

NICE ONE!

WELLINGTON FREE AMBULANCE
THE ONES WHO ARE HERE FOR YOU

DECEMBER 2020

NEW CHAIR, KERRY
ONESIE DAY HIGHLIGHTS
CARDIAC ARREST SURVIVOR SHAUN



WELLINGTON
FREE AMBULANCE
kia ora te tangata

We are the ones. 111



Mike Grant

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
WELLINGTON FREE AMBULANCE

Kia ora koutou katoa,

As 2020 wraps up, this year, more than ever, I encourage you to celebrate the things that really matter to you.

I know this year has been hard for many of us, but with these challenges comes a greater importance to do things together. We're a big family at Wellington Free Ambulance and I hope you feel part of it too. Even with the difficulties COVID-19 brought us,

we have still been able to achieve some great things this year, thanks to you, our supporters.

We were able to add an additional ambulance to the road during the busy winter months. The Mahi Ngātahi vehicle was dedicated to attending those 111 calls for low acuity patients, but who still need to go to hospital. You can read more about this from Darrin on page 4.

We also refreshed our organisational values to reflect who we are, where we're going and who we're taking with us. Be authentic, original true | Mā pango mā whero ka oti te mahi; Act with kindness | Aroha atu, aroha mai; Lead by example | Mahia te mahi, hei painga mo te iwi; Keep getting better together | Whaia e koe te iti kahurangi. Explore our values and find out what they mean to people on pages 6 and 7.

On page 8, you can read about five amazing years of support from the Lloyd Morrison Foundation. They're always supporting our mahi by continuing to be the proud sponsors of our Heartbeat CPR training programme and have donated a number of ambulances over the years.

COVID-19 meant we had to move our Onesie Day Annual Appeal away from the street and bring it to life online, and you really gave it your all! Check out how much you helped raise on page 11.

Be sure to look after yourself and each other this summer, and we'll be sure to be here for you when it matters to you, because it matters to us.

Thank you for your support, and everything you do. **Arohanui.**

TEAMING UP WITH WAIRARAPA SEARCH AND RESCUE FOR AORANGI RESCUE

Bad weather made the rescue of an injured hunter in the Aorangi Forest Park earlier this year tricky for all those involved.

However, the experience of our Extended Care Paramedic and rescue team member Sam, plus the joint planning and deployment with New Zealand Police, Wairarapa Search & Rescue, and Life Flight ensured everyone was kept safe.

Disorientated and in pain, the patient had attempted to make his own way out. But on his third night in the bush, he recognised he was in trouble and phoned for help.

Sam and the Wairarapa Search and Rescue team trekked the 11 kilometres roundtrip to reach the patient. "When we found him he was wet and had signs of mild hypothermia. He was lucky and would have been in a much worse state if we didn't reach him before the morning," Sam explains.

As the weather was due to worsen, the plan was to extricate the patient overnight.



Once out, the patient was transported home as there was no need for further urgent medical treatment but was advised to see his GP after getting some rest.

"Great interagency communication and leadership, as well as working alongside Wairarapa Search and Rescue meant I could assess the patient's injuries, give appropriate pain relief, and help ensure the patient's safety during extrication".



SURVIVING A CARDIAC ARREST ON THE STAIRWAY TO HEAVEN

As Shaun and Chantal were approaching the end of their walk along the Paekākāriki Escarpment Track things took a turn for the worst. Shaun stopped and collapsed, he was having a cardiac arrest. Chantal describes the moment as a “nightmare” and began to scream for help.

“So much was going through my mind in that moment. When he dropped, I just thought, ‘oh my God, what’s happened?’ Being in that situation is something I’ll never forget,” Chantal says.

Fortunately, Chris was also walking the track and had heard Chantal calling for help. Chris was CPR trained by one of the team at Wellington Free Ambulance, so knew exactly what to do. She dialled 111 and started chest compressions immediately.

“I’d never done CPR on anyone before but didn’t give it a second thought. It was just one of those on the spot moments where you do what you need to do,” Chris says.

