

Impact 100 donate \$50k to Plunket

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THE collaboration and generosity of 50 Eastern Bay women is helping Whānau Āwhina Plunket break down barriers for isolated mothers.

Plunket Whakatāne is the first recipient of a \$50,000 donation from the Impact 100 women's fund – an organisation seeking to empower women to ignite transformational change in their communities and provide impactful solutions to large-scale issues.

Impact 100 initially aimed to sign up 100 generous women, who would each donate \$1000.

This year, organisers Viv Barr and Robyn Woolsey, both trustees for the Eastern Bay Community Foundation, signed up 50 women who together donated \$50,000.

Four local organisations were selected as contenders for the year's fund and presented their impactful projects to the donors at a luncheon at the end of July. A panel of eight women representing the geographical spread of the donors considered all applications.

The donors voted for who they wished to receive the fund, choosing Whānau Āwhina Plunket.

The Impact 100 fund is a new concept in providing a way for caring women to consolidate and collaborate by giving a little to make a big difference.

Such funds have been very successful in other places across the globe and within New Zealand. It was initiated under the umbrella of the EBOP Community Foundation, by Mrs Barr and Mrs Woolsey.

"It's all about local women helping local women and children. Our 2022 donors come from all areas of the Eastern Bay," Mrs Barr said.

"We are looking forward to working with Plunket to witness the difference they can make using these funds. We ended up with four very deserving charities presenting their projects to the donors. We just wish the fund pool had been greater to help all of the worthwhile projects presented," Mrs Barr said.

The money will go towards assisting isolated mothers in the Eastern Bay community to feel connected to other mums and break down barriers of isolation.

"One of the major things going on is that mums are really isolated; Covid has really impacted their maternal mental health. So, what we want to do is break down the barriers and connect them with other mothers and organisations that can help them," Plunket grants specialist Sarah Elliott said.

"There are a lot of high long-term needs families who are really struggling, and they are isolated. So, we want to break that down because it's a real challenge for families and getting mums to connect with other mums is really important."

There had been an increase of 31 per cent in maternal mental health referrals in the past 12 months, Mrs Elliott said.

"The whole Covid thing has just exacerbated a problem that was already there."

The money will go towards a vehicle, with car seats, which will be used to visit mothers at home and transport mothers and babies to appointments – something which has proved a challenge for local mums in previous years.

It will cover the entire Eastern Bay, and for the first time in Whānau Āwhina Plunket's history, community services coordinator Tania Ramsay will be going in with Plunket nurses and kaiawhina to the homes, to create a relationship with mothers and encourage them to connect with others in the area.

Some of the \$50,000 will also go towards toys for the Plunket children, after many were destroyed by floods two years ago.

The most prominent challenges facing families in the Eastern Bay are food, clothes, and car seats, so the Impact 100 donation will also be put towards assisting with these issues.

It will assist with any necessary objective in breaking down barriers to isolation – whether that is in fuel vouchers to help mothers attend their Plunket sessions, or get them driving lessons to gain a licence, or simply provide food at appointments, the money will "go a long way".

"It means so much to every single mum in the Eastern Bay, there are no words to describe how much this will help," Plunket nurse Kaysea Cronin said.

Plunket clinical nurse leader Annie Fisher said they had been trying to figure out how to break down those barriers for mums and how to get them more connected to their communities.

"This just goes such a long, long way to get this happening. It's amazing for the community' it's amazing for the families."

The Impact 100 Fund will run again in 2023, and anyone interested in coming on board is invited to contact the Eastern Bay Community Foundation at admin@easternbaycommunityfoundation.nz or call 021 336 226.



BREAKING BARRIERS: Impact 100 Fund have donated \$50k to Plunket to help break down barriers between isolated mothers. From left, Sarah Elliott, Annie Fisher, Viv Barr, Drew Storey, Kaysea Cronin, Tania Ramsay and Robyn Woolsey. Photo: Troy Baker E2644-08