

Media release

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Standing up against violence on White Ribbon Day

“Violence against any person is not acceptable any day of the year but tomorrow, on White Ribbon Day, we publicly mark our stand against violence towards women by wearing a white ribbon”, says Murray Edridge, Chief Executive of Barnardos New Zealand.

“Sadly, domestic violence is occurring daily throughout New Zealand. Police record on average around 12,000 family violence related assaults and many children and women are hospitalised every year as a result of assault.¹ In the year ended 30 June 2008, Barnardos “Footsteps to Feeling Safe²” programme worked with 228 children who had been victims of, or witnesses to domestic violence³”.

“We all need to speak up against violence, not only for women but for the children and the men who suffer violence in our midst. Many children who witness domestic violence are constantly in a state of heightened anxiety. They may have trouble sleeping, have low self-esteem and behave in ways that are challenging both at school and at home”, concludes Mr Edridge.

Tomorrow, Barnardos staff throughout New Zealand are supporting White Ribbon Day by holding several awareness events providing free white ribbons, information about family violence, and balloons for children. In Invercargill, a White Ribbon is being signed by the community and the Fire service will lift the ribbon as a banner to hang on the Barnardos office building. In Christchurch, outside the Barnardos office, staff will be giving away sausages and ribbons and discussing the issue with the local community.

ENDS

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¹ <http://www.nzfamilies.org.nz/research/zero-tolerance.php>

² Footsteps to Feeling Safe is an information programme for children aged from five to 17 years who had been victims of, or witness to domestic violence.

³ Barnardos Annual Report <http://www.barnardos.org.nz/AboutUs/B-AR08.pdf>