



Case Notes at Dec 2014.

(Names removed for privacy)

“They didn’t tell me what to do”

A young couple came into the Family Start program expecting a baby. They already had one child in CYFs care and 3 other children that had been given to their extended family to raise as by their own admission, they were ‘unable to care for them the way they needed’.

The couple had both grown up around violence, drugs and alcohol and both had spent years in and out of foster homes and being passed around a range of family members. When their child was taken into CYFs care they were living in a home that their social worker described as, ‘simply squalor.’ Rubbish littered every room, the house smelt and there were no clean clothes to find. The adults were always drunk or stoned and food was often not provided.

When the mother found out she was pregnant she referred herself to Family Start Porirua and with Family Start’s encouragement, she and her partner talked about their childhoods, and what they wanted to change for their own children. They attended parenting courses and began the ‘Get ahead’ course at the Cannons Creek Whanau Center.

The couple set goals around keeping a clean home and learned to cook. Over the last year this family have gone from ‘very hard to track down and engage with’, to a family who are ‘functioning extremely well’. Their young son is back in their care full time and they are approved supervisors for the partners sister who has access with her parents every weekend.

They had both left school with no qualifications yet in 2014 are graduating 5th and 6th form and the young mother is now striving for 7th form and then wants to do a diploma in caring for the elderly.

The young couple are constantly reflecting back on their lives and are very proud of their accomplishments. They said to me last week *“We have done more in the last year than we have our entire lives. I never thought we could do this”*. The young mother added, *“I like family start because they don’t tell me what to do in my life, they help me find ways that will work for my family”*.

(Wesley Family Start Whanau Worker, Emma Hartley)

“The happiest thing that ever happened”

In August 2013 a young mother came into Wesley’s Porirua Family Start with her son who was 15 months old at the time. The young mother had been in her late teens when she had become pregnant and at that time it was a major shock to her as she was not ready to be a mum.

She was not living with her son's father, and as a single mum she was dependent on her family for support. When Wesley's Family Start worker first met her she said that before baby was born she could not see a positive future for herself but when her son came into the world, she felt a strong love for him and knew that he was, *"the happiest thing that ever happened"* to her.

She appreciated the support from Family Start to identify goals for her to achieve as she did not know where to begin on her own. She knew that she wanted to go back to study and eventually to get a job so she could support herself and her son.

Working with Wesley's Family Start, she slowly started goal setting and began to take steps to put her ambitions into practice. It hasn't been an easy process for her as sometimes the motivation and confidence were not strong. Occasionally her family and friends were distractions from her focus, however she has persevered and in December 2014 will graduate from a one year polytechnic course in catering.

Now she is excited about the future and is gaining the confidence to apply for work in the new year.

(Wesley Family Start Whanau Worker, Nina Marshall)

