



Welcome! Tena koutou, Talofa Lava, Kia Orana, Fakaalofa Lahi Atu, Malo e Lelei, Bula Vinaka, Taloha Ni, Kam Na Mauri Namaste, Hallo, Bonjour, Hola and Greetings this month to our **5700+** member families and all our non-member subscribers!

Are you raising someone else's child full-time?

GRG provides support, information, advice, advocacy services and caregiver education programmes nationwide to full-time caregivers who are raising a child not born to them. Membership is free. Call us on toll free **0800 GRANDS** or visit www.GRG.NZ to join.

Raising resilient and healthy children and young people through empowering grandparent and whānau care families since 2001

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Financial support for raising someone else's child...

If you are raising someone else's child because there has been a breakdown in the child's family, or their parents have died, they are missing, or they have a long-term disablement and you are their principal temporary or long-term caregiver; from the date you apply to Work and Income for this support then you are entitled to either the Unsupported Child Benefit or the Orphan's Benefit to help with the costs of raising the child.

The **Unsupported Child or Orphan's Benefits** are not taxable and is not affected by your income or assets as a caregiver. It is affected by any income the child might be

receiving (e.g. ACC) and the child must be resident and present in New Zealand.

To qualify for it you must also be over 18 years of age, resident and present in NZ and you must not be a natural parent, an adoptive parent, or a step-parent of the child.

If these circumstances apply to you and you think you have been incorrectly advised or you realise now that you should be receiving this support, please contact us tollfree on **0800 472 637** or call our National Support Office on **09 418 3753** for a referral to our advocate, Tricia Corin.

0800 GRANDS

Call us on our free helpline service for support, information, advice and referrals to our Outreach and Advocacy team.

0800 472 637 or **09 418 3753**

Monday - Friday 9am to 2pm



[Facebook.com/grg.org.nz](https://www.facebook.com/grg.org.nz)



Instagram: [@grg_trust_nz](https://www.instagram.com/grg_trust_nz)



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Keeping it Current

Our aim is to keep you informed and of what's happening, key information and opportunities that can help you. Letting us know if you've moved or had a change to your mobile phone or email is easy.

Click on the green **Update Your Member Details** button or visit our website www.grg.org.nz and click on the green button there.

Or email us at office@grg.org.nz Or call us on **0800 472 637**

Update Your Member Details





Kate's Take

Kate Bundle
Chief Executive

As I write this, Auckland faces a second day of record numbers of COVID-19 cases and today's numbers tops them all with 190 new infections detected in the country. It is also 12 weeks of working remotely from home. GRG's National Support Office team and our Support Group Coordinators have continued to coordinate support for member families however and wherever we can within the restrictions that have now become a part of our lives. I want to pause a moment to thank all our staff, support coordinators and volunteers for their hard work helping our member families throughout the country who have struggled with varying circumstances through these past months and especially our staff and volunteers in the Auckland and Waikato who are facing the toughest restrictions of all.

It has been and continues to be an incredibly uncertain time for everyone. The long days of winter and early spring cooped up inside during cold and inclement weather on top of the anxiety, fear, pain, frustration, anger and despair that COVID-19 has caused in our lives, individually and collectively, is taking its toll. I think I can safely say that we are all tired and hopeful of some reprieve to be able to spend time with loved ones and friends soon. For some though, they have caught the COVID-19 virus. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all to get through this safely and well, as we pray, we all will.

Stress and the Vagus Nerve

Reflecting on the stresses of the past 12 weeks is timely in the context of our advocate, Hannah Morris's column on [page 4](#). She introduces us to the **Polyvagal Theory**, which provides a helpful insight and understanding of how we automatically respond to stress. The theory is that without involving the thinking parts of our brain, we automatically scan our environment sensing whether there is a threat or it's safe, and depending on our read of the environment, it triggers a response within our vagus nerve that impacts how we feel at any given moment. This happens at every level of our life, whether it is as innocuous as reading an email, getting a phone call, watching something on TV, or seeing a friend. Having a greater understanding of how it works can help us recognise our response, how our body feels and the thoughts that accompany it—seeing it for what it is, and this can help us regulate our emotional response to it. I look forward to learning more about it too!

Increase in Working for Families and Best Start

This month [Tricia](#) has focused on the **Working for Families Tax Credits and Best Start Payments**. Coincidentally, the Government advised over this past weekend a \$5 increase in the weekly rates from **1 April 2022**.

Increase in OB and UCB from 1 April 2022

The rates of the Orphan's Benefit, Unsupported Child's Benefit, and Foster Care Allowance will also increase by \$5 per child, per week from 1 April 2022. This increase will have a flow on effect for the rates of the **Holiday Allowance** (formerly the Christmas Allowance) and the **Birthday Allowance**, which are **set at half of the weekly payment rate**. Children receiving the UCB or OB will receive the Holiday Allowance for the first time this year when it comes into effect on 1 December 2021. It will be paid automatically into caregivers' bank accounts.

From 1 April 2022 there will also be an **additional \$34.84 per week for children aged 0-4 years** and an **additional \$10 per week for children aged five and over** for

children receiving the UCB or OB. This is to **remove the remaining disparity in regular standardised payments** these caregivers receive **compared to caregivers receiving the Foster Care Allowance**. The total increase in rates paid will be dependent on the annual CPI adjustment (which will be announced in early 2022).

