

# Hospice News

## December 2021

**“For us it was about quality of life for as long as we could keep him with us, and Hospice helped us with that.”**

### **Meretaka shares her family’s palliative care journey.**

Life as you know it can change in an instant. For Merv Houghton and his wife Meretaka that instant was two years ago when Merv was playing rugby league. His team noticed he wasn't himself, falling over and fumbling the ball. Meretaka realised something really wasn't right. She says “we took him to the hospital and days later a Motor Neurone Disease diagnosis was made”. Motor Neurone Disease (MND) is a degenerative condition resulting in progressive muscle wasting and weakness. **“It was a huge shock for us - this is the healthiest man I know, and he’s going to stop eating, stop walking, stop breathing”.**

Meretaka had some experience with Hospice but thought Hospice only came in to help at the end of someone’s life. This changed after a whānau hui where she’d “asked everyone who came to bring their ideas, any research they’d done on MND. One of our daughter-in-laws said Hospice isn’t just for end of life, they can be there for you for the whole journey.”

Merv and Meretaka were extremely active in their community. Meretaka worked as a community liaison and was part of several sports and community trusts. Merv was a bodybuilder and wrestler, working for 45 years before retiring. Meretaka says “we work well as a team, we have a beautiful marriage.” Hospice has provided connection and community for Merv and Meretaka, especially as they have had to step back from the many community projects they’ve been involved with.

The goal for Merv and Meretaka in including Hospice into their journey was quality of life, for as long as possible **“for us it’s about keeping him here as long as we could, and Hospice helped us with that.”**

About the Hospice clinical team Meretaka says, “Going through this journey the nurses have always supported us. I would have been feeling so much grief and guilt without them saying to me “Mere, this is not your fault”. Merv’s made an amazing connection with all of the nurses so that anything he needed, they’re able to sit us down and just help us”.

**“There have been different stages that Hospice has helped us with. The nurses were good at liaising with us and the hospital, and making sure I was ok. They are so loving and caring and helped us through some hard transitions.”**

A last wish was granted through Hospice’s connection with Race 4 Life, an organisation which helps people with a life limiting illnesses to realise dreams. Mere recalls, “Merv was a regular at Day Stay and met Race 4 Life there. Merv’s final wish was a recommitment of our vows because this year was our 10 year anniversary. He always said I was the twinkle in his eye. I think weddings show that real love does exist, it’s alive and it’s beautiful.”

Their recommitment ceremony was held at a holiday home in Rotorua. Mere tells us as she was walking down the aisle she saw Merv and thought **“He was so handsome, he looked shiny, glowing. I broke down as soon as I got to him. I could see that he was crying when he saw me coming down the aisle. I can’t stop talking about it, it was beautiful.”**

Merv died in early November, surrounded by an abundance of love. “This whole MND journey has brought so much aroha and rangatiratanga with our children. They’ve stepped up a whole new level showing empathy and compassion. It’s humbled them and us because everyone has given their time and we’re all here as a whānau to support my darling and each other. **I am such a proud mum, I’m a proud wife and I thank God every day for the blessings that He has given me”.**



### **What's inside your supporter update?**

- Find out how you can support Rotorua Hospice this Christmas
- Meet long-term volunteer Glen and see how his passion for dance helps Hospice
- Shining a light on our Health Care Assistants

# Remember a loved one with Trees of Remembrance

Christmas is generally the time of year when we think of people who won't be with us during the festive season - they may have died, they may be living overseas or in other parts of the country, or perhaps just can't be with you at this time of year.

Trees of Remembrance are a way to honour those we're thinking of and also support hospice. From 19 November until Christmas Eve everyone who makes a donation to hospice whilst shopping in Farmers will receive a remembrance card. This card is an opportunity to write a special message for someone you'll be thinking about this Christmas. Each Farmers has a dedicated Tree of Remembrance in store to display your message for friends and family and the community to see.

As with the purchase of the limited edition baubles, 100% of everything donated remains within the community in which it was given, supporting the local hospice service.



## The story behind your Farmers 2021 limited edition hospice bauble – 'Togetherness'



This year's bauble evokes the Christmas spirit, where family, friends and communities come together to enjoy each other's company and to make lasting memories. During this time of year, we also remember those who are no longer with us and cherish those who are.

At hospice we see people coming together year-round. We see communities supporting each other and working together to create a space where people feel comfort and compassion.

"What I see is an immense coming together of families, people and friends. Everyone's on the journey to support that person, whatever that may be – it's about being together. As a community we need to wrap ourselves around those who are dying." - Mary, Palliative Care Nurse.

The last couple of years have been challenging for many with the impact of the global COVID-19 pandemic. It's during these difficult times, we realise the importance of people coming together to support each other. We also miss those who live overseas, or even those who live in different parts of the country and of course those who are no longer with us. So, this Christmas we want to recognise both the people supporting each other and the people we can't be with.

