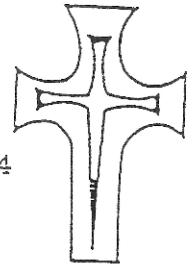


# Sisters of Mercy

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## COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT AUGUST 1993

The work of the Sisters of Mercy Wiri basically involves two aspects - one is a social work aspect and the other a community development aspect. This financial year we have been granted \$24,000 by the Community Funding Agency towards a salary grant for the two workers for the social work we do. This involves a six month social audit and deals with numbers of clients and outcomes.

### APPLICATION FOR GRANT FROM THE ASB COMMUNITY TRUST

The \$20,000 grant for which we are applying to the ASB Community Trust is for a salary grant of \$15,000 for the two workers for the community development aspect of our work and \$5000 for ongoing administration cost for the agency.

#### Community Development work includes:

- (a) Facilitating neighbourhood networks
- (b) Encouraging community development in the area of Wiri.
- (c) Fostering a self-help approach among local residents so that they may become involved and have the satisfaction and stimulation of working to create better communities.
- (d) Networking with community groups, voluntary and statutory organisations.
- (e) Being actively involved in local community projects.
- (f) Addressing and raising awareness of structural inequalities and injustices.

A brief account of our past involvement and future plans regarding this side of the work follows.

### WIRI WHANAU SUPPORT GROUP

Since we have been in Wiri (1988) we have belonged to the Wiri Whanau Support Group. This is a group of residents from Wiri and Rata Vine who work in cooperation with the school to provide support and encouragement for families in the area. One major project in which this group was involved was the Community Hall project. This hall was opened in August 1992 as a result of lobbying residents, Manukau City Council, and other groups in the area. It took constant effort (three years in fact) to keep the consultative processes open on all levels and at all times to ensure that the hall is most beneficial to the people and truly what they wanted. Our involvement was the key to the success of this project.

#### WIRI COMMUNITY HOUSE

In December 1988 the local Community House was in turmoil and in danger of being closed because of difficulties with the management committee. We became involved and worked with local people for several years to enable this community resource to continue. We are no longer directly involved with the affairs of the house except for offering support and encouragement and providing supervision for the co-ordinator and chairperson of the management committee.

#### HOUSING MEETINGS

Since 1991 housing policy in New Zealand has changed with far reaching effects. Most of the houses in Wiri are state houses. In 1992 and 1993 we held several public meetings to inform state house tenants (and housing corporation mortgagees) about the policies, how they work and how they, the people would be affected.

#### WIRI SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAMME

The Principal of the Wiri Central School invited us to devise a scheme to help them provide lunches for the children who come to school without one. The scheme that is running presently in the school uses volunteers from the community. We obtained initial funding from local businesses and put into action a programme which works to maintain the anonymity of the children concerned while at the same time discouraging dependence. We visit the families involved and where possible work with them to eliminate the need.

#### RATA VINE PEDESTRIAN SAFETY ACCESS

Residents of Rata Vine whose children have to cross the Great South Road to get to the local school have been concerned for the safety of the children. We have been involved in discussions with the residents of Rata Vine, the Manukau City Council, the School and the Traffic Department in deciding upon the most appropriate option to address this concern. The negotiations continued for over a year and we are still involved in ensuring that the Council completes the work they are responsible for. The option agreeable to all parties concerned required recruiting volunteers from the community to supervise children across the road using a pedestrian refuge island. We approached people in the community to do this responsible job, trained them and continue to monitor the project.

## 55 PLUS GROUP WIRI

With the establishment of a local community hall we responded to the need expressed by the elderly in the community for a programme to meet their needs. This involves working with people from the local rest home, the residents of the Council flats and other elderly from the area. We formed a planning group and together with them have established a weekly programme that is varied and enjoyable. At present we have an ongoing commitment to this group to ensure that there is a programme every Thursday afternoon and that it goes smoothly.

## CHILDREN'S OUTINGS

For the past two years we have provided three outings a year for children in the area. These have proved very popular and provided experiences the children would not otherwise have. The ASB Charitable Trust funded the pre Christmas outing 1992.

At the present time there are two projects that we are initiating - that is determining whether or not there is a need and then taking the necessary steps to get it up and running. On going support and maintenance would probably be necessary.

## OUT OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

There have been inquiries from the community about care for children after school. There is a need for such a programme but whether or not the community has the resources to run such a programme or can get them is the question. This project is in the exploratory stage. We have devised a simple questionnaire to ascertain from the local primary school children what kinds of out of school activities they would be interested in. When this is completed by the children and the results collated we will, with the Wiri Whanau Support Group look at what are our options.

## COMMUNITY NUTRITION EDUCATORS

The nutrition programme was suggested by a Manuaku City Council Adviser. It is a project aimed at improving community nutrition. Again, it involves ascertaining the level of interest and support for such a programme, applying for funding, co-ordinating the programme and training educators from the community to carry out effective nutrition cooking classes in the community. The training of educators



would be in conjunction with Community Health Services, South Auckland, who have been involved in similar programmes in other areas.

Besides being involved in the specific programmes outlined above we are active in fostering participation in local community groups such as Neighbourhood Support and those which provide recreation, networking, information exchange, community education and opportunities for social interaction.

*Margaret Merton*

*Anne Hussey*