

## WAIAPU CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ENABLER - 2012 REPORT

The past year has seen the role of Children and Families Enabler continues to evolve. It has been encouraging to see the ways some praying communities value and prioritise ministry with children and families and the variety of expressions of these ministries. Whether we are talking about preschool music, after school programmes, playgroups, reading tutors, Sunday morning worship, or BMX tracks, there are many creative and exciting options for involving people of all ages and stages. I have had the privilege of meeting with ministry leaders and vestries to talk about their aspirations and the challenges they face, and to hear their stories of past and present successes and sometimes struggles. It has also been a privilege to be invited to join with parishes for worship and to share ministry which is primarily focussed on children and their families.

At the same time there are other places where there is little sign of any ministry with children or their families. Building intergenerational praying communities is crucial for our life as a Church, and part of the CaFE role is to continue encouraging all of our places in this ministry. StraNdZ have published a vision statement setting out four major areas to focus on, and this has been presented at each regional conference. It will offer a framework for us in Waiapu as we continue to look for ways to engage with children and families wherever we are. Julie Hintz, the national StraNdZ Enabler, has visited Waiapu twice this year to help with training and is in regular contact with me; and StraNdZ gathers as a group twice a year, with six of the seven dioceses represented.

In the July holidays last year a team of six travelled from Waiapu to Christchurch and ran a series of one day children's holiday programmes. We felt very privileged to join with the local parishes in the Eastern suburbs, to briefly be part of the wonderful community networks they have built, and to see first-hand how they were coping with the consequences of the earthquakes. It was also great to be working as part of a team who were very enthusiastic and had a range of experiences to offer.

There have been two training events in the diocese over the past year. The first was delivered in each of the three regions and based on a new resource I had developed called "Christmas Discovery" which offers general guidelines, suggestions and templates for planning holiday programmes. The second was a joint diocesan training with youth leaders where a key component was safety awareness and policies. Feedback from both of these training opportunities highlighted the value of getting children and families' ministry leaders together to encourage each other and share ideas. In addition to these local training events, five Waiapu children's ministry leaders attended "Way 2 Go" training which is provided through Scripture Union, and which offered both formal presentations and a variety of practical workshops. Those who attended found the conference very helpful.

One of the areas that has been of concern in terms of our commitment to ministry with children and families, is the lack of a clear safety policy. In the past we have relied on the ABC guidelines which are an excellent tool for developing policies, but are not policies on their own. In order to ensure a consistent and comprehensive approach to safety policies when working with children and young people, we are currently looking at implementing "ChildSafe" which is recommended by StraNdZ and in use in several dioceses at present. If this is to be successful, it will need to be widely utilised and to become part of our everyday lives and ministry so it was great to have scenarios at this year's diocesan ethics training which focussed specifically on children and young people.

It continues to be a privilege to work in this role, and to be an advocate and promoter of children and families ministry in Waiapu. I would like to acknowledge those who share in this ministry in our local praying communities, and the gifts that they offer. There are exciting times ahead of us!

**Reverend Jo Crosse**