

A LIFE-CHANGING PARTNERSHIP

30 JUNE 2018

You would think that after several years of partnering with God in doing what He asks us to do, that He would no longer surprise me, but actually ... it's just the opposite! He never ceases to amaze me and as I sit writing this, I'm once again overwhelmed by His incredible goodness, power, presence and love in our lives, individually and collectively.

I guess our story began a few months ago when a local senior sergeant started emailing and visiting the more than 100 Christian churches in the South Auckland area. He wanted to see how they could partner with churches in the prevention of crime and rehabilitation of young offenders. Sadly, after constant refusal and lack of replies he became disillusioned with the whole idea and gave up. That is, until Sel Seluone, who works with him, said he should try talking to us at Papsda. We saw God in that connection.

Since then, we have partnered with police in a number of different ways that led to a discussion around how we, as a local church, could best support them. One of the dreams they had was for local churches to open their doors to the vulnerable in our communities and we saw God at the centre of that dream. That dream led to lots of conversations ... and those conversations led to a discussion with our elder board ... and that discussion led to approval to open our facility every Thursday night (to begin with) to vulnerable people wanting help to change the trajectory of their lives ... and we saw God in the willingness and unity of

our team.

Planning began, more conversations, more lists and we realised we had none of the things we would need – no bedding, mattresses, sheets, blankets, pillows and towels – and no budget for any of those things. Our community team started messaging anyone they knew that might have a contact to purchase these things at a reduced rate. Kelley Tams' sister, Tania, just happens to be the CEO of Group Sourcing Support and TWL/WSL Merchandise at The Warehouse Ltd. Kelley asked if she could help at all. Her reply was, "If this works for you, we would be happy to donate the entire amount needed". "If this works for you" ... haha! Oh it definitely works for us! WOW! We saw God in the amazing generosity of Tania and The Warehouse team.

"What if we tore down these walls ... our candle burns brightest in the dark ... and they loved each other with actions because words were unnecessary, and they chose to give this love away, but it still remained, no matter how much they gave." We saw God in Sarah Ryan's spoken word in a worship service five years ago (read it on page 8) and we see God in the living out of her words today. Let's continue to partner with God on His mission to radically change our community and in doing so, He will radically change us too.

BY KARYN NEWSON