

November 2026

Rotorua Hospital Chaplaincy Trust

A newsletter for our friends and supporters.

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Rotorua Hospital Chaplaincy Department
Rotorua Hospital
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Rotorua Mail Centre
Rotorua 3046



Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child is a project of Samaritan's Purse that brings joy and hope to children in need around the world. Each year, people pack shoeboxes with toys, school supplies, hygiene items and personal notes of encouragement. These simple gifts are delivered to children who may never have received a Christmas gift or maybe never heard about the message of God's love for them.

This year we were able to support this worthy cause with 57 boxes.

The Day Stay ward was where the majority of the boxes came from due to a large number of staff getting involved. Pictured is our part time chaplain Susan with the boxes all ready for pick up.



The Posture of a Grateful Heart

Gratitude is more than a polite habit or a response to good fortune; it is a deliberate spiritual posture. It is a choice to shift our focus away from what we lack and place it squarely on the unwavering faithfulness of God. In a world that constantly tells us we need more to be happy, a thankful heart is a powerful act of faith.

The Biblical Anchor

"Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus." — 1 Thessalonians 5:18

A Reflection on God's Goodness

Notice that the Apostle Paul does not say to give thanks for all circumstances, but in them. There is a profound difference. God does not expect us to be happy about tragedy, pain or loss. However, even in our darkest moments, we can be thankful for who God is. We can praise Him because He is still our Comforter, our Provider and our Saviour. True Christian thankfulness is not anchored in our changing emotions or our current bank account; it is anchored in the unchanging character of Jesus Christ.

The cultivation of a lifesyyle of gratitude results in three changes in our spiritual walk.

·It guards our hearts against bitterness: worry and discontent are loud, but thanksgiving silences them. When we actively count our blessings, we leave very little room for envy or resentment to take root.

·It corrects our vision: hardships have a way of distorting reality, making our problems look giant and making God look small. Giving thanks reverses that. It reminds us of how God has carried us through storms in the past, giving us the confidence that He will do it again.

·It acknowledges the Source: every breath we take, every sunrise we witness, and every moment of peace we experience is a gift. Most importantly, the cross of Christ is the ultimate reminder that we have already been given the greatest gift imaginable—eternal life and reconciliation with the Father.

Moving Forward in Faith

Gratitude is a spiritual muscle. It requires practice, especially on the days when we don't feel particularly blessed. It begins with the small things: thanking God for a warm cup of coffee, a roof over our head, or the breath in our lungs.

As we walk through this week, lets challenge ourselves to let our first response to any situation be a simple, sincere prayer: "Thank You, Lord, for Your presence and Your goodness." Watch how that one small phrase transforms your perspective and brings deep, lasting joy to your soul.





Crafting Comfort:

A beautiful act of generosity is bringing quiet comfort to patients in their times of greatest need, thanks to the skilled hands and warm heart of Matamata craftsman **Campbell Snook**.

Campbell has been donating beautifully handcrafted wooden holding crosses to our hospital, providing patients with a tangible symbol of hope and solace. What makes these pocket-sized treasures even more special is their origin. Campbell rescues scraps of native New Zealand timber from a local demolition yard—pieces that are otherwise deemed unusable and destined for the waste pile. With patience and care, he transforms these discarded fragments of history into smooth, tactile crosses, finishing each one with a loving coat of oil to bring out the natural grain of the native wood.

Our chaplaincy team is incredibly grateful for the donations. Having these unique, handmade pieces to hand out gives chaplains a meaningful way to connect with patients, offering them a physical source of inspiration and comfort during difficult moments.

Campbell's kindness extends well beyond our walls; he also generously supplies his hand-carved crosses to patients at both Waikato and Tauranga hospitals, spreading comfort across the region one piece of timber at a time.

How One Man's Wooden Crosses are Bringing Solace to Hospital Patients

Toiletry items donated.

Thank you to the Millennium Hotel Rotorua who generously donated the following items: 24 pump bottles of Conditioning Shampoo, 50 Dental sets and 50 Shaving sets to be used in our emergency toiletry bags.

MILLENNIUM
HOTEL ROTORUA

Emergency Toilet Bags

One of the practical ways we support patients is by providing emergency toiletry bags. These are for people who find themselves admitted to hospital unexpectedly, often in distressing or traumatic circumstances, and who arrive with few or no personal belongings.

A simple toiletry bag can provide a small but meaningful source of comfort until family or friends are able to bring in personal items. For visitors to New Zealand or those without local support, these bags may be their only access to basic toiletries during their stay. Being able to have a shower, wash their face, or brush their teeth can help restore a sense of dignity and normality during an otherwise overwhelming time.

