

Wednesday 25 March 2020 at 6:40pm

Kia ora whanau

What a fantastic job everyone has done to prepare for the lockdown at midnight tonight. I can't express my gratitude and appreciation enough for what has been achieved by all of you.

There have been some very big logistical challenges particularly in Manaaki Mai/Manaaki Atua that have been responded to by staff with the spirit of compassion and generosity that are the hallmarks of this faith based, Te Tiriti centred Mission. There is so much thinking going on to try to reduce the boredom and inevitable tension that will bubble up in places like Kaainga Taupua and Punanga. There is the fear and anxiety of the person who lives alone at Waikeria who will be anxious about not having the same contact with his mentor. This time also gives us a fresh appreciation of the women on EM Bail who live with these restrictions every day and show us their determination to liberate themselves from the inside out.

Today we realised that four women in Punanga who are strangers to each other, share a small house, and so we asked kids FIRST whanau centre leadership to open their space up to two women so that the intensity can be taken out of the Punanga house. They agreed and freely offered support to colleagues in the reintegration team to manage this situation. I have also heard about the amazing work the youth team have developed in response to their young people and whanau to provide the best possible support to some of our most vulnerable whanau. And the Centre for Social Justice took the initiative to zoom and plan together today to play their part. The leadership team has "met" at 10 am on zoom each morning to work out next steps, think laterally about how to do what we have never done before and keep everything moving seamlessly. There are lots of hidden parts to the Mission which need to be taken care of and it has been incredible to be part of this.

As you know at midnight we move to COVID-19 Level 4 and a state of emergency has been declared so that every power available to the government can be exercised to keep us safe. Now we have to put all the planning into a daily action and live into this new dynamic which will undoubtedly change every day. I have witnessed the values of this Mission at work in every gesture, attitude, action and thinking as we have worked together to offer our best in this unprecedented moment in our history.

There are lots of beautiful reflections and poems being written and shared and this was one that came across my screen yesterday which I would like to share with you as a final message:

*Every hand that we don't shake must become a  
phone call that we place. Every embrace that we  
avoid must become a verbal expression of warmth  
and concern.*

*Every inch and foot that we physically place between ourselves and another,  
must become a thought as to how we might be of help to that other should  
the need arise.*

- By Rabbi Yosef Kanefsky

WE OFFER HOPE

Karen Morrison-Hume