United Nations has the spotlight on Kinship Care

In June 2021, GRG submitted a joint submission to the **United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**, together with Pillars NZ, VOYCE Whakarongo Mai, Wai Research and Family for Every Child calling for better recognition of the needs of children in kinship or "whānau" care by state parties to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

For the first time, the UNCRC agreed to focus on the needs of children in "alternative care"; that is care that is not state care. Kinship care as an alternative to state care placements with foster carers or institutional care is finally being recognised and valued for the benefits it can provide a child who can't be in the care of their parents.

I remember when I first became aware of the challenges facing grandparent caregivers in the 1990's as a family lawyer. In accordance with the focus of the relatively new, at the time, Children Young Persons and Their Families Act 1989 (now the Oranga Tamariki Act 1989) the state's mandate was to place children in the care of whānau or family (kin) or their wider family group, hapu or iwi.

Despite this mandate—and the duty on the Chief Executive of Child Youth and Family (now Oranga Tamariki) to ensure the state provided the "necessary assistance and support" to "enable the child or young person to be cared for and protected within his or her own family, whānau, hapu, iwi, and family group" (section 13 (d)) there was a disconnect between what was **needed and what was in reality provided** for children in kinship care, who would otherwise have been placed in foster care.

Article 2 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that "States Parties shall respect and ensure the rights set forth in the present Convention to each child within their jurisdiction **without discrimination of any kind, irrespective of the child's or his or her parent's or legal guardian's race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national, ethnic or social origin, property, disability, birth or other status.**"

It further requires that "2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that the child is protected against all forms of discrimination or punishment on the basis of the status, activities, expressed opinions, or

beliefs of the child's parents, legal guardians, or family members.”

Over the years, in submissions to select committees on law reform we have argued that children outside the state care system who are in the care of their grandparents or other whānau are being discriminated against, based on the fact of their legal status of care—i.e., they are not in the state care system.

Increasingly, the Government has recognised this fact and this is borne out by the various changes to the way in which decisions are made when children are in need of care and protection, or where there is a risk that they may need to be in the care of someone other than their parents. There has been, and continues to be, a gradual alignment of standardised payments received for the care of children via the UCB/OB to be commensurate with the Foster Care Allowance.

As mentioned above the UNCRC now has the spotlight firmly on kinship care and I was recently invited to present to the Committee at their **Day of General Discussion on “Children’s Rights and Alternative Care”**, which, for the first time, thanks to COVID-19, was held virtually on 16-17 September 2021.

It was an honour to represent GRG and to advocate on behalf of grandparents raising their grandchildren full time and whānau caregivers and quite an experience linking in to a virtual international conference of over 500 people from countries across the globe. With just five minutes, at a pace that could be translated into sign language, French and Spanish at the same time, it was quite a challenge to get across the issues that affect so many of our families and what governments should be doing to ensure better support for non-statutory care kinship families.

Included in my submission, I advocated for caregivers to have better access to legal aid and advocacy services, for further law reform to ensure equity as compared with foster carers, and for more resources to ensure children in non-statutory kinship care placements have access to therapy, counselling, services, disability supports and learning tools that enhance their wellbeing, so that these children can realise their true potential, to thrive and lead healthy and resilient lives.

The [link to the video of the presentation is available on our website](#) and can be found in the video tab of our News section.

Kinship Care in Australia

In mid-October, I had the pleasure and privilege of working with **Dr Jill Worrall**, MSW, PHD, MNZM again. Jill was one of GRG’s first trustees along with Samina Corbett, Birgitt Rehbein, Debbie Gillies, our founder Diane Vivian and me when GRG was established as a charitable trust on 23 October 2001. Jill was also responsible for undertaking what was at the time, our ground-breaking research into the issues affecting [grandparent and whānau/kin caregivers in Aotearoa in 2005](#). This was followed up by her study [“A view over time” in 2009](#) and paved the way for our NZ Lotteries funded [2016 study](#) with over 1100 grandparent and whānau caregivers. This research has informed our practice and advocacy over the years and has led to significant changes in the level of support now available.

These changes haven't gone unnoticed by our Australian friends. Jill and I were invited to present to the [Queensland PeakCare Forum IV](#), which this year has

grandparents raising grandchildren as their focus with the intent to galvanise their strategy to effect similar change in their laws and policies. Unfortunately for many grandparents raising their grandchildren outside of state care in Australia, there is much less support available and they were keen to hear about our journey over the past 20 years. Links to the forum presentations are available here. <https://peakcare.org.au/queensland-kinship-care-forum-iv/>

Preparing for this presentation involved quite a nostalgic trip back over the sectoral changes and the highlights for GRG over the years and I am struck by the serendipitous way in which the invitation and opportunity to co-present with Jill arose at the same time as Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ has reached its 20th year milestone.

Unfortunately, we haven't been able to have an occasion to re-group with those who have played an important part in the GRG journey over the years. COVID-19 and the lockdown restrictions have thwarted our planning in this respect. We hope that in the year ahead we can mark what will be our 21st year as we'd hoped.

However, I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Diane Vivian, QSO, our founder who was the inspiration and driving force to establish GRG in the very beginning. She had been raising her fostered daughters two children for two years before she set up the first support group in Birkenhead in 1999, and she ignited an important movement for change that has continued apace ever since.

On our [Grands Reflections page 8 and on page 9](#), Karla Macdonald, our Communications and Projects Coordinator has assembled reflections and photographs from over the years from various events including picnics, fundraisers, GRG conferences, training, Bruce Hopkins long walk for GRG and when **GRG won the Kiwibank New Zealander of the Year, Mitre 10 Community of the Year award in 2013**.

