



CANTERBURY MEN'S CENTRE

Annual Manager's Report for AGM May 2009

Our Place in Christchurch/Canterbury's Social Outcomes:

The Canterbury Men's Centre is accountable to our funders and the people of Canterbury for making real improvements in the lives of men/boys and those they relate to.

We provide drop-in/referral support for men. The men that come to us aren't "shopping" for information, as we had expected. They are dealing with a crisis and need a person to talk to immediately about: housing, medical conditions, trauma, grief, and separation. We typically meet them once or twice and then refer them on to appropriate supports. According to different informed sources help seeking behaviour by men is growing, but the pattern of 'too little too late' (compared with women) is still very clear. We hope our presence addresses some of this deficit, and opens men up to other healthy behaviour.

We support the broader social sector's provision for men and boys. We promote and support initiatives such as the Methodist Mission/Salvation Army "Men on a Mission" group. We produce a monthly e-newsletter for male related services/courses to inform community workers (Male Call). We run a monthly forum for male community/health/education workers.

We inform social and health systems about the needs of men and boys. I am actively providing information through my participation on the Partnership Health Canterbury board, the Christchurch Council of Social Services, and the CDHB's Consumer Advisory Council.

We bolster services that support men and boys. Father and Child Trust, Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse, the Men's Advocacy Network, Mensline, MensTrust, Tracks, Big Buddy, and the Men's Sheds groups have all expressed their gratitude for our support and are keen to see us be there continuing our work.

We are acutely aware of the economic stress being experienced by many local families and news is reaching us about male suicides. Research from previous downturns shows us that suicide numbers will increase, especially for older men displaced from work, and younger men that don't find job openings. We hope that we can do something for men to bridge the gap at this vulnerable time.

Thanks to Our Funders:

We have continued to receive great support from funders. I'd like to thank the **Christchurch City Council**, the **Canterbury Community Trust**, **Lotteries New Zealand**, and the **Community Organisations Grants Scheme**. In particular I'd like to thank the (now previous) Minister of Social Development, Ruth Dyson, for her generous one-off grant from Innovation Grants scheme. I hope they find we have used their funds in an effective way in the community.

Community Work vs. Health Work:

Our involvement in Men's Health forums takes about 20% of our time and provides 8% of our income. While doing this work we are focussed on the community sector. I see my role in health forums as one that will result in improved community outcomes for men. If because I am on these panels more organisations are running effective programmes, in a more male inclusive way, then we are adding something useful to both men's health and their well-being.

Summary of 2008:

Our first complete year of operation finished on December 2008. It has been a year of exciting developments. We decided in early 2008 to focus on building relationships with other agencies, and becoming involved in existing community group networks. We aimed to find out their perceptions of the needs of their male clients, and to identify the most useful role we could play in improving outcomes for men and boys under their care.

We didn't anticipate that we would become deeply involved in men's health, albeit from a community perspective. As the year unfolded and after discussion with the board it was decided that I assume two pivotal roles in the health system, the CDHB Consumer Representative Panel and the Partnership Health Canterbury Board (see below).

We hired Simon Gurnsey in December as our Office Coordinator for two days per week. He will take on the administrative/finance/funding tasks and some of the drop-in and volunteer support. We now have paid staff for 6 working days.

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c/ 141 Hereford St., Christchurch, ph 03 940-9487, fax 03 366-8535, e-mail donald@canmen.net.nz

Achievements 2008:

Office Developments:

1. Established our office space in Christchurch Community House including signage furnishings, library/resources. Established office systems including accounting, letterhead, a draft website, a blog, banking, manager reporting/financial reporting
2. Performed our first financial audit and will present our second audit at our AGM 2009.
3. Had a successful opening day with approximately 80 people attending, many of whom expressed both their keen support for our work and expressions of interest in developing projects together.
4. Created a flyer for our agency which is a resource for other community groups wanting to find services for men, and for men wanting to find out about local support services. This pamphlet has been in high demand with the first and second bunch of 500 pamphlets each having been taken away to other agencies. I have printed over 3000 flyers, almost all of which have been taken away as a resource by other community groups.

