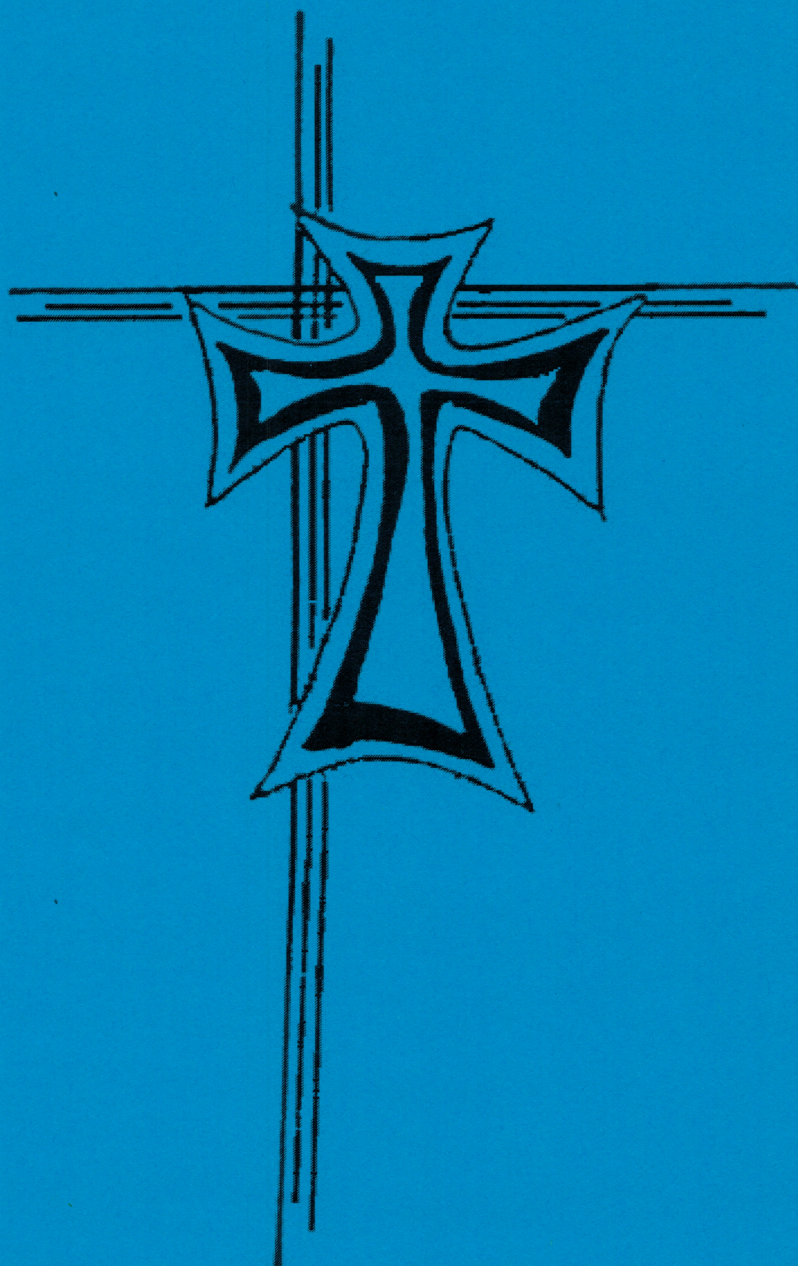


Sisters of Mercy Wiri



2015/2016 Annual Report

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Brief History

In 1988 Sisters of Mercy responded to an invitation by local Maori women and came to live in Wiri. Sister Anne Hurley and Sister Margaret Martin established the community based agency Sisters of Mercy Wiri in 1990 in response to growing community needs. For ten years Anne and Margaret worked from the house which the Sisters had built themselves. The establishment of the Wiri Centre in 2000 was a joint initiative between Sisters of Mercy Wiri and Wiri Central School and in November 2000 the service relocated to the Wiri Centre.

As an active community based not for profit organisation Sisters of Mercy Wiri delivered a range of services and programmes. The agency also contributed to a number of regional forums that focussed on improving social outcomes, health and wellbeing in the region.

In December 2009 Sisters of Mercy Wiri Trust relinquished all formal contracts, both funding and employment and vacated the Wiri Centre. Margaret and Anne continue to live and work in Wiri. They are now freer to be open to the unexpected and awake to new possibilities.

The ministry of Sisters of Mercy Wiri embodies the mission of the Catholic Religious Congregation of women, Nga Whaea Atawhai o Aotearoa Sisters of Mercy New Zealand, founded by Catherine McAuley in Dublin in 1831 to work with the poor, especially women and children.

