



2014 ANNUAL REPORT

With an enthusiastic and committed team behind me, we have without doubt, had the busiest but most productive year yet. Perhaps the highlight of the year was my being announced as the Supreme Winner at the Women of Influence Awards. The awards held at Sky City, Auckland, were a glittering black tie affair attended by over 600 people. I was awarded the community category trophy and never for a moment thought my name would be mentioned again that night. When I was announced as the Supreme Winner I was in a daze and remember little of what happened next. Bill tells me that the entire audience rose to its feet as I went to accept the award. After I finished speaking they rose again and applauded me all the way back to my table. This was a hugely emotional event and I look at it, not just as an acknowledgement of me and the Sophie Elliott Foundation but more a recognition that family violence is an issue in New Zealand that people are talking about and reacting positively towards. The next day began at 5.30am preparing for live television interviews, radio station calls and print media interviews. On reflection I'm so grateful to the trustees for encouraging Bill to go with me as he was able to manage the busy schedule at short notice.

Whilst in Auckland I attended and presented some awards at the Next Woman of the Year event. Being a former winner I was invited to be on the judging panel and, while this was an honour, it certainly put more pressure on our working year. I well remember returning home from one of our trips reading nominee profiles while Bill did the driving.

On the topic of awards it's appropriate to note here that after having spoken to the Rotary Club of Dunedin East its members nominated me for a Paul Harris Fellowship. The nomination was accepted by Rotary International and in December I was presented with a certificate and medal that takes pride of place beside other awards I've been given. Again I reiterate that these awards are as much about the recognition of family violence and the work of the Sophie Elliott Foundation as they are about me. Even so, the accolades are very much appreciated and encourage me to carry on with my mission to do something positive about violence in relationships.

During the year I carried out 37 presentations talking to 3,000 students and 1,700 adults. The nature of presentations has changed considerably. While I'm still asked to present 'Sophie's Story – what WE missed' to senior secondary school students, I'm being increasingly asked to talk about the foundation, where we are at with Loves-Me-Not and where we are heading. More and more I'm sharing the talks with Bill and I think we make a pretty effective team. I talk about where the foundation has come from and Bill talks about where we are at now and what lies ahead. We have given this talk to organisations such as Zonta and Rotary, as well as to a lot of public meetings. Several large donations have come our way as a result of these presentations.

Our first trip for 2014 was the Marlborough region where I gave presentations at a Zonta International Women's Day event, Marlborough Girls' and Boys' Colleges and Queen Charlotte College. Other visits of note were in Wellington, Auckland, Ashburton, Upper Hutt, Christchurch, Stratford, Geraldine and Orewa. The Southern Victim Support network held a conference in Te Anau and asked me to be a keynote speaker talking from a victim of crime perspective. This was a very difficult subject to talk on but from feedback I've received it proved to be valuable to those attending the conference.

Presentations in 2014 were varied and memorable and it is hard to single any one thing out, but what will be etched in my memory is a return flight from New Plymouth where the plane flew to what seemed almost arm's length to the top of Mt Taranaki. It was absolutely breath-taking.

As for the variety of talks there were wonderful moments at the Zonta-run events in Ashburton, Christchurch, Oamaru, Wellington and Orewa and how these contrasted with the presentation I gave at the Youth Justice facility at Rolleston Prison. I was invited to speak to the female youth but on arrival found I was speaking to some very hard and intimidating young men from as far away as Auckland. I was told that my talk had a profound impact on the residents and was still being talked about a week later. And I won't forget either, these same young men who had been involved in some serious violence, lining up to give me a hug. I'm sure that my talks over the year have had effects in different ways on different audiences. It's appropriate here to thank all those people who arranged my visits through my voluntary manager, Bill.

Fundraising has been a big issue for us, especially in making quality audio/visual resources for Loves-Me-Not. However, people have been very generous. We have had donations large and small, but all so very much appreciated. Zonta has been very supportive and is dealt with later in this report. Bill and I have addressed a number of local Rotary clubs following an initiative by Joy. So far three clubs have given substantial donations while others have indicated they will support us financially. The University of Otago and Otago Polytechnic are jointly funding one of the videos being made for Loves-Me-Not and some trusts are also pledging money. Late in the year we were somewhat blown away when, out of the blue, an individual from Auckland donated several thousand dollars towards resources, her donation being prompted through a Zonta-led event where I spoke. Some of the clubs I was asked to speak at also made what I would describe as significant donations. After I addressed the senior students at Avonside Girls' High School in Christchurch the girls held a gala day and donated the profits to the foundation. These gestures are, I think, not only recognition of the foundation and Sophie's legacy, but a desire to do something positive about our appalling levels of family violence. I don't intend naming all those who made donations in this report as I'd risk leaving someone out, but we will be making an acknowledgement on our web site once we have cleared it with those making donations. Perhaps the one donation we received that shows people's desire to support us coming to grips with the problem was from a man in a Christchurch hospital. He wrote to wish us well in our endeavours and enclosed two \$5 notes. He said it was all he could afford. That, like all the other offers of help, was hugely appreciated.

Towards the end of the year we came across a Dunedin lady, Jo Tiszavari, who wanted to help the foundation. Jo has experience with how trust funds work and has offered to help us coordinate fundraising efforts, and for that we are so appreciative.

