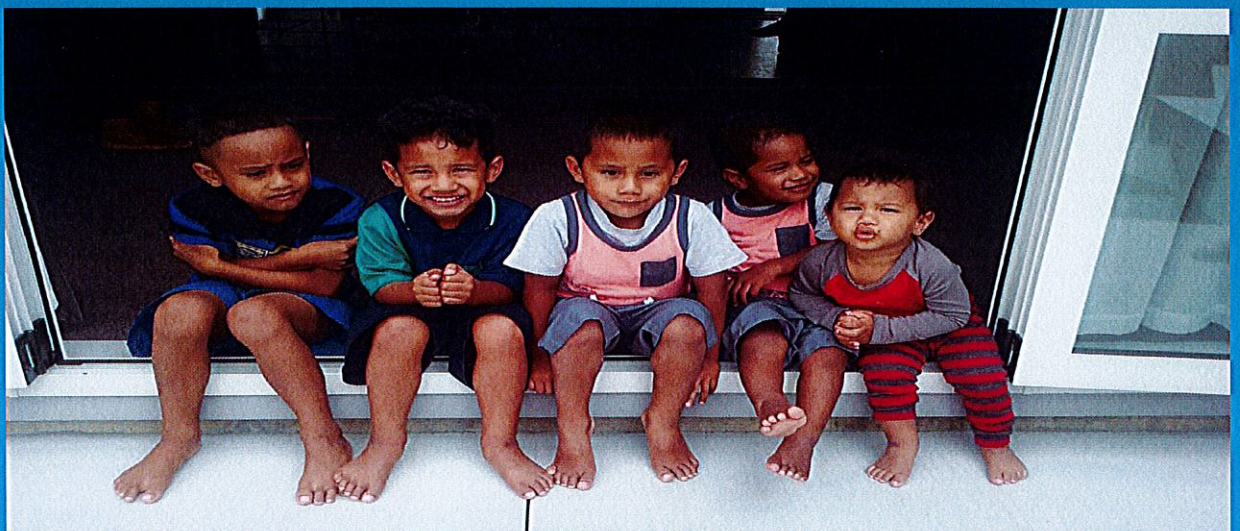


# **MONTE CECILIA**

**Housing Homeless Families**

Annual Report 2016/17





## **Contents:**

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Chairperson Report

CEO Report

Statistics

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Stories

Financial Report

Tēnā koutou, Malo e lelei, Talofa Lava

It is hard to believe but Monte Cecilia Housing Trust has been housing homeless families for 35 years. As Auckland, and indeed New Zealand, struggles with a lack of affordable housing, the work that Monte Cecilia does providing support to whānau/families who do not have access to decent housing remains as important as ever.

This year has been another year of growth as Monte Cecilia has responded to the ongoing demand whānau/families in need of emergency housing. The development of housing at Luke St, leasing a motel in Takanini and the steady growth of the social and emergency housing portfolio means we have been able to support many more families over the last 18 months than ever before. We now have 88 houses and have provided housing, support and advocacy to 600 families in the past 18 months. The Board decision to purchase Windrush Close from the Catholic Diocese of Auckland was a key milestone for the Trust. In partnership with the government, Windrush will be redeveloped to include 30 new two-bedroom units.

With Bernie's strong leadership the organisation has stretched not only to grow to meet increasing demand but also to achieve significant improvements in the way services are delivered. The focus on growing services means the organisation is more financially stable. The Trust's revenue has almost doubled from \$1.6m last year to \$3.6m this year.

Bernie continues to keep issues of homelessness and poverty at the forefront of the government agenda, frequently representing the sector in the public and media realms. Thank you, Bernie, for your dedication to the organisation and your commitment to social justice.