Our Mission

*To work with the poor, especially women and children,
to build positive relationships that strengthen families and communities
and to join with others to bring about a more just and compassionate society.*

Animated by Gospel values and Catholic Social Teaching we respond with Christ's love to the needs and concerns of the economically poor, especially women and children.

Treaty of Waitangi

Te Tiriti o Waitangi/The Treaty of Waitangi is New Zealand's founding document and Sisters of Mercy Wiri is committed to honouring Te Tiriti as a principle for the way in which we work.

Guiding Principles

- Work with all people of goodwill towards the transformation of society to bring about the reign of God
- Promote the value that all persons are called to family, community and participation
- Facilitate community development by involving neighbourhood and community participation
- Embrace the multi-cultural character of Wiri and recognise and value all cultures and ethnic groups that are represented in the local community
- Participate in processes to influence those who exercise power and make decisions affecting the lives of others

Works of Mercy

Feed the hungry
Clothe the naked
Welcome the stranger
Bury the dead

Give drink to the thirsty
Visit the imprisoned
Heal the sick
Care for our common home

"I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

John 10:10

Board of Trustees



Back row from left to right: Graham Goldsmith, Sr Margaret Martin, Tony Horan
Ruth Spelman (Chair), Sr Anne Hurley and Catherine Dodson

Chairperson's Report

It is my pleasure to present the Annual Report for the year to June 2016 on behalf of the Sisters of Mercy Wiri Trust Board. During the year the Board has continued to work within its strategic plan.

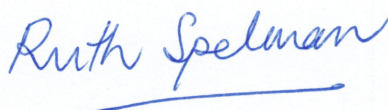
This year has seen the farewell of Trustee Carol Thomas and a welcome to Catherine Dodson, Tony Horan and Graham Goldsmith to join the Board. During this year advocacy work in relation to housing needs and prison visiting has been gathering support locally and regionally. A number of parishoners of St Anne's Manurewa have taken part in prison visiting and in planning for assisting women coming out of prison. It has been heartening to see this local commitment alongside the work of Anne and Margaret.

In the light of the new Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 the Board clarified the position of Sisters of Mercy Wiri as a volunteer association. A volunteer association is not a Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking as defined in the new Act.

The Board opted to report under Tier 3 of the New Reporting Standards which come into effect this year. This format is based on accrual accounting which is our current accounting practice. Sisters of Mercy Wiri meets the criteria for Teir 3.

The Board continues to affirm the work done by Anne and Margaret. They continue to be invited to participate in a wide variety of community forums and consistently give witness to the call of mercy.

My thanks to all Board members and to all those who support the work of Sisters of Mercy Wiri.



Ruth Spelman
Chairperson

Ministry Report

During the period of this Annual Report Pope Francis announced that there would be an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy. This was to be held from 8 December 2015 to 30 November 2016, and celebrated not only in Rome, but all around the world. Francis's strong call was to focus particularly on God's forgiveness and mercy, and to listen attentively to the cry of the earth and to the cry of the poor.

As we reflect on our ministry during the past 12 months it is with Pope Francis' call in mind that we report how we have listened and responded to the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth.

Housing has figured largely in the work of Sisters of Mercy Wiri. Barely a week goes by when we are not made aware of the plight of the homeless, through a phone call, a chance meeting or a visit. Frequently, we learn of families in Wiri moving in with their relatives, maybe staying in a garage or some other temporary shelter. At the same time we also see Housing New Zealand houses empty for many months, and private houses for sale and then for resale.

We recognize the systemic nature of this crisis and respond to the cry of the poor through advocacy, awareness raising and speaking publicly about it.

Advocacy has involved negotiating with landlords over tenancy concerns, reporting maintenance and repairs concerns to Housing New Zealand on behalf of tenants, and attending tribunal hearings. While these interventions have achieved good outcomes for the people concerned it remains a sad reality that 'the poor' often need advocates in order to be heard.

During the year some key awareness raisings of the housing crisis have been assisting with and participating in the Hikoi for Homes March in November, and spending a night in our car at the Mangere Park-up for Homes in June. Speaking

publicly took the form of a presentation on child poverty and housing organised by the Auckland Justice and Peace Commission, and a talk on housing to Saint Mark's Pakuranga Justice Group. As well, we led three introductory sessions on Social Justice and Catholic Social Teaching at St Anne's parish, Manurewa.

Sisters of Mercy Wiri also made submissions on Auckland Council's Review of Existing Alcohol Bans, the Residential Tenancies Amendment Bill, the Social Security Re-Write Bill, Auckland's Housing for Older People's Partnering Proposal and the Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide Inquiry.

