

# LIGHTING LIVES



FOR THE SAKE OF OUR CHILDREN TRUST

Official Newsletter December 2011

## ABOUT US:

### Trust Vision

Our vision is to see New Zealand become a place where our children:

- are safe from harm;
- have a sense of belonging, of feeling loved and valued;
- have access to the necessities they need to engage fully with life and realize their own unique potential.

### Trust Mission

We aim to be a "voice" for the "voiceless".

We do this through **educating, promoting and raising awareness** of the **wellbeing** of our **children** in New Zealand and the need for **strong families** and **communities** to support them.

## CONTACT US

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## Year in Review 2011

As we come to the end of 2011, For the Sake of Our Children Trust (FSOCT) take time out to review all the work we have done this year.

2011 has been a busy year for us as we have continued get our message out to numerous communities about how we can make NZ a better place for our children. In doing so, the Trust is much more savvy in its social media mediums with a Facebook page and an updated website.

The Trustees and management have met numerous government leaders throughout the year, providing feedback, recommendations and suggestions to social policy development.

In particular our Chairman is currently providing insight on effectiveness and efficiency to Government leaders around the pilot social sector trials being delivered in 6 communities: Gore, Te Kuiti, Tokoroa, Levin, Kawerau, Taumaranui, examining youth development and leadership.

John has also been instrumental in many community initiatives to include the Mayor Taskforce 3yr leadership programme with Marcus Akuhata-Brown and young Maori Leaders throughout New Zealand.

Over 80% of Mayors providing mentorship and assistance towards leadership development with the young



leaders.

The Trust continues to support The Aspiring Leaders Forum supporting six young leaders to attend the 2011 event with staff acting as group facilitators.

FSOCT have continued to respond to Government and Community leaders on matters concerning our families and children. The Trust is currently working on putting through a submission on the recent Green Paper: Vulnerable Children due 28<sup>th</sup> February 2012.

Increased activity and dialogue with our elected leaders have led to more intensive discussions on social policy development and the implementation of social action through community initiatives such as the social sector trials.

Once again 160 young children and their parents connected to our Trust attended 4 live pantomimes delivered by Southern Stars Charitable Trust.

Each show raising funds for specific charities to include Burns Support Unit, Ronald McDonald House and Starship Hospital.

Management attended a few shows claiming how wonderful it is to see hundreds of young children and families enjoy the performances.

We have become internet savvy with an updated website, an interactive Facebook page (search **FSOC** Trust) and a Facebook cause page 'Prevent Child Abuse & Neglect NZ'.

We have responded to media requests on issues concerning children and families and attended forums and conferences on such matters. Our Trust newsletter has proven popular with our supporters providing ongoing feedback and suggestions.

We hosted our first "Forum on Our Children" at the Northern Club, Auckland with Family First Bob McCroskie as a speaker, Political Commentator Mr Willie Jackson and Paediatrician Dr Teuila Percival.

The event was attended by 80 delegates and the discussion had and feedback provided strongly indicated a follow-up to this forum in 2012.

[www.forourchildren.org.nz](http://www.forourchildren.org.nz)



## Key Points to Discuss: The Green Paper on Vulnerable Children: Thrives, Achieves, Belongs

### A WORD FROM



Chairman and Founder - John Sax

2011 has been a year full of life changing events to include tragedies (Christchurch earthquake, Pike River disaster), celebrations (Rugby World Cup 2011), an election, a new governor general, and Children’s Commissioner.

We cannot let it go unknown that six young children have died this year at the hands of abuse and violence in New Zealand.

As we look back reflect and review on the accomplishments and the challenges we have faced at the Trust we are only encouraged to come back in 2012 rejuvenated and ready for another big year ahead to continue standing the gap for our children of New Zealand.

In doing so we will continue talking with our newly elected leaders in central and local government and our communities and support effective leadership development across the Nation with our young people.

Thank you for your on-going support we know we cannot do it alone yet collectively with like-minded hearts we are making a significant positive difference to social policy development for our children and families.

God had a great dream for you, your family and our Nation. That we live a life full of ‘Love, Joy and Peace’. We at For the Sake of Our Children Trust have that dream and it is our hope this is especially real for you, your family and friends as we celebrate Jesus’ Birthday.

Ngā mihi nui mō te Kirihimete

John Sax

**On page 4 of our newsletter a summary of the above title Green Paper is provided.**

The Trustees and Management have reviewed this document and have provided it’s key points of discussion which will be presented in it’s submission late February 2012.

We have listed a few in order to get the dialogue started with our supporters.

**Points of discussion noted:**

- A)** There is not one mention or written word ‘marriage’ in the green paper document
- B)** Why does the Government still not have a comprehensive pic-

ture of vulnerable children to date?

**C)** An independent Royal Commission Enquiry into our most vulnerable children – the abused and neglected who are killed as a result should be conducted.