Quiz Night fundraiser success



Our Quiz Night on the 3rd of September was a fantastic success, bringing the community together for a busy evening of fun and friendly competition with **27 tables booked**. The early enthusiasm was clear, with guests arriving from 4:30 PM for the 7:00 pm start, many promising to return next year.
The event ran like a well-oiled machine thanks to an impressive team. Chaplaincy volunteers and a retired VCA helped with set-up, while **Alison Lamberton** ensured everything ran efficiently. **Noel Lamberton and Alan Macfarlane** entertained as Quiz Masters, **Steve Lovegrove** managed the auctions, and **Clare Jessep-Van Wyk and Aaron Coveney** handled the scoring. **Cecilia Roper** completely sold out the popular raffle tickets. Special thanks go to our kitchen team, who worked under immense pressure to serve great food despite several staff members being hospitalized the week prior.

On behalf of the Chaplaincy team, we extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported, volunteered and donated. We receive no government funding and rely entirely on community generosity and competitive grants. This event made a real difference, raising **just under $7,000**. A portion of these funds will support our volunteers' annual professional development retreat, while the rest will fund the unpaid portion of the Chaplains' stipends. Your support keeps our services running, and we cannot wait to see you all again at next year's Quiz Night!



The winners, Pieces of 8. Above, the moment they realised that they had won. Below, the winning team after receiving their prizes.







Right, two of our many raffle winners, delighted with their prizes.

Quiz Night fundraiser sponsors

We would not have been able to have a quiz night at all if it were not for all our amazing sponsors!
The generosity shown to us was simply amazing and blew us away. Not only were we able to provide prizes for our quiz winners, but we also had enough to run raffles and auctions.
Listed on the next couple of pages are all the fantastic people and businesses who showed their support by donating either cash, vouchers, gift baskets or other suitable items for our quiz night.
We want to thank all of them for their contributions which helped make the night a success and we encourage our readers to support these businesses if possible. Most are local and we would love to see them thrive and be paid back in blessings.

Restaurants/Cafes

Zippy Central Cafe

urbano bistro

Lone Star

Sequoia Eatery fuelling your adventures

Unique & Homemade Bold Flavours Local & Fresh

McDonald's

Hotels

Millennium Hotel Rotorua

Jetpark Hotels

Sudima Hotels

Novotel Hotels & Resorts

Hilton Lake Taupo

Regent of Rotorua

Entertainment/Tourist Attractions

Redwoods Treewalk

WINGSPAN
BIRDS OF PREY FOR OUR FUTURE

Rotorua Duck Tours
Amphibious Sightseeing
NEW ZEALAND

3mirage

The National Kiwi Hatchery Aotearoa

READING CINEMAS

HOBBITON
MOVIE SET

MINI Ggolf ROTORUA

Hells Gate
Rotorua

BURIED VILLAGE of TE WAIROA

TE PUIA
ROTORUA, NEW ZEALAND

ZORB

OFFROADNZ
DRIVEN BY ADVENTURE

VELOCITY VALLEY

Agrodome
A world of fun on the farm

Accountants/Lawyers/Consultants

OSC Law
O'Sullivan Clemens

BLACKSLATE
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

MAXIMIZE Consultancy

money metrics

GRAHAM BROWN & CO
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANTS

JBM JB MORRISON
LAWYERS

Pampering

POLYNESIAN SPA
GEOTHERMAL HOT SPRINGS AND THERAPIES

WAIARIKI
HOT SPRINGS AND SPA

MAJESTIC TOUCH
DAY SPA

The Studio
thai massage

Other

Villa
PRODUCTIONS

Retail

Sulphur City Soapery

Unichem
Central Pharmacy Rotorua

Fenton Park Dairy

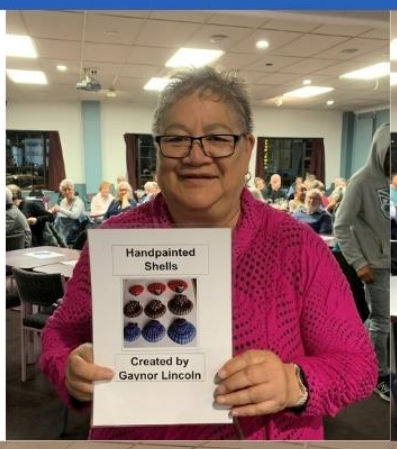
BUNNINGS warehouse

the warehouse

JUNIPER



More of our happy raffle winners, with their fantastic prizes.













Hats for patients

Pauline Harper dropped these hats she has knitted into us to distribute to patients. Bless you Pauline!



Teddies for Tots

Our thanks to the Glenbrae knitting ladies for the wonderful soft teddies they created for little patients who need a friend to snuggle with!





Woolies for Wee Ones

The St. Mary's Knitting Group have been very busy producing 12 cardigans, 4 vests, 22 beanies, and 1 toy to be distributed in the Maternity and SCBU units. Thank you for all your kind knitting.



