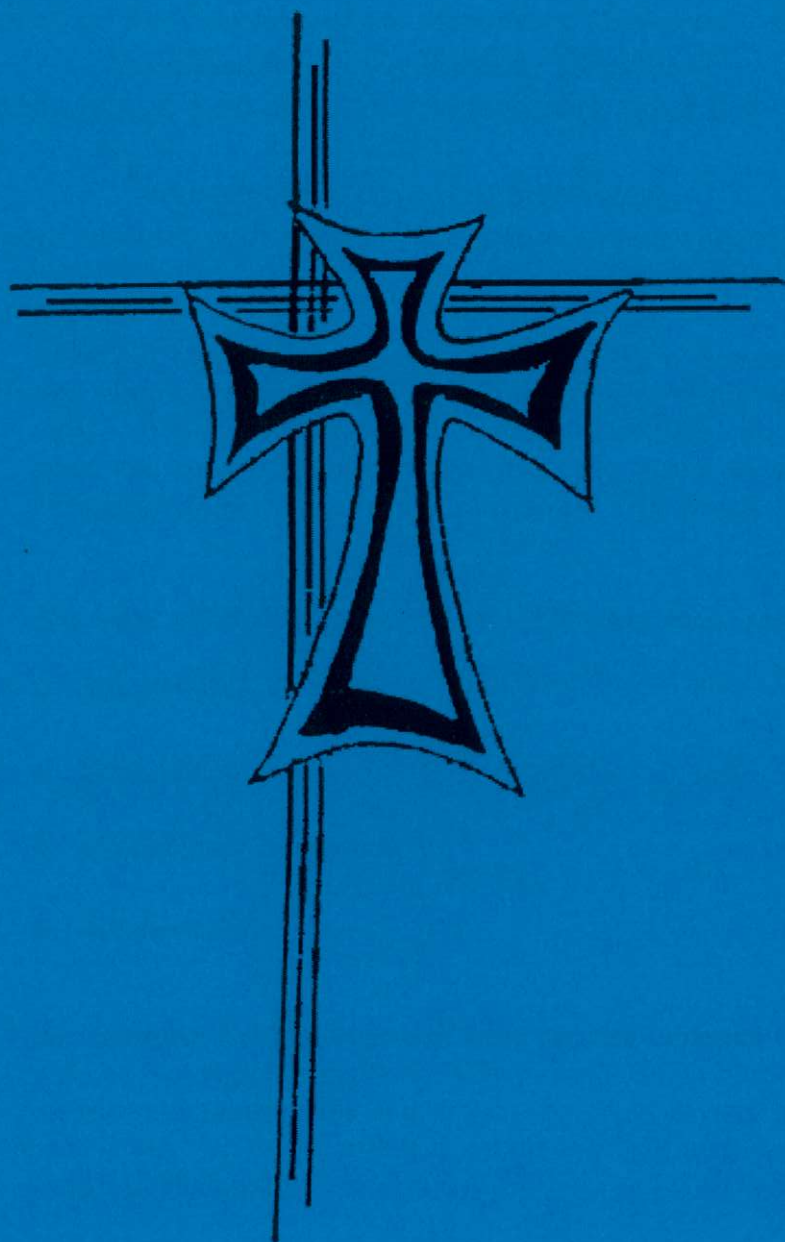


Sisters of Mercy Wiri



**Annual Report and Statement of Accounts
2001/2002**

Mission Statement

*Animated by the Gospel and the charism of Catherine McAuley,
the Sisters of Mercy Wiri are committed
to work with persons who are poor and suffering, especially women and
children,
to analyse the causes of their needs
and to work with others to transform unjust systems.*

Sisters of Mercy Wiri was established in 1990 by Sisters Anne Hurley and Margaret Martin. It is a community based social service agency, with a strong social justice and community development focus. For 10 years the service operated from where the Sisters live in Wiri. In November 2000 the agency relocated to the Wiri Centre.

The work of the agency centres around four key focus areas:

- Social Services
- Social Justice
- Community Development
- Spirituality

We recognise the importance of an integrated approach when working with and alongside people to effect change. A partnership model based on common goals and community input as well as respect for each other's skills, knowledge, culture and spirituality underpins the working relationships.

Central to our working relationships is a commitment to promoting Te Tiriti o Waitangi in our organisational life and ministry.

Board Members

Carol Mollard
(Chairperson)
Waina Emery
Sister Anne Hurley
Sister Margaret Martin

Staff

Lineta Suafoa
Sharon Lang
Sister Anne Hurley
Sister Margaret Martin
(Manager)

Chairperson's Report

It gives me great pleasure to present my first Annual Report as Chairperson of Sisters of Mercy Wiri.

