



2013 ANNUAL REPORT

It is with considerable pleasure and satisfaction that I write this Annual Report. Since the Foundation's inception this would have to rate as our best year yet. The Sophie Elliott Foundation was set up with one major aim – the establishment of an educational awareness programme for senior secondary school students. I am delighted to say that with the hard work and persistence from people around me, our ambition has been realised.

Our joint project with Police and the 'It's not OK' campaign of the Ministry of Social Development was trialled in term two in nine diverse colleges. It was independently evaluated, the conclusion being that from a student perspective Loves-Me-Not is remarkably successful. More can be viewed on the Loves-Me-Not page on our website.

I am so appreciative that the executive of the New Zealand Police saw fit to support this programme as a strategy worthy of nationwide implementation. I truly believe that if Sophie had access to this programme when she was in her last year or two of college she would have recognised when things began to go wrong. I have a feeling of deep satisfaction knowing that young men and women will now have a programme on which they can base reasoned decisions. Thank you everyone who has contributed to and supported Loves-Me-Not; you have my heartfelt appreciation.

This is not the end of work for the Foundation. While Police and MSD will lead the programme our Foundation has committed to providing quality audio/visual resources and work has already begun on developing these.

On a personal note this has been another full-on year. With my voluntary manager and trustee, Bill O'Brien, we have travelled extensively spreading the word on what to look for in dating relationships. During 2013 I was able to give 42 presentations and spoke to 1570 adults and 4485 students. Apart from the presentations, Bill and I travelled to working party meetings in Wellington a number of times and had the privilege of watching some of the Loves-Me-Not facilitator training and school deliveries. To watch police, teachers and NGOs working together was enough to bring one to tears. This was cooperation between different organisations working towards a common goal at its best. And then to observe the interactions with students, either single sex or in co-ed colleges was heart-warming.

I had some lovely visits to places such as Ashburton, Te Anau and Waimate. On this latter trip a billboard in the main street said I was presenting to a public meeting at \$5 a head. Jax Hamilton of Master Chef fame would be appearing a few days later at \$20 a head. I queried this with Bill and asked why people paid \$5 to hear me and \$20 to hear Jax. He replied saying it's because Jax can actually cook!

We did a lot of shorter visits to places like Oamaru where I always feel most welcome. Those working in family violence prevention in the Waitaki are a fine example of what can be done. I also had the privilege of being guest speaker at this year's White Ribbon Day commemorations in Christchurch – an emotional but rewarding experience. Waitangi Day was especially memorable as I was invited to a garden party at Government House in Auckland. I was accompanied by the Foundation deputy chair, Kristin Dunne-Powell and from there we flew to Wellington for the first of our working parties. 2013 got off to a busy start.

We managed to do three major tours this year. One was a trip to the West Coast; such amazing scenery only matched by the warmth and caring of true Coasters. The Soroptimist International ladies based in Hokitika arranged four schools and three community meetings in Greymouth, Westport and Hokitika. Memories of my visit to the West Coast will last a long time.

Zonta, who are wonderful supporters of the Foundation, arranged a very productive and memorable visit to the Manawatu. That trip was another of many highlights.

Our biggest trip away was nine days spent in Auckland mid-year. We visited a number of colleges so diverse in many ways. Diocesan was an amazing college with everything at their disposal. We then visited Tamaki, a college with many more social challenges but a school I'll remember. In the grounds at the entrance to the college there is a large stone carving in the shape of a koru. At the end of my presentation I was given a wooden replica of that koru, carved by some students in the workshop. It takes pride of place on my mantelpiece. We also visited Epsom Girls' Grammar then went to up to Helensville to Kaipara College and Rutherford High in Te Atatu.

In Auckland I also presented to the National Forum of GirlGuiding New Zealand and was delighted to see that they, like us, are doing something positive to get to grips with this terrible problem of violence against women. I'm also extremely grateful for the on-going financial support the Guides are giving us. The year finished in Riverton where we were able to experience true Southland hospitality.

There are many generous people out there who support my quest. While in Auckland, Eric & Sue, two of our biggest supporters, loaned us a vehicle for the entire nine-day stay. Some hotels and motels supplied accommodation free of charge and service organisations or organisers of our presentations made significant donations to help us with our work. Others continue to contribute financially towards our programme development with donations large and small. A number of supporters make regular direct debit donations into our account. You know who you are and I just want you all to know that the financial support we receive is gratefully accepted. You can be assured your generosity is being put to very good use. Thank you.

All six trustees continue to use their particular skills to critique and comment on the varied issues that confront us. They continue to strive to ensure the Foundation and our programme Loves-Me-Not is something we can all take great pride in. Our newest trustee is Joy Nicolson, a former school principal turned businesswoman. Joy has talents and a passion for our cause and I know she will be an asset to the team. While not in any way minimising the contribution all trustees make to our ongoing success I can't let this newsletter go out without some acknowledgement of the contribution Bill O'Brien makes

to the Foundation. Bill not only manages my speaking engagements, he also accompanies me where possible. We would not be where we are today if it wasn't for him. There is no way I could continue to work, organise my speaking and other engagements and give presentations without his assistance. Bill is the trustee who has the Loves-Me-Not programme as his portfolio and we couldn't wish for a better person to take on this role. He is totally committed to getting the programme off the ground. The reports he writes after our trips (many as we fly home) are informative and an excellent record for the Foundation. I acknowledge on behalf of all the trustees the tremendous amount of time and energy he gives to the Foundation all in a voluntary capacity. Bill's wife Olwyn does all our word-processing ensuring our correspondence and reports are professionally presented. To cap this off she has had Bill away over many, many days this year. I thank her for the role she has played in quietly supporting us.

There are many other people I should thank, but at the risk of leaving someone out I need to just say a heartfelt thanks to you all. The trustees of the Foundation work tirelessly to help me achieve what I set out to do and we are making great progress. We will make New Zealand a better and safer place in which to live. Of that I have no doubt. Next year will be another big one for us. We are excited the programme will be rolled out nationwide. We will strive to ensure the resources we provide for Loves-Me-Not will be of the highest quality and we will continue to search for funding to make this happen. I'm sure Sophie would be proud of what so many are doing in her honour.

Lesley Elliott
Sophie Elliott Foundation
Chairperson