

## TUAKAU & DISTRICT LSM

### Tuakau Selwyn Centre.

We will soon be celebrating our second anniversary- it seems hard to imagine St. John's without the Selwyn Centre on a Tuesday. It has become the hub of our week day activities and has become synonymous with our church amongst Tuakau residents.

It has all happened so smoothly- as we are using the church itself, no alterations were necessary. We used our initial grant to purchase geriatric chairs, a carpet square, extra heating, games etc. We drew volunteers from the congregation and local people- and opened our doors!

When we first opened we expected frail elderly and people needing physical help to arrive. Instead, along came a group of independent but lonely, car driving elderly in search of friendship. That initial group of 9 has grown by word of mouth and newsletters into a buzzing gathering of up to 20- a great mixture of longstanding Tuakau residents and recent arrivals who came to Tuakau to be near their families and in doing so, lost their friendship base. The Selwyn Centre fills the gap admirably.

They have blossomed into a strong group, very supportive of each other but warmly welcoming to new faces. They keep in contact through the week and organise their own transport roster. We have a sales table and a book group. They turn out to support the church- eg. they did Devonshire Teas at our Christmas Fair, and some have begun attending Sunday services. They spread the word amongst friends and neighbours. Recently we started another day which also offers respite care and the Tuesday group have come along to help get it started- "People will see all the cars and come in." And they do. They're an inspiring bunch.

The Selwyn Centre has proved itself as an ideal outreach for St John's. Members of the congregation visit us regularly as do people from the community. Having the centre has enabled us to visit those who are housebound or caring full time for a loved one and offer them some practical relief. Also it has allowed us to discover the reasons for people becoming isolated in the community e.g. After an article appeared about us in Zenith magazine, two ladies arrived who had been recently widowed and were finding it very difficult to resume their social activities. We teamed them up with two others in the same situation and they formed a support group who have a fish'n'chip lunch every fortnight. We now keep in touch with others in that situation.

Establishing the Selwyn Centre has given us a practical base from which we can address pastoral care issues and offer viable solutions. It's great for everyone and has brought new life into our church. It is so rewarding in every way. We are extremely grateful for this opportunity made possible by the generosity of the Selwyn Foundation. A brilliant idea!

Madeline Dodds. Treasurer, Council Member, Tuakau & Districts LSM  
Judy Skinner. Coordinator, Selwyn Centre. Administrator, Tuakau & Districts LSM.

*This is an Anglican church in small rural town. The church was due to be closed and sold before the Selwyn Centre started. The Selwyn Centre has transformed the church into a viable congregation. There was initial reluctance to use the church itself, as this involved removing pews, but agreement was reached and there has been no looking back!*