**Each bauble costs \$10 and thanks to the generous support of Farmers, the full \$10 from every purchase will be donated to the local hospice service.**

Hanging a 'Togetherness' bauble on your tree this year is a symbol of being around those you love. Gifting a bauble is also a perfect way to show a loved one you will always be with them, even if you're physically apart.

There are limited numbers of the baubles available, so pop in to see the local team at Farmers Rotorua, corner of Amohau & Amohia Street to get you bauble today. Get in quick - last year they sold out!



 **Farmers**

  
**hospice**  
Living Every Moment

# 5 Great Reasons to shop at Hospice Shop

## 1. It's more ethical and environmentally friendly!

Pre-loved clothing and household items are a form of recycling, and stops these items ending up in a landfill.

Hospice volunteer Jocelyn says one of the reasons she volunteers at the shop is because she's "into everything being sustainable and upcycling different items".

## 2. It's cheap!

You can find great items, sometimes never used, for bargain prices. If you're in your first flat it's a great way of making your money go further.

Shopping for your children at Hospice Shop is also ideal, especially when they grow out of clothes so fast.



## 3. It's fun!

Op shopping feels like a treasure hunt, especially when you find an item that is fantastic quality and the price tag is budget-friendly. Hospice Shop Rotorua often gets comments that show "disbelief, they can't believe it's an op shop! So many people say it's the best retail shop in Rotorua" says Retail Team Leader, Gianne Reid. She also says "the turnover of stock is high and fast, so every week you'll find new treasures."



## 4. It's unique!

Hospice Shop is a great place to find items that create looks unique to your personal tastes rather than the latest trends. You'll find antique items, vintage clothing that will spice up your life!

## 5. Profits help fund Rotorua Community Hospice!

All net proceeds go to making sure Rotorua Community Hospice can operate a free service for anyone in Rotorua with a life-limiting illness.

Rotorua Hospice CEO, Jonathon Hagger says, "The shop provides the community with an easy way to contribute to Hospice. The greatest treasures of all in the shop are our staff and volunteers. The staff and volunteers don't get to see how their contribution makes a difference but our patients and their families find out first hand".

## If you want to donate your great quality, clean clothing and household items to Hospice Shop you can:

- Drop it off at Hospice Shop, 1134 Eruera Street during opening hours:  
Mon - Fri 9.30am - 4.00pm  
Sat 9.30am - 2.00pm
- Give the friendly shop team a call on 07 349 4231 to arrange a pick-up.

# Thank you!

You have attended, organised, created, supported, volunteered and made our events possible. Thank you!

Fundraising events raise awareness and much needed funds, helping us to reach the \$1 million target we need to raise every year. We have been very fortunate to successfully hold the majority of this year's fundraising events including Harcourts Dancing for Hospice and the inaugural Kilwell Hospice Golf Classic. We've also worked collaboratively with events like the Rotorua Marathon and the Rotorua Home and Lifestyle Show.

To all of our sponsors, funders, donors, volunteers, suppliers, and event attendees we thank you for your support and generosity - we couldn't do what we do without you!

- Harcourts Dancing for Hospice - \$130,000
- Kilwell Hospice Golf Classic - \$20,122
- Rotorua Marathon - \$6,478
- Rotorua Home & Lifestyle Show - \$4,864
- Farmers Trees of Remembrance & Bauble Sales (2020) - \$26,114
- Community Trees of Remembrance (2020) - \$10,208



# How a passion for performing helps provide free of charge Hospice care.

Meet Glen, a long-time supporter of Hospice with a passion for dance and all things performance.

We caught up with Glen to find out what his volunteer role involves, why he enjoys volunteering for Rotorua Hospice and why his role is so important.

## What does your volunteer role involve?

My volunteer role is giving encouragement and advice to the brave dancers. I've been involved with ballroom dancing from the age of 12, so have lots of experience and knowledge which I'm delighted I can use to help both the dancers and Hospice.

## Why did you decide to get involved?

It was a no-brainer, really. I had the knowledge to assist and Hospice is a most worthy cause. Rotorua Hospice cared for my mother, their support was nothing short of amazing. A wonderful organisation with beautiful, caring staff and it has been a real pleasure to be able to help them out.

## What do you enjoy about volunteering for Hospice?

It's the people - it is truly he tangata, he tangata, he tangata, both staff and dancers. The people who take part are amazing people. It's a huge commitment from them and their families. It's truly a privilege to be involved each year.

## We asked dance instructors Ellie Smith & Troy Smith what impact Glen's role has.

Glen is a bit of a legend in the NZ ballroom dancing world, so it is a real coup for our dancers to get to learn from someone with so much knowledge and experience. We were in awe of all the time that Glen gave to this event, he was always there whenever we needed him, ready to lend a hand whipping our dancers into shape! He brought a wealth of expertise to every practice and also his wicked sense of humour, helping not only the dancers but everyone involved to get out of their heads a little bit and enjoy the amazing journey we were on together. We are so grateful and indebted to his generosity, knowledge, good humour and kindness.