In March this year, these awards celebrated their 12th year of Awards and established an Alumni of former winners. It was a real pleasure to have two of our longest serving Support Group Coordinators, Cecilee Donovan (Wellington) and Tess Gould-Thorpe (Tamaki/East Auckland) join me with Lisa Braid (National Operations Manager) and Tricia Corin (Advocate), to attend the Awards evening itself on 31 March 2021.

It too, was an opportunity for us to reflect on GRG’s journey and to feel very proud of what GRG has achieved over the years in its support and advocacy for full time grandparent and whānau caregivers in our country. GRG truly stands tall with individuals and organisations contributing to the wellbeing of the country and inspiring others.

I am humbled and inspired by the love, determination, courage, compassion and sheer grit that you all demonstrate in your quest to protect and raise your grandchildren and mokopuna in spite of the challenges you face daily, and it is an honour to be a part of this incredible organisation and to continue with the vision that our founder Diane Vivian had all those years ago. As she communicated recently to us, congratulating GRG on its 20th year, “The vision was true and carried to fruition. From small seeds grow mighty oaks.” Thank you Di, may God bless you, and you all who have made GRG what it is today. Ngā manaakitanga, ngā mihi nui kia koutou katoa—Kate



Hannah's Outreach

Polyvagal Theory

Hannah Morris
Community Outreach
Advocate

With this week's topic we get a little theoretical, however as simplified as I can! Bear with me—it is interesting and I want to discuss this because it truly is important for every single person to understand, as it affects us all, and even more so for anyone who has ever experienced trauma which is often the experience of the grandchildren in your care—possibly you too. Polyvagal theory is also hugely beneficial to understand on an individual level as it helps us understand our own central nervous system, how it responds and ultimately how we can start to work alongside it to live a more healthy, happy and balanced life.

Polyvagal theory was developed by Dr. Stephen Porges who really revolutionized how we see our body's stress response and how we process stress in our bodies. What Porges figured out is that we actually have multiple states of stress or **multiple states of nervous system activations** than was once thought. The name relates to the vagus nerve (that runs from the neck down to the abdomen). The three different states that he identified are (in simple terms), the **shutdown/immobilization response**, the **fight or flight response** and lastly the **social communication system**.

From an evolutionary perspective the **shutdown/immobilization response** actually dates back to 500 million years ago and is considered a much more primal part of us. This is when the body reacts to what it perceives is a threat and it essentially freezes. Some symptoms that your body is having this response are feelings of being emotionally numb or flat, unable to think, memory impairment, sleepy, spacey, fainting, unable to move etc.

"The vagus nerve is why your heart races and stomach curdles when you sense a threat and why your breathing slows and your body relaxes when friends welcome you to their house."

Psychologytoday.com

The **fight or flight response** is a defensive response and what you most likely relate to stress – it is active. It's where you want to get up and run, or you want to get up and fight something off. It is where you want to take action! You are motivated to dispatch the threat. In this state you will experience an increased heart rate, digestive problems, enlarged pupils, blood is directed toward your muscles – and basically your body is preparing to actively fight or flee – you are ready for action! Some symptoms that your body is in this state are feeling emotionally overwhelmed, tension, anxiety, panic, emotional outbursts, addiction, rage, irritability, racing thoughts, feeling unsafe etc.

Lastly the **social communication system** is the most recently evolved system and is activated when you and/or the environment feels safe. In this state you can connect and relate to other people. Healthy connections with other people help us regulate and spend less time in these other more distressing states. According to the polyvagal theory, this system is the optimal state in which we endeavour to live our daily lives, if we can. In this state we will experience benefits such as feeling connected to others around us and as a result you feel a happier, calmer, connected you.

So why is it important to understand polyvagal theory and understand these stress states? Because the fact

of the matter is being in either fight or flight or immobilization states constitutes a survival state in your body. There's an action of self-preservation happening in your nervous system. It changes how you see the world – the world suddenly becomes really threatening and when you are in that state, you're going to misread other people's cues so you're more likely to see neutral faces as being aggressive, you're more likely to see fearful faces as if they are angry, and you won't be able to use people to self-regulate as they will become threatening. It just totally changes how you perceive your reality.

Being in these stress states makes it difficult to cultivate powerful, strong, heartfelt, authentic relationships with people. On every level it's affecting us – our physical health, emotional health, and mental health.

Understanding Polyvagal theory is about becoming aware of yourself and becoming aware of what has influenced or shaped you and becoming more self-aware of what state you may be in. So, the first thing to do is try to become aware of what state you are in and how your body is responding to certain situations – because this is all going on all the time even if you are not conscious of it.

Pause and try this:

"Right here, right now... take a few mindful breaths as best you can, turn your awareness toward your body... See if you can become curious about how your body and mind are right now. As best you can, try feeling with your awareness how your belly is... Is it tight or relaxed? How about your facial expression? Is there any tension or gripping or contraction in the body? Notice the types of thoughts or stories that were just going on in your head before you stopped to do this. As best you can, simply sense the state of your body and mind in this moment... without judgment... Is it relaxed and at ease? Is it tense or irritated or anxious? Are you able to feel? Are you numb or feeling empty? How is your energy? Are you feeling over activated, hyper aroused? Are you feeling under-activated, hypo aroused? Are you feeling balanced, calm, and present?"

Once you have more of a sense of how your nervous system is feeling then you can choose how to respond because deciding what state you are in will determine

what practices and methods you use. For example, if you are hyper aroused, then you should engage in activities that lower this energy – some examples are breath work practices, singing, chanting, even blowing bubbles. On the opposite end of the scale if you are hypo-aroused you will engage in practices that increase arousal and energy some examples of these activities are counting, describing objects while moving your head to look around the room, or splashing cold water on your face.

