



## Greetings from our CEO

Tēnā koutou katoa. As we reach the halfway point of the year, we celebrate some remarkable achievements and continue to adapt in the face of a tough financial climate.

Sadly, a significant decrease in Government funding has resulted in the closure of vital programmes and services, including the Iosis Whānau Centre (see the article below).

Despite this, we have many positive stories to celebrate, like the hundreds of mothers whose lives were transformed through the Iosis Whānau Centre. Young mums like Lily-Rose, a former meth addict who is doing well and has settled back into the community with her daughter (read her story on page 2).

We also celebrate the support of wonderful partner churches like Eastview Church (see page 3), which has generously given warm pyjamas, beanies, crockpots and recipe books to families in need through their Winter Warmer campaign. And on page 4, we celebrate the publication of the book 'Who is a SWiS and what do they do' – an important guide to help tamariki in schools get the support they need.

These wonderful stories demonstrate the life-changing effects of our mahi, even during challenging times. In the name of Jesus Christ, we will continue to transform family life, for good.

**Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters - CEO**



## Rising to challenges. Transforming lives

**Like many charities, Iosis has had to navigate contractual changes over the past six months due to Government funding cuts. The most significant of these has been the closure of the Iosis Whānau Centre – a huge loss for our community.**

For over 40 years, this incredible residential programme has been transforming the lives of vulnerable young mothers - originally under the names Childhaven and Merivale. Over a six-month period, these young mothers begin to overcome abuse or addiction, learn invaluable parenting skills, and leave as better mums with tamariki in their care.

Unfortunately, these funding cuts have reduced our three Social Workers to two, and we have also had to suspend our popular Parenting Programmes and MenD (Men's Development) programmes. These free programmes often had long waiting lists and were critical in helping South Auckland parents create positive change for their families.

Last year alone, 165 families attended our Parenting Programme, and 48 men participated in our MenD programme - that's over 200 people who have become safer, stronger people, partners and parents - and 200 families that now have better lives.

*Story continued on page 2...*

### Inside...

Lily-Rose's  
story  
**P2**

Prayer  
needs  
**P3**

SWiS book  
launch  
**P4**

On a brighter note, thanks to the generosity of our community, we have been able to secure some additional funding to offer a short series of parenting programmes to help alleviate the high demand for these life-changing programmes.

With the amazing support of our community behind us, we aim to continue to find new and innovative solutions to support vulnerable families in South Auckland in every way we can.

**“I orea te tuatara ka puta ki waho.”**

A problem is solved by continuing to find solutions.



#### LILY-ROSE'S STORY:

## **“I’ve benefited so much from being here”**

**The Iosis Whānau Centre has not only helped Lily-Rose get clean; it has enabled her to keep her baby and look forward to a better, happier life for herself and her daughter.**

Sadly, Lily-Rose will be the last mother to graduate from the Iosis Whānau Centre before it closes its doors after 40 years, due to the termination of our government contract this year.

Now 22 years old, Lily-Rose has a four-year-old daughter. She became pregnant at 17 while she was still at school. She had been smoking weed at school and had progressed to taking meth at the weekends. Her 33-year-old boyfriend was also doing both drugs.

“I had a pretty stable family life, and I was really terrified of telling my parents I was pregnant,” she reflects. While her parents were worried for her, she says they’ve always been really supportive.

Lily found having a newborn baby a struggle and she began to take meth more and more often. Her partner’s parents were concerned and called Oranga Tamariki, who granted them temporary custody of her baby, Raven. OT advised Lily-Rose that she would

lose her daughter unless she undertook a residential programme like the Iosis Whānau Centre.

**“I was distraught, and it made me realise that I needed to make changes in my life, or I would lose Raven permanently,” she says.**

Lily-Rose immediately went into detox when she entered the Centre last year. Since then, she has completed two addiction programmes and is clean. “It was so hard when I first arrived,” she says. “But you soon realise that the staff are there to help you, not judge you. They only want what’s best for you and your child and having that encouragement to overcome challenges is life changing.”

**“It’s so sad that the Iosis Whānau Centre is closing.”**

Lily-Rose is now engaged and looking forward to returning home. She encourages any other young mums in her position to find help to change their situation. “It’s so sad that the Iosis Whānau Centre is closing,” she says. “I’m really looking forward to going home but I’m also sad to be leaving everyone – they’ve played such a pivotal part in my journey.”

She is also sad that other mums won’t have this opportunity to change for the sake of their kids. “I’ve benefited so much from being here and I know others would as well. Every addict falls over eventually, so get help before you fall for your child, because they need you.”



# A very warm thank you to Eastview Baptist Church

Our heartfelt thanks to the congregation of Eastview Baptist Church, long-time supporters of Iosis, for running another successful 'Winter Warmers' campaign.

This year, as well as ensuring many families have the gift of warm pyjamas and hand-knitted beanies just in time for winter, they've kindly added an innovative element to the campaign – crockpots. 15 vulnerable South Auckland families have now received the wonderful gift of a crockpot, a recipe book and a \$50 Pak'n'Save voucher, so they can make warm, affordable meals such as soups and stews.

A huge thank you to everyone at Eastview Baptist Church for this wonderful initiative. In God's name, you are truly warming bellies, bodies, hearts and minds this winter.



*These warm-hearted gifts will make winter cosier for children in need.*



Help us  
keep more  
families  
warm this  
winter



Life is tough for vulnerable families right now – and even more so during the harsh winter months. If you'd like to donate towards keeping Iosis families warm this winter, please make an **online donation on our website** (use reference: *Winter*) – or if you're a local business that can donate gifts of warm clothes, bedding or food, please **contact us**.

**Thank you, your gift will be warmly welcomed.**

## Prayer needs

As we head into the challenging winter months, we pray for the many families who are struggling to access the support they need. We also pray for our staff as they strive to manage waitlists and calls from families needing our support.





# Teaching young students that it's okay to ask for help

**We're delighted to celebrate the launch of 'Who is a SWiS and what do they do?' – a wonderful book created by our SWiS (Social Workers in Schools) team.**

This thoughtfully written and beautifully illustrated book teaches school students that SWiS are there if they need to talk about anything that's worrying them at school or at home.

The launch event was held at Iosis last week and we were thrilled with the turnout, including representatives from the Oranga Tamariki and other local social service agencies, as well as our SWiS/MASSiSS team and the schools they support.



*Proud illustrators Heidi Austin-Crawford and Jolisa Silu'uga, with Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters.*

Heidi Austin-Crawford, former SWiS Manager and co-illustrator, read the book to great applause.

"This book has been a labour of love by the whole SWiS team, and we're so thrilled to finally have it published," says Heidi. "Through simple, child-like messaging and illustrations, teachers can let children know that we're there to help, no matter what's going on in their lives."

"The launch was a very special event and reason to celebrate," says Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters, Iosis CEO. "This book is an important milestone in our mahi in schools - reassuring children that there is always someone they can talk to. By reaching these children early, we can ensure that little problems don't become bigger problems in later life."



## Gift a book to a school and change little lives

Due to limited funding, we're only able to print a small number of these books. Yet the more schools they reach, the more children our SWiS team can support through the ups and downs of school and home life.

If you can, your gift of \$20 for a book or \$55 for three books - has the power to change children's lives. Please visit our website to donate today (use the reference 'SWiS') - thank you!

**Ngā mihi nui, and God bless.**



**Due to budget constraints, this will be the last printed newsletter. If you'd like to keep in touch and we don't have your email address, please email [Sarah.Hughes@iosis.org.nz](mailto:Sarah.Hughes@iosis.org.nz)**

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Transforming family life for good