Funding:

We have been very well received by funders in our first two years despite an unanticipated \$0 response from one funder in 2008. Hon. Ruth Dyson provided us with a much needed MSD Community Initiatives Grant of \$25,000 plus GST in recognition of our novel service and special role.

Supported Local Men's Groups:

1. Met with our key stakeholders to define their expectations and establish their perceptions of client needs, as well as their perceptions of the broader needs of men in Canterbury/Christchurch.
2. We've initiated the Men's Shed Hub meetings and these have been well received. Three groups in Christchurch expect to have a shed up and running in the next six months, with three in rural Canterbury in various stages of development. There appears to be a lot of interest in this way of addressing men's needs, opening up their volunteer potential while using already existing community resources to a large extent.
3. MensTrust. I've been supporting them while they redefine their purpose after losing their worker. The board is short of expertise and finds my support useful while they define the new position and find an employee. I'm hoping that they will move strongly into the community sector, working with other community groups to form relevant men's groups.
4. Father and Child Trust: I am on the board and this keeps us working closely with each other. I have also provided informal supervision to their worker, making available my knowledge of social work systems and agencies to enhance their work.

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5. Male Survivors of Sexual Abuse: I support Ken Clearwater when he is dealing with complex client issues, and act as a sounding board while he works out his agency's direction.
6. Mensline: We refer men to the Mensline group and also support them by recommending men in the community to volunteer as group facilitators.
7. Tracks: Tracks, Takaka is forming in Canterbury and needs some help to keep their local team true to their vision. They run "transition to Manhood" 5 day events for boys. I've met with their team 5 times this year and provide supervision to their leaders as they require it.
8. Big Brother: Runs mentoring services for boys and we supplied them with a list of suitable candidates for a position they hope to open up in 2009.
9. Men's Advocacy Network: We inform them of any political issues and forward requests to them for consideration.
10. Koru Men's Group: Meeting monthly we formed this group for gay men leaving heterosexual relationships in conjunction with the New Zealand Aids Foundation and Richard Tankersley when they found this to be a growing need.
11. Formed the MiSHES: A monthly group for Men in the Social/Health/Education services that provides support for male workers, education about male client groups, and acts as a springboard for group collaborations for men. Normally 12-14 participants.
12. Inspired the start up of a men's support group inside the Depression Support Network.
13. Ran a Men's Health Week event in June 2008 that had over 200 participants from community agencies Conference based in Christchurch which in the end we changed into a NZ Men's Health Week educational programme.
14. Used the contacts gathered from the Men's Health Week to send out a monthly e-newsletter (Male Call) presenting summary of local services for men. This is very well received with 280 local healthy and community workers on our e-mail list.
15. I've spoken to the Manager of Presbyterian Support Services for South Canterbury on several occasions about us doing some work in rural Canterbury and she has been very supportive. I am building relationships with key stakeholders in the hopes of us doing significant work to link Christchurch based men's services up with key organisations in rural Canterbury so that current men's work will extend out to rural men.
16. Hosted a White Ribbon event at Christchurch Community house that was well attended.
17. Joined the COSS network as the men's sector representative. I have been very warmly received in this role.

Men's Health:

1. I completed the Men's Health 451 Post-Graduate paper with an A average, building a clear understanding of the literature related to men's health from a social perspective. I also attend the CDHB Jigsaw course for health promoters.
2. I'm on the Partnership Health Canterbury Board under the consumer and community grouping.
3. A national Men's Health Hui came out of our initial work on a conference, but was taken over and run by the Ministry of Health for the (previous) Associate

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- Minister of Health. This hui announced health funding for targeted men's health projects.
4. I have joined the CDHB Consumer Representative Panel as the men's sector representative.
 5. Consulted briefly with the Runaka meeting about the Men's Health Week project in relation to Maori men and established some commitment to working on this issue together.
 6. We ran a very successful Men's Health Week event with funding support from the CCC. 220 community and health workers attended our 10 educational sessions and from this effort we established a database of 250 people interested in monthly updates about services for men in Canterbury.

