

Whānau Āwhina Plunket volunteer supports whānau to succeed

Volunteer superstar Diana Castaneira is working with Whānau Āwhina Plunket on Auckland's North Shore to empower new parents to thrive.

Since 2020, Ms Castaneira has been volunteering with the charitable organisation's home visiting programme and has supported over 30 families. A desire to see parents and caregivers enjoy the early days with their tamariki is what drives her to give back to the community.

"Whānau need someone who really sees them. Someone who will listen and help without questioning or judging. The arrival of a pēpi (baby) should be a time of happiness and I want to give whānau the tools and confidence to make those first months a positive experience," she says.

Ms Castaneira also runs a parent coffee group, nannies and works at a local toy library. When out and about, she often bumps into whānau she has supported over the past four years.

"I recently saw the very first family I worked with and their baby is now four years old! It's incredibly rewarding and I feel we both left a lasting impression on each other that won't be forgotten. I love special moments like this."

Originally from Mexico, Ms Castaneira has been a great support for Spanish speaking mothers new to Aotearoa New Zealand. Some of the families the home visiting programme supports come from overseas, so knowledge and experience as an immigrant is invaluable in helping them feel more comfortable in a different environment.

Plunket's popular home visiting programme has been running since 2017. It enables passionate volunteers to provide practical support to families with young children who may be struggling, in the form of light housework, emotional support, advice and suggestions for community connection.

This is just one example of how Plunket has adapted to meet the needs of whānau in a challenging and ever-changing environment. The programme continues to receive positive feedback, with families sharing that the support they received had a big impact on their lives.

Plunket is New Zealand's largest support service for the health and wellbeing of tamariki under five and their whānau. It is a charity and much-needed community services like the home visiting programme are not Government funded. This means they depend on the support of generous donors to keep them running.

Donations mean more whānau in need of a helping hand can be reached. Plunket is currently expanding the home visiting programme to include Central Auckland and hopes it could be extended to other parts of the country too.



New volunteers are always welcome to join the Plunket team. If you would like to become a volunteer or make a donation, please visit the [Whānau Āwhina Plunket website](#). The website also has more information on what Plunket offers in your community.

ENDS

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Photo caption: Diana Castaneira supports families to thrive through Whānau Āwhina Plunket's volunteer home visiting programme.

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About Whānau Āwhina Plunket

Pēpi, tamariki and whānau are at the heart of Whānau Āwhina Plunket. The charity is Aotearoa New Zealand's largest health and wellbeing support service for tamariki – seeing 290,000 under-fives. About 80% of newborns are enrolled with Whānau Āwhina Plunket each year.

Our nurses provide clinical assessments, and along with Kaiāwhina and Community Karitāne, support whānau and families, through home and clinic visits. PlunketLine 0800 933 922 is a free 24/7 telephone advice service for parents and whānau, where callers can speak to a registered nurse for advice, or call the Admin Line on 0800 184 803 to make an appointment in your area. Our website plunket.org.nz is one of the country's most widely read digital child health resources, with 1.8 million visits each year. It is available data-free through the Zero Data portal at zero.govt.nz, and you can choose to view it in English or te reo Māori.