

November 2004

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Shonam Reddy, aged 12, played a pivotal role in securing the future of What's Up. She (centre) celebrates the new alliance with schoolfriends, Kids Help Foundation Trust Executive Director, Grant Taylor, and Child, Youth and Family Minister, Ruth Dyson. See page 2 for more on Shonam.

What's Up Supported by New Alliance

What's Up has two new supporters, corporate sponsor White Pages® and leading children's organisation, Barnardos New Zealand.

The two will work in partnership with the existing sponsors Griffins and Kellogg to ensure that the free telephone counselling service continues to meet the needs of children and young people in New Zealand.

"Many children and young people have found What's Up invaluable because it is accessible,

private and free," said Child, Youth and Family Minister Ruth Dyson announcing the new alliance in late July.

Child, Youth and Family provided enough funds to cover a shortfall, while the Trust searched for new backing, following the withdrawal of two former sponsors.

White Pages® is primarily a financial sponsor, while Barnardos will provide operational and developmental support.

Call Rate Rockets

What's Up calls have doubled over the last year to about 1,000 a day.

"The most significant increase followed the return to a 12-hours-a-day service in early October," says What's Up Executive Director Grant Taylor.

"The rate began rising in late 2003 but levelled out when the service's hours were reduced for several months this year, while extra funding was sorted out."

Grant attributes the rise in calls, particularly from seven to 12 year olds, to the extensive coverage of What's Up's financial difficulties, successful sponsorship deals, and subsequent

promotion of its increased hours in the media, including children's television programme, Sticky TV.

"We're really pleased to be reaching this age group," says Grant, "as What's Up emphasis is on helping children develop problem solving skills, which will stand them in good stead for the future."

What's Up has increased its counselling staff and extended its hours of operation thanks to funds provided under the new alliance. It now operates from midday to midnight, seven days a week.

Schoolgirl Comes to Aid of What's Up

Twelve year old Shonam Reddy, from Auckland played a pivotal role in ensuring the continued availability of What's Up.

After hearing in May that What's Up was facing possible closure, Shonam organised a petition in her school community in support of the service. She and her friends collected more than 700 signatures within just a few days. The petition was presented to the Minister of Child, Youth and Family, Ruth Dyson, by Green MP Nandor Tanczos on Shonam's behalf.

"Shonam's efforts, with the help of a few friends, ensured that politicians like myself took notice of the concerns that young people had for the future of What's Up. We did take notice, and so did the new sponsors," said Ruth Dyson.

"Shonam's determination to see What's Up get the support it needed was matched by her clear thinking, careful planning and hard work," says What's Up Executive Director Grant Taylor. "Her achievement is a great example of what children and young people are capable of when they get the support of adults and access to the resources they need. Shonam has made a huge difference to an important service for young New Zealanders."

New Members of The Kids Help Foundation Trust Board

Two key Barnardos figures, Chief Executive, Murray Edridge, and Council Chairman, Warwick Harvey, have joined The Kids Help Foundation Trust Board.

"I am very pleased to welcome Warwick and Murray to our Board," says Allan Barber, Board Chairman. "Their involvement will ensure that the objectives of both Barnardos and the Kids Help Foundation are fully expressed and understood at our meetings."



The two new Board members replace Jude Mannion, and Maggie Eyre, who resigned from the Board in August. Jude has left to focus on her own charitable trust, the Robin Hood Foundation, while Maggie is moving to England.

"Jude and Maggie have contributed enormously to the success of What's Up," says Allan. "We will miss them and wish them every success in the future."

Warwick and Murray join Allan Barber (Chairman), Andrew Davidson, Ian Hassall, Griffin's Chief Executive, Tony Nowell, and Kellogg's Chief Executive, Natalie Innes. Foundation Executive Director Grant Taylor will continue to attend as a non-voting member and will be joined by Andrew Wood, Barnardos General Manager, Service Development.

"Emotion without action is irrelevant..."