Once Paramedics Tash, Mal, and Francis arrived, they worked quickly and efficiently – and after about 20 minutes of collective CPR plus one shock from the defibrillator, Shaun’s heart started to beat again.

“The important things in a cardiac arrest are ensuring CPR is started as soon as possible and early defibrillation – and fortunately Chris had already done an amazing job,” Mal says.

Saving a life requires a team effort. It started with Chris who was there to do CPR, then our team of paramedics; next it was time for the medical professionals at hospital to help.

“We all had a common goal and worked together to achieve a good outcome,” Mal says.

Shaun says everything that happened is history but hasn’t been forgotten. “I can’t remember anything that happened but am thankful I am alive today. Every day is a blessing and I’m always going to be grateful for those who helped me,” Shaun says.

“I was the same age as one of my kids when my dad had a cardiac arrest; I’m not in a rush to get out of the house now and really cherish the time Chantal and I spend together and with the kids,” Shaun explains.

WELCOME TO OUR NEW CHAIR



In March we were delighted to welcome our new Chair, Dame Kerry Prendergast. Kerry has been a member of the board since 2013 but now takes the role of Chair, replacing Ross Martin who remains on our board.

Having served on the board for many years, Kerry is delighted to have the opportunity to lead whilst continuing to contribute to the strategic direction of Wellington Free.

The former Mayor of Wellington also sits on a number of boards and has immeasurable experience in governance and leadership. Kerry hopes to continue to share her passion for the community through measureable initiatives and change.

"I would like to thank Ross for his significant contribution to Wellington Free over the years and I am looking forward to working with the board, our executive leadership team as well as our community, stakeholders and supporters going forward," Kerry says.



PROVIDING THE EXTRA HELP OVER WINTER

Patient Transfer Officer Darrin is humbled by the amazing people he's met over the years who continue to express their gratitude for the care they receive.

Darrin and his colleague Stephen were part of the crew for Mahi Ngātahi, meaning working together, to add an additional ambulance to the road during the busy winter months.

Normally the Patient Transfer Service transport patients attending scheduled hospital appointments or transports between hospitals.

The Mahi Ngātahi vehicle was dedicated to attending those 111 calls for low acuity patients, who still need to go to hospital. These are the patients who are not in an immediate life-threatening condition and can safely wait for transport.

Darrin says patients are first assessed by a Paramedic, a Clinical Paramedic Advisor over the phone or a registered medical professional, before being transported to the emergency department.

"The benefit of having a vehicle designated to transporting low acuity patients allows our paramedic colleagues to respond to more urgent and life-threatening incidents."

Darrin enjoys working with both his Patient Transfer Officers and Paramedic colleagues. He says one of the best aspects of being part of the Mahi Ngātahi crew was the opportunity to assist in a way that benefits both his frontline colleagues and patients.



PROVIDING URGENT PATIENT CARE IN OUR COMMUNITY

Since joining Wellington Free four and a half years ago, Paramedic and Clinical Paramedic Advisor Abby has continued to extend her clinical expertise by most recently becoming an Extended Care Paramedic.

“You’re always learning in this job and that will never stop regardless of the role you do.”

What caught her interest in upskilling was the ability to treat patients closer to home and in their own communities.

As an Extended Care Paramedic, Abby is part of our Urgent Community Care team who use response cars instead of ambulances.

Based in either Porirua or Kāpiti, Abby uses local pathways and her own extended clinical expertise to help treat patients at home; reducing unnecessary trips to hospital.

“I really enjoy all the extra assessment skills and techniques I have learnt that help me investigate and diagnose more thoroughly. To be able to liaise with GPs and medical centres to formulate appropriate plans for patients is great too.”

Abby loves the variety in her roles.