The more you continue to practice your ability to self-regulate the more this ability will improve over time. You can engage in these activities independently, as a

whānau or one on one with your grandchild. Truly anyone can learn self-regulation – even a child, in fact raising our children with fantastic and frequent self-regulating techniques may be one of the greatest gifts we can gift our young people, which will assist them in becoming resilient young adults.

Next month we will look more into self-regulation and discuss some techniques and ideas! In the meantime, begin to be mindful of what state your body is in and when you are feeling dysregulated and as always give us a call at National Support Office if you would like to discuss anything further or you need support.



Tricia Corin
Specialist Advocate
Income/Financial Support

Tricia Advocating for You

There is often a lot of confusion around what the various tax credits are and who is eligible for them. This month we look at the Working For Families Tax Credits and we also provide a reminder of the School and Year Startup Payment available to recipients of the Unsupported Child and Orphan's Benefits and the payment rates.

As announced on 6 November 2021 there will be an increase by \$15 a week for eldest child and \$13 for subsequent children to the weekly rate of the Family Tax Credit, and a \$5 increase to the weekly rate of the Best Start payment from 1 April 2022.

Working for Families Tax Credits

These are payments for families with **dependent children aged 18 and under**. The payments are to help you raise your family. Entitlements are based on your yearly family income and family circumstances. Working for Families (WFF) is **not child support**. Child support is paid by parents who do not live with their children or who share care with someone else.

Payments are based on your yearly income and circumstances.

There are 4 types of WFF tax credits:

1. Family Tax Credits
2. In Work Tax Credits
3. Minimum Family Tax Credits
4. Best Start

1. Family Tax Credits

This Payment depends on how much you earn, the number of children you have, and any Shared care arrangements.

If you are on a **Main Benefit**, then the Family Tax Credits can be paid with your Benefit or directly from IRD.

When a person is on a **Main Benefit**, they can get the **Family Tax Credits** and the **Best Start** payment. They can not get the other two **Tax Credits**.

NZ Superannuation and Veteran's Pension with dependent children must apply to Inland Revenue for payment of the Family Tax Credits and Best Start payments.

NB: If you are receiving **the Orphans/Unsupported Child's Benefit** for a child you are caring for then you can not receive **Family Tax Credits** as well.

2. In Work Tax Credits

The **In-Work Tax Credit** is an incentive for people to be in the workforce and is paid by Inland Revenue to

low-income **working** families with dependent children. You must be over 16 years of age and have the principal care of a child who is financially dependent on you.

There are **no minimum hours of work required** to get this payment (**from 1 July 2020**).

Working families can get up to \$72.50 a week for the first 3 children (total) and up to \$15 extra per week for each additional child.

If you apply for the **Temporary Additional Support** from Work & Income the **In-Work Tax Credit** is considered "chargeable income" and part of your income for assessment purposes.

Like the **Family Tax Credit** this payment depends on how much you earn. If you're receiving an income-tested benefit or a student allowance you will not be eligible for this payment. However you can get the **In-Work Tax Credit** if your income is from accident compensation - including survivor payments, or paid parental leave.

As long as you are working, you can get the **In-Work Tax Credit** if you receive other types of income, including:

- NZ Superannuation
- a Foster Care Allowance
- an Orphan's Benefit
- an Unsupported Child Benefit
- a Veteran's Pension
- weekly compensation from Veterans' Affairs New Zealand

You **cannot** get **In-Work Tax Credit** when your family gets:

- a student allowance

- a parent's allowance or a children's pension from Veterans' Affairs New Zealand

3. Minimum Family Tax Credits

This is a payment if your annual family income after tax is:

- less than \$30,576 from 1 April 2021
- less than \$31,096 from 1 July 2021

It tops up your family's after-tax weekly income to at least \$588 from 1 April 2021 or \$598 from 1 July 2021. To get this payment you must work for salary or wages and not be self-employed. A single parent must work at least 20 hours a week. In a 2-parent family, 1 or both parents between them must work at least 30 hours a week.

The minimum **Family Tax Credit** is not available to families receiving the following:

- an income-tested benefit
- a parent's allowance
- a children's pension from Veterans' Affairs New Zealand.

4. Best Start Tax Credits/Payment

Best Start is a payment of **\$60 per week for families supporting a new born baby**. (This rate will increase to \$65 per week from 1/04/2022). Families who qualify for Best Start can receive the payment until their baby turns 1, no matter how much they earn. If you are receiving paid parental leave payments, you cannot get the Best Start payment until paid parental leave finishes.

After the first year, you can continue to receive Best Start payments **until your child turns 3, if you earn under \$93,858**. The amount you receive depends on your family income. Best Start begins when **paid parental leave finishes, you cannot receive both at the same time**.

Best Start Tax Credit payments can be paid to main benefit clients by the Ministry of Social Development on behalf of Inland Revenue.

Note: clients getting a **Main Benefit** and **Orphans Benefit** or **Unsupported Child's Benefit** can choose to get **Best Start Tax Credit** from the Ministry of Social Development if they meet the qualifications. Caregivers getting an **Orphans Benefit** or **Unsupported Child's Benefit** but **not getting a Main Benefit need to apply to Inland Revenue for Best Start Tax Credit payments**.

School & Year Start Up Payment

If you're caring for someone else's child and receiving either the **Unsupported Child** or **Orphan's Benefit** and need help with pre-school or school-related costs at the beginning of the year, you can get the **School and**

Year Start-up Payment.