... said Betty Williams, on being awarded the 1976 Nobel Peace Prize winner for her work towards peace in Northern Ireland.

What's Up was founded by people who felt the same. They were keen to take action rather than just worry about the welfare of children and young people in New Zealand. After extensive research, they set up What's Up to address the needs of children and young people. Their vision and willingness to act on their feelings has been validated by the success of the service.

What's Up, however, relies on continued support to provide ongoing assistance to children and young people.

You can help by:

- increasing awareness of the service and its value among the adult population. Tell others about What's Up (see the box of key facts), point them to the What's Up website for further information or download it yourself to give to others. Encourage others to donate or register for the What's Up e-newsletter.
- donating funds to help What's Up pick up the many calls that go unanswered every week. Every extra \$20 donated to What's Up enables another ten calls to be answered.

To donate funds, call the What's Up office on (09) 630 4144 with credit card details, call the What's Up donation line 0900 YOUR CALL (0900 96872) to have an automatic \$10 donation charged to your telephone account, or post a cheque to What's Up at PO Box 56642, Dominion Rd, Auckland.

All donations over \$5 qualify for the charitable donations tax rebate. Please ensure your name and address is included for tax receiving purposes.

What's Up Key Facts

- What's Up is a free telephone counselling service for children and young people aged five to 18 years.
- The What's Up help line number is 0800 WHATSUP (0800 942 8787).
- What's Up operates seven days a week from 12 midday to 12 midnight.
- What's Up receives about 900 calls every day. Current funding enables its counsellors to answer about 280 of these.
- What's Up is unique in that it offers early intervention, rather than picking up the pieces later.
- More than 40% of the problems children and young people call What's Up about involve relationships with peers, family and partners.
- What's Up counsellors are paid professionals, trained specifically in techniques and skills for counselling children and young people by telephone.
- What's Up is operated by The Kids Help Foundation Trust, an independent New Zealand-registered charity, based in Auckland. What's Up works in association with Barnardos New Zealand and is supported by funding from Griffin's, Kellogg's, and White Pages®.

Young People in Crisis

The main aim of What's Up is to provide children and young people with an early intervention service, helping them learn how to deal with everyday problems and build their skills in preparation for all that life might bring them.

About five times each month, however, What's Up receives calls from young people, desperate for help in a high-risk situation. They may be facing abuse, a crisis of mental or physical health, self-harm or have suicidal intentions.

What's Up telephone counsellors follow established Duty of Care protocols to ensure that such calls are handled in a way that optimises safety for all concerned.

The protocols are:

- Risk assessment to ensure that careful consideration is given to the dangers involved.
- Informing the caller that What's Up is so concerned about the risk of harm that it can no longer promise to keep the call confidential.
- Consultation with supervisory staff to ensure that the best decisions are made.
- Liaison with emergency services so that someone 'on the ground' or with the necessary statutory authority can intervene to safeguard the situation.
- Documentation of the risk assessment and all decisions and actions taken.

The most common external agency engaged to help with these situations is Child, Youth and Family, followed by the Police and various mental health crisis teams around the country.

The average age of callers in crisis is 14 with calls taken from children as young as six. Almost a third of these calls are from callers contemplating suicide, nearly one-fifth about physical abuse, and just over one in ten about homelessness.

A Counsellor Reflects

Lisa, a telephone counsellor talks about her role in What's Up.

What does your job involve?

I am a Counsellor on the phones at What's Up, and have been with the service since it started three years ago.

Our callers include children who are being abused or who have run away from home. We are a friendly accessible first port of call for these children, and if necessary, are able to organise three-way calls to Child Youth and Family so that we can support the callers whilst they talk to a social worker.

Although our focus is not as a crisis line, we do receive calls from teenagers who are suicidal and we have saved lives.

Thousands of children in the mid-childhood age have called us about being bullied at school, and we have been able to help them develop skills that they can take into their future.