“AS A FRONTLINE PARAMEDIC, I START EACH SHIFT NEVER KNOWING WHAT IT WILL ENTAIL; AS A CLINICAL PARAMEDIC ADVISOR IN OUR III EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE, MY CLINICAL PRACTICE AND DECISION MAKING SKILLS ARE ENHANCED; AND AS AN EXTENDED CARE PARAMEDIC, I GET TO MEET AND CARE FOR PEOPLE IN MY COMMUNITY.”

If that wasn’t enough, Abby also works as an assistant tutor for the Paramedicine Degree at Whitireia – and hopes to do more teaching in the future.

THE BEST LITTLE AMBULANCE SERVICE IN THE WORLD

Earlier this year, we refreshed our organisational values to reflect who we are, where we're going and who we're taking with us. Our values operate as guidelines to behaviour and culture, and help us drive our mission to be the best little ambulance service in the world.

At our core we focus on helping people feel comforted and supported, particularly at times when they feel most vulnerable. But when we lead by our values, we evolve to meet the changing environment, the needs of the communities we serve and who we are as Wellington Free Ambulance.

As a patient, family member, supporter or health partner, you can expect the essence of all our values to be present in all we do.



Be authentic original true | Mā pango mā whereo ka oti te mahi

We respect and champion diversity. We gain stronger, trusting relationships and better outcomes when we all feel confident, comfortable and able to be ourselves.

The whakataukī *Mā pango mā whereo ka oti te mahi* means 'with black and with red the work is completed'. It refers to us working together with respect for each other, our patients and stakeholders to achieve our goals.

For Patient Transfer Service Manager, Yvonne "*Mā pango, mā whereo, ka oti te mahi* is about people working together to achieve a common goal or purpose. To me, this is absolutely what it feels to be authentic, original and true at Wellington Free – to work with and support our community. It reminds me of what we are truly here for – to help each other."



Act with kindness | Aroha atu, aroha mai

Kindness is the quality that we give to those we work with and everyone around us. Care and compassion are fundamental to how we work. Be kind, every day.

The whakataukī *Aroha atu, aroha mai* means ‘Love received, love returned’.

Wairarapa Manager Jake says “this whakataukī is about reaping what you sow and acknowledging the importance of intent. Living into these principals would look like engaging in conversation with an intention of building people up, acknowledging alternative perspectives or a differing world view and embracing people with a meaningful warmth. Ultimately for me it’s about care and aroha beyond the literal translation of the word. Love received encourages love to be returned.”



Lead by example | Mahia te mahi, hei painga mo te iwi

Our actions define us, we do what we say we will. We build trust and respect when we are present for our patients and colleagues. We say what needs saying to ensure better outcomes for all.

The whakataukī *Mahia te mahi, hei painga mo te iwi* means ‘Do what is needed for the benefit of the people’. This speaks to our influence and contribution to all our communities to ensure better outcomes for all.

Nick is a Call Taking Supervisor in our Clinical Communications Centre, for him it means doing everything we possibly can to protect, stabilise and reassure our patients and callers until the paramedic crew arrives. “Our team works hard every day and night to problem solve and formulate the most effective responses to our patients’ needs. This makes me very proud to work at Wellington Free.”



Keep getting better together | Whaia e koe te iti kahurangi

We are open to learning and we strive to continuously improve. Being visionary matters. We achieve as a team when we work together. We respect healthy debate because it makes us question, learn and improve.

The whakataukī *Whaia e koe te iti kahurangi* means ‘Strive for something of great value’. This whakataukī is about perseverance and endurance. It is about doing what is best for our patients, staff and whānau every day, growing, learning and getting better together.

For Extended Care Paramedic, Jimmy this whakataukī has long been a favourite and speaks to him about “the long and valuable journey that paramedic students undertake to become paramedics at Wellington Free – seek the treasure that you value most dearly, if you bow your head, let it be to a lofty mountain.”

CELEBRATING OUR 93RD BIRTHDAY WITH OUR NEW PATRON

In November, we proudly celebrated our 93rd birthday with new patron Wayne Norwood, the grandson of our founder, Sir Charles Norwood.

