

SWiS: helping students, helping families.

“One of the things that makes me smile as a Social Worker in Schools is being able to make a child’s day. There’s nothing quite like seeing their faces light up when they receive a new pair of shoes and warm rain jacket.”

Kathy Hori, Social Worker in Schools.

It’s a typical work day for Kathy as she goes about her job as a Social Worker in Schools at Papakura Normal Primary. As we talk to Kathy, she gently reminds Jacob* that he’s not in class when he should be. Kathy knows Jacob well. Like many of the children SWiS works with, he has behavioural issues resulting from problems at home.

“The families we see here struggle with a multitude of issues. Financial problems, housing issues, the lack of basic essentials. We’ve also got several mums going through legal processes with their partners and you can see how that impacts on a child’s behaviour in the



Kathy Hori, Social Worker in Schools

classroom,” she says.

Kathy has been working at Papakura Normal School for six years with children ranging from years 0 to 8. Her office is no ordinary office, it’s a space for parents to engage; it’s a time out space for the kids she works with, and a place to build relationships. “I’ve had mums just pop in for a coffee and a chat. They know that my office is a space where they can come and have a conversation about anything. And it’s from those conversations that relationships with these families start to develop and trust starts to build.”

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CEO's message

Usually we bring you stories of families that Iosis has helped to make changes in some way. However, this time, we thought we'd 'flip the mirror' so you can learn more about the work of our frontline staff, which can be both challenging and rewarding.



Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters

In this issue, our wonderful Social Workers in Schools provide you with a little insight into the work that they do. They act as a bridge between the student and the school, helping to build relationships through trust in order to create the sort of positive outcomes that Kathy, Marama and Karen all speak of.

Being able to provide such strength to our children in schools is so crucial to their growth and how they develop, which is why I'm pleased to say that Iosis is blessed with qualified, capable and compassionate Social Workers.

Our work with children in schools is made possible by the dedicated staff at Iosis and the support of our generous donors and partners. Thank you for your ongoing faith and support.

Tunumafono Tracey-Leigh Peters
CEO

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Kathy also appreciates the fact that she can access the range of services at Iosis to help with the students' journey. "It's great having a wraparound service at Iosis to help our families. I often make use of the counselling, parent support, community social work and budgeting services," she says. "And some of Iosis's services are mobile – that's really important because some families don't have the means or the transport to get around."

Kathy is constantly encouraged with the work that she does with her students. "My role means that parents learn that a Social Worker is not only there for negative reasons.

I'm trying to ensure parents aren't afraid to talk to us – that we're here to support them through whatever's going on in their life". ☺



** Names changed to protect identities*

Prayer needs

- Pray for the continued strengthening of our relationships with our community partners.
- Pray for our Board and leadership team as we continue to seek God's guidance in the work we do.

Creating stronger children & stronger families

For most children, school is an exciting place full of endless opportunities. However the reality is that for some students, their potential to achieve is severely limited because their home life is unstable or unsafe. With classes, homework, extracurricular activities, and social expectations, many young children struggle through these years.

Marama Hetaraka has been a SWiS Team Leader for five and a half years, managing 13 schools throughout Manurewa and Papakura. Each school in the district is allocated a Social Worker whose role is to provide a professional but genuinely caring response to students and their families.

Marama tells us that during her time at Iosis, she's observed significant challenges facing students in Manurewa and Papakura. "One of the biggest challenges is financial stress at home. Because they've often gone without for so long, some people have difficulty viewing money as a resource and therefore may not be able to make the right financial decisions."

At the same time, she's also witnessed positive changes – both small and large – within the

families. The SWiS team can draw on a wide range of Iosis services and programmes, which means they can help families address a number of needs at the same time.

For parents who are already in stressful circumstances, this 'wraparound' approach is proving very successful. Marama says she's seen time and time again that Iosis's approach of bridging the gap between the family and the school leads to positive changes – and better futures for families. 🌐



Marama Hetaraka

SWiS programmes: transforming students' lives.

An important part of the role of SWiS is to equip students with the necessary tools to cope with a range of behavioural issues, both inside and outside the classroom. In the 13 schools in which Iosis operates, each SWiS worker facilitates programmes to help students have more positive experiences at school, including:

🌐 Seasons of Growth

Seasons of Growth is an eight-week grief and loss education program catering for young people aged 6 – 18 years. It's based on the belief that change, loss and grief are a normal and valuable part of life. The programme assists students who are going through changes in

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their lives – at school, at home, moving, or parents losing a job. Children learn strategies to deal with their issues which in turn improves their behaviour, both in and out of class.

☉ Anger Busters

Anger is a normal human emotion, but when it gets out of control and turns destructive, it can lead to problems in school, with siblings, family and peers, which impacts the child's quality of life. This six-week programme teaches children that it's possible to control anger, to be more aware of their personal strengths, develop alternative responses and understand the consequences of negative behaviours.

☉ Vision Board

This programme is designed to help children to dream big. It teaches them to develop their dreams and learn the important skill of goal-setting – allowing children to take responsibility for themselves and build self-confidence. When children achieve their goals, they learn to believe in their abilities and are more likely to set new goals for themselves in the future. ☉



Meet our staff

Karen Smith, Financial Mentor

iosis partners with Presbyterian Support Northern and the Anglican Trust for Women and Children to provide financial mentoring to families.* Karen is the Financial Mentor at iosis and works together with families to help them stabilize and improve their financial situation.



Karen Smith

“Anyone is welcome to engage in financial mentoring,” explains Karen. “Some families

are in crisis and require a budget worksheet for a third party such as WINZ. Others are seeking ways to manage their finances more effectively. Every family is different, however we see similar issues time after time: high rent combined with a real struggle to pay debt and buy food.”

Karen enjoys assisting and empowering families to manage their own finances and relieve stress. “Firstly, I build a rapport with families, get to know their story and what their goals are,” she says. “We then explore what they are struggling with financially – and encourage, educate and support families to make positive financial changes. We also connect them to other support services if required. It's wonderful to see clients gain a better understanding of where their money has gone – it really makes a difference.” ☉

**Under a collective contract*