Firstly, I wish to acknowledge the other foundation Board members, Waina Emery and Sisters Margaret Martin and Anne Hurley. Sister Mary Foy was to have been on the Board but her sabbatical leave intervened. Together we have travelled the path from the initial Board meeting to where we are today.

This journey has focussed on mission, human resources, strategic planning and finance. Each director is aware of and committed to the mission and values as espoused by Sisters of Mercy Auckland Charities and are resolved to see these reflected at Wiri.

As well as the above duties, the Board explored the issues as set out in the discussion paper 'Shaping Ministries for Mission'.

In any organisation, there is the ebb and flow of personnel. I take this opportunity to welcome Kathy Lynch, a Sister of Mercy, on to the Board. Her wisdom and experience will be valued. We thank Sue Court for the competent handling of the accounts.

The Manager's report will give us a brief glimpse of the mission of the agency Sisters of Mercy Wiri, begun over a decade ago by Anne and Margaret. Much of their work is unseen, but highly valued.

As Chairperson, I wish to acknowledge both of them and in so doing invite us to reflect together on the words of the song 'Pour out Compassion and Mercy'.

*Pour out compassion and mercy
From the depths of your heart
And give to the poor and the broken
The service of your love.*

*In so far as you do these holy deeds
With all the love of your soul
Then you will resemble me, your God
And I will make you whole.*

*If you seek out and find the stranger
And comfort the lonely of heart
And offer them your friendship
Then my justice you'll impart.*

*So pour out compassion and mercy
From the depths of your heart
And give to the poor and the broken
The service of your love.*

Carol L Mollard
Chairperson

Manager's Report

September, the beginning of Spring and the month in which Sisters of Mercy world wide, their co-workers and associates celebrate Mercy Day. I am aware as I write of the connectedness we all share in the mission of Jesus, and that new beginnings come out of times of struggle and hard work.

This is in my mind as I reflect on the year 2001-2002, our second year of operating from the Wiri Centre. I am also mindful of the amount and variety of work we cover. It includes such activities as the distribution of bread three times a week, participating in a National Housing Strategy workshop in Wellington, coordinating family meetings, and providing a variety of programmes. Given the range and diversity I acknowledge we are stretched to capacity and applaud the tireless work that each member of our team puts in.

One programme to which considerable attention was given during the year was the home based early childhood education programme. This we introduced to Wiri in partnership with Wiri Central Primary School in January 2000. HIPPY (Home Instruction Programme for Preschool and Year One Youngsters) as it is known, celebrated the graduation of 19 children completing this 2 year programme in December 2001. For the children and their families this was a very special occasion. However, after careful review of the HIPPY Programme and in consultation with Wiri Central Primary the Sisters of Mercy Wiri decided in January 2002 not to renew its contract with the Pacific Foundation to operate the home instruction programme.

During the year I was pleased that we were able to increase the receptionist's hours from 20 hours a week to a full time position. Our work is such that it takes us away from the Centre many times a day. Lineta in this role creates a spirit of gracious welcome to callers and visitors and provides a very personal touch to those accessing our service.

Particular strengths of the agency are the consistent, reliable and professional service we provide, and our links with other organisations and service providers at a local level. The value we give to establishing and maintaining these links is shown by our initiating this year a monthly networking Morning Tea which brings together at the Wiri Centre the staff of organisations working with children and families in Wiri.

Over the years there have been many requests for us to have a student on placement. Because we now work from the Wiri Centre we are, for the first time, in a position to respond positively to these requests.

Without the dedication of a small but great team of people: permanent staff, contract staff, volunteers and Board members who contribute their time and expertise, the work of Sisters of Mercy Wiri would be considerably curtailed. Particular thanks to Mark Argent who provides IT support and back up. His expertise and advice is an immeasurable asset to us. Sadly, we lost a friend, neighbour and volunteer of seven years due to the untimely death of Yvonne Weggery. Yvonne's contribution and support was much appreciated.

A special thanks also to Wiri Central Primary School for their continued support and for the use of the Wiri Centre. Carol deserves a special mention not only as Principal, but also as Chairperson of our Board of Directors. Her wise guidance, humour and energy have been appreciated.

2002/2003 will inevitably present us with new challenges. We have already begun to plan a community based health promotion initiative.

Early Intervention Programmes for children and their families will also be explored.

My hope for the coming year is that our service in mercy 'to the poor and the broken' will continue to have a meaningful input into social change and community wellbeing.

The following is a summary report of each focus area.

