

Contact Details

December 2016

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UPDATE FROM THE CHAIRMAN

This newsletter sees us heading quickly towards the festive season and hopefully a break for some and a time to relax and recharge. At this time our thoughts are also turned to those that have been effected with the recent earthquakes and flooding. It has been a very trying time for many and life as they had known it has now changed significantly. Since the earthquakes the Welfare Society has been in contact with all our members in the effected regions to check in with them and see what assistance they require, if any. We also had regional representatives working out of the disaster emergency response centres on behalf of the Welfare Society.

Our region one representative Darryl Johnston was given the opportunity to address the conference which gave the Welfare Society another chance to let delegates know about us. Growing the Welfare Society membership and ensuring that our numbers stay consistent means that we can continue to provide the service that we do now to our members. I'd like to take this opportunity now to wish all our members a very Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year. Please take care of yourselves and if you require any assistance do not hesitate to contact me personally or your regional representative.



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At the end of October the Welfare Society attended the annual UFBA conference held this year at the Air Force Museum in Christchurch. We were able to speak to a number of potential members and catch up with those that are already members. Attending conferences such as these gives the Welfare Society a chance to get our voice heard and to let those that may not be aware of who we are a chance to see what it is that we offer and how we can help them. Delegates that attended the conference on behalf of their brigades are able to collect information on the Welfare Society and take it back to their brigades. Some delegates organise station visits with our reps whilst they are at conference so that their brigades can be better advised and given the opportunity to become members themselves.



Office Closure over the Christmas Period

The New Zealand Firefighters Welfare Society offices will be closed from:

Friday 23 December 12.00pm

re-opening

Monday 16 January 9.00am

For urgent matters during this matter please contact your local area representative. Their contact details are on the back of this newsletter or can be found by visiting our website: www.firefighters.org.nz

Holiday home bookings over this period can be done through our app for smart phone and tablet users. With these apps you can check availability and book online for the Welfare Society's homes.

HOLIDAY HOMES CONDITIONS OF OCCUPANCY

A reminder to all members that are using the holiday homes.

Check in times are 1.00pm. Entry prior to this time is not permitted unless it has been preapproved with the office prior to your arrival. Even if you check on your phone app and see that the home was not booked the evening before it does not mean that members can go in early. When the houses are free it is a time when caretakers can take regular maintenance checks.

Check out times are 11.00am. Please ensure that you have cleaned the homes by 11.00am and have vacated the premises leaving them clean and tidy. The limited times between members checking out and others checking in is needed so that the homes can be checked over and any issues put right. Please respect these rules.



UPDATE FROM OUR AGM

The Welfare Society held the 29th Annual General Meeting on 23 September 2016. The meeting was hosted at the Welfare Society offices in Avalon and was a joint meeting with the Firefighters Credit Union.

The Chairman reported on the ongoing efforts to form a good working relationship with the new Fire and Emergency New Zealand management team as they move towards July 2017. The Chairman also reported that there had been a slight increase in membership numbers this year which was positive for the Welfare Society and also meant that new benefits could be investigated.

The Treasurer's report was read and accepted by those in attendance. A positive year for the Welfare Society financially and it was pleasing to see more money was able to be spent on benefits for its members. A new holiday home purchase was also able to proceed.

Mr David Turner was appointed Auditor for the financial 2016/17 year.



Brian Thompson

Mr Brian Thompson was re-elected as Trustee for a five year term commencing on 23 September 2016.

INTRODUCING DAN O'BRIEN - AON



Dan O'Brien is a Client Adviser with Aon New Zealand. Dan is keen to hear from any Welfare Society members who would like to discuss life insurance options. With current events happening you may have been thinking about getting things in place.

Dan is committed to providing clients with thorough and expert advice to ensure individuals and their families are protected with the most suitable insurance plan for their circumstances. Whether you are looking to review your current insurances, or if this is your first introduction to life cover, Dan will endeavour to make this process an easy and enjoyable one.



EMERGENCY SURVIVAL ITEMS

With all the recent activity around the country it is a timely reminder to all of us to ensure that we have an emergency survival kit.

In most emergencies you should be able to stay in your home. Plan to be able to look after yourself and your household for at least three days or more. Assemble and maintain your emergency survival items for your home as well as a portable getaway kit in case you have to leave in a hurry.