**D)** Why are the case studies based on solo parenting environments?

**E)** If fathers contribute to building self-esteem and resilience in children – The government should conduct a comprehensive study on how many vulnerable children come from fatherless homes or raised in sole parenting father homes.

**F)** The Government should further assist in spending on existing programmes/services that WORK and have a successful history of positive impact change in communities - ie., pay for evidence base evaluations. Less spending on initial start-up programmes over the next 3 years.

**G)** The Government has a key role to play demonstrating leadership with policy development and delivering effective services for our children. This leadership needs to be courageous and ‘outside the square’.

Your feedback is vital for the Trust to submit a strong submission on behalf of our children of this Nation.

## Christians Against Poverty (CAP) Giving Freedom and hope to families this Christmas



When we think of Christmas, its words like joy, celebration and holidays that come to mind but for many families who are struggling in debt and poverty in New Zealand Christmas can be a scary time. We know their Christmas won’t be the way they’d hoped, they won’t be able to afford the usual Christmas meal or gifts for their children.

The pressure of unmanageable debt is already enough without the added stress and expectation of Christmas. Over one third of Christians Against Poverty’s clients said they had seriously considered or attempted suicide before asking for help.

Christians Against Poverty is helping people this Christmas by providing those living in

poverty and debt a hope and a solution. We provide help through our specialist debt counselling and personalised face to face service in clients’ homes which creates hope for the future.

Solo mum and CAP client Christina told me.... “CAP has been such a huge relief. They’ve been a lifesaver really. I feel good about Christmas this year.

*I don’t feel on high alert – like I gotta do this or gotta do that like I always did. I feel a lot more relaxed. It feels terrific to have the savings there to pay for Christmas.”*

It is a true joy to hear Christina’s story and know what a difference CAP has made. To find out more about CAP and how you could play your part in helping transform lives in NZ visit [www.capnz.org](http://www.capnz.org).



**Favourite Christmas Quotes**

*"What is Christmas? It is tenderness for the past, courage for the present, hope for the future. It is a fervent wish that every cup may overflow with blessings rich and eternal, and that every path may lead to peace."*

*"Ask your children two questions this Christmas. First: 'What do you want to give to others for Christmas?' Second: 'What do you want for Christmas?' The first fosters generosity of heart and an outward focus. The second can breed selfishness if not tempered by the first"*

*"The best of all gifts around any Christmas tree: the presence of a happy family all wrapped up in each other".*

*"It is Christmas in the heart that puts Christmas in the air".*

*"I will honour Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year"*

*"Christmas, my child, is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas"*

*"Christmas is most truly Christmas when we celebrate it by giving the light of love to those who need it most".*

*"Christmas, children, is not a date. It is a state of mind".*



**Stress less for a happier Christmas**

Christmas is about enjoying time together but the holiday season often places greater demands on many people.

Sometimes the strain causes significant tensions, with heated arguments and regrettable results following.

Minor problems can be resolved before they reach boiling point and heated exchanges. Taking some quiet time away from tense, heated and stressful situations can be enough to calm feelings and emotions down. A few quiet hours may be all that is needed.

We at FSOCOT hope some helpful advice will result in diffusing arguments over Christmas, New Year and beyond.

Spend within your limits - it's not 'a bargain' if you can't afford it in the first place. Unexpected expenses, overspending and poor budgeting

can stretch finances and cause enormous burdens and stress. Reserve some money for the January and February bills.

Drink responsibly and have a sober driver. Police will be out in numbers checking for drink drivers across the country.

You don't have to be drunk to have a great time and your actions could cause considerable friction with loved ones.

Make arrangements early if you share joint custody of children so they can enjoy time with both parents.

Children can become extremely distressed and confused by the stress of arguments between their parents.

Make plans to spend Christmas and New Year with supportive loved ones so

you are not drawn back to bad or violent relationships through temporary loneliness.

The incidence of family violence traditionally increases at this time of year and arguments can occur over a variety of issues - often money, relationships and access to children.

Family violence is not okay and people with concerns for safety should call Police.

Police don't expect to eliminate every family violence situation just with these suggestions. Deeper family violence issues can extend back for years.

The dynamics associated with family violence are complex and permanent changes take a long-term commitment.

Police will provide information about support agencies to those in need.



on our objectives and our Vision. We need to be challenged and find new ways of raising the awareness of keeping our children safe in NZ. Your suggestions provide a further catalyst for the Trust to keep doing what we do.

**cont.from page 1**

To wrap the year up, Trustees and management were pleased to have had the opportunity to meet with newly appointed Children's Commissioner Dr Russell Wills in November providing a wonderful opportunity to share about the work FSOCOT do and hear of Dr Will's plans within his new role.

The Trustees believe much will be achieved under Dr Wills leadership at the Commission – we can only 'watch this space' and hope for the best by providing support and continuous dialogue with him in 2012.

