

Private Bag 4722,
Christchurch 8140.

Editorial
Ph: 943 2598

Advertising
Ph: 943 2562

General Enquiries
Ph: 379 0940

MANAGER

Paul Williamson
Ph: 943 2862 | 027 487 0880
paul.williamson@themail.co.nz

EDITOR

Sarah Jarvis
Ph: 943 2598 | 027 497 6208
sarah.jarvis@themail.co.nz

REPORTER

Anna Price
Ph: 943 2582 | 027 207 0833
anna.price@themail.co.nz

SALES TEAM LEADER



David Holme
Ph: 943 2562 | 027 448 0232
david.holme@themail.co.nz

ADVERTISING CONSULTANT



Alexandra Zolotova
Ph: 943 2567 | 027 226 3621
alexandra.zolotova@themail.co.nz

ADVERTISING CONSULTANT



Ally Mullord
Ph: 943 2872 | 027 449 0649
ally.mullord@themail.co.nz

CLASSIFIEDS

goclassifieds@themail.co.nz
Ph: 377 8778

ADVERTISING FEATURES WRITER

Angela Waller
Ph: 943 2540
angela.waller@press.co.nz

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Gifts abound from afar



Quake bonus: Making whoopee in a sea of goodies are St Ives staff Maria Paynter (left), Elize Benadie and Trudy Hegan.



Fun zone: Resident Dulcie McDonald gets up close and personal with the cuddly critturs.



With love: A Hamilton youngster's message says it all.

“The people of Hamilton have opened up their hearts for the children and young people in the Christchurch earthquake.”

Marie Gibbard

Hamiltonians give willingly

Richmond's St Ives senior care home Friday found itself awash with a bounty of post-quake gifts for the city's young needy – from the Fountain City to the Garden City.

Assistant manager Marie Gibbard said the packages just kept coming in.

They originated from a sister Radius elder care home in Hamilton, St Joan's in Peachgrove Rd.

“I have never seen such a huge array of soft toys from the biggest Winnie the Pooh to the Cabbage Patch collection, toys of every kind, shape and size. We've been inundated – there are toys, blankets, knits, baby gear, the whole nine yards, made by staff, residents and families,” she said.

“The people of Hamilton have opened up their hearts for the children and young people in the Christchurch earthquake.”

“It is amazing, I just can't believe it.”

Mrs Gibbard had enjoyed close connections with Hamilton and its Radius care centre for many years.

Together, St Ives residents and staff unpacked the couriered parcels which would be dispensed through the Salvation Army.

“We are now looking for genuine cases of families whose children have lost every thing in the earthquake,” Mrs Gibbard said.

Campaigners welcome school report

The decision to seek a Ministry of Education area report on the case for a new high school in Christchurch's north-east has been welcomed by campaigners as a

positive sign. It is understood an area report would avoid the need to duplicate work already done by Parklands Residents' Association's North East

Secondary Education Committee (NESE).

The report would decide if there was sufficient evidence of need for a new school. If so, the ministry would consult with boards of trustees of affected schools.

“A positive area report will lead to the establishment process,” NESE chair Amanda Williams said.

“The committee is pleased with this decision.”

A public meeting at a date to be set would inform on progress and answer questions, she said.

The decision follows an Education and science select committee report in June recommending a review of secondary school requirements in the zone.

This was credited to the work of National MP Aaron Gilmore and NESE, who presented a petition and proposal for a local high school to the parliamentary select committee in April. The case focused on pupil numbers, social needs and environmental sustainability.

The select committee recommended a review of

secondary school requirements in the city's north-east including consultation with the community to ensure adequate schooling was available for the area.

Education minister Anne Tolley tabled the Government's response to that report in the House on September 27

Rather than following the select committee recommendation, Government instead directed the Ministry of Education to complete a formal area report “in a timely fashion”.

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