The **School and Year Start-up Payment** provides non-taxable, non-recoverable financial assistance to assist with sundry school related costs or other costs relating to the care of the child.

The Caregiver **MUST** be receiving The **Orphans Benefit** or the **Unsupported Child's Benefit**.

This payment is available from Mid January to end of February each year.

The maximum amount of School and Year Start-up Payment will depend on the child's age as at the last day of February and is paid directly to your bank account.

The child's age is their age on the last day of February in that year.

Applications for this payment are made through Work & Income's website and their online form which is made available in mid-January. We will post the link to the form on our website and social media pages when it is available.

The money is then deposited into your Bank Account within 10 Days. See rates in this table

Category	School and Year Start Up Payment
Child 0 - 4 years	\$400.00
Child 5 - 9 years	\$450.00
Child 10 - 13 years	\$500.00
Child 14+ years	\$550.00

Our team of Support Group Coordinators is growing enabling us to provide much needed support to more grandparents.

However, there are some areas that we are still looking to cover: **Kerikeri, Whangarei, Bream Bay, Hibiscus Coast, North Shore, Avondale, Waitakere, Henderson, Glenn Eden, Central Auckland, Mangere/ Onehunga, Te Puke/Papamoa, Tauranga, Opotiki/ Kawerau, Turangi, New Plymouth, Dannevirke/Tararua, Levin/ Otaki, Marlborough, Dunedin, North Otago and Otago Coastal.** Would you be interested in volunteering your services for GRG? If you are raising a grandchild on a full-time basis or have an understanding of the blessings and challenges that this role brings and would like to share your experience and abilities to support and empower other like-minded family/whānau, we would like to hear from you.

Email: Merle@grg.org.nz or call us on toll-free on 0800 472 637

If you have any questions on any of these issues, or need assistance, please contact GRG's National Support Office on: 0800 472 637 or office@grg.org.nz

Merle's Support Group Update



Merle Lambert
National Support
Coordinator

Thank you Margaret and welcome Barbara and Janette!

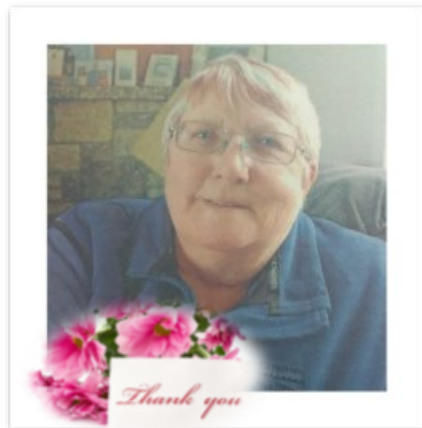
This month we extend a big thank you to Margaret Pearson in Upper Hutt and thank her for her ten plus years of support to the Upper Hutt Support and Coffee groups. Margaret was a wonderful support to Barbara Jeffries, an earlier Support Group Coordinator, bringing her strong secretarial skills. Together they formed a formidable team, and it was a natural progression for

Margaret to take over the lead when Barbara decided it was time for her to resign from the role. Margaret continued to support GRG families through common challenges such as drugs, alcohol and other complex issues. The bonds formed with members have lasted over ten years and some have become lifelong friends. In later years as the children grew up, the need for social contact

became clear and Margaret continued to offer the opportunity for members to gather in a more relaxed format through a coffee group. One key moment that Margaret recalls was wearing the GRG team T-Shirt when she abseiled down the CBD Tower, over ten stories high, in celebration of her

that they had never thought they would have to face in their twilight years. Barbara has a strong belief in what grandparents can offer and this passion is infectious to grandparent's that may be lacking in belief in themselves in being the best grandparents they can be.

Barbara, takes after her name sake from "The Good Life", loving the connection with the land and being creative in growing her own produce and keeping critters to provide for the most sustainable lifestyle as possible. Her creativity for crafts, jade carving, silver smithing and jewellery creates a bit of a diversion to life's challenges and sustains her wellbeing too.



60th birthday. In all this time Margaret has been supported by her husband Barry; "When you find a good one, you keep him", says Margaret. Margaret and Barry look forward to the time when they can shake off the Covid shackles and get back to travelling which is what they both love to do.

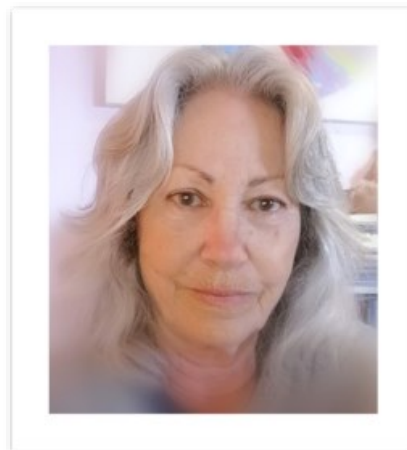
Introducing our NEW Support Group Coordinators Barbara Green and Janette Miller Upper West Coast and Central West Coast Regions

We would like to warmly welcome **Barbara** and **Janette** to the **Support Group Coordinator team** knowing that they will provide much needed support to grandparents in the **West Coast region**.

Barbara will be covering the Upper West Coast and Janette the Central West Coast area.

Barbara Green has been raising her now 15-year-old grandson for three years and brings first-hand experience to the SGC role.

