

REPORT TO DIOCESAN SYNOD 2021

During 2021 BAF has completed a strategic process to achieve a number of important outcomes:

1. Better identify the impact we seek to achieve;
2. Define how we work to achieve that impact;
3. Define measures that will show how well we achieve impact over time;
4. Open up engagement with our partners and communities to understand how we are experienced by them in our work.

IMPACT STRATEGY

We have created a new impact strategy from this process which is available on our website at the following link <https://www.baf.org.nz/about/> along with our latest Update Report.

REFINED FOCUS

BAF has also refined its focus to ensure we clearly articulate who we are, how we work and what we aim to achieve:

“BAF is a catalyst for change. We work alongside changemakers to help develop initiatives that challenge inequity.”

STORIES OF CHANGE AND IMPACT

To help articulate our work we have developed stories of change with an initial group of four change makers who we have enabled. These stories map both the change being achieved and the critical role BAF played in enabling this. These stories create a framework that we will continue to apply to document our work over time.

As the stories are not yet available on our website I have included them below as the substantive part of our report to Synod.

OUR WORK

A detailed outline of our current research and project work can be found on our website www.baf.org.nz

Manna Youth Home

When Priscilla got a text saying *'check out this YouTube clip'*, she had no idea it would lead to her moving to Taranaki to start Manna Youth Home. Priscilla, an experienced Social Worker, knew first hand the challenges facing Rangatahi who needed to leave home, or who were exiting 'the system', so when the opportunity to reimagine a 2-acre property in the heart of Oakura came along, she jumped at it. Today, you'll find Manna Youth Home buzzing with up to six 16-21 year olds, plus a team of Social Workers, calling this place home as they gain skills and relationships needed to succeed in the next phase of their lives.

In operation close to 30 years as an adult respite centre 'Manna Healing Centre' was a place of healing for those facing stress or trauma. In 2019, the doors closed. The board of the Healing Centre knew this place could still offer refuge, but were at a loss as to how this could be done sustainably and who was best to lead this work to meet current needs. They needed a guide.

They found that guide in BAF, who have enabled the new expression of Manna to emerge by providing essential strategic, governance and financial leadership. Priscilla shares that *"our startup journey would have been so different without BAF... they brought credibility and connections that opened doors easily"*. Thanks to BAF you'll find strong partnerships between Oranga Tamariki and the passionate social workers at Manna Youth Home. All focused on serving the needs of vulnerable young people, helping them get ready to transition into independent living.

"Knowing there's a trusted organisation [BAF], who know what they're doing, enables us to focus on relationships with young people" says Priscilla, Manager of Manna Home.

Manna Youth Home has just celebrated one year of being open. Evenings revolve around sharing food and playing games. On weekends everyone gets out in nature together; surfing, hiking and exploring Taranaki's beauty. It's these simple rhythms combined with intentional mentoring, during and after stays, that are unlocking new levels of trust, connections, self esteem and hopefulness in the rangatahi who become part of the Manna whānau. What the team have created is a genuine whānau community.

As we talk, Priscilla recalls the change she's seen in that first young woman who stayed 8 months, and has remained connected through her Manna mentor and weekly visits for whānau dinners.

"She's got multiple adults supporting her. So she knows that she is loved. She has a sense of belonging with us. It's what we All need. Trusting people comes into everything, whether it's learning to live in community with others, whether it's a job, trust is so huge. So for them to be able to get to this place of sense of belonging and trust people will impact the rest of their life and every other relationship."

With strong foundations in place, Manna Youth Home is looking towards the future and exploring how they can increase their reach to respond to the current housing crisis and step out as their own charity in order to resource these aspirations.

To find out more about Manna Home, or support their work, contact the team
info@mannayouth.org.nz

The Wheelhouse

It's fair to say that 2020-2021 was a unique year for everyone, especially community groups supporting Taranaki's most vulnerable people. COVID-19 meant radical shifts as the landscape continued to change around funding, using technology to connect, and navigating Government guidelines. Offering a beacon of light in that time was Wheelhouse, Taranaki's go-to capacity-building organisation.

The Wheelhouse began in 2014, when Community Partnership teams within Councils were seeing duplication and inefficiency when it came to providing capability and support to community groups. Something needed to change. With strong relationships across the region, Bishops Action Foundation were able to clarify the opportunity and set things in motion to establish Wheelhouse, a partnership between eight organisations including each district council of Taranaki. Together these partners share a vision of stronger and more effective community groups.

"It [Wheelhouse] matters because part of having a thriving region is strong community groups who can deliver social services and social good." Callum Williamson, New Plymouth District Council

Today Wheelhouse offers a wide variety of support, advice and training to community organisations. The Wheelhouse website and training calendar is a hub of best practice and quality resources. *"Without that training, community groups wouldn't have the skills that mean we can be confident in funding them or, they wouldn't be as effective."* - reflects Callum. Because of this, and the tailored support available through manager Marcia Millard, the Wheelhouse has built a solid reputation for capacity-building in Taranaki, a model which has gained national interest for its collaborative approach.