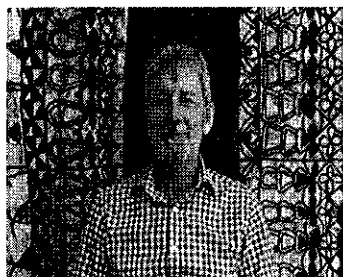
I would also like to pay tribute to Monte Cecilia's staff who do an outstanding job supporting whānau/families who are in need of emergency housing. The team has grown considerably over the past 12 months and the dedication, expertise and compassion each and every one of you brings to your work shines through as you support families to make changes in their lives.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all those that have supported the trust through donations. We are blessed to have your support. In particular we were humbled by the very generous donation provided by Jim and Mae Weir. Their incredible generosity will contribute to the redevelopment of the Windrush Close site. We also received a very generous gift from the Sisters of the Good Sheppard which will also make a very real difference to the support Monte Cecilia provides to families.

Finally, thank you to my fellow Trustees – Jim Weir, Bourke O'Connor, Brett Johnstone, Louise Elia, Malia Hamani, Kathy Lynch, Ken Brophy, Craig Brown, Mariota Smutz and Peter Burley. We are very fortunate to have such a highly skilled, diverse group of board members and I would like to acknowledge your guidance and commitment to the vision and mission of Monte Cecilia Housing Trust.

The year ahead promises to be a challenging but exciting one as we continue to grow, improve and lead the way in the provision of services that support whānau/families to thrive as they move toward housing independence.

Hope Simonsen  
Board Chair  
2017



CEO Bernie Smith

We bring you this 18 month report to better align with our contracts, so rather than January to December, so we'll move to July 1 to June 30, please note this report covers January 2016 to 30 June 2017

We commenced January 2016 committed to setting Monte Cecilia on a firmer platform to move into the future, to work smarter and not harder and support more families into housing as the need for housing increases and New Zealand enters into a housing crisis like never seen before.

As a Trust we entered into transformational change acknowledging that for 33 years we have barely had 20% Government funding and the rest has been from the good will of volunteers, donors and Trusts. In spite of this, the Trust has been held in high regard in many sectors across Auckland and New Zealand, the commitment of staff has been overwhelming with over 15000 families assisted. Over the past ten years over 16800 children have benefited from our emergency, social housing and advocacy services.

We updated our Logo and Web Site. Developed a new strategic plan, reviewed our Vision, Mission & values. We brought various software and now have Xero for accounting, Flexipay for salaries, Exess for Social Work case management, PCOM's for client satisfaction and Chintaro an Asset Property & tenancy management software.

Our property rental numbers have grown from 42 to 88 social and emergency housing options.

In July 2016 we were excited that at long last the Government acknowledged they needed to better fund emergency housing providers, so part funding commenced, then in December 2016 the Government offered 100% funding which allowed us to take on the extra emergency housing where we expanded into Papakura, Takanini & Otahuhu.

We have gone from nine FTE staff to 16 and 6 part-time, strengthened our Trust Board to enhance existing skill base and purchased the Windrush site we presently use as our service delivery headquarters and have a very exciting & bright future ahead of us.

In spite of the above we are seeing record numbers of homeless people across New Zealand living in poverty and circumstances that should not be occurring in our country. Monte Cecilia assisted over 600 families in

the past 18 months which involved 932 Adults and 1450 children, assisting over 60 families into affordable or social housing rentals. Many more families were assisted to keep or sustain their tenancies, get on the Housing Register or gain entitled WINZ assistance.

Our commitment to our Vision that 'Everyone has access to adequate, affordable and secure housing' remains as strong as ever. We plan to increase our emergency and social housing options over the next 12 months from the present 88 to 150 as a minimum.

Edward Everett Hale said '*I am only one, but I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something. And I will not let what I cannot do interfere with what I can do*'

As a Trust we know there are many wonderful organisations doing fabulous things for people living in poverty and living in homelessness, but none more as Monte CEO than the countless volunteer hours, individuals, Trusts, organisations, Trust Board members and staff whose generous support, donations and good will has assisted Monte Cecilia make a 'housing difference' for those who came to us

So thank you each one for your contribution and let's achieve even greater things in the next 12 months making homelessness rare brief and non-recurring.

