

Dear Hospice Waikato Supporter,  
In these unprecedented and unpredictable times  
palliative care has never been more important.

# Covid brings changes and new challenges

As the full impact of COVID and the subsequent lockdown became apparent, it was clear to Gwyn Bassett, Nursing Team leader at Hospice Waikato, that things were going to need to change - and change very quickly.

While Waikato Hospital discharged as many patients as it could to allow room for possible COVID patients, Gwyn's team was faced with an influx of new patients just as we headed into lockdown.

"I had to amalgamate my two teams (Hamilton and Rural) into one large team to cope with the influx of discharges from the hospital. Some of my team had to upskill quickly as they had not performed hands-on clinical skills for a long time," says Gwyn.

"Nurses have really struggled with not being able to do as many face-to-face visits with their patients. Working from home, nurses were using Zoom for handover meetings or to liaise with our doctors and using Zoom and telephones to liaise with patients and their families.

It was daunting but the team has been totally awesome," says Gwyn, "they have had to adapt to new ways of working, hours, regions and patients, as well as liaising with other health professionals and GPs they did not normally have to.

Of course, it has been very distressing for everyone including our families and carers, especially when our patients were nearing the end of life. The team was dealing with family members who were not allowed to visit, or to share the workload, and very distressed families who could not attend the funerals of their loved ones.

Throughout this pandemic our palliative care has continued. We have wonderful relationships with our patients and their families, and I know that maintaining the quality of our care has remained our top priority even while life has been very different for everyone these last weeks," says Gwyn.

**BELOW: Gwyn (front row, second from right) with other members of the nursing team. (Photo taken before lockdown)**



Craig Tamblyn  
Chief Executive

## Stories Throughout Lockdown

Today we are supporting over 420 patients in your local community.

Hospice Waikato is continuing to provide its care for people in the Waikato who are living with a terminal illness. Throughout this COVID emergency we have also been sharing our stories with our supporters.

Today's newsletter is a compilation of these stories and a celebration of the wonderful work the team at Hospice Waikato has been doing through these unprecedented times.

Our patients are compromised because of their health and this has been a stressful time for them and their family and carers.

It has also been stressful for our staff as they have adjusted to new ways of working. The stories in this newsletter illustrate how we have found innovative ways to deliver our care in this challenging environment

We are so proud of our wonderful team who are out in our community every day providing our nursing care and support.

We are also very grateful to you for your continued support for our service. There has probably never been a time in the Hospice's history where your donation could make such a difference for so many people.

Please donate to Hospice today  
using the form on the back of this  
newsletter or donate online at  
[hospicewaikato.org.nz/covid19](https://hospicewaikato.org.nz/covid19)



# Our music therapy under lockdown

**Hospice Waikato music therapist Nolan Hodgson talks about his experience under lockdown.**

"Before this I didn't believe it would be possible to run a successful music therapy session over the internet. Our music therapy sessions rely on vocal and musical interactions that are often very personal, immediate and so essentially in-the-moment that I didn't think a video-call would be able to do them justice.

Now my work days are filled with Zoom sessions. The majority of these are with children I work with through Rainbow Place.

Often these children had limited social interaction before the Covid-19 pandemic and now this has reduced to only those family members in their bubble. Even the



**Music therapist Nolan Hodgson with a Hospice Waikato patient.**

many care or support workers who usually spend time with these children are unable to do so and this means the parents have lost this extra support at a time when they

are navigating how to work from home and keep their entire household busy each day.

Many of the children I am working with have had numerous or long term hospital admissions and so are accustomed to having their social interactions reduced to a small 'bubble' for weeks at a time. It is me who has to change and adapt the way that I work.

Music has a wonderful ability to take us out of our present situation and carry us away wherever the song takes us. It's a fantastic way to connect, to share and to communicate with others and I'm thankful that we have the technology to enable this to happen from afar.

I'm sure the current lockdown will transform my practice in the future and will hopefully enable me to keep in contact more regularly with those living in distant or rural areas of Waikato."

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# Keeping our volunteers connected

**As the Manager of Volunteer Services, Karen has over 700 volunteers registered, many of these people are aged over 70 years.**

During lockdown Karen wanted to stay connected with her team so, with support from other Hospice staff members, she has been keeping in contact with the generous people that give up their time to work in our HospiceShops, to visit our patients, to write life stories and many other tasks. Her volunteers were pleased to hear from her. Volunteering at Hospice is an important part of their lives and many were finding the isolation difficult. The friendly check-up calls from Karen helped to ensure that our volunteer team stayed connected with their Hospice family.