## Volcanic Kitchens - the gift that gives back

### The perfect way to send the very best of Rotorua

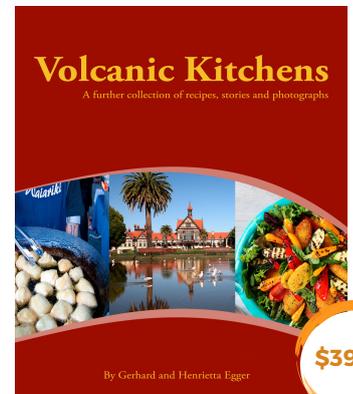
This incredible cookbook is a great way to send the very best of Rotorua to family and friends you may not be able to see this year. It also makes a great gift for clients - email [fundraising@rotoruahospice.co.nz](mailto:fundraising@rotoruahospice.co.nz) to place your order.

Every purchase supports Rotorua Hospice, making it the perfect way to shop local, showcase Rotorua and support a great cause!

### Available in store at:

Hospice Shop	Mitre10 Mega
Polynesian Spa	Artisan Cafe
Capers Café + Store	Volcanic Hills Winery
Cafe Dynasti	

*Buy 10, get one free!*



## We gratefully acknowledge our funding partners:



**\$10,000**  
Operating costs



**\$30,000**  
Operating costs



**\$10,000**  
Registered Nurse salaries



**\$4,000**  
Health promotion



**\$5,996**  
(Rotorua branch)  
Equipment costs



**\$16,000**  
Printing & computer costs



**\$5,996**  
Equipment costs



**\$9,205**  
Equipment costs

# Clinical Team Focus - Healthcare Assistants

Health Care Assistants are an integral part of our clinical team. They provide direct patient care, ensuring the patient's comfort, hygiene and well-being are maintained. With over 80% of our patients cared for in their own homes, the impact they have on patients and their families is enormous.

Our three Health Care Assistants, Dianne, Maryann and Jan are also responsible for delivering and installing loan equipment which support a patient's needs, from small nebulisers to electric beds and wheelchairs. They educate families on how to use the equipment as well as on personal care.

Dianne said "Each patient we visit is a new opportunity to embrace, empower, assist and support as needed in what is a difficult but uniquely individual journey in their lives."

Maryann told us "It's lovely when a bed is set up in a lounge so the patient can be in the heart of their home, giving constant contact with family and loved ones. Knowing a patient feels safe and secure, gaining their trust and being able to listen is so rewarding; it's an honour to be part of their journey".

Jan agreed " it is a privilege to be allowed into that window of patients lives when they are so vulnerable. Our job is about allowing our patients to maintain their dignity and to make a difference at their end of life - treating them with care and compassion as if they were our loved ones."

A patient's family told us "through our journey with our darling parents, Hospice became our "family". They listened, they cared, they cried with us, they laughed, they knew all our names but mostly they showed incredible respect, integrity, care, tenderness and love towards our Dad and Mum which we will be forever thankful for".



## Shine a Light for Hospice Virtual Community Trees Appeal

Our Community Trees of Remembrance appeal has gone virtual this year. Remember your loved ones and donate by scanning this QR code using your smartphone camera/QR reader app or go to:

<https://visufund.com/shine-a-light-for-hospice>



## "A beautiful space to sit and think" - Hospice Garden transformed thanks to green fingered volunteers.

**Volunteer Manager Sue explains the impact of the garden project.**

A garden can be invigorating with its constant movement and aroma but it can also be a source of solace, a place for meditation and contemplation. The Rotorua Hospice garden is simple in its design, focusing on nature. Patients visiting the garden can see the textures and colours, smell the aromas and observe the birds and bees. Staff also benefit from having a place to contemplate and rejuvenate.



It is a "young developing garden" and the work of local landscape designers, business partners, Rotary Rotorua Sunrise members, hospice staff and many volunteers.

The overall goal of the Rotorua Hospice garden has been to make it as relaxing and comforting as possible, a safe place of tranquility for contemplation and reflection.



# Seeds of Support

*Poipoia te kākano, kia puāwai - Nurture the seed and it will blossom*

Seeds of Support is a way for you to contribute regularly to Rotorua Hospice. Every dollar counts and small amounts add up over time.

Regular giving means we can plan ahead and fund our nurses, health care assistants and family support worker to reach more people in the community living with a life-limiting illness.



Monthly emergency call line



Consumables for a month (gloves, syringes, bandages)



Bereavement counselling session



Seeds of Support

Sign up now to become a regular giver

[www.rotoruahospice.co.nz/donate-now](http://www.rotoruahospice.co.nz/donate-now)



## We want your feedback!

To ensure Rotorua Hospice is providing the best service possible for our community we'd appreciate you letting us know how we can improve.

Go to <https://bit.ly/hospice-survey>.

**We care for patients 24/7, 365 days a year, even when COVID-19 alert levels change. From July 2020 to June 2021 our 11 clinical team members had:**

**13,236**

visits to patients



**353**

new referrals



**6,989**

patient/whānau telephone calls



**223**

people died