## Statistics

### Jan 2016 – June 2017

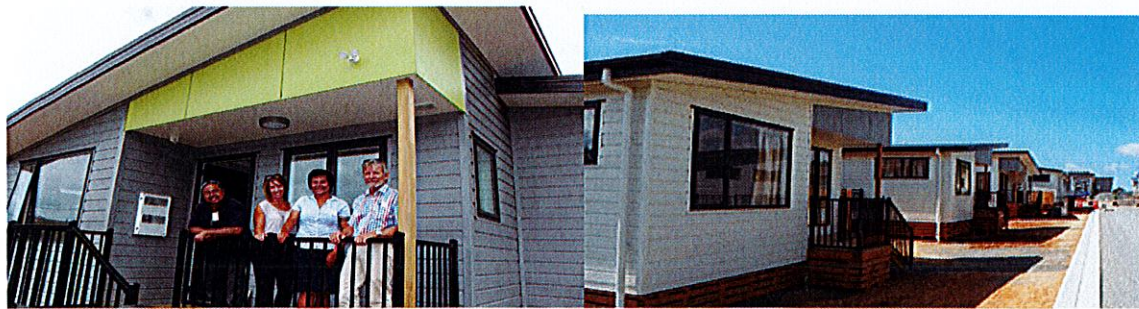
	Families	Adults	Children
Housing Enquiries Received	646	932	1,450
Furniture/Household Goods/Clothing Assistance Provided	59	100	173
Food Parcels supplied	454	771	1,432
Ex Residents of Monte Cecilia House (completed programme)	60	96	179
Residents of affordable rental housing during 2016- 17	44	74	150
Adult Education	50	40	
Playgroup	20		30
Christmas Giving Tree	89	140	278
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,422</b>	<b>2,153</b>	<b>3,692</b>

## Monte Social Housing



Monte Cecilia Trust Board decided in 2007 to provide social housing. The desire was to offer longer term safe warm & secure transitional housing. The purchase of the first six homes was made possible by the NZ Government creating a Housing Innovation Grant which Monte was able to access to assist these first purchases. By December 2015 Monte Cecilia owned 21 homes & leased another 10 homes. In the last 18 months we purchased two more homes one being freehold because of a generous donor and rented or leased another 12 homes bring our total to 45 social housing homes

## Luke Street Emergency Housing:



The 1.6ha site at Luke St, Otahuhu, had been earmarked by its owner the Ministry of Education for a future school. "The Ministry of Education will not be using this site for several years so has leased it to Housing New Zealand. but in the meantime was developed into 27 two-bedroom, seven three-bedroom and 17 four-bedroom homes for families on the social housing register.

Also built on site was a community centre & office facility to assist staff & social workers supporting families on site. To further create community a basketball court and play area was developed

Monte Cecilia Housing Trust took the first 12 properties built, 6x4 bedroom homes & 6x2 Bedroom homes with the first families moving in February 2017. The Salvation Army and Vision West took over the rest of the properties

Monte Cecilia leased further emergency housing options from HNZA with 10 in Takanini and 4 in Papakura and our original 12 units in Mangere allowing us in total to house 38 families at any one time

## Barney Way West Auckland:

Monte Cecilia, Lifewise & Vision West collaborated together to lease from HNZA 15x2 Bedroom units for social housing turning one unit into a social gathering place in November 2016. Monte & Vision



West placed families in their units while Lifewise placed young people/couples in their units. A first such like collaboration for Monte Cecilia with has worked really successfully for each agency and even more so with each family gaining a brand new apartment with wrap around social supports

### **Bernie Smith**



Was appointed CEO in January 2016 after spending 7 years in Queensland Australia working for the Queensland Government in housing & homelessness. Returning to New Zealand with grandchildren on the way but also the desire to continue to assist those who for whatever reason are disempowered often feeling there is no future or hope for themselves or their children. Bernie has over 40 years in social services, child protection, disabilities, seniors and of course housing & homelessness.

### **Elaine Lolesio**



The Trust Board & staff gathered to honour Elaine for her 30 years of service with Monte Cecilia. Elaine has been at the forefront of making a difference in families' lives. She has seen Board members; staff and families come & go and has many stories and happy memories, but continues to remain focused today of ensuring the 10-15 enquiries Monte gets weekly that they get the best possible support & service.