Capes for Coziness

These lovely soft and cozy knitted capes were given to us for OPRS from Lillian and the ladies at Regency Park Retirement Village. Thank you, ladies.





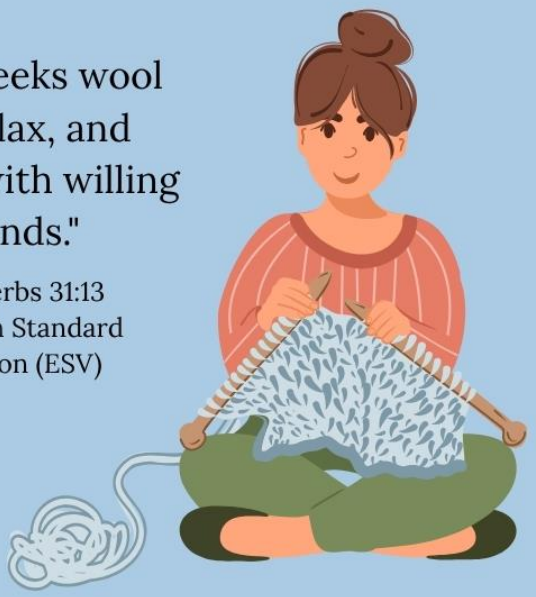
Winter Warmers

Nanna G has been busy and donated all these lovely knitted items for our wee patients. She even included washing instructions.



"She seeks wool and flax, and works with willing hands."

Proverbs 31:13
English Standard Version (ESV)





Cuddly Companions

Kindly donated by Isobel Fruish

A sleuth of bears

Debra Angus (one of our wonderful Trustees) and her Mum have rescued all of these bears and lovingly cleaned them and given them bows all ready for their new owners.





Hospital Trees

A poem by Allen Foote

What a blessing is springtime when the winter passes by.
The trees all bare of leaves, their flowers waiting to comply.
With springtime rules we are ready for a change in what we see,
For on the branches tiny lumps are waiting to break free.

And soon the trees will once again be filled with leaves so green,
Though views of lake and skies now blocked, no longer to be seen.
So, now the view is lots of leaves, their patterns truly great.
Their freshness and their beauty offer scenes to contemplate.

Thanks to our grant suppliers:

Our Chaplaincy service relies heavily on grant funding to stay operational.

We acknowledge and thank these generous organizations for keeping our service running. The following local venues contribute to some of these grants.

Westend Tavern
Malfory's Tavern
Village Sports Bar/Cafe
Crates n Cues
Phoenix Bar & Gaming
Matata Hotel



Pub Charity Limited

Four Winds Foundation

Lottery Grants Board
Te Puna Tahua
LOTTO FUNDS FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

Rotorua Trust
MŌ TĀTAU KATOA

NODA

-No One Dies Alone: Bringing Comfort to Life's Final Journey



In October our team meeting featured a deeply moving guest presentation from Kay Ryan, a representative of No One Dies Alone (NODA). Kay shared the profound story and vital mission behind this incredible volunteer service which operates right here inside Rotorua Hospital and local rest homes.

A Promise Born from Heartbreak

The global NODA movement began in 2000 in the United States, founded by a hospital nurse named Sandra Clark. Early in a shift, Sandra met an elderly patient near the end of his life. He was completely alone and gently asked if she would stay with him. Bound by a heavy workload and a ward full of other patients, Sandra promised she would return in half an hour after checking on her other charges.

Tragically by the time she made it back, the man had already passed away alone. Heartbroken by this experience, Sandra vowed to change how the vulnerable experience their final hours, prompting her to establish the very first NODA group. Today her vision has gone global ensuring dignity and presence for thousands of people worldwide.

What Does NODA Do?

At its core NODA volunteers provide the ultimate gift: presence. They sit with patients who are close to death and have no one else to be with them. Their compassionate care takes many forms:

·Supporting Families: They step in to take shifts for small families who need a restful break, or sit with patients whose loved ones are still traveling from afar or overseas.

·Creating Sacred Space: Volunteers work quietly to close doors, reduce noise, honor religious needs, and care deeply for the patient's immediate comfort.

·Symbolic Respect: When entering a room, volunteers place a sign on the door featuring a pīwakawaka (fantail). Once the patient passes, they gently change the sign to a kawakawa wreath, remaining with the body until it has been collected.

·Supporting Medical Staff: Because hospital staff face the same heavy workloads Sandra Clark did decades ago, NODA offers immense relief to nurses and doctors who worry about patients dying alone but are unable to stay at the bedside.

Training for a Sacred Task

Being with a stranger during their final moments requires immense strength, empathy, and preparation. NODA volunteers undergo rigorous training days and meet quarterly to debrief and support one another.

Beyond the hospital walls, NODA is active in our wider community. They host informational talks at the public library and run community outreach initiatives to teach families and friends how to confidently care for and sit with their own loved ones when the time comes.

