

School social work – a unique position

Pandemic-related stress has significantly affected children and young people. However, Iosis is well-placed to respond to their needs through school-based social work.



“There is more anxiety in general in the world. But it has gone up definitely since the pandemic happened,” says Heidi Austin-Crawford, manager of Iosis’s school social workers.

In response, her team has created two programmes to run in schools. One is about anxiety. The other deals with online well-being, since social media is how young people typically engage with their peers—and even more so during lockdowns.

“In the past if there were crises you might see the news, but the awareness was not so acute. It is more tangible when it is on social media.

“There is also a lot of comparison online. People feel like they need to project a false image of themselves,” says Heidi.

Some commentators pinpoint social media one-upmanship and a lack of engagement with school being contributing factors to the recent spate of ram raids and car thefts by minors. Heidi acknowledges these are real issues, but says the reasons are not so simplistic.

“For the last two-and-a-half years, whānau have just been managing getting through life. But now a lot of trauma and mental health problems are raising their heads. Also, for some kids, school is

continued overleaf

Inside...

Page 2 CEO’s message | Training the trainers | Prayer needs

Page 3 Who is a SWiS and what do they do?

| Meet our school social work team

Page 4 Farewell to Jillian Parsons

| Bernard’s ‘bits and bobs’



A message from our CEO

As a former teacher myself, I feel for students, teachers and schools trying to find their way in this pandemic-scarred world we all find ourselves in now.



Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters

For many children in the formative years of their education, lockdowns, school closures and self-isolation have impacted their social skills as much as their

academic learning. Teachers are playing a catch-up game in the classroom, while navigating their own Covid-related family dilemmas at home. Schools are under immense pressure, with a shortage of staff and resources.

Now, more than ever, Iosi is thankful for the opportunity to work in schools. There we can develop real relationships with children and their whānau. We thank you for your support, which enables us to work alongside families in multiple ways, helping them to transform their family life for good.

Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters
CEO

School social work – a unique position

continued from previous page

not a place where they can learn in a way that works for them. Schools and teachers, too, are carrying much stress.

“That’s why our role is so important. School social workers have the ability to take time to connect with kids and whānau who don’t normally engage with social services. That in itself is pretty special, and long-term it is quite successful. We’re so blessed to have such a unique position.”

Training the trainers

Iosi encourages professional development for staff. Recently our school social workers trained with Empowerment Trust to help them teach children about keeping themselves safe in multiple situations.

“We did this because body safety was coming up as an issue in schools,” says Heidi Austin-Crawford. “It’s also helping kids learn how to vocalise and make decisions about what is good or not good. This knowledge flows in together with the knowledge we have built as a result of our own well-being and anxiety programmes in schools.”

Prayer needs

Please pray for successful outcomes for the children and families our school social workers are currently engaging with. We have several vacant positions across the organisation in what is a difficult time to recruit qualified and experienced staff—please pray we will soon find the right people for these roles.

Who is a SWiS and what do they do?

Iosis's school social work team has developed a picture book, explaining to children how a SWiS (Social Worker in Schools) can help them and their whānau.

Illustrated by Heidi Austin-Crawford and one of her team, Jolisa Silu'uga, the book follows two fictional child characters, Apa and Loimata, as they engage with a social worker at their school. Iosis plans to publish the book, with it potentially becoming a resource for other school social work agencies too. 🌀



Meet our school social work team



Heidi
Manager



Sheree
Rosehill & BLENNZ



Regina
Park Estate, Kereru & Orere



Kimiora
South & West Manurewa



Vaimatagi
Senior Practitioner &
Manurewa High



Justine
Papakura High



Jolisa
James Cook High



Cecilia
St Anne's Catholic



Siosifa
Senior Practitioner &
Finlayson Park



Cassandra
Papakura Normal



Josh
Te Maturanga



Christian
Leabank Primary

Want to see why our school social workers love working at Iosis?
Check out this video clip! <https://youtu.be/89w-phlQ9sM>

“We get to believe in children and their whānau, and to hope for better for them. That’s where change starts. Because if you don’t have anyone who believes in you, how can you move forward?”

– Iosis school social work team.



Stay current with what is happening at Iosis.
‘Like’ our Facebook page www.facebook.com/IosisLtd

Farewell to Jillian Parsons

Recently we farewelled Jillian Parsons, affectionately known to staff as 'Whaea Jill'.

Jillian joined Iosis in 2006 and worked in a number of social work, facilitator and counselling roles, most recently as counsellor/programme facilitator at Merivale. The number of lives she has impacted in her time with us is immeasurable. As colleagues and friends, we also learnt so much from this gracious, wise wahine. Bless you, Whaea, you will be greatly missed. ☺



Bernard's 'bits and bobs'

From his Auckland garage, retired telephone technician Bernard spends many an hour dismantling donated cast-off electronic gear.

He is driven by a desire to reduce landfill waste and to support good works. By selling electronic components or scrap metal, he and his team of likeminded others have raised thousands of dollars for charities—including \$8,000 in the first half of 2022! Iosis is one of the charities to benefit from this generosity. We offer a big thanks to Bernard and team for using their skills and time for good! (You can watch a short video about Bernard's hobby at <https://youtu.be/P80DU7ALIVQ>.) ☺



Photo: Consumer NZ

Ngā mihi nui – thank you

Our sincere thanks to all who have donated to our Merivale kitchen appeal. To date we have raised \$835. It is not too late to give—see our website for details on how to make a donation www.iosis.org.nz/support-us/donate.

We are grateful for recent grants from Lottery Community (for a part-time addictions counsellor), Frimley Foundation (Merivale operational expenses) and Four Winds Foundation (for Merivale beds). And we were especially delighted to receive a surprise \$1,000 voucher from Resene for various painting projects we have!