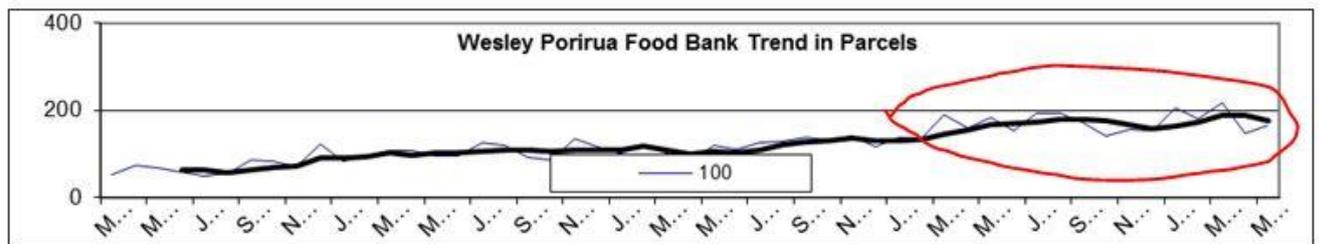




## Cannons Creek Community Pantry update – December 2014.

Over the last 2-3 years WCA have been progressing the old Cannons Creek food bank from an emergency needs based social model, to a proactive reciprocal 'Community Pantry' model where our clients are empowered to change their lives.

For over 10 years Wesley's Cannons Creek food bank had provided emergency food parcels to those in need and typically provided up to 2,000 emergency food parcels which benefitted 3188 adults and 4417 children per year. For many years demand was steadily increasing, however in recent years as shown by the red circle below, demand has been static and possibly falling due to the success of Wesley's 'community pantry' initiatives.



In 2012 people accessing Wesley's emergency food bank services were invited to give back to the food bank by volunteering their time to establish and maintain a community vegetable gardens with the proceeds being used to supplement the food bank which was then gradually transformed into a reciprocal 'Community Pantry'.

### Participants in the Community Pantry gained skills and benefits including:

- educational – horticulture; healthy living; home economics etc
- gardening skills
- enhanced work ethic – minimises dependency and provides an activity and skills.
- community participation – sense of ownership
- reduced community isolation – encourages people to get out
- sense of pride and worth – giving back to the community and not receiving a handout
- budgeting – financial benefits from growing their own veges.

- relationship building – strengthening their relationships with others and our service – builds trust
- cooking classes – teaching families and individuals how to prepare and cook the fruits of their labour

## A Food Co-operative emerges

Following the successful development of the community pantry and community gardens and with over 60 additional gardens developed in the Porirua schools and play-centres, the team turned their attention to investigating the possibilities of establishing a food cooperative to further assist low income families to access cheap healthy food.

The team visited the successful Christchurch Food Coop model which currently delivers over 2,000 vegetable packs per week.

**In late 2014 a trial Porirua Fruit and Vege Co-op trial was established to improve affordability and access to fruit and vegetables for the residents of Cannons Creek and Waitangirua.**

The three month trial started with 40 initial 'orders' per week and grew to delivering over 150 'orders' per week in two months. This was achieved without promotion and currently there is a waiting list from other organisations and schools wanting to host or help as 'distribution hubs'.

We anticipate a doubling of demand in the next year if we are successful in obtaining funding to help meet the administration.

The Porirua Food Co-op trial involved; Wesley Community Action, the Salvation Army (Porirua), Corinna School and Regional Public Health (Wellington)

