

## **14 Hours Homeless – Sleeping The Talk**

The grounds around the Wesley Church on Taranaki Street were a hive of activity on Friday night, October 9 2015, World Homeless Day. Coordinated by the Salvation Army and other agencies working with homeless in Wellington, **14 Hours Homeless** was an opportunity for the community to sleep out and raise money for homeless people.

Over 230 people from all walks of life slept out on cardboard, on couches or in cars to raise awareness of the plight of far too many New Zealanders sleeping rough or living in poor housing. After a dinner of soup and bread, groups went to various venues in the inner city where homeless people receive help. They learned about the amazing work being done by The Wellington Homeless Women's Trust, Night Shelter, Downtown City Ministry, Soup Kitchen, The Salvation Army Caravan and the Inner City Mission to help homeless people.

35 of the 230 people who slept out raised funds for the Wellington Homeless Women's Trust. Many of these people we had not met until the night of the sleep out. 14 Hours Homeless was a major boost to raising awareness of the Trust and the funds raised will enable us to sustain our work in the future.

Diana Jones, Chair of the Trust Board, said "I was amazed and humbled by the goodwill and generosity of people who slept out and raised funds for us. There was a great atmosphere of goodwill among the participants and a real desire to learn and to help."

Much of the evening's success was due to these agencies working together for many weeks under the guidance from The Salvation Army together with City Council staff and the Wellington Free Ambulance.

We learned that over 500 people from several cities around New Zealand took part and \$80,000 was raised in total. An astonishing \$60,000 was for Wellington and \$14,500 was specifically for the Trust.

Dossing down on cardboard or in Sister Catherine's case, in the back of her rather small car, we braved the chilly night and hard ground. The atmosphere was heartwarming and tranquil. A number of people who have experienced homeless joined us and many talked gently through the night.

The Mayor of Wellington, Celia Wade-Brown, showed her support by sleeping on cardboard with the rest of us.

Our staff spoke of their work with women who come to the Trust. House Manager, Helen related that many women come to the Trust because of violent relationships. They arrive with nothing other than the clothes they are wearing.

Helen said "The event was a great team-building exercise for us. Meeting and learning about the other homeless services at the planning meetings was invaluable".

Your donations will go to providing basic necessities: a warm fully furnished bedroom, clothes and food parcels. Our staff help the women establish their ID, assist in form filling for benefits, accompany the women to doctors and counseling appointments, teach life skills and provide caring listening ears as well as practical, wise counsel as the women turn their lives around.

During their time with the Trust, the women address the circumstances that led to their homelessness. The Trust works with local agencies to find suitable sustainable housing once the women have completed their time with us. As one woman said "Being here saved me."

The Trust is the newest and the smallest of the agencies working with the homeless. In just two years we have supported more than 50 women transform their lives. Your generosity helps makes this possible.