Outlook for 2009

Projects we are Committed to:

1. We continue to talk to key stakeholders about support services for fathers on separation. I expect we will act on this in this next month.
2. Men's Health Week 2009: We've had several requests to repeat some of last year's speakers. We are running a very simple event at Christchurch Community House on a very limited budget.
3. The Men's Sheds effort will be continued as we see this as a critical resource for men, especially with the current economic climate. We will provide support for comprehensive support for individual sheds if there is an identified need and a partner organisation to work with.
4. Mail Out: We will do a mail out to the Christchurch surgeries, information points, and social agencies including our flyer and relevant flyers from other agencies.
5. We are working with Victim Support, the police, the DIA, Father and Child Trust, and Christchurch Women's Refuge to address POL400 reports related to male victims. Victim Support tells us that 15% of the current POL400 reports are male victims (predominantly by female partners) and that they currently do not respond to these.
6. Eli Lily has approached us and asked for our support as consultants while they develop a bi-annual Men's health conference based in Christchurch. I start to meet with them next week to flesh this out but they appear to be very committed to making at least the initial conference happen.
7. Our E-newsletter is very well received and having a clear impact with minimal drain on our time.

Drop-in Support:

We are committed to expanding our drop-in/assessment/referral support for men in 2009. In addition we have had very positive interest in this service from;

- Women's Refuge: Anne Gillespie the area manager has said she is keen to support our development with the hope that we can accept referrals from male partners of female victims.

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- Victim Support: They currently receive 3 or 4 POL-400 reports for male victims of domestic violence every day, as well as a variety of other male victim related issues.
- The Stopping Violence agencies: There are 4 that I know of in Canterbury and 3 of them are likely to want to use us.
- Relationship Services: Support for male partners
- A variety of mainstream agencies such as Presbyterian Support, Methodist Mission, Salvation Army, Hope4Life. Early Start, Street 10- Inner City Agency Trust.
- Men's support agencies such as Father and Child Trust, MensTrust, Mensline.
- Phone based agencies such as Lifeline and Mensline Auckland.
- Self-referrals from our leaflet drop in a variety of community locations around Christchurch.
- GP practices

Further Potential Projects:

1. Outreach to rural men: We did some talks this year in rural Canterbury as a start. I hope that we will design a useful resource/pamphlet for rural Canterbury men to use in the event of a personal crisis with the approach of who to talk to, and how to go about it.
2. Individual Men's Shed projects if the opportunity, funding and need arises.
3. Next Steps for men: a group for men finishing non-violence courses

Other Potential Funding: I receive a small grant for my work on the Partnership Health Board. I have been asked to do supervision work by several agencies but believe I need some personal training to do this first. Father and Child Trust have asked to do some work in conjunction with us on family violence issues.

Outlook for 2010

Our drop-in/needs assessment/referral models will be well-honed by this point and we will start including more volunteers in 2010, similar to the Women's Centre. This will probably require us to move out of Christchurch Community House as I doubt we would have the space required to support a larger operation with inherent informal space that is required. This will obviously be funding dependant.

In addition I expect that there will be more need for support for family men during this and following years as the current **economic climate is grim**. During times of economic hardship and subsequent family breakdowns, men (particularly men at the beginning of their work life or nearing the end of their work life) demonstrate significant increased rates of

- Depression (<http://eurpub.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/content/full/16/5/542>)
- Suicide, particularly in rural Canterbury (<http://tinyurl.com/crl8mw>)

We are ambitious in our work and one of our expectations is to make a real difference to men's suicide in the context of despair. We have been told by one client that we made the difference with them on this decision, with others hinting at this as well and believe that our drop in support and range of projects is making a tangible difference.

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Best wishes

Donald Pettitt
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