



Autumn 2020 | Your monthly gift makes a real difference in the lives of people with intellectual disabilities.

You are saving families in crisis

## IHC's Family-Whānau Liaison Programme is making a real difference

Stopping families from falling through the cracks



Family-Whānau Liaisons Sheridan, Karen, Suzanne and Jim thank you for your kind support that funds their essential work

Your wonderful support helped create the Family – Whānau Liaison Programme and you have helped change the lives and futures of people with intellectual disabilities and their families. Thank you!

In fact, so many lives have been changed with the intervention of the Family-Whānau Liaison programme that we are looking at how to increase the number of Liaisons from four to eight.

**In the first year of this service more than 300 families of children with intellectual disabilities have been helped. That is more than 300 families who were in a crisis situation.**

Some of these families had given up trying as the services in their area were slow to respond or non-existent. Your wonderful support has given them hope.

One of the key concerns that has been identified in the first year of this programme is the impact of a child or young person who clearly has an intellectual disability not being able to get an official diagnosis. As a result of not having a diagnosis of an intellectual disability, they are not able to access desperately needed help. You can read a story about this on page 2.

**Your kind gifts are helping these children and young people access the extra support they need.**

Another area where families are struggling is with access to benefits. Often, having a child with an intellectual disability makes it harder for one of the parents to work full time as their child needs extra support.

Many parents who have been working with the Liaisons have said they have given up trying to claim benefits they

are eligible for after being referred from one service to another or being let down by people who do not respond as promised. One mother told us *"I don't even bother trying to talk to them (Work and Income NZ) now, it is just too hard."*

Your support has meant our Liaisons can be there for these families when they need someone to stand by their side, be their advocate, and provide expert advice and guidance.

One of the reasons this programme is so successful is that there isn't a long referral process for families in need. They just ask for help and they are part of the programme. The Liaisons know what services are available in their local area and how long the wait is. Where no services are available, or there is a long wait to receive them, they seek to find solutions. In one area there is a shortage of after school care for children with intellectual disabilities. So families are introduced to each other so they can support each other and take turns at providing after school care.

**Your support of this programme is making a real difference in the lives of so many people. And with your continued support we can do even more. We hope you are as proud of this programme as we are.**

## “We didn’t know where to turn”

Sam’s family find the help they need



“Our hearts were breaking as Sam became more and more isolated every day. We felt so completely alone and broken; we simply didn’t know what to do.” Fran Sam’s nanna.

Sam\* has a hard-to-recognise intellectual disability that went completely undiagnosed until he was 8 years-old.

There was something wrong, but no one knew what. His mum Andrea had taken him to see a paediatrician several times, explaining what was happening. But Sam always hid his difficulties during these sessions, so the paediatrician didn’t realise he was finding so many things challenging. Sam’s school had him assessed by an educational psychologist too. But the result was the same.

In despair, Sam’s school applied for funding for a Teacher’s Aide. But twice he was turned down because he didn’t have a diagnosed intellectual disability.

Sam was stuck in a horrible situation. He needed help for an undiagnosed disability. But without a diagnosis, no one would give it. He was desperate to learn, to catch up with his classmates. But he couldn’t no matter how hard he tried.

His Mum Andrea\* and Nanna Fran\* felt completely lost.

***“We were at our wits end. We didn’t know where to turn. I thought, ‘we can’t go on like this, there must be someone out there who can help.’ That’s when Jim walked through the door.”***

Jim is one of IHC’s first Family-Whānau Community Liaisons. He’s the kind of person you help IHC provide for a family like Sam’s through your monthly donation to the Smile Club.

Jim recalls the moment he first heard about Sam.

***“The more they told me, the more I realised there was something going on that had been missed.”***

Jim quickly got on the case, speaking to local organisations he knew could help. This resulted in a diagnosis that explained why Sam was struggling to learn. That is why he was so frustrated, why he felt so far out of his depth. When all he needed was someone like Jim to join the dots and get him the help he needed.

As you can imagine, no one appreciates Jim more than Sam’s mum.

***“Jim is an angel. He changed our lives. I don’t know how we could have coped if it wasn’t for him. And I hate to think how life would be for Sam without the education support he now receives, thanks to Jim and IHC.”***

Sam is now going to a school where he gets the kind of support and education he both needs and deserves.

Jim is one of four of IHC’s Family-Whānau Liaisons. Sam and his family are just one story amongst many, of the impact this IHC programme is having. Thanks to wonderful supporters like you.

Ordinary families are not experts in intellectual disability or how to navigate their way through the public health system. There are gaps and as a result, families like Sam’s fall through them all the time.

***Thank You for making a huge difference in the lives and futures of children like Sam through your regular gift to the Smile Club.***

\* Names of Sam and his family have been changed to protect their identities.