Her practical, down to earth approach will give grandparents the calmness and reassurance they need to support them through challenges



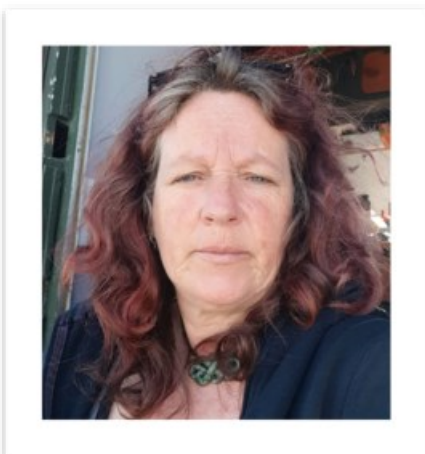
Janette Miller comes to GRG from an extensive background in navigating education, health and disability services over a period of thirty years; having first advocated for her neuro-diverse daughter and then her granddaughter who experiences learning difficulties.

She is passionate about ensuring that voices are heard and carers are empowered to achieve positive life outcomes.

She has been an active member with The Northern Buller Disability Action Group for seven years and holds memberships with Carers NZ, SPELD NZ, Altogether Autism, ADHD NZ, CCS Disability Action, the Disabled Persons Assembly and has been a Committee member of WC RDA (West Coast Riding for the Disabled).

Janette has a Diploma in Ceramics, and she finds her interest in photography very soul soothing and re-energising.

We are delighted to welcome Barbara and Janette on board to support our GRG whānau on the West Coast.



20 Years of Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ

Grand Reflections



Celebrating 20 Years of GRG

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ is celebrating an incredible two decades of supporting grandparents and whānau care families.

We have changed and grown a lot in that time, but our core focus has remained the same: helping grandparent and whānau caregiver families that are vulnerable due to the age of the grandparent/other whānau caregivers, and in most cases the children (of all ages and stages) have experienced trauma in their lives. Social and geographic isolation, economic disadvantage, mental health and wellbeing issues are most often present for these whānau.

“Through our work and research in this field over the past twenty years we have learned that properly supported and resourced caregiver placements are essential to ensure a child has a safe and nurturing home environment where their wellbeing and needs are met.”

- Kate Bundle, GRG CEO speaking to the United Nations Children’s Rights Committee, Day of General Discussion, 17 September 2021

How it all began

Founded by Diane Vivian as a support group in 1999 and established as a charitable trust in 2001, Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust New Zealand is a unique organisation that has a deep understanding of both the long-term benefits for grandchildren being raised by their grandparents and the challenges it can present.

Providing support services throughout New Zealand to grandparents who are raising their grandchildren on a fulltime basis:

“Our objectives are to help them by providing them with much needed support and information empowering them to provide a safe, nurturing and supported home environment that will also promote their ongoing well-being and development.

“The grandparents take on the care of their grandchildren because they believe it is best for them to be brought up within the family. But they do this while enduring huge personal sacrifice, stress and ongoing challenges - financially, physically and emotionally. Many of the children have special needs and suffer from psychological damage. The grandparents who take on these traumatized children need considerable help and support”.

- Diane Vivian, QSO, GRG Founder

“Congratulations on GRG’s 20th anniversary.

The vision was true and carried to fruition.

From small seeds grow mighty oaks.”

Di Vivian 2021



“A picture paints a thousand words ...”

Interesting fact about A Picture Paints a Thousand Words

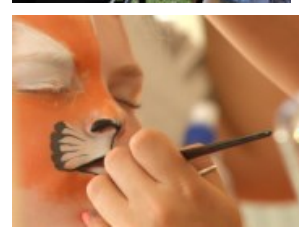
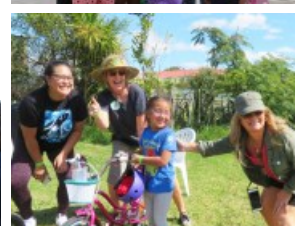
A similar expression to ‘A picture paints a thousand words’ first appeared in a 1911 newspaper article quoting editor Arthur Brisbane’s discussion of journalism and publicity: *“Use a picture. It’s worth a thousand words.”* During the discussion, Brisbane was making a clear-cut case for the use of images to accompany stories.

Therefore in Celebration of **Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ**, Board of Trustees, Staff, Volunteer Support Group Coordinators, Sponsors, Community Agencies and most importantly all grandparents and whānau care families we have supported over the past 20 years, we want to share with you some of our favourite GRAND Memories made over the past two decades.

Please feel free to share your stories with us by sending us an email at communications@grg.org.nz we would love to hear from you!

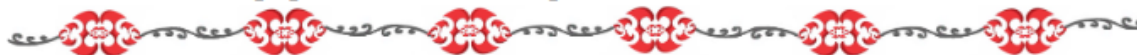


Parity for clothing allowance - in 2018





GRG Support Groups Nationwide



Meetings are held during school terms - with public and school holidays excluded unless otherwise stated.

KAITAIA

Contact: Pam Walters

022 658 3443 / Kaitaia@grg.org.nz

Meets: Every 3rd Thursday of the month at 10.30am.

Location: Hope Christian Centre, 234 Commerce Street, Kaitaia.

TAMAKI/EAST

Contact: Tess Gould-Thorpe

09 535 6903 / Tamaki@grg.org.nz

Meets: Date and location varies. Please get in touch with Tess for confirmation of the next meeting.

PAPAKURA

Contact: Shirley Afoa

021 129 4151 / Papakura@grg.org.nz

Meets: Second Thursday of each month at 10am

Location: Smiths Avenue Community Hall, 20 Smiths Avenue, Papakura.

HAMILTON WEST

Contact: Pat Davis

022 600 7672 / Hamilton@grg.org.nz

Meets: Last Monday of each month at 10am

Location: St Davids, Rifle Range Road, Dinsdale, Hamilton.