### **Family Stories**



### **Back on Track with Monte Cecilia**

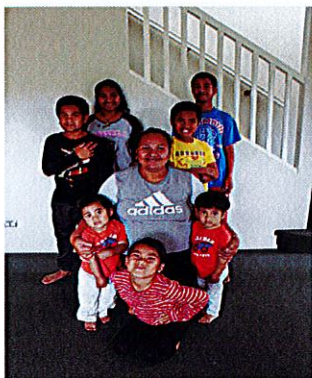
Husband Saimone and wife Eleni Moala and their five children are facing 2017 with hope for a better future thanks to Monte Cecilia's 12x week re-housing programme.

"life is 'unpredictable' and no family knows that better than the Moala's who were living with their parents. The parents sold the family home in 2015 to move to Australia. Saimone and his family moved to Australia to care for his ill and elderly parents. Unfortunately, due to Australian visa

restrictions, Eleni was unable to remain in the country and had to leave her husband and returned back to New Zealand with the youngest children.

With their family torn between two countries and Saimone's parents health improving, the family decided to reunite in Auckland last year only to find the housing market more expensive and out of reach of everyday Kiwis. It was not long before the family had exhausted favours from extended family, time and what very little money they had to live on looking for a place to call home. Homelessness was staring the Moala's right in their eyes.

It was not until Eleni discovered the Monte Cecilia Trust that hope and a home could be a reality. Through the re-housing programme the family have found a home, and can now create a stable environment for their children to thrive in. Now the Moala's are back on track for 2017.



It has been a long journey for Carol, sometimes believing she would never experience the joy of finding a place for her children to call home.

Carol and her 7 beautiful children arrived in New Zealand in 2016 with the hope of making a better future for herself and her children.

After applying for a number of private rentals and being constantly declined, Carol found herself with nowhere to live. This single mum was forced to move in with relatives in a very overcrowded house before ending up in a run-down lodge, sharing a single room between 8 people. This was when Carol learned about Monte Cecilia and visited us to see how we could help.

Monte Cecilia was able to support Carol with her social housing application, advocating for her family to be considered as urgent priority for a house. In March, Carol was offered a 5 bedroom house from Housing New Zealand.

With the support from Monte Cecilia's advocacy programme, Carol can now dream again. She is determined to give her children the best possible future and has dreams of starting her own sewing business.

"My children are so happy, and so am I!"





Vaka Tautua running & facilitating Financial Literacy group & one sessions

#### Participant #1:

Since I started this course I have used the money system of the spending diary. Ever since me and my kids have been on our own I have struggled with money, but with this course I have started to cut down the wants and focus on needs. Also seeing and hearing the other families and their stories has been good. We have started saving some money and are hoping to get a house soon.

#### Participant #2:

I am 25 years of age; I have six children. Today is a bit overwhelming for me because Jess has been chasing me down these past couple of weeks. I didn't know I was going to graduate today because I didn't make it to any of the classes. Jess made sure that I kept up with the rest of the group, so I really appreciate what you've done for me and my family. I know that my wants are not important and I need to focus on my needs. And cutting down on my smoking because I spend \$80 a week on smokes and I know that can go towards my children. I dropped out of school when I was young and so this is my first certificate and I'm just so excited about it. Being a young mum of 6 is hard, we have heaps of bills, but focusing on getting it down so that everything can be bright for my kids in the future.

#### Participant #3:

I am a mother of 4 and at the moment my job is on hold, I work for amourgaurd I am a security officer. Finance is hard, money is the root of evil, we have to be careful of how we spend it. I have learnt a lot about how we spend money, like when you go to the shop make sure you get rid of all the wants. Also, for insurance and the companies that we go and buy our cars, so during that day they gave us the activities for us to focus on and have a look what's the differences between the GST and interest and we find out you can buy two cars from that money. Now I can sit down and have a look at it and know it's a rip off. It's a really good course, it helps our families and especially us mums.