As mayor of the day, Sir Charles founded Wellington Free in 1927 after finding a man on Lambton Quay, injured with no way to get to hospital and no ambulances to be found.

Sir Charles believed in a place where emergencies needn't cost lives or money and declared his city would have a free ambulance service for all.

Wayne remembers his grandfather as a man who put people at ease; sharing their life stories with him soon after meeting. "He was a wonderful man who had the ability to make everyone feel important."

Wayne's proud of his grandfather's achievements, and is excited to be our new patron.

"I'm in awe of the paramedics who go out day and night, in all weather and situations unknown to help people and save lives."



"I have never met a more dedicated and talented group of people than those at Wellington Free and nothing would have pleased my grandfather more than to know the service is still free to all."

Wayne knows his grandfather would be delighted with the reputation Wellington Free has today.



Emergency Medical Call Taker Claire says there have been so many stand out moments in her 12 years with Wellington Free including the calls she will never forget. Some have been good, others sad and some very challenging.

Claire says she seems to attract baby deliveries, helping 51 new parents safely deliver their babies over the phone. "All callers are different and react differently to my instructions. With most of the delivery calls I have taken the babies have come very quickly, within a few minutes of taking the call."

Hearing a baby cry for the first time is euphoric. "I feel like I'm holding my breath until I hear that first cry as I never know what instruction I'll be giving next."

Over the years, she's helped resuscitate newborns, controlled bleeding from mums, wrapped placentas, talked a mum through delivering alone, a grandad deliver twins, grandmas deliver their grandbabies and a stranger deliver a newborn – all over the phone.

"THEY ALL HAVE SPECIAL STORIES TO HOW THEIR LIVES STARTED AND KNOWING I PLAYED A LITTLE PART IN THAT IS REALLY COOL," SAYS CLAIRE.

A BIG FIRST YEAR

Though Harry had an unexpected start to his paramedicine career he was fortunate to have colleagues who supported each other.

Joining the team in February meant maintaining an expert level of care for his patients was the priority, but there was also a need to be conscious about the impact COVID-19 was having around him – something that occasionally made Harry feel like he'd been thrown in the deep.

"Being out on the road is a whole different world. You really do see everything... and I mean everything," Harry explains. "It was certainly a strange time to join the service, practically going straight into the pandemic. Luckily everyone was very proactive about checking up on each other to see how everyone was holding up. It has been a massive learning step though."

What confirmed Wellington Free Ambulance was the place he wanted to be were those he met; people who would later become colleagues and some of his closest friends.

"Being able to recognise when each other needs support has been really important over the last few months. Good and bad, we're always there for each other."



For the Aussie lad, 2020 will definitely be a year that he'll never forget.

Harry wants to remind those who might be feeling low following COVID-19 to make sure they take time out to rest.

"I would also encourage anyone who is not feeling themselves to speak to family or friends, or even a professional. The feeling of being able to open up, particularly after such a strange year, is a relieving feeling."

QUICK RESPONSE HELPS MURRAY RECEIVE SPECIAL, LIFE-SAVING TREATMENT

What started as a normal day for Murray ended up taking an unexpected turn. Shrugging off a bout of fatigue after the gym, Murray progressively felt worse so asked his wife, Jan, to take him to hospital. When it came time to leave, he collapsed and Jan phoned 111.

When Paramedics Matt and Grace arrived, they assessed Murray. He was conscious but his speech was slurred and had a significant loss of coordination on his right side – he was having stroke.

The quick response of our paramedics and the stroke specialists at Hutt Hospital meant Murray was able to receive a special medical treatment to dissolve the clot. He responded positively to the treatment and over the next 48 hours regained his normal movement and speech.

"It was quite unbelievable to be honest. I left hospital knowing that it could have easily had a different outcome. Without the help of the paramedics and the doctors, I am confident that I



would not have recovered as I did," Murray says.

Wellington Free Ambulance Deputy Medical Director Dr Dave O'Byrne says "recognising the signs of stroke early and calling for help is very important."