- Torch with spare batteries or a self-charging torch
- Radio with spare batteries
- Wind and waterproof clothing, sun hats and strong outdoor shoes
- First aid kit and essential medicines
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Pet supplies if you have pets
- Toilet paper and large rubbish bags for our emergency toilet
- Face and dust masks

Check all batteries every three months. Battery powered lighting is the safest and easiest. Do not use candles as they can tip over in earthquake aftershocks or in a gust of wind. Do not use kerosene lamps, which require a great deal of ventilation and are not designed for indoor use.

Food and Water for at least three days

- Non-perishable food (canned or dried food)
- Food, formula and drinks for babies and small children if you have any
- Water for drinking, 3 litres per person per day
- Water for washing and cooking
- A primus or gas barbecue to cook on
- A can opener

Check and replace food and water every twelve months. Consider stocking a two-week supply of food and water for prolonged emergencies such as a pandemic.

Source: gethru.govt.nz

HELPING CHILDREN COPE with disasters and Trauma



Most disaster responses are based on the idea that most people/children will have some kind of reaction, and that for most people that will fade over time. Children tend to react in the following ways:

Preschoolers: clinginess, maybe some regression, generally being unsettled and scratchy.

School age children: often present with physical symptoms such as sore stomachs, not sleeping, maybe some re-experiencing of the event, being unsettled, sometimes a bit hyper, and they can get a bit angry and/or 'naughty'.

Older children and adolescents: Tend to react with more typical anxiety and sometimes depression as well. Teenagers can sometimes develop a sense of hopelessness about the future.

As a result clinicians and researchers developed the concept of 'psychological first aid', a series of guidelines that were supported by both the best of the current research, and by practical experience on the ground helping children at major incidents. At face value these things all seem a bit obvious, and certainly driven by common sense, but it's good to know that some of the smartest people in the world have come up with this stuff, and that it has been used in a number of major incidents to really help children deal with traumatic incidents:

Promote a sense of safety. Obvious really, but there you go. The safer you can make them feel the better they will be. Promote a sense of calmness. They will look to you to see how to respond so the calmer and more in control you can be, the better they will be. This is where you really need to put your game face on, suck it up, and get on with it. The great thing about kids is that they focus you, and they make you think really hard about what's best for them. If you are having a 'moment', and God knows you have every right to, then try and do that away from them, or to contain it as much as you can around them.

Promote a sense of connectedness. In the immediate aftermath they will want their family around them. They may want to stay very close to you, and to sleep in your room at night as well. All that is fine, and normal, and nothing to worry about. Just being there is important. You can also

help them to see that they are not alone, and that everyone is helping out. This is very easy to do in Canterbury because so many people are helping each other out. The more they see that Christchurch has now become a village of connected and caring people, the better they will feel.

Promote a sense of self-efficacy. Help them to see that even though this huge thing has happened, that they are not helpless, and that they can influence and have an impact on what happens around them. You can do this by fighting small battles you know you can win. (eg "Let's see if we can put all the kitchen chairs back up?" or "How about you see if you can shift those bits of wood?"). The idea here is for them to develop a sense that they are not simply at the whim of the world, but that they can have an impact and some degree of control.

Promote a sense of hope. It's important for them to see that life continues on and that things will, eventually, return to normal. Stay upbeat, focus on the good things (no matter how small they may be), and make a big deal out of every tiny step back towards normality.

On top of all that I'd just add that you should try and shield them from as much of the media stuff as you can, and that returning to routines is hugely important. Going back to school is good, making your bed in the morning is good (even if it's a cot in a hall), brushing your teeth (where you can), and all that other stuff.

It's also important too that you look after yourself. You can only help them if your head is in a working space so make sure you take whatever help you can get, and that you give yourself some time to collect your internal resources as needed.

Above all be gentle on yourselves, on your partners, and your kids. These are the most difficult of times and you will all be carrying heavy loads both practically, and emotionally. Be forgiving with each other.

Source: Psychologist Nigel Latta

CONTACT DETAILS

Have you moved?
Have you changed your email address?
Have you changed your phone provider?

If you answered yes to any of these questions can you please contact the office on
0800 65 34 73

or email thesec@firefighters.org.nz
to update your personal details so that we can keep in touch. The office will be contacting by mail those members that we still don't have email addresses for in the new year.