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GOVERNMENT SERVICE CONTRACT



## NEW PREMISES

Family Help Trust is delighted to have purchased a new building, a short move west along Carlyle Street. This is an exciting development in the history of the Trust: the first time we have owned such an important asset.

In a brand new building, fitted out to suit, we will be more comfortable and more efficient in the way we work. Special thanks to Contact Energy for their significant contribution towards this.

Our step up to property ownership has been made possible through the generous assistance of a series of funders: the Canterbury Community Trust, the Lamar Trust, the Christchurch City Council and another significant donor who has chosen to remain anonymous. Funding to assist FHT in this move means we will be mortgage free within five years.

It is ironic that, although we now own the roof over our heads, we still struggle to fund operational funding to meet the cost of our services.

## EFFECTIVE EARLY INTERVENTION, NOT STATE CUSTODY, BETTER FOR NEWBORNS

**Is state custody the most effective way to protect our most vulnerable children when there are much more effective ways to address the problem, with greater prospects for long-term success?**

Granted, for extreme cases, state custody is the only option, but recently publicised figures reveal that Child, Youth and Family (CYF) took 66 at-risk newborn babies into its care last year. That equates to one infant, on average, every five and a half days.

On average it costs around \$10,000 per annum to care for a child taken from its family by the state.

On that basis, caring long term for newborns taken into care by CYF last year will cost the taxpayer \$660,000 per annum.

Many babies are taken into care from mothers who have already demonstrated inadequate parenting skills. With one or more older siblings of these newborns likely to also be in care, the actual cost here is probably at least two or three times that amount.

The real cost, however, is later in the life of these babies, when, without effective early intervention, they are highly likely to place yet further and far greater cost on the taxpayer in crime, mental health, negative impacts on the education system and their poor future employment prospects. As those previously in state care figure prominently in these negative statistics, we know 2008's 66 newborn state wards will place an ongoing future burden on the taxpayer.

In addition is the human cost on them as individuals from the effects of being taken into state care at the very start of life.

Effective early intervention programmes to address the root causes of child abuse cost on average around 60 per cent of the cost of keeping a child in state care and, as Family Help Trust has shown, achieve far more successful outcomes for the children concerned and for society as a whole.

Spending one dollar on early intervention services now will save \$19 in the future when those children, should they survive their adverse start to life, are otherwise likely to cost the taxpayer in a linked series of negative social statistics.

Taking so many infants into state care will perpetuate rather than properly address the causes of child abuse. Investment in proven and effective early intervention programmes would be a much better, and more humane, use of taxpayer resources.



**DISTRICT POLICE COMMANDER WELCOMED AS NEW TRUSTEE**

### Superintendent Dave Cliff has joined the FHT board.

Dave has been Canterbury District Police Commander since November 2007. With a career in the police that began in 1983, his previous experience of child abuse issues includes as a detective working on the West Coast when he investigated numerous child sexual abuse and violence cases. In his current role he has an overview of all Police youth related services, including the Child Abuse Team as part of the Canterbury District Criminal Investigation Branch.

FHT has had an excellent working relationship with the Police for many years, including when one of Dave's predecessors as District Commander, Paul Fitzharris, chaired the FHT board from 1996-2000.

Dave Cliff has been married for 20 years and has two teenage children

## EVALUATION REPORT PENDING

Within the next few weeks, the latest evaluation report on the Family Help Trust's work will be published.

In October 2006 Dr Mark Turner undertook an evaluation report on the outcomes of our work with 55 families recently introduced to our services.

According to that 2006 report, "FHT families were successful in improving maternal child-rearing skills and reducing child abuse risks over the first 12 months involvement with the service."

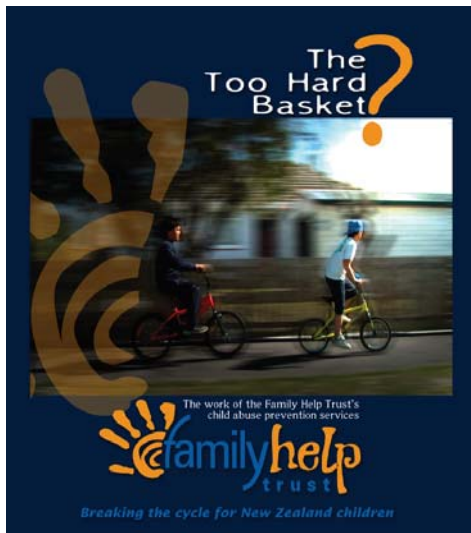
In the next evaluation report, Dr Turner will track our subsequent work the same group of families to see what further progress has been made.

These reports are immensely important to the Family Help Trust as they provide an independent, in-depth critique of our work, which enables us to objectively measure what we do and present our case to potential funders, policy analysts and Government decision-makers.

## GOVERNMENT SIGNALS WHERE IT WILL FOCUS SUPPORT

While new policies and funding models for social agencies have not yet been announced by the new government, in February the Minister of Social Development, Paula Bennett, pledged to support those agencies within our communities making the most difference to our most vulnerable families in these tougher economic times. She said that the government is committed to backing what works.

The Family Help Trust fits those criteria. Over the past 18 years we have worked with the families of over 1,000 children born in Christchurch at the highest risk of child abuse, successfully helping them to lead far better lives than would have been the case without our assistance.



### 'THE TOO HARD BASKET?'

Towards the end of last year, FHT completed production of a nine minute promotional DVD, 'The Too Hard Basket?' summarising and illustrating the work we do.

Focusing on the stories of some of the families we work with, 'The Too Hard Basket?' presents a powerful picture of how we have helped them to turn their lives around and overcome adverse circumstances. For a copy of the DVD, please contact FHT.

We are grateful for the generous assistance of the Rotary Club of Christchurch, which funded production and distribution of the DVD.



Published by  
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AJ Becroft  
Lesley Max M.B.E.

**Sports Ambassadors:**  
Julie and Dallas Seymour



## PROFILE

**Name:** Maggie Riddell

**Started with FHT:** 2002

**Previous social work experience:**

Working with agencies dealing with offenders from 1998-2002

**Previous life experience:**

I had a challenging start to life. As a young adult that included problems with drugs, alcohol and the law. My proudest achievement was deciding, with my husband, that we were going to turn our lives around when I fell pregnant aged 24. We managed to break the cycle. That life experience has given me the confidence to walk alongside others as they seek to do the same.

**Biggest challenge in working for FHT:**

Staying positive for some of the families I work with when I can see how much of a struggle they go through.

**Greatest satisfaction in working for FHT:**

Seeing people become responsible when they find value in being a good parent, particularly those who have extended that into further education.

**What is the one thing that would make the most positive change for early intervention programmes dealing with the causes of child abuse:**

For government to increase funding to realistic levels for NGOs providing services on an evidence-based practice basis.

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