"The majority of our volunteers are in roles that have people contact daily. Whether they are dealing with customers in our Hospice shops or writing a patient's life story, they had all had to put their volunteer work and life on hold. It was a stressful and often a lonely time for our volunteers."

Volunteering to work at Hospice provides an important social connection and network for many of our volunteers, it's something they look forward to and it is an



**Karen Mansfield and just a few of Hospice Waikato's 700+ volunteers.**

important part of their week."

Keeping in contact with her team of volunteers was important to Karen during the lockdown. They are a special group of people, and Hospice relies heavily on their generous gift of time. We are looking forward to seeing them all back at Hospice soon.

And Karen is going to need all the help she can get with our shops reopening, and the donations flowing in again. So, if you have some spare time and would like to join Karen's team please email Karen on [karen.mansfield@hospicewaikato.org.nz](mailto:karen.mansfield@hospicewaikato.org.nz)

# Rainbow Place through lockdown



**Zoe Fairbrother**  
Rainbow Place  
Nursing Team Leader

"Our Rainbow Place nursing team is amazing," says Zoe Fairbrother, Rainbow Place Nursing Team Leader, "they have all been working so well from home, they adapted quickly to the lockdown rules and focused on how to support our families differently. The team is used to heading out in their Rainbow Place cars every day, visiting families at home and

offering invaluable face to face support and nursing care, but with lockdown this way of working changed overnight.

Our nurses have been phoning, using Zoom, texting and emailing our families on a regular basis.

Our team spends time listening to our families, ensuring they feel heard and their real concerns acknowledged.

The Rainbow Place nurses have also been reading stories to our children via Zoom to ensure the children continue to have a relationship with them and have some fun too. We have been running our parent and carers virtual morning tea via Zoom

with our music therapist providing some beautiful interactions between families so they can still see other Rainbow Place families.

I am also impressed by our two new nurses, Sarah and Laura, who both joined our Rainbow Place team in the middle of the lockdown and are Zooming in with patients to introduce themselves to the children. This has been happening every day and been a success - what a time to start a new job - in a lockdown! I know they are both very excited about meeting the children in person.

I am a very proud team leader.

## Above and beyond: Jane's Story

**We think that Jane is a wonderful example of our staff, living our values: community, advocacy, respect, empathy (CARE).**

"As we all went into lockdown four weeks ago my first concern was for my patients and their families. It was scary and stressful for all of us let alone for families who were already living in extremely stressful conditions with a sick and vulnerable child. How were they going to cope with this added stress?"

At the time of lockdown, Rainbow Place was caring for 44 sick children. I started phoning each of the families I was looking after and very quickly I realised that many of my families were facing some extremely worrying difficulties. The simple task of grocery shopping was, for some families, now fraught with fear and real danger. I had families with very sick children, wheelchair-bound children and others suffering from conditions such as cystic fibrosis which put them in a high-risk category.

I had just finished a phone call with one of my patient's parents when I realised I needed to do something quickly.

This parent had applied for priority assist grocery shopping but was not able to receive it. She had no choice but to take her vulnerable child out with her and get her groceries. Another parent was turned away from a grocery store when she went with her sick child during the assigned vulnerable hour.

I was really upset at the difficulties my families were facing. Our Rainbow Place children are some of the most vulnerable people in the Waikato (along with our Hospice Waikato patients).

I decided I had to do something, that there must be some way that I could find for our families to access groceries and other essential items, without leaving home.

