



News Release

For Immediate Release

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Corrections and Victim Support Changing Lives at Upper Hutt Summer Carnival

Sock monkeys, seedlings, snazzy shoulder bags, kete baskets, planter boxes, and prisoner art are some of the many items made by prisoners and community offenders that will be available at this year's Upper Hutt Summer Carnival.

For the first time, Corrections and Victim Support have partnered for a stall at the annual Carnival. The "Changing Lives" stall will feature goods made by prisoners in Arohata and Rimutaka prisons and community-based offenders managed by Community Corrections across the greater Wellington area.

All proceeds from the event will help Victim Support Hutt Valley to continue its important work in the local community.

Assistant Prison Director for Arohata and Rimutaka prisons, Kym Grierson says the stall is about changing lives for positive outcomes.

"We're working with Victim Support to change lives for the better of everyone, including the wider community.

"For prisoners and community offenders, it's about giving back to the community in a meaningful way. They're developing their existing skills as well as learning some new ones that could change their lives.

"For Victim Support, it provides funding for their valuable work in the Hutt Valley."

Stall items include vegie seedlings, planter boxes made by community offenders, baby clothes, cot quilts, bucket hats, dream catchers, and a lot more.

"There are some incredible pieces of artwork and carvings including patu on stands which highlight the artists' skills," says Ms Grierson.

Items are reasonably priced and include screen printed "Changing Lives" canvas shopping bags for \$2 that will be available at the Carnival entrance and on the stall.

The stall will be managed by Victim Support staff and volunteers, and supported by Corrections staff.

Victim Support is a charity which provides practical advice and emotional support to people affected by crime, trauma, and suicide. Their free service is available around the clock.

Hutt Valley staff and volunteers help around 1,600 victims a year to understand and participate in the justice process, access services and financial support available to them after an incident, and to find hope and strength through times of tragedy.

Victim Support's Wellington Area Manager, Paula Connolly, says Victim Support is extremely grateful for the support it's received from Rimutaka and Arohata Prisons and Wellington District Community Corrections to put together the fundraising event.

"We've been overwhelmed by the support we've received from Correction staff and the huge amount of positive engagement from the prisoners to make goods," she said.

"As a charity, we rely on donations to keep our service freely available to the public, but this partnership runs deeper than that.

"It's about giving those who have created harm the chance to take responsibility and give something back in a really positive, constructive way.

"It's also a great opportunity for us to remind people that Victim Support is a volunteer organisation and encourage people to get involved."

People interested in becoming a Victim Support volunteer can find out more by calling 0800 VOLUNTEER or visiting www.victimsupport.org.nz/volunteer.

The Upper Hutt Summer Carnival will be held at Trentham Memorial Park, Barton Road, Heretaunga, Upper Hutt on Saturday 24 February.

ENDS

Photo: Ms Sock Monkey – one of the items available at the Changing Lives stall

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