Sister Margaret Martin
Manager

Social Services

The family/whanau support services provided by the Sisters of Mercy Wiri include but are not limited to the following:

- **Advocacy**
- **Home Visits and Home Based Support**
- **Social Work**
- **Information and Referral**
- **Immediate Need**
- **Money Management**
- **Crisis Intervention**

An indication of the numbers accessing the service is given by the following data recorded during the months of March and June 2002.

MARCH	Number of people accessing the Wiri Centre:	388
	Number of Incoming Telephone Calls	364
	Number of Home Visits	33
JUNE	Number of people accessing the Wiri Centre	293
	Number of Incoming Telephone Calls	301
	Number of Home Visits	29

The presenting concerns and issues range from accessing housing to filling in forms and include financial hardship, parenting, information and support.

Supporting families means going to people's homes and listening to their story. This is time-consuming but helps people feel at ease and allows for a more accurate assessment of the home situation.

A Case Study: Families in need of support

A Housing NZ case manager was concerned about a tenant who had recently moved into Wiri. He is a solo dad with four children, all boys, the youngest only 5 weeks old, who required information and support. Margaret made a home visit. As a result the dad found out about the local schools and where to enrol his sons, he was put in touch with Plunket and a plan to help the dad to fulfil a promise of a skateboard for his son's 10th birthday was initiated. The eldest of the boys attends the after school study support for Y8 students and from time to time the Wiri Centre on wet days is a haven for the baby when dad has an appointment to keep.

In the words of Catherine McAuley:

*'What the poor prize more highly than gold,
is the kind word, the compassionate look and the patient hearing of sorrows'.*

Social Worker in Schools

This year the role of the Social worker in Schools has evolved and developed to the degree that Sharon Lang, the social worker for Wiri Central Primary, has become an integral part of the school and the community.

The presenting concerns range from a child or children coming to school with no lunch to disclosure of abuse.

Rather than just deal with the presenting problem the close working relationship between the Sisters of Mercy Wiri and the local primary school has enabled this service to operate effectively. Involvement of the families, interagency cooperation, clear communication and coordination have been critical to the success of the service

Sharon focuses on early intervention by:

- Visiting families in their home
- Making assessments
- Supporting parents and monitoring family plans
- Coordinating meetings with the family and school
- Planning and running holiday programmes
- Coordinating the lunch programme for children coming to school with no lunch
- Networking with other agencies and organisations

A Case Study: Early Intervention Practice

Each morning the phone rings with names of the children on Sharon's caseload who are absent from school. Visiting these children and their families is one of the many tasks to be attended to each day. By establishing a sticker or tick chart with the child and/or the family Sharon has had a significant impact on improving the attendance at school of the children most at risk. It is not unknown for her to bring two or three children to school after a home visit or to walk a child to school over a period of time to establish a morning routine for the child and the family. As Carol Mollard, Principal of Wiri Central Primary, was heard to comment 'Sharon is worth her weight in gold'.

Children's Outings

Again this year we have been able to provide outings for children. A day trip to the museum and the domain was a highlight for many and the annual film festival is always an enjoyable experience for the children! The outings cater for between 50 and 60 children at one time.

Community Development

Sisters of Mercy Wiri focus on community development by bringing people together to work with people and organisations to provide opportunities and programmes for the upbuilding of individuals, families and the whole community. Community development happens when people work together for the common good.

In this regard our contribution to the Wiri Whanau Support Group is considerable and involves us in issues of importance to the community. This year these have included:

- Upgrade to the Wiri Pond
- Wiri Graffiti Paint Out Programme
- Community Meetings to address concerns with Youth

Courses and Programmes

The following adult programmes were offered during the year to enhance or increase skill levels:

- Driver Education
- Te Reo
- Toi Mai Raranga (Maori Flax Weaving)
- Child Parent Relationships
- Aerobics
- Exploring Whanaungatanga

Evaluation Comments reflect a high degree of interest and satisfaction from course participants. Some of the participants wrote:

'I like the parenting for it was good for me to learn.'

'Please have another one.'

'What I have learnt has empowered me to do the things that I have not done before. The course is excellent'.

'Good exercises for us to make our body strong'. Thank you very much.

'Can we have more classes. Maybe a night class'.

'Thank you for your help and the great classes'.

'I enjoyed the course, it was really helpful'.

'Thank you very much for helping me to get my licence.'

'I did really improve by taking part in this course'.



After School Study Support

Education is an important aspect of enabling young people to participate fully in all the benefits of our society and to break the cycle of poverty.

This year the Intermediate After School Study Support Programme for at risk children has been available four afternoons a week to cater for the steady increase in numbers participating and the limited space available to run the programme.

