix, and paying off debt can be very challenging. A good way to get your finances back on track is by working with a financial mentor.

A lot of people use 'buy now, pay later' options to buy Christmas presents. On the upside, you can pay it off in instalments with no interest or fees. But on the downside, it can be a real struggle to pay off the debt.

If you miss payments you'll be charged penalties and the debt can quickly spiral out of control. Before using this option, make sure you can afford the repayments. Better still, be prepared and have some savings in place for Christmas.

A financial mentor can help you work out how to plan ahead - for example, by putting \$10 a week into a savings account – which can help you avoid all that debt and stress next Christmas!

If you have debts, focus on paying them off as soon as possible by putting any extra cash towards them, e.g. sell unwanted items or go without takeaways until the debt is cleared.

But if you can't afford to pay back debt, contact your creditor and try and work out an affordable repayment plan. A financial mentor can help you contact creditors or negotiate an affordable repayment amount on your behalf. 🎯



Mary's story: reducing debt & stress levels

Mary* had been made redundant before Christmas and was struggling to repay outstanding debts on a solo parent benefit. She couldn't afford food, and was relying on weekly food parcels for her and her son.

Our financial mentor, Karen, reviewed Mary's budget and discussed ways to reduce outgoings and to increase her income. She also explained a variety of options, including applying for hardship with both her creditors and KiwiSaver.

With Karen's support, Mary negotiated reduced debt repayments with her creditors to an affordable amount. She completed a 'work waiver' with her vehicle finance company, which will cover most of Mary's car payments for up to 12 weeks. She also submitted a KiwiSaver hardship application to pay off a debt. This means she'll have extra money each week.

As a result, Mary is now able to afford food, reduce her debts and pay essential living costs – which has also significantly reduced her stress levels! 🎯

** Name changed to protect identity.*



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Jillian Parsons - celebrating 15 years at Iosis

Jillian started working at Iosis 15 years ago, when we had rebranded from Baptist Action. She says she was undertaking a Bachelor of Clinical Studies when our founding CEO asked her to work as a social worker at the newly formed Iosis. The CEO suggested she change her degree to a Bachelor of Social Work. Jillian agreed and joined our small founding team.

“It was an exciting time. Adopting a multi-disciplinary approach meant Iosis could now offer a wraparound service to clients, to better overcome the complex challenges they faced. This approach created a strong foundation for the work Iosis undertakes today.”

“It is a life-changing time in their lives and I feel privileged to be on this journey with them.”

The other reason that led Jillian to join Iosis was because it is faith-based. “I had taken my previous role to deepen my understanding of my Māori culture. The next step in my journey was to find my way back to the Lord.”

Jillian who is now a counsellor and programmes facilitator at Merivale, says it is a privilege to work

alongside clients. “Merivale is a special place. I’ll be working alongside the mums to encourage them to think beyond their past experiences.

“Every new mum entering Merivale is encouraged to leave all that went before at the door and to start on a whole new journey.

Through our work we show them other options and new ways of communicating and dealing with challenges. We make them see that they are worthy — that they have the right to have an opinion and to be loved and to love.” ☺



Jillian Parsons

If you would like to donate to Iosis to help us continue to transform family life for the better, please email supporters@iosis.org.nz or make a donation on our website www.iosis.org.nz/support-us/donate/. Thank you as always for your incredible support.

Christmas thanks

Our thanks to those who so generously supported Iosis families at Christmas, including Epsom Baptist Church and Life Church who donated 120 food

parcels, which we delivered to families with the greatest need. Thank you for giving these families a special Christmas. ☺



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