To learn more about recognising the signs of stroke visit the Stroke Foundation website: stroke.org.nz/fast

TOMMY'S REAL ESTATE ON BOARD FOR ANOTHER YEAR

Tommy's Real Estate have once again said yes to helping keep the 'free' in Wellington Free Ambulance by donating \$75,000 over the next year!

For both Mark Hamilton and Mark Coffey, directors of Tommy's Wellington and Hutt Valley offices, to see the long standing partnership continue is something they're very proud of. "I think for us it was about giving back to the community with something a little bit different, with more of a community focus than we had in the past," Mark H says. "It was just the right thing to do."

Tommy's Real Estate are dedicated to supporting Wellington Free, but they also know that it takes a collaborative effort to ensure the service remains here for those who need help. "Especially since COVID-19, supporting local is more important than ever and you can't get any more local than Wellington Free Ambulance and Tommy's Real Estate," Mark C explains.

We're forever thankful for the generous support of Tommy's Real Estate. Over the years they've donated around \$250,000 towards helping us provide the best possible care to you, your whānau and our community.

HELP THAT'S THERE WHENEVER YOU NEED IT

For Robert knowing that Wellington Free Ambulance was there night and day was very reassuring.

He had a Freedom Medical Alarm which connected him directly to our 111 Clinical Communications Centre at the push of a button. "It's like an insurance policy; it's nice to know that someone is there to help if I need it," Robert explained.



When a medical alarm is activated, one of our Emergency Medical Call Takers gets an alert. From there they can access the patient's file which contains all the details they need to make contact. Should they be unable to get through to the patient, an ambulance crew is dispatched and the next of kin are called.

Having a medical alarm enabled Robert and his wife, Judy, to remain in their home; it also gave their children the peace of mind that someone was there for mum and dad if anything was to happen. "We both love Wellington Free Ambulance and Freedom Medical Alarms. Whenever we've needed them they've been there for us," Judy says.

Unfortunately Robert passed away before this story was published. However, with permission from Judy, she wanted to share Robert's positive words - "To have their help is greatly appreciated."

For more information on Freedom Medical Alarms, visit their website: freedomalarms.co.nz

THANKS FOR BEING ONESIE-FUL!

This year's Onesie Day looked a little different to previous years. We moved away from the streets and brought Onesie Day to life online, and you really gave it your all!

Your willingness to get into the spirit and fundraise your own way was incredible! With cake sales, sponsored walks and raffles all taking place to support Onesie Day.

From bandages to medical equipment, medication to stretchers, all the way through to fuel, oil and tyres for our ambulances, your support means we can continue to provide urgent medical care to those who need our help.

THIS YEAR YOU
HELPED RAISE
\$122,000

**See you next year on
Friday 3 September 2021!**



CELEBRATING MELBY, A LOYAL SUPPORTER

Melby was a man who cared for and loved his community – and Wellington Free Ambulance.

For more than 40 years, Melby donated so much of his time to supporting the work we do, including fundraising collections with many of his local groups. This allowed us to be here for him and so many others across Wellington and Wairarapa.

Unfortunately Melby passed away on 15 May 2020. He was 96.

It's the people like Melby who are always supporting us and cheering us on, that encourages us to keep going.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR UNWAVERING
SUPPORT, MELBY. WE WILL NEVER FORGET
YOUR SMILE AND PASSIONATE PERSONALITY.**



EMERGENCY SERVICES EXPO HIGHLIGHTS

It was great to once again be part of the Wellington's Emergency Services Expo at Te Papa.

From teaching CPR through showing people through one of our ambulances, to the action-packed demonstration of a car extrication, the day was definitely a lot of fun!

We loved working alongside our emergency services whānau, as well as spending time with our amazing Wellington community.



STAYING IN TOUCH

We'd love to share your story with our readers.

If you've got something special to share write to: info@wfa.org.nz

For questions or feedback:
Phone 0508 WFA FREE(0508 932 3733)