The programme is ably led and coordinated by Anne. The librarian from Wiri Central Primary School, Shirley Frost, continues to assist and supervise students accessing the school library for information. Together with the two computers at the school library and the installation this year of a computer for general use at the Centre, the students have had access to three computers.

The comments from some of the Year 7 and Year 8 students in the end of term evaluations indicate that the programme is providing an opportunity for these young people to receive valuable assistance with their school work.

'Study support is cool because I can learn and get more information'.

'What I like about study support is everything'.

'I like the food'.

'We have games and quizzes. I don't forget the happy faces of Margaret and Anne and Claire.'

'It helps me with my homework and we do cool activities.'

'I like the way I get helped a lot with homework and other work.'

'I want to come back'.

'Getting to do my homework in peace and quiet.'

'I am able to do my homework and use computers'.

Social Justice

Sisters of Mercy Wiri have always recognised the relationship between social need and social policy. We have contributed towards ensuring as far as possible that the most vulnerable are paid account of both with local and central Government.

We Wiri focus on social justice by:

- Honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Acting as a voice and advocate for those in need
- Writing submissions to local and central government and encouraging and assisting people to participate in the process
- Helping people to represent themselves either in person or in writing
- Collaborating with other organisations having common values and mission

A Case Study: Participating in Policy Development

Throughout the year Anne has been one of two Catholic representatives on the New Zealand Council of Christian Social Services (NZCCSS) where she can use local knowledge and experience to advocate, through the poverty and housing group in particular, to ensure that the voices of the disadvantaged are heard.

As well, in her role as Chairperson of the Manurewa Community Board Anne, in a more public way, can represent the issues and concerns of those who are often excluded or ignored.

Anne's involvement at this level, while time consuming, is beneficial to the advocacy work that we undertake.

As a member of the Wiri Whanau Support Group Anne is able to channel people's queries or concerns, if appropriate, to the Community Board or to Manukau City Council officers.

Spirituality

A deep and obvious spirituality is evident in the people we live and work among, and our spirituality as Sisters of Mercy is fundamental to and embraces all that we do.

Sisters of Mercy Wiri focus on spirituality by:

- Embracing the Mercy charism in the light of contemporary society
- Ko te wairua o tena o tena (Acknowledging the spirituality of the tangata whenua)
- Respecting the spirituality of all the people we work with
- Accepting leadership roles in the small Wiri Catholic faith community

Case Study: An uneasy transition

Since the early beginnings of the small faith community that worships each Sunday in the Wiri Community Hall we have had an ongoing conversation about being inclusive both culturally and genderwise. Language is one obvious way of achieving this. But there are other ways not quite as obvious.

One of these is the seating, and easy enough to change in a hall setting. The current arrangement has initiated some debate as we wrestle with new understandings of what it means to be in relationship with one another. The arrangement is not exactly circular, but we all sit around the table, which is in the centre. The lectern forms part of the 'circle'.

The comments from two members of the community illustrate the communities response at this time:

'Facing the front is what we are used to' and 'It helps us to talk to each other better and to feel more part of'.

Two black women, Celie and Shug, discuss this in Alice Walker's novel 'The Colour Purple'.

"You telling me God loves you", Celie says to Shug, "and you ain't never done nothing for him? I mean not go to church, not sing in the choir, feed the preacher and all like that?"

"But if God love me, Celie, Shug responds, "I don't have to do all that. Unless I want to. There's a lot of things I can do that I speck God likes".

"Like what?"

"Oh, I can lay back and admire stuff. Be happy. Have a good time."

"Well, this sounds like blasphemy sure nuff".

"Celie," Shug says, "tell the truth; have you ever found God in Church? I never did. I just found a bunch of folks hoping for him to show. Any God I ever felt in church I brought in with me. And I think the other folks did too. They come to share God, not find God."

Acknowledgements

The work of Sisters of Mercy Wiri is made possible through the generous support and assistance of a number of organisations and individuals.

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ASB Community Trust
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Manukau City Council
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Southern Trust

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Foodtown Manukau
Mercy Hospital
Rotary Club of Newmarket Inc.
Telecom NZ Ltd
Wiri Central Primary School

And our deepest appreciation to volunteers who have assisted us:

Mark Argent for his expertise in IT, Michael Corry for legal advice, Chris Geaney and Gwen Naughten for the collection and delivery of goods; Claire Elliott for assistance with the after school study support; Melinda Pinkney for reception work, Liliu Ah Foon for childcare supervision, Lyn Mehana and Maria Climo for their help with the lunch programme and the many parents who have assisted with supervision of children's outings.

We also acknowledge with gratitude Reverend Terry Dibble and Peter Murnane for their warm support and commitment to the Wiri faith community.