That long-standing reputation and large reach meant Wheelhouse was uniquely placed to respond during COVID-19. *"We [Wheelhouse] are so agile and that's one of the beauties of it"* shares Callum, *"at the Wheelhouse you go 'well, let's do it and see what happens'.... COVID was a perfect example where Wheelhouse reacted well by acting quickly. Much quicker than it could have if Wheelhouse was housed within a council."* Training was run online, course topics were altered to cater for the growing uncertainties, and support was readily available to help community groups remain resilient throughout lockdown.

"By having access to this support we are confidently navigating through turbulent waters as community organisations can face from time to time." - Stratford Community Childcare Centre

Some have described Wheelhouse as BAF's flagship project. BAF's ability to manage complex relationships, understand Funder needs, identify large-scale opportunities, and provide backbone support through admin and accounting have all played a role in Wheelhouse' success over the years. Particularly in 2020-2021 when community groups have faced more uncertainty than ever.

To find out more about Wheelhouse go to: www.wheelhouse.org.nz

New Horizons Aotearoa

Taranaki had been calling Kere Ell home for some time when he saw that Western Institute of Technology had begun offering the same Social Work degree he was working towards in Nelson. With his children having left home, he made the move back to Taranaki. One week after arriving he was surprised to see alarming similarities with the community he had just come from “lots of alcohol, lots of drugs, kids running around with no shoes on.” One question ran through his mind “How do we get those people that are really in need into the consciousness of everyday New Zealanders?”

Years earlier, Kere had been shoulder tapped to become a mentor and help create positive memories with 11-13yr olds. *“I was watching these kids just standing tall and having a ball, I just thought, wow.”* He fondly recalls the adventures he facilitated during that time, cooking up pipis on the beach regularly.

Could a similar mentoring scheme inspire the same change here? He knocked on the door of Devon Intermediate and shared his vision. Early support came through the principal *“You find some mentors. I’ll give you the tech lab, and my tech teacher.”* Further support to develop and strengthen the idea came through BAF. *“I had no local credentials. So it was going to be really hard for me to tap into funders. BAF was doing all the funding applications for us based on their reputation.”*

Since those humble beginnings in 2015, New Horizons Aotearoa has proudly built relationships with over 300 young people and numerous mentors. Weekly sessions across four schools see mentors and young people come together through building projects, but it’s more than predator traps and buddy benches being built though, it’s the confidence and self esteem of these otherwise vulnerable/at risk young people.

Kere shares the impact he’s seen in one young person facing grief due to the loss of her father to suicide. *“She used to come along and be like ‘I’m gonna look so tough and confident’ But real confidence is completely different. It’s her now making eye contact, laughing and smiling and giving stuff a go.”* When Kere caught up with the mum, she also shared *“You know, she’s out there and she’s taking on the world and that was all because of your programme.”*

In 2019 BAF supported New Horizons Aoteroa to gain charitable status and establish it’s trust. Today they are a strong organisation with their own networks and positive reputation. BAF continues to champion their work.

To find out more about New Horizons Aotearoa go to: www.newhorizonsaotearoa.nz/

Migrant Connections

“I felt like an alien” says Geetha Kutty as she recalls her first months in Taranaki. “When I came here there was nothing. There were no [migrant support] services. It was so hard for me to find everything I needed.” 24 years down the track Geetha has supported over 1838 fellow migrants through her community organisation ‘Migrant Connections Taranaki’ (MCT). Which started in 2014.

Racism, discrimination, bullying, unemployment, and immigration issues are just a few of the complex challenges migrants face when they restart life in a new place. Geetha has made it her mission to change that experience for the 5,000+ migrants who call Taranaki home.

MCT have been proactive in their efforts to support the migrant community here in Taranaki. They run regular workshops on topics such as Diversity in the Workplace, Treaty of Waitangi and Orienting as a Migrant. They also led the vigil attended by over 2000 people at Brooklands Bowl to commemorate the Christchurch Mosque Attacks. And of course, they continue to provide crucial tailored support to individuals and families who are navigating the many layers of language and culture within domestic violence situations, employment issues, and intercultural marriages.

“Without Simon's help, this wouldn't have happened. I still know that if I need any support or I'm stuck or need any advice I can go to Bishop's Action Foundation.” Geetha recalls fondly the positivity Simon from BAF shared during that first coffee where the idea of Migrant Connections took flight. From there BAF supported Geetha with building their website, Governance workshops and general advice. Alongside BAF, Geetha recalls the integral support from Community Law and her own family too.

COVID-19 brought its own challenges and opportunities for MCT. Alongside the rising urgency to get government guidance out to a community of 24 languages, Geetha saw the opportunity to create a gift back to the wider Taranaki community through a cookbook ‘Ethnic Flavours’, 133 recipes shared by 16 contributors from the migrant community. A celebration of the beauty found in diversity, bringing a taste of travel into the homes of Taranaki families.

Today, Bishop’s Action continues to be a proud supporter and friend of Migrant Connections Taranaki, impressed by the reach and depth by which Geetha continues to advocate for easier integration for migrants Taranaki.

To follow Migrant Connections work, visit their website: www.migrantconnections.org.nz