Why do you do it?

Because working for What's Up is a unique experience— an incredible feeling of commitment to something I really believe in; because I feel passionate about the job, about helping children and young people learn skills that will help them in difficult times now and in the future; because I know we make a difference to the lives of those who call.

What's Up Turns Three

What's Up telephone counsellors have answered close to 340,000 calls from young people since the free service was launched in September 2001.

As well as counselling callers, the What's Up team collects non-identifiable information on the nature of the calls. As a result What's Up has gleaned some important information on the issues faced by children and young people in New Zealand.

The five most common reasons for calling What's Up are peer relationships, bullying, family relationships, relationships with partners, and pregnancy. Of these, the calls about peer relationships and pregnancy are the only two to have changed markedly in frequency, with both increasing over time.

Of most concern in the pregnancy-related calls is the increase in calls from young people needing urgent medical or emotional support, which suggests that many young people dealing with pregnancy do not have adequate support from their friends, family or local services.

The increase in calls about peer relationships mostly involves occasional or single feelings of rejection, with the rate of calls reporting serious and ongoing peer relationships difficulties remaining unchanged.

Other calls on the increase are those concerning physical health, mental health and legal issues. In contrast calls on life skills, drug use, self image, sexual abuse, loneliness, contraception, emotional abuse, anger and neglect have decreased over the past three years.



Give an example of the sort of call you take?

Recently I had a call from a 10 year old boy in tears because his parents were separating and he had to decide which parent to live with.

The agony of his position and his pure sense of wanting to do the right thing was in his voice. He felt so responsible for his parents' feelings and so afraid of hurting them.

With gentle questions I was able to help him unravel his feelings and work out what was best for him. It became clear that he wanted to live with his mother but was afraid of hurting his father. We explored whether he could talk to them both and explain how he felt.

He decided that was a good idea and sounded calm and relieved by the end of the call. I let him know that he could call me back and let me know what happened. I felt sad for him but happy to have been able to be there when he needed help.

What is the most rewarding part of the job?

Hearing the relief from a child or young person at the end of the line who has been able to talk through the problems and/or worries he or she faces, and knows that help is at hand.



Barnardos, the country's leading children's organisation is delighted to support What's Up. "What's Up is a great service for children and young people needing help sorting out problems before they get too big," says Chief Executive Murray Edridge.

"Barnardos looks forward to developing the service so it continues to meet the needs of children and young people in New Zealand."



"One of the main reasons Kellogg gave its initial support to What's Up was that it offered an early intervention approach for young people," says Marketing Communications Manager Vicki Hamilton.

It's support has been validated, with "thousands of young New Zealanders calling and benefiting from using What's Up over the last three years. This is most rewarding."



When sponsorship manager Sarah Beard began the search for a sponsorship, she looked for a service that stood for the same things as White Pages does and would help the community in a way that was meaningful for White Pages staff and its customers.

"We became convinced What's Up would be an excellent fit for White Pages when we learnt that some forty-five percent of children's calls relate to relationship issues with peers, family and friends," says Sarah. "What's Up is all about connecting people and being there when you're needed, and that's what White Pages is all about too."

"By supporting What's Up, an organisation that makes a real difference to the lives of young New Zealanders, we are making one of the most powerful investments we can make in our country."



Griffin's is proud to be a founding sponsor of What's Up.

"What's Up provides an important service for children and young people in the community. That's important to Griffin's. We have a strong New Zealand heritage and want to continue to make New Zealand a wonderful place to grow up and live," says Marketing Director Vicky Taylor.

With more than 100,000 calls received by What's Up each year, Griffin's believes the telephone counselling service is providing a much needed service that helps children deal with issues that may otherwise cause problems later in life.

"Our support in helping these children early in life is rewarding and part of our ongoing community and social responsibility".

What's Up Supporters 2003-2004

Takahe Group – More than \$10,000

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Boystown Family Care
Child Health Services Trust
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