

PETERSGATE COUNSELLING CENTRE

Friends Newsletter August 2010

Director's Message:

Dear Friends,

This week I have had the opportunity to study the financial returns of two of the four denominations which support Petersgate. These figures have been collected from a number of parishes from Canterbury and the West Coast. Both sets of figures tell the same story of dwindling income and fewer financial resources, and fewer people attending worship. It is not just this year either - the trend has been going on for some time.

I believe that Petersgate has now developed its work sufficiently to be able to offer back to the churches which gave it birth, a model of ministry which is growing and dynamic, and which can be replicated successfully in other locations. Central to this model are several "learnings" which I would like to share with you. If they seem controversial, then I take responsibility for them, as they do not necessarily represent the view of all of the Petersgate team:

- Petersgate is ecumenical. The churches cannot afford to maintain separate denominational structures any longer. These divisions belong to other lands, cultures and times and have no relevance to life in New Zealand. The theological justifications for such divisions are petty and vacuous, and have more to do with maintaining power structures than furthering the Kingdom of God. The cost of maintaining our differences hugely limits our ability to minister beyond our dwindling congregations.
- Petersgate is built on relationships. People pay us to relate to them – to be listened to, and loved. These people do not have to "believe" any doctrine, or subscribe to any ritual to come here. I have heard countless stories of people in need of love, who find entry into a parish family too difficult – especially when feeling fragile. They are open to discussing "spirituality" but do not want to discuss "religion". I hesitate to say this, but Petersgate succeeds in part because we have a secular persona.

Petersgate is built on the spirit and ethic of Christ: love, joy, peace, forgiveness, laughter, compassion, kindness, reconciliation, hospitality, challenge, friendship. These are the very things which I know you value in your congregational life.

I always feel warmth and acceptance among you. So perhaps my challenge is about the packaging of these values, rather than their essence. We are doing the same work as you – yet we do it differently. I know we have much to offer each other, and I look forward in the coming year to sharing our stories and our journey at a greater depth.

As Petersgate grows – we support more people who cannot afford to pay us. Because of this, our need for further financial support increases each year. This appeal is to those of you who understand and support what we do, and again we ask for more funding. In return, we are honoured to work in the community on your behalf (for this is your ministry), and perhaps also work with you too, to find ways to make a Gospel more relevant to those who need to hear it most.

With grateful thanks for your support,

Struan Duthie



Highlights:

The last year has been quite an extraordinary one in Petersgate's history. We have:

- Passed the 70,000 counselling sessions milestone;
- Conducted over 4,000 sessions in the first 6 months of this year;
- Retained our loyal band of volunteers and recruited new volunteers;
- Succeeded in increasing our funding base by attracting new supporters with our Building Development Appeal;
- Recruited a new Honorary Treasurer, Paul Dawson;
- Improved our website www.petersgate.org.nz. It's worth a visit.

Our Services:

Our commitment to providing counselling on the basis of need, rather than the ability to pay, remains as strong as ever. We see people because they need our services and they are seeking our help in record numbers.

We have maintained our fees at the lowest levels we can and no one is ever refused counselling on the basis of cost. It is 'need' that drives us and we don't want that to change.

Our team of 28 skilled and dedicated counsellors are responding to the increasing demand with professionalism and commitment. We are very proud of the quality of their work and the positive changes they can help their clients to make.

For older adults, we offer counselling in client's homes and that is important, especially when mobility is reduced.



Our team

Our Future:

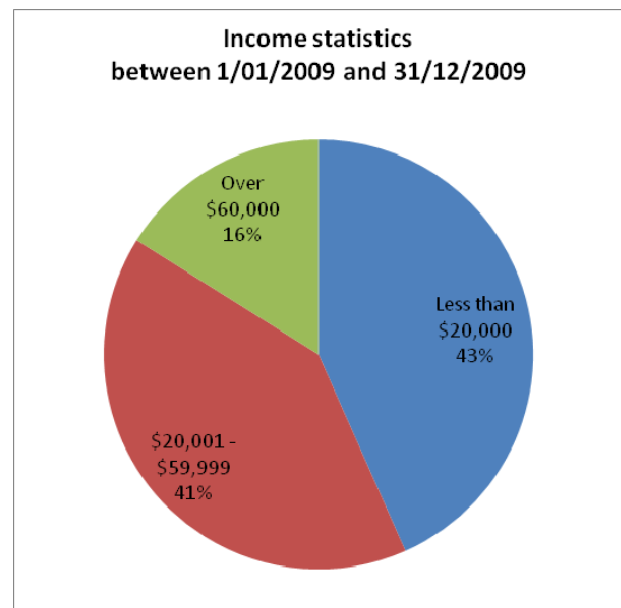
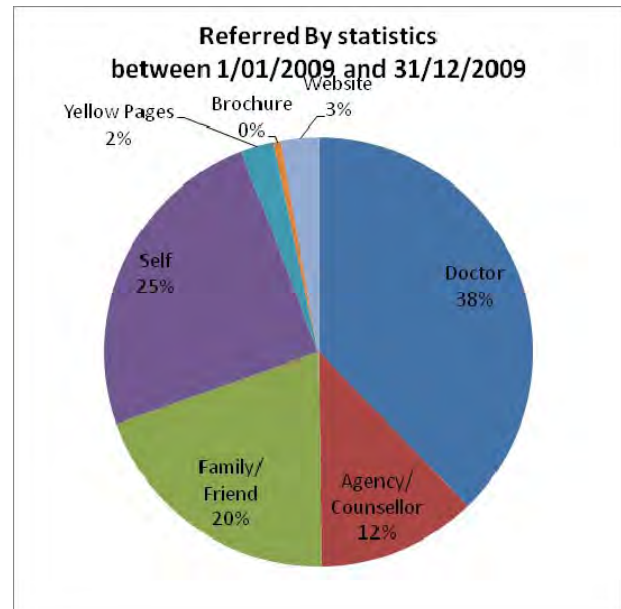
One of the issues we grapple with is measuring how successful our counselling is. How do we know we are making a real difference in people's lives? Some clients tell us they feel better, and sometimes we witness improvements in the levels of functioning and confidence.

We felt we needed to know more about the effectiveness of our work and to achieve that goal we have engaged Professor Bob Manthei to conduct an in-depth clinical review. He will interview clients and counsellors, and other interested parties, about their Petersgate experience and he will conduct a review of our systems and processes. You may be one of the people Bob approaches. If so, your honest feedback will enable Bob to get as complete a picture as possible. All responses will be absolutely confidential.

We are excited about the future, both in terms of services and facilities. Our services are in greater demand than ever and we are ready to respond to our clients' needs for support, care and some professional guidance with the issues they are struggling with.

We are upgrading our facilities and have lodged our application for building consent to expand and improve our counselling rooms at 29 Yaldhurst Road. This is an exciting development and will provide our clients with a welcoming, friendly and comfortable place to come to receive help. It will also be an even better place for our counsellors to provide the assistance our clients are seeking.

Statistical Information:



Your Support:

We are seeking your support in helping our clients by contributing to the costs of providing counselling. We continue to work hard to keep our costs as low as possible, and the incredible support we receive from our volunteers makes a huge contribution to our low cost structure.

We have received generous financial support from The Canterbury Community Trust, the New Zealand Lottery Grants Board, and the Christchurch City Council and we thank them for their support.

We have received support from individuals and Parishes for our capital appeal and special mention must be made of the outstanding contribution made by St Marks Presbyterian Parish. We acknowledge also the generosity of the Rotary Club of Riccarton, the LB Miller Charitable Trust, the Keith Laugesen Charitable Trust, the Jones Foundation, and the Bishop of Christchurch's Mission Fund. Our capital appeal is now approaching \$180,000.

We are an ongoing service and we must meet our operating costs in order to remain viable. Your donation will go towards meeting the costs of counselling for our clients.

We hope you will feel able to make a contribution.

Have Your Say:

This year we are enclosing a questionnaire aimed at providing you with an opportunity to tell us how best we can meet your needs as a Friend of Petersgate. Please take a few moments to complete the questionnaire and return it in the stamped, addressed envelope.



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