We contributed to a number of networks and value the commitments, decisions and actions taken by the many people involved. These included participating in the Equality Network Hui in March, joining with Auckland Action Against Poverty (AAP) in the four day Impact held at Mangere WINZ in April to advocate for people who were not receiving their full entitlement, contributing to the Auckland District Council of Social Services (ADCSS) Housing sub committee and the MSD/HNZ/Advocates meetings and the NZ Council of Christian Social Services. Being connected to a wide range of groups and organisations working for the common good of all is both hopeful and encouraging.

In this Mercy year our response to women in prison at the Auckland Regional Women's Correction Facility (ARWCF) in Wiri has been to continue to visit the women in the high security units weekly, and to lead two church services there once a month. At the beginning of 2016 we began to take services for the women on the low side of the prison. With this change the church services are now taken in the Spiritual Space or the chapel within the prison. This setting is more conducive to a prayerful and peaceful atmosphere for the women.

We facilitated two nine week Seasons for Growth programmes under the umbrella of Prison Chaplaincy. This programme raises the awareness of the losses, changes and grief that the women may have suffered and teaches skills to enable them to accept them as a normal part of life. In the words of the women:

"I have deeply appreciated this course because it has allowed me to gain powerful insights to healing the grief of losing my son in December 2013".

"I really enjoyed our sessions. Has really helped me a lot. To understand how grieving works and that it is okay to cry and talk about feelings and changes".

"Absolutely wonderful programme and facilitators. It was an emotional ride but one I'd recommend to anyone wanting help".

"Thank you for your support and helping me heal in my journey".

"Truly thankful and blessed to have been a part of this programme 4 years incarcerated with no acceptance or forgiveness in my heart. I must say I've found it today and fully move forward and up with a smile".

This year we developed a Reintegration Support Plan for women transitioning from the ARWCF to the community. We also worked with the St Anne's Network of Support to promote awareness of those in prison through the St Anne's parish community in Manurewa. We have spoken at all Sunday Masses, provided regular updates in the parish newsletter and involved members of the parish through prayer cards.

With the support of the parish priest, Fr Mike Wooller, we now have included regularly in the Sunday prayers of intercession a prayer connected in some way to the prison - perhaps for those in prison, their families, those who work in the prisons or provide pastoral care, or for the victims of crime. We acknowledge the ongoing contribution and support of Daniella Rudolph, Divine Dumlao, Donne Aeria, Graham Goldsmith, Helmut Rudolph, Patricia Jorden, Silino Tevaga and Veronica Rudolph. The hope to support a woman post release from the ARWCF in collaboration with the St Anne's support network from St Anne's parish continues.

Sisters of Mercy Wiri responded to the 'cry of the earth' in this Jubilee Year of Mercy by addressing the dumping of rubbish in our local community, which is an ongoing problem. Being attentive to the local environment in which we live and work has always been an integral part of encouraging neighbourhood and community responsibility to look after our natural world. Two specific actions we took stand out.

One action involved working with families in an area that has had household rubbish as well as inorganic rubbish dumped in it for years. The area is the entrance to a large driveway of a group of 13 Housing New Zealand houses. We engaged with the tenants as well as with Housing NZ and Auckland Council staff. The action involved taking photos, arranging meetings, visiting and talking to all the families concerned, providing information and updates as well as recognising and affirming the efforts families were making to improve the situation. Since this action the area in question has remained, for the most part, rubbish free except on the weekly collection day.



that
was
then

this is now



Another memorable and fruitful activity that we engaged in was to participate in an organized clean-up of Manukau's Puhunui Stream which runs through Wiri. Working to clean up and protect our waterways alongside so many others in what was the largest single environmental clean-up in NZ, was inspiring.

Ongoing are the day to day services of responding to immediate need, home visits, requests for information and assistance with filling out forms, referees declarations and letters of support. Approximately 60 families a week benefit from the distribution of bread three mornings a week. We continue to receive requests from people who are dealing with various Government departments and who seek support to navigate a system they describe as lengthy, often problematic and becoming increasingly impersonal.

Sisters of Mercy Wiri is blessed with a very generous and supportive governance team. We go forward together in the coming year attuned to the call of Mercy and to the opportunities and encounters that will call forth from us all a merciful response to the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.

“... everything is connected,
and that genuine care for our own lives
and our relationships with nature is inseparable
from fraternity, justice and faithfulness to others”.

Laudato Si' para 70 (2015)

Sister Anne Hurley
Community Social Worker

Sister Margaret Martin
Community Social Worker

Thank you

We acknowledge with gratitude the generous support and assistance of those who have contributed in a variety of ways over the past year.

Camilla and Jon Maplesdon
Countdown Manukau
Denise Gregory
Flowerise
OEM Computers
Mary MacKillop Care Centre

Neil Roper
Pak'n Save Manukau
Sarah Hart
SMSM Sisters
Spotless Facility Services (NZ) Ltd
Sr Elaine Wainwright