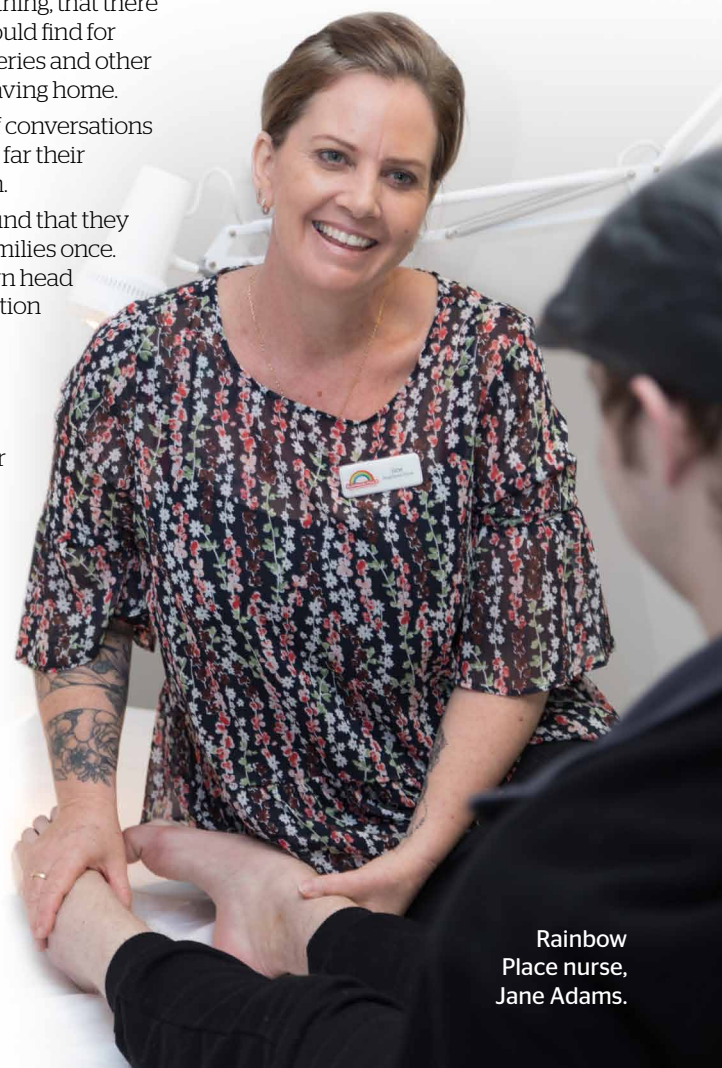
By this time, I had plenty of conversations with families, and this is by far their biggest hurdle of lockdown.

I tried Civil Defence but found that they would only shop for my families once. I decided to call Countdown head office. I explained our situation and that time was of the essence, as these families needed help now.

Thankfully, Countdown came to the rescue and our Rainbow Place families were given a special code which allowed them a preferential delivery service.

It was just such a relief and such a good feeling to be able to do this for these families I care about so much. It's difficult for us to imagine just how hard life can be caring for a child with a life limiting illness even without the added fear of a new and frightening virus."

You can help our Rainbow Place team continue to support our families who have a child with a life-threatening or terminal illness. Please fill in and return the form on the back of this newsletter.



Rainbow Place nurse,  
Jane Adams.

# HospiceShop is now online!

Now you can do all your favorite Hospiceshop shopping from the comfort of your home.

During the lockdown period the Marketing and Retail teams worked together to create Hospiceshop Online. Check it out at [www.hospiceshopwaikato.co.nz](http://www.hospiceshopwaikato.co.nz).

In less than one working week the online shop was up and going.

"With all eight of our shops closed it was imperative that we got our online offering out into the market as soon as we could," says Retail Manager, Teresa Bidlake.

Over the coming weeks, we'll be adding more stock and more categories, so don't miss out - get shopping and start saving!



[hospiceshopwaikato.co.nz](http://hospiceshopwaikato.co.nz)

## E-receipts

Would you like to receive your receipt via email? Please include your email address below and leave this section attached to your donation.

**Now more than ever we need your help to keep our service available to our patients. We understand this is a difficult and stressful time but we still need your help and our community's support. With our shops closed and our fundraising events cancelled ... can you help us?**

### Please return this form in the provided prepaid envelope to:

Hospice Waikato, PO Box 325, Waikato Mail Centre, Hamilton 3240

Or freecall 0800 HOSPICE or visit [hospicewaikato.org.nz/donate](http://hospicewaikato.org.nz/donate)

**Donate via internet banking** to Westpac 03-1555-0091553-00. Please ensure you use your unique ID, name and DONO4 as a reference so we can identify your donation.

- I wish to find out more information about leaving a gift in my will. Please send me a brochure.
- I wish to become a Friend of Hospice. Please send me more information.
- I wish to gift a full day of care to a patient (\$1,000)
- I wish to gift a half day of care to a patient (\$500)

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

^ VALUE OF DONATION

- Cheque.** Made payable to Hospice Waikato.
- Bank transfer.** See Hospice Waikato bank details, left.
- Automatic payment.** Please send me details.
- Credit Card.** Please debit this amount to my credit card monthly.
- OR**
- Credit Card.** Debit this amount to my credit card as a 'one-off' payment.

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