# Novella and Mark get much needed time out

Your amazing support of the Smile Club gives parents a break when they need it

Novella and Mark have only had a couple of breaks away from their kids in the 25 years they have been married. Their fourth child Matthew has Down syndrome and needs a lot of support.

**Novella says finding someone you trust to look after five young kids, including one who needed extra care was never easy.**

Now that their oldest kids are able to care for Matthew it makes it easier for Novella and Mark to get away. Your kind support means they were able to take a short break away together in February through IHC's Take a break with us programme.

The couple heard about the programme through a friend Joyti. "Joyti likes to make things happen and she really encouraged us to apply," says Mark.

"I'm very much an at home mum," says Novella. "It's not a lack of trying by my husband to get away. I'm pleased we went, it was wonderful!" They decided to take a break not too far from home. "It only took us an hour to drive to Christchurch. We don't go there often."



"It was really kind of the donors to make the night away even more special because we could go out and enjoy ourselves thanks to the voucher we were given. We really appreciate their kindness

**"We had a fantastic walk around the central city looking at the changes in Christchurch, the new buildings and new things happening since the earthquake," says Mark.**

They stopped to have an ice cream and Mark wanted to take a photo. "Some woman appeared from nowhere and offered to take it for us so it was of

both of us, and the gorilla," Novella said.

On Saturday night they had dinner out and went to see a film. Novella says they had a nice relaxing time knowing Matthew was well cared for and that if anything did happen they could be home in an hour.

**"We did really appreciate the break," Novella says. "It was really nice having accommodation provided and the voucher to pay for dinner and the movie. We don't have lots of money and it was really kind of the donors to make the night away so special."**

## What's your lasting legacy?

You have shown you care about people living with intellectual disabilities during your lifetime. A gift in your Will can make a huge difference in the lives and futures of New Zealanders with intellectual disabilities living in your community. This could be your lasting legacy. For more information, or to share your legacy promise with us, please phone 0800 746 444 and ask for Gail Plamus in confidence.



You, and other Smile Club donors like you, make the Take a break with us programme possible through your monthly gifts. Thank you.



## Ryan passes his learner's licence

Your support is helping Ryan get the skills he needs to get a job.

Ryan has had a lot of challenges in his life. He also has dreams. Thanks to your kind support he is one step closer to fulfilling one of his goals – to learn to drive. Your kind gifts to the Smile Club have meant Ryan has had the extra help he needed to learn the Road Code and pass his learner's licence test.

Ryan's mum died when he was 14 and he was bounced around foster homes. He now lives with Ron and Shirley who are in their 80s.

At 24 years of age, Ryan is keen to be more independent. He also wants to get a job. Ideally he would like to be a car groomer or gardener and for both of these jobs he will need to be able to drive. That is where you are helping him.

**"I'd like to see the cars nice and shiny, ready for a customer to pick up. To do this job I need to learn to drive,"**

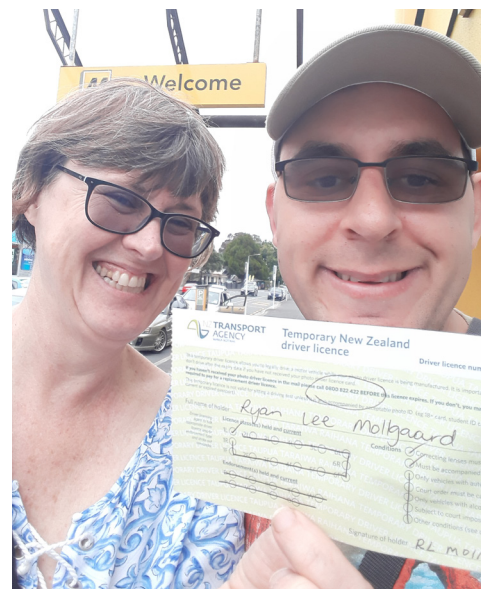
So thanks to you, IHC matched Ryan up with a Skills Based Learning volunteer to help him learn the Road Code and practice for his test.

In February 2019 Ryan and Sara, who volunteers for the Skills Based Learning programme, started meeting at their local library once or twice a week. They would go through the online learning modules for the Road Code theory test. Not long before Christmas Ryan sat the test and passed with flying colours!

**"I got my provisional licence on 17 December. It is my goal to learn how to drive a car,"**  
Ryan says.



Ryan is now working with a driving instructor to learn to drive a car.



Ryan passed his test getting all 35 questions correct. "He was over the moon!" says Sara.

### Do you like craft beer?



The Independence Collective is a group of young people with intellectual disabilities who have launched their own craft beer range called Change Maker. The beer is being made by award winning brewers on the Collective's behalf. Keep an eye out for it in New World stores.

### Want to change more lives?



Play a big part in the life of a person with an intellectual disability by joining our one-to-one Friendship or Skills Based Volunteer programmes. Find out more at [ihc.org.nz/get-involved/volunteering](http://ihc.org.nz/get-involved/volunteering)