



"Gordon's family are generous, kind and loving – all they needed was extra support"

Northern NOTES

SPRING 2017

GORDON ACHIEVES HIS GOALS

Gordon was coming to school without lunch and had withdrawn as he worried about his family.

Kristen, the new Social Worker in School, wanted to connect with the family so she took them a Christmas hamper and introduced herself.

Gordon lived in a three-bedroom house with his nana, his aunty and her partner, five cousins, younger sister, and two uncles. His mum had moved overseas with two of his other younger siblings.

The kids missed school when they had no lunch, and transporting them there was difficult. Nana works long shifts and bedding and clothing for everyone was limited. When Gordon's mother returned, two families were living under one roof.

"Gordon started coming to my office at school at lunchtime to say 'hi'. He drew a picture of the things he likes: playing rugby and eating food."

Housing shortages meant finding somewhere else for Gordon's aunty and her family to live was difficult but the Family Works team persisted until they found a house.

They then sourced blankets and household items, as well as winter clothes and shoes for the children so they could come to school warm and proudly dressed.

Kristen asked the local rugby club to sign Gordon up, but he was worried about the cost of fees, boots and a uniform. The club helped cover the fees, Kristen sourced some rugby boots and Gordon's uncle offered to take him to training and games.

Gordon's nana phoned me the next day and said "You would never believe – I just woke Gordon up and he was sleeping with his new boots in his bed. He doesn't want to let them go."

Family Works is financially mentoring both families and a neighbouring family is helping to get the kids to and from school.

"Gordon's family are generous, kind and loving – all they needed was extra support. Gordon recently told me he had played his best game of rugby yet. His team lost, but he scored two tries and won Player of the Day. That smile of his will stick with me forever."

THESE BOYS ARE DONE CRYING

When Samuel* and Nigel's* mum Carol* left them at their aunt Jean's* home, they felt confused and thought she was abandoning them. "Mum has to live somewhere else for a while," she said, as she kissed them goodbye. What Samuel and Nigel didn't know was that their mother was taking the positive step of beginning a year-long rehabilitation programme to help her deal with her addiction issues.

Even though Jean loved the boys and wanted them to feel secure, they felt anxious and afraid in their new surroundings. Nigel cried constantly at his new school and felt frustrated when he couldn't keep up in class. Samuel expressed his fear and confusion by picking fights and hitting his classmates.

Jean was extremely concerned and approached Family Works for help. The boys began an eight-week Seasons programme, and also met with a social worker each week. Seasons is designed for children going through grief and loss and it helped the boys deal with the disruption and unexpected changes in their lives. Samuel and Nigel also met other children who were going through similar experiences. They made new friends, developed new skills to help them adapt to the changes in their lives, and learnt new ideas for playing together and having fun.



Carol hadn't realised how deeply her separation from her children had affected them. The social worker connected with Carol and helped her to understand the boys' feelings and behaviour by explaining how worried they had been about her. She became even more determined to make positive changes that would make her a better parent to her sons. Months later, sober and drug-free, Carol was reunited with her boys.

The brothers are over the moon to be back living with their mum who is so grateful she understood in time what an important person she is to the sons she loves.

*Stock image and names changed to protect identity

"One generation plants the tree; another enjoys the shade"

The gift of a bequest to Presbyterian Support Northern is a simple and powerful way to make a difference for future generations. If you would like to discuss leaving a gift in your Will please contact **Suzanne Ward 09 520 8628** or email **suzanne.ward@psn.org.nz**.

A GROWING SENSE OF WORTH

Kyra's* husband tried to run her over when she was pregnant with the first of their four children.

For 23 years she lived in constant fear and was at times suicidal as he physically and emotionally abused her and the kids, controlled her income, kept her a prisoner and stalked her when she wasn't at work.

The children could not remember a time when their father did not beat up their mother – including once when he burst her eardrum and threw her out of the house with no money.

Kyra was too ashamed and isolated to seek help until the night her oldest son tried to protect her and his siblings and he was beaten and half strangled. The police arrested his father and alerted Shine.

After visiting Kyra and her children, a Shine advocate

made sure their home had a panic alarm and new locks, helped them get protection orders and worked with various agencies to get them financial and psychological support. Kyra and the younger children were enrolled in a safety programme and received Family Works counselling and social work support.

Family Works' and Shine's wraparound services are helping to keep Kyra and her children safe. As her sense of worth grows, she is taking charge of her life and for the first time enjoy living with her children in a violence free home.



*Stock image and name changed to protect identity

To donate, please use your personalised response slip,
or send your gift to Presbyterian Support Northern, PO Box 99890, Newmarket, Auckland 1149.
Alternatively visit **www.psn.org.nz** to donate online by credit card.