Looking Ahead

Kay's presentation left a lasting impression on our team. To better equip our own ministry, we are planning a collaborative training day for our chaplains next year with NODA. This training will ensure our chaplains are fully prepared and supported whenever they are called to stand vigil with a patient about to pass.



You are invited

What: Christmas Carols around the hospital
When: Wednesday 23rd **December, 5pm**
Where: Starting at the Chapel
Dress Code: Festive

Spread a little festive cheer this holiday season by joining our **annual hospital Christmas caroling event**!

Everyone is warmly invited to lift their voices and take part. We will gather for a short, casual practice in the chapel before heading out to sing our way through the wards. To help keep us all on track, we will have a guitarist accompanying us and carol books in case you've forgotten the words.

Being in the hospital over the holidays can be incredibly tough. Many of our patients are missing out on the traditions, family gatherings, and community events they usually enjoy at this time of year. This is a wonderful opportunity to bring the joy of the season directly to their bedside, brighten their day and let them know they aren't forgotten. Whether you have the voice of an angel or just want to hum along, your presence will make a world of difference.

Once we have finished entertaining the patients, we will join together in the atrium for a festive supper to celebrate and thank you for your time.

Let us know you are coming: priscilla.coveney2@lakesdhb.govt.nz



Finding Stillness in the Advent Rush

A Devotion on Honoring Jesus

The Noise and the Quiet

The weeks leading up to Christmas often feel less like a peaceful countdown and more like a sprint. Between the end-of-year deadlines, school concerts, gift shopping and festive gatherings, our calendars overflow. It is easy to find our calendars full but our souls completely empty.

In the middle of this seasonal rush, we are invited to pause. The very first Christmas did not happen in a bustling, high-tech metropolis; it unfolded in a quiet, crowded stable in a small town. God entered our world not with a loud fanfare, but in the quiet cry of a newborn baby. To truly experience the wonder of the season, we must intentionally create spaces of stillness to dwell on the real reason for our celebration: the birth of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Dwelling on the Real Meaning

Christmas is the celebration of Incarnation—God with us. When we take time to slow down, we shift our focus from the temporary pressures of the holiday season to the eternal gift of God's love.

"The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth."

— John 1:14 (NIV)

When we meditate on this reality, the stress of finding the "perfect gift" or hosting the "perfect party" begins to fade. We already have the perfect gift in Jesus.

How to Honour Him This Season

Honouring Jesus during the Advent season doesn't require adding more to your to-do list. Instead it requires a shift in your heart's posture.

Here are three simple ways to honour Him amidst the rush:

· Give Him your first moments. Before checking your phone or reviewing your holiday shopping list, spend five quiet minutes in prayer or reading Scripture each morning. Let His peace set the tone for your day.

· Practise intentional gratitude. Shift your focus from what you need to buy to what you have already been given. Thank God daily for sending His Son to bring light into a dark world.

· Be His hands and feet. Jesus modeled a life of humble service. Honour Him by looking for ways to bless others—whether through a kind word to a stressed retail worker, a donation to someone in need, or taking time to truly listen to a lonely neighbour.

"For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

— Isaiah 9:6 (NIV)

A Prayer for the Season

Lord Jesus, thank You for coming into our world to bring us hope, peace and salvation. Forgive me for the times I let the rush and busyness of this season drown out Your voice. Help me to slow down, to breathe in Your presence and to keep my eyes fixed on You. Teach me how to honour You in my daily interactions and to reflect Your love to the world around me. You are the true gift of Christmas. Amen.

Please continue to pray for us
For the Chaplains, the volunteer Chaplaincy Assistants and the Administrators
For the Committee members and our Trustees

HOW IS CHAPLAINCY FUNDED?

The Rotorua Hospital Chaplaincy service is funded from:

Donations from local Churches, Charitable trusts and Individuals, Friends Subscriptions, some Government funding (Ministry of Health and Lakes District Health Board). Donations over $5.00 are eligible for a tax rebate.



Where do you come in? You may wish to:
Become a Friend of the Rotorua Hospital Trust, donate to the Rotorua Chaplaincy Department, make a regular donation by automatic payment, or make a bequest in your Will.

Above all, you can PRAY!

Donations: By direct credit Bank Account Details ASB Bank, Rotorua 12-3155-0260724-00
Account name: Rotorua Hospital Chaplaincy Trust

Cash is still lovely, but please do not post.

Charities Commission Register No: CC20601

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▲ YES! I would like to become a Friend of Hospital Chaplaincy

▲ YES! I would like to donate monthly $15 $40 $75 Other $.....

▲ YES! I would like to receive your Friends newsletter

Name: ..... Email .....

Address .....

(if you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please email priscilla.coveney2@lakesdhb.govt.nz)