It there is one area of our operation that is an ongoing cause for concern it is the fact we still don't have a formal letter of agreement with police. While our relationship is strong and professional, having an agreement would give us more certainty in our partnership. Police have been excellent to work with. We were sad to see our initial contact, Inspector Brigitte Nimmo, move on to other duties. Also now out of the mix is Sylvia Powell. However, before Sylvia finished with Loves-Me-Not she was seconded by police to do a revision of the workshops. From a foundation point of view we can't thank Brigitte and Sylvia enough. The draft workshops for 2015 are now tighter and more positive in outlook, along with a better gender balance. I'm very comfortable with the revision of LMN and look forward to seeing how the resources our foundation is funding will enhance the workshops. After several changes in key personnel at Police Headquarters the workshops' responsibility finally fell into youth education headed by Lawrie Stewart. We have formed an excellent relationship with Lawrie and his involvement encourages us.

Tony Sutorius from Unreal Films has done a lot of work with Lawrie to understand how LMN works. He has been of much help getting the workshop emphasis changed to a more positive line and in doing so has been able to determine how resources will better enhance the workshops from a student perspective. Just before Christmas Tony came to Dunedin to film segments for the vox-pop vignettes he and Lawrie had worked out. With Heather's help (especially bringing Terry MacTavish into the mix) we had drama students from Kings High, Queens High and the Globe Theatre doing some wonderful work to make the films. Tony also spent several days filming me for the opening and closing segments and also Sophie's friends for the part relating to her legacy. Where we were originally looking at perhaps five brief video clips it now seems LMN will have about 10 clips, all aimed at stimulating student discussion. The week-long filming task went without a hitch except perhaps for the 'argument' being filmed for one of the vignettes. Tony had two actors wired up with microphones to stage what was a good argument with some choice teen language. There were about a thousand frequencies to choose from but by pure coincidence the one Tony chose was identical to that in the nearby St Paul's Cathedral. We were surprised when one of the clergy approached Bill to say everything the actors said could be heard inside the cathedral including a rather astonished congregation!

It is Lawrie and Tony's intention to try the new resources out with a test group in Wellington at the end of January and a trial run of the whole workshop at a Bay of Plenty college in February. If possible I would like to attend these workshops to see how the revisions and resources work.

During 2014 we saw a number of deliveries of LMN and with the new and improved format I'm sure it will be even better.

If there was one activity in 2014 that stretched me and Bill to the limit it was completing our book, Loves Me Not – How to Keep Relationships Safe. That was a monumental effort especially given that this was already a busy year. The book was released in a blaze of publicity and Bill and I had numerous engagements with radio and print media as well as appearing on several television programmes in

Auckland. This followed hard on the heels of the publicity from the Women of Influence awards so there was plenty of exposure. Our latest book, although not primarily written for the market, proved to be popular, and in December we were astonished to learn of its popularity overseas. One of the world's largest e-reader companies, Kobo (a company with over 16 million users from 190 countries) had chosen our book as one of the six notable non-fiction books for 2014. Kobo has a catalogue of 4 million e-books so for us to be selected among six titles worldwide is hard to get our heads around.

Our prime motive in writing the book was for it to be made available to students doing Loves-Me-Not. Mid-year we signed a memorandum of understanding with Zonta District 16 and they began fundraising. We have had a lot of communication with clubs and areas necessitating many visits to speak to Zontians. As a result we had contact in Oamaru, Dunedin, Orewa, Christchurch, Blenheim, Wellington, Ashburton and North Shore. We would also have attended a charity ball in Hamilton planned by a foundation supporter but it was unable to proceed. The organiser hopes to resurrect the concept in 2015.

I would at this point like to thank Governor Janette Irvine for her support in getting the collaboration with Zonta up and running. I have no doubt it will prove to be beneficial for both organisations. I also thank Zonta's liaison officer with SEF, Lyn Farry. Early next year the books will be couriered to Zonta clubs for distribution to students and, through the generosity of New Zealand Couriers transported throughout the country at no cost to the foundation.

One of our final trips away for 2014 was to Christchurch and Oamaru to attend White Ribbon events. The only 'official' engagement was for Bill to be the keynote speaker following a debate in the Oamaru Opera House. He spoke of his relationship with the origins of White Ribbon in Montreal, Canada and what our foundation is doing to help turn around the disgraceful statistics of family violence in New Zealand.

Apart from travels to give presentations, attend Zonta clubs or other commitments, we also attended a number of planning meetings at Police Headquarters, mostly to do with the making of resources. Once this was well established we then carried out regular meetings via video conferencing from Dunedin Central.

This report seems long yet I haven't covered other aspects of our day-to-day work. This continued to take up a lot of time but I can say we had a very full and satisfyingly productive year. This wouldn't be possible without the professional help from Paula and Denise, our accountancy specialists, and lawyer, Sally Peart.

Now that I have been able to cut my shifts down to two a week, I have more time to devote to SEF work. Countering this a bit has been the way things have gone up a level since the Women of Influence awards. I'm now expected to talk to a wider range of audiences and at a higher level. This brings with it some heightened expectations, but with the dedication of our trustees I am able to meet the demand.

So my sincere thanks go to Kristin who is a sounding board and the person who monitors our ever busy info line. Joy, your expertise and dedication to keep our finances in order gives me great peace of mind. Thank you, Katie, for keeping our website and Facebook page up-to-date and the variety of other things

you do for the Foundation. Heather, your expertise in education and counselling is always so helpful and this was no better illustrated than with the book writing and the filming of resources. Jo, new to the fold, has started off looking at our fundraising and sponsorship activities with eagerness. I so very much appreciate Olwyn's willingness and expertise with our secretarial requirements. The reports, letters, receipts and minutes (not to mention the manuscript and editing of our book) are always professionally prepared. And again I need to say a special thanks to Bill for his efforts on behalf of SEF, his management of Loves-Me-Not and his voluntary management of me. I couldn't have got to this point without all your help, so I say a big thanks to you all. I'm sure Sophie would have been proud.

Lesley Elliott

Chairperson

SOPHIE ELLIOTT FOUNDATION