TE AWAMUTU

Contact: Ruth Gilling

022 045 4475 / Teawamutu@grg.org.nz

Meets: Date and location varies. Please get in touch with Ruth for confirmation of the next meeting.

TAUMARUNUI

Contact: Jo Wickham

07 896 7515 / Taumarunui@grg.org.nz

Meets: First Monday of each month at 10am

Location: Taumarunui RSA, 10 Marae Street, Taumarunui.

KAIKOHE

Contact: Moengaroa Floyed

027 644 0978 / Kaikohe@grg.org.nz

Please contact Moengaroa for support.

WAITAKERE

Currently vacant. If you or someone you know would like to consider becoming the local Support Group Coordinator for the Waitakere area, please contact **Merle Lambert** at merle@grg.org.nz

PUKEKOHE/WAIUKU

Contact: Anne Doddrell

09 237 8161 / Pukekohe@grg.org.nz

Meets: The last Tuesday of the month at 10am

Location: St. Andrews Church, 43 Queen Street, Pukekohe.

HAMILTON EAST

Contact: Maria Marsh

Meets: Every last Wednesday of the month at 10am.

Location: Desert Spring Community Centre, Corner Insoll Avenue and Peachgrove Road, Fairfield, Hamilton.

TOKOROA

Contact: Debbie Newton

027 284 2103 / Tokoroa@grg.org.nz

Meets: Last Friday of each month at 10am

Location: Tokoroa Council of Social Services, Gate 1, Tokoroa Hospital (1st building on the right). Parking available at the back.

ROTORUA

Contact: Anne Donnell

022 059 5107 / Rotorua@grg.org.nz

Meets: Third Monday of each month at 9:30am

Location: Linton Park Community Centre, 16 Kamahi Place, Pukehangi, Rotorua.

DARGAVILLE

Contact: Sandy Zimmer

09 439 4420 / Dargaville@grg.org.nz

Meets: First Tuesday of each month at 12pm

Location: Whānau Focus, Victoria Street, Dargaville—Next to the Bakehouse

NEW LYNN

Contact: Robyn Robertson

021 309 365 / Newlyynn@grg.org.nz

Meets: Third Tuesday of each month at 10am

Location: House of Prayer, 9B Binsted Road, New Lynn.

NGARUAWAHIA/HUNTLY

Contact: Trevor Don

027 229 2041 / Ngaruawahia@grg.org.nz

Meets: The last Monday of the month at 10:30am

Location: Ngaruawahia Community House, 13 Galileo Street, Ngaruawahia.

TE KUITI

Contact: Kay Higgins

027 430 2939 / Tekuiti@grg.org.nz

Meets: Third Wednesday of each month at 10am

Location: Te Kuiti Community House, 28 Taupiri Street, Te Kuiti

TAUPO/TURANGI

Contact: Lesley-Anne Wells

07 377 3539 / Taupo@grg.org.nz

Meets: Every 2nd Tuesday of the month, 1pm

Location: St Andrews Hall, Titiraupenga Street, Taupo

KATIKATI

Contact: Cathie Kenyon

021 088 78686 / Katikati@grg.org.nz

Meets: Last Wednesday of the month at 10am

Location: St. Pius Catholic Church, 89 Beach Road, Katikati.

WHAKATANE

Contact: Karlene McCormick

021 022 20328 / Whakatane@grg.org.nz

Meets: Date and time varies. Please get in touch with Karlene for confirmation of the next meeting.

Location: Liberty Church, 65 Wairaka Road, Whakatane.

HASTINGS

Contact: Nga Ngatae Heather

022 341 7789 / Hastings@grg.org.nz

Meets: Date and time varies, please contact Nga for confirmation of meetings.

Location: The Octagon Room, All Saints Church, 23 Puketapu Road, Taradale.

WAIRARAPA

Contact: Tere Lenihan

021 509 493 / Wairarapa@grg.org.nz

Meets: Date and location varies. Please get in touch with Tere for confirmation of the next meeting.

WELLINGTON

Contact: Cecilee Donovan

021 158 6643 / Wellington@grg.org.nz

Meets: Date and location varies. Please get in touch with Cecilee for confirmation of the next meeting.

UPPER WEST COAST

Contact: Barbara Green

027 591 3955 / Upperwestcoast@grg.org.nz

Meets: TBC

Location: TBC

ASHBURTON

Contact: Karen Kilgour

027 741 2039 / Ashburton@grg.org.nz

Meets: Date and location varies. Please get in touch with Karen for confirmation of the next meeting.

COFFEE GROUPS

Whangarei

Janet 09 435 0044

Warkworth

Shirley 09 423 7052

Waitakere

Waiora 022 647 3032

South Auckland

Virginia 09 277 7514

Morrinsville

Jennifer 027 683 6207

Whitianga

Gillian 027 454 0314

Cambridge

Brenda 027 438 5401

Napier

Nga 022 341 7789

Porirua

Roma Paull 022 050 4761

Greymouth

Donna 0274 840 688

OPOTIKI/KAWERAU

Currently vacant. If you or

someone you know would like to

consider becoming the local

Support Group Coordinator for the

Opotiki/Kawerau area, please contact **Merle**

Lambert at merle@grg.org.nz

PALMERSTON NORTH

Contact: Jacqui Phillips

021 229 0455 / Palmerstonnorth@grg.org.nz

Meets: Two meetings are held on the first Thursday of each month at 1:15-2:45pm and 6-7:30pm

Location: Crossroads Childcare Centre, 220 Church Street, Palmerston North.

