



Newsletter August 2011

A.G.M.

City Missioner Michael Gorman spoke movingly of the amazing contribution of volunteers in the aftermath of the earthquakes. On February 22 many of us simply didn't know what to do. Michael saw a volunteer competently directing traffic, and recognised he was one of the Mission's Night Shelter clients. Just three days after the earthquake the Mission was again operating (from the Riccarton Club) and the volunteers were wonderful. It was hard to know how we might get back to normal, and the Mission worked to project a positive image in the hope it would prove contagious. They set up two foodbanks in different parts of the city, and also worked from a caravan.

Prior to the earthquake the Mission distributed 25-30 food parcels a day. Afterwards there was a need for 100-150 daily parcels. Food then started coming from many sources and the Mission was able to store some which is now (five months later) much needed. With the initial recovery period over people are facing redundancy and homelessness. Many have no idea what their future will be. The people of Christchurch need love, care, food, counselling, budget advice, and help. It is volunteers who will provide all of these, and Michael acknowledged the vital role VolCan plays in recruiting and supporting those volunteers.

VolCan wants to thank all those who braved the snow to attend our AGM. For those members who weren't able to come, a copy of our Annual Report is enclosed with this Newsletter. Retiring Board Members Gavin Hampton, Ron Cormack, and Sue Kobar were thanked for their contribution.

The meeting agreed that there will be an increase in membership subs for the 2012-2013 year. P.t.o.

What's happening to us all?

The earthquakes have had a huge psychological impact on everyone, and communication has been disrupted in a variety of ways. Workers in voluntary organisations continue to provide services and support while needing to face many new issues in their personal and professional lives. The demand for our services has changed and increased, while our capacity to take in information has shrunk. Many of us face conversation and compassion fatigue, and we need to reduce our expectations of ourselves and others. In some cases our work gives us a break from worrying about earthquakes and damaged or destroyed homes. It has been noticeable that as the earthquakes continue the waves of outside sympathy have decreased. If we manage to get up in the morning and function for the required number of hours, then we have achieved success. We all need to care for ourselves and remember that we cannot help others until our own needs have been met.

Volunteer Co-ordinators' Network

July 21st saw this group of 'givers' on the receiving end for a change, as they enjoyed massage, meditation, and exercise, followed by a delicious lunch. Thanks to Liz whose massage relaxed us, Bronwyn who gave us a tool for dealing with the things that keep us awake at night, and Ann who invigorated us with a walk around the Avon Loop and then fed us.

The next meeting for the Volunteer Co-ordinators' network is on Wednesday August 17. Karolin Potter (Human Rights Commission) will lead a discussion on *Avoiding Discrimination in Volunteer Recruitment*. 12.30 – 2.00 pm at the Avon Loop Community Cottage, 28 Hurley St. RSVP to VolCan.

The role of volunteers following disasters

We are currently looking at the role of volunteers in the immediate aftermath of the earthquakes and during the long term rebuild. After completing evidential and anecdotal research, we plan to talk with member organisations to assess your needs. If you have information in this area or are interested in being involved in the process, please contact us. We will be using this information to formulate a strategy as to how VolCan can best assist in the rebuild.

Email problems

We have had some problems with emails. If you don't get a response from us when you should have one, please call and check that we have received your email.

See our website www.volcan.org.nz for details of coming events