2011 has been a busy year – with the Rugby World Cup the year definitely went by too quickly. As we draw near to the end of the year we will take time out to refresh, rejuvenate and be ready for 2012.

We want to hear from you, your feedback is important to ensuring we continue to deliver

On behalf of our Chairman, Trustees and staff of For the Sake of Our Children Trust, we want to say thank you for supporting us and believing in the work we do.

We look forward to catching up with you in the New Year. Bring on 2012 - It's going to be a good one!!

We pray you and your family have a safe and joyful festive season ahead. Look after each other especially our little ones in our families, neighbourhoods and communities.

A recent media article claimed that child abuse rates would increase during the festive period due to a combination of alcohol, festivities and other social factors.

Be alert, be courageous and be vigilant with our children.

**Make this Christmas a special one for you and your loved ones.**

## Free Christmas Events in Auckland

Christmas in Auckland is a special time of year and everyone comes out to celebrate the season with a huge range of events to suit any-one's tastes.

### Franklin Road Christmas Lights 1st Dec-24th Dec 2011

Franklin Rd Christmas lights will light up, as it has for the past 19 years, when residents decorate their homes with garlands of lights for public viewing until Christmas Eve.

### Christmas in Aotea Square 16th – 24th Dec 2011

You're invited to enjoy live entertainment from across the Auckland Community. Enjoy the festive spirit of gospel choirs, acoustic musicians, and lively Pacific island dance and drumming.

From Marimbas and Ukuleles to Brass Bands and Steel Pan Drums Christmas in the Square has something on offer for every Aucklander.

### The Cadbury Dairy Milk Giant Snow Globe

Auckland will be turning white this Christmas thanks to the huge snow globe (replicating the ones we used to play with as children) but this time on a giant size,

Head to Devonport and make all your dreams come true by stepping inside a real life snow globe, and be instantly transported into a winter wonderland.

Open from 10-9.30pm on Tuesday 21 - Friday 24 December at the Windsor Reserve in Devonport.



## The GREEN PAPER for Vulnerable Children— Every Child Thrives, Belongs, Achieves



This Green paper is a chance for New Zealanders to share their ideas on how we can do better for vulnerable young people.

Set out by the Government, the Government isn't afraid to challenge itself and opening debate key issues with New Zealanders to find solutions that will help our children and our children's children.

The hope is to change the focus so children always come first and remain the centre of our Government's thinking – across all sectors to include: families, individuals, professionals, communities, agencies and across Government.

The paper is concerned with the estimated 15% of New Zealand children at risk of not doing well.

*The Green paper highlights statistic below addressing the focus on vulnerable children within such categories:*

- **Child, Youth and Family confirmed 21,000 cases of abuse and neglect in 2009/10**
- **Over 30,000 students are truant from schools on any given day**
- **7,342 school leavers left with no qualification in 2009**
- **13,315 hospital admissions in 2008/09 were for children under five that could have been**

**avoided in the same year, 1,286 admissions for all children were as a result of assault, neglect or maltreatment**

- **47,374 children \*(aged 0-16) were present, or usually residing with the victim, at an incident of family violence reported to the Police in 2010.**

### Government's Vision:

Everyone under 18 years old in New Zealand: **Thrives, Belongs, Achieves.**

### Thrive:

- Be healthy
- Be protected from harm and keep themselves safe
- Have their basic physical needs met (food, shelter, clothing)

### Belong:

- Be loved and supported by parents/caregivers, family and whanau and communities
- Be confident in their identity, language and culture
- Have positive connections with friends and adults

### Achieve:

- Achieve strong foundations for lifelong learning
- Have the support they need to contribute positively to their own and New Zealand's future
- Children who are Maori succeed as Maori
- Children achieve in their own culture

### Series of Actions presented by Government to discuss and receive feedback from public

The Green paper outlines proposed action the government 'COULD' rather than 'WILL' do as a final decision has not been made as yet:

**Share responsibility** – the Government alone cannot improve

the outcomes for vulnerable children: parents are crucial, as are the family and whanau, and communities.

**Show leadership** – Ministers making a long-term commitment to improving outcomes for vulnerable children, and their families and whanau, and working with iwi and Maori leaders

**Make child-centred policy changes** – making the targeting and funding trade-offs needed to improve outcomes for vulnerable children, and their families and whanau

**Make child-centred practice changes** – excellent and committed professionals work tirelessly to serve vulnerable children, and their families and whanau, but there is room for improvement in how services are aligned and delivered.

As a concerned New Zealander for the well-being of our children, the opportunity to put through a submission on the green paper is available to you.

The close off date is February 28<sup>th</sup> 2012. Have your say, contribute and provide feedback.

Email: [yourresponse@childrenactionplan.govt.nz](mailto:yourresponse@childrenactionplan.govt.nz)

If you wish to read the complete report go to [www.forourchildren.org.nz](http://www.forourchildren.org.nz)