PORIRUA

Contact: Roma Paull

022 050 4761 / Porirua@grg.org.nz

Meets: Every second Wednesday of each month at 10am

Location: Porirua RSA, 5-7 McKillop Street, Ranui

NELSON

Contact: Sharon Norriss

03 548 6710 / Nelson@grg.org.nz

Meets: Every second Friday of the month

Location: Stoke Methodist Church, 94 Neale Avenue, Stoke, Nelson.

CENTRAL WEST COAST

Contact: Janette Miller

021 119 0828 / Centralwestcoast@grg.org.nz

Meets: TBC

Location: TBC

SOUTHLAND

Contact: Colleen Saunders

03 216 4173 / Southland@grg.org.nz

Meets: Second and fourth Wednesday of each month at 10am

Location: Family Works, 183 Spey Street, Invercargill.

CURRENTLY VACANT

Would you be interested in volunteering your services for Grandparents Raising Grandchildren?

With over 5500 members across the country Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ rely on volunteer Support Group Coordinators to provide hands on support, information and advocacy in addition to running regular support groups for members to get that peer support that is so valuable when sharing their experiences and accumulated knowledge. Currently we are seeking Support Group Coordinators in the following areas: **Kerikeri, Whangarei, Bream Bay, Hibiscus Coast, North Shore, Avondale, Waitakere, Henderson, Glen Eden, Central Auckland, Mangere/ Onehunga, Te Puke/ Papamoa, Tauranga, Opotiki/Kawerau, Turangi, New Plymouth, Dannevirke/Tararua, Levin/Otaki, Marlborough, Dunedin, North Otago and Otago Coastal.**

Contact: Merle 021 246 0553 (9am to 2pm, Monday–Thursday) / Merle@grg.org.nz

NAPIER

Contact: Beth Thurston

022 073 9900 / Napier@grg.org.nz

Meets: Date and time varies, please contact Beth for confirmation of meetings.

Location: The Octagon Room, All Saints Church, 23 Puketapu Road, Taradale.

WHANGANUI

Contact: Bob Wilson 027 268 7678 /

Whanganui@grg.org.nz

Meets: Every Thursday at 10am

Location: 48 Alma Road, Whanganui.

HUTT VALLEY

Contact: Serenah Nicholson

021 743 414 / Huttvalley@grg.org.nz

Meets: Date and time varies. Please get in touch with Serenah for confirmation of the next meeting.

Location: Pomare Community House, 55 Farmer Crescent, Taita, Lower Hutt.

MOTUEKA

Contact: Rankeilor Arnott

021 133 7299 / Motueka@grg.org.nz

Meets: Every second and fourth Tuesday of the month at 1:00pm

Location: St Andrews Church, 64 High Street, Motueka.

SOUTH CHRISTCHURCH

Contact: Anna Clare

021 085 77404 /

Southchristchurch@grg.org.nz

Meets: Every first Friday of the month at 10am

Location: 168 Stanmore Road, Linwood.



Other Handy Helpline Numbers

Thank you to our Funders for their support for our newsletter

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ

Established in 2001 as a registered charitable trust (CC20205), GRG supports over 5500 grandparent and whānau care families nationwide, representing around 9,000 caregivers and over 14,000 children. Our vision and kaupapa is to empower grandparent and other whānau care families to achieve positive life outcomes, through providing support, information, advice, advocacy services and caregiver education programmes.

For more information about GRG please contact us at office@grg.org.nz or +64 9 418 3753 | 0800 472637

111 for emergency services, fire, ambulance or police

0800 933 922 PlunketLine for advice on child health or parenting from a registered Plunket Nurse

0800 611 116 Healthline for health triage and advice from a registered nurse.

COVID-19 Healthline concerns call **0800 358 5453**

Text 1737 'Need to Talk?' Get help from a counsellor

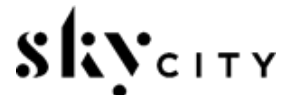
0800 543 354 or **Text 4357 for Lifeline** - 24/7 confidential support from qualified counsellors and trained volunteers

0800 376 633 Youthline, helping families and youth

0508 Carers (0508 227 377) a 24/7 Caregivers Guidance and Advice Line.

0800 WHATS UP (0800 942 8787) - a free counselling helpline for teenagers and children run by Barnardos.

Depression.org.nz – Free text number 4202



Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Trust NZ

Suite C, Chelsea Business Park
162 Mokoia Road
Birkenhead
Auckland 0626

PO Box 34892
Birkenhead
Auckland 0746

Phone: 09 418 3753

Email: office@grg.org.nz

Can we help you?

Members ONLY services are available free of charge nationwide

New members and existing members please call our Helpline 0800 GRANDS (0800 472 637) or 09 418 3753

Join GRG

Join GRG or subscribe to our newsletter via our website at GRG.NZ

Or click the red Join GRG button below

Have your circumstances changed?

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or you have changed address please update your details by clicking the green **Update Your Member Details** below or contact the GRG Trust NZ National Support Office

Disclaimer: Opinions or views expressed in this newsletter shall be understood as reflecting those of the author as quoted and are not to be taken as given or endorsed by GRG.

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Heoi ano, na. *E te Atua, aroha mai..... O God shower us with love. Ka kite Ka Whangaia ka tupu, ka puawai* - That which is nurtured, blossoms and grows. *He rōpū manaaki, he rōpū whakarongo, he rōpū ake o mātou* —We are respectful, we listen, we learn.

Please pass this newsletter on to other grandparents and whānau caregivers who need support

GRG.NZ



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Update Your Member Details

COVID-19

Donate