

Victim Support
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MEDIA RELEASE

Vital support for the people of Canterbury

Today The Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem Charitable Trust will make the first of three yearly donations of \$10,000 to Victim Support for its work supporting the people of Canterbury as they continue to contend with the emotional and physical after-effects of natural disasters.

Victim Support is an independent incorporated society that provides a free 24 / 7 community response to help victims of trauma caused by such things as a criminal act, violence, a natural disaster, a major accident. It is the predominant organisation carrying out this work and the only national provider.

From February to May 2011, Victim Support helped almost 3,170 people locally, along with 7,000 earthquake-related victims located in other parts of the country, assessing their needs and providing support and referral.

“Our work in Canterbury continues,” said Victim Support CE, Kevin Tso. “We supported people at the time of each emergency, including the recent flooding, and we continue to support many in the aftermath. Some people only now realise they are not coping and need our help.

“This generous donation, made over three years, means we can plan our continuing work here. It also highlights the need we have for funding to provide help for people who suffer through no fault of their own.

“We are so grateful that people around the world have seen the plight of the people of Canterbury and come to their aid. We hope this human act of compassion and generosity will inspire local organisations to consider how they too can support us.”

The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus of Jerusalem, a chivalric, ecumenical Christian and charitable Order with 50 jurisdictions and a large number of philanthropic projects across the world, selected Victim Support for its work in Canterbury. The funds have been raised by its international Orders, and its generous donation will help Victim Support continue its vital work in supporting earthquake and flood victims in Canterbury.

Christchurch resident and Deputy Grand Prior of The Military and Hospitaller Order of Saint Lazarus, Jan Hadfield, said how delighted they are to contribute to the work of Victim Support, work that is “so dear to our hearts.”

“We are a very old ecumenical Order, dating back to before the Crusades, and all through history we have been involved with the plight of the needy, as is Victim Support. We are thrilled to be able to help Victim Support as their need for help is very real.”

Jan well knows how much local victims have needed support. “So many people have been through so much,” she said. Jan lost three houses: her own home and two investment properties. “I have learned what’s important: to be safe, healthy and happy. Nothing else matters. I used to live in a house with seven bedrooms and four bathrooms. After the earthquake, I was grateful to move into a converted garage, which is home for now. It’s tiny and it’s lovely.”

For more information:

Getting help - 0800 VICTIM or 0800 842 846

Volunteering - 0800 VOLUNTEER or 0800 865 868

Donating – 0900 842 846

Our website - www.victimsupport.org.nz

Ends

For immediate release

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Background facts

- Victim Support is a free 24 / 7 service that provides immediate emotional support and front line services to victims of serious crime and trauma (e.g. homicide, suicide, sudden death, serious and grievous assaults, kidnapping, robbery), less serious crime (e.g. vandalism, burglary), accident and civil defence emergencies (earthquake, flood, etc) and search and rescue events.
- Victim Support helped deliver recovery support following the 22 February 2011 earthquake, work included:
 - supporting the relatives of the dead and missing
 - providing support to members of the community at welfare centres in Christchurch and other New Zealand locations
 - attending to telephone referrals (e.g. government 0800 contact centres, Red Cross missing persons line, NZ Police, etc)
 - meeting and supporting families of deceased or missing overseas persons, in collaboration with foreign embassies and government agencies
 - planning and attendance at the Memorial Service 18 March 2011
 - meeting ‘displaced’ people from Christchurch and the surrounding area at Auckland, Wellington, and regional airports; assessing their needs; and providing support where appropriate
 - working with other agencies (e.g. Ministry of Social Development) to coordinate the welfare response, and
 - providing relevant information and practical advice to victims.
- From 22 February to 20 May 2011, Victim Support helped 10,144 people in relation to the Christchurch earthquake by assessing their needs and providing support and referral. Of this figure: 3,169 people were locals (i.e. Christchurch based), 1,397 (rest of South Island), 2,215 (Auckland), 718 (Wellington), 1,500 (rest of North Island), and 1,145 (handled through our national Contact Service).
- During this time, many Christchurch volunteer Support Workers and staff were affected by the earthquake. Workers from outside the area were deployed to help those in the Christchurch community directly affected by the earthquake as well as victims of crime and other trauma.
- In addition to the work done in the Christchurch / Canterbury area, Victim Support was heavily involved in helping people affected by the large earthquake centred near Seddon, Marlborough, on 16 August 2013.
- Volunteer Support Workers from Blenheim and Kaikoura (part of Victim Support’s Canterbury Tasman region) were deployed to help at the Welfare information centre in Seddon. Their work involved:
 - gathering information from the people affected by the earthquake
 - offering emotional support
 - visiting the elderly living alone
 - advocacy work, and
 - helping complete applications to the Mayoral Earthquake Fund.

- In the Christchurch / Canterbury area, we supported 2,235 victims for the year ending December 2014: Christchurch Central - 1,828, Christchurch Rural North – 255, and Christchurch South - 152.
- During this time, volunteer Support Workers also continued to assist victims affected by other traumatic events and serious crime. Research suggests that criminal behaviour increases following natural disasters, with a significant increase in reported domestic violence crimes.
- There are 49 volunteer Support Workers covering the Christchurch city / Canterbury rural area delivering front line services for victims under the management and supervision of paid staff. The immediate support and care provided to people affected by crime and trauma simply couldn't happen without the dedication and heart of Victim Support's volunteer support workers who help make a positive difference to shattered lives for both individuals and the wider community.
- Regionally based staff include an Area Manager, Service Coordinators and Service Assistants. The Service Coordinator role is pivotal in providing supervision, debriefing, coaching, victim case management, liaison and monthly ongoing training of volunteer support workers.
- Victim Support is there for people whenever they need us no matter the location or time of day. We know that people who receive adequate support and information are more likely to remain connected in a positive way with their whanau, family and local community and are better placed to rebuild their lives.
- Read more about the work of Victim Support at <http://www.victimsupport.org.nz>

