



6 April 2019 - Fit for Funding – Stratford

Presentation by Rochelle Steer, Founder, Kai Kitchen

45'700 School lunches have been made and delivered in Taranaki.

Lives have been saved! Lives have been changed! Hope has been given!

Good Morning My name is Rochelle Steer, I am the Founder of The Kai Kitchen Trust and this is our story.

April 2015 and I was reading the paper when a man named Alan Lyall was sharing the same struggle my mum had all those years ago, he was left with \$40 a week to buy food to feed himself and his teenage daughter. Alan's story hit a chord with me and I felt compelled to help him in some way.

My friends and I raided our pantries and made Alan a huge food hamper ... I'm a great detective and found Alan's address and delivered it to him. I spent maybe 10 mins inside Alan's house talking about the struggle he was facing. A week later Alan and a newspaper reporter turned up on my door step for a follow up article about Alan.

This was the first big step in why I am standing here today. Alan dropped a bomb shell at my kitchen table that day when he told the reporter he was going to end his life the afternoon I had arrived, but I had given him a glimmer of hope. I had changed his mind and his life.

My friends and I carried on making and giving food parcels to people in our community until one night just a few weeks later a family of 7 children came to collect some food we had on offer.

My husband and I had given them almost all the school lunch food out of our pantry that night so they could have a nice lunch at school the next day. Later on that night I saw on the 'buy & sell' pages on Facebook that the mother was trying to swap or trade the food for alcohol. **I knew then we needed to make a change to the way we were doing things - this could never happen again!**

I approached the children's school the following day and explained the story from the night before and offered to make these children's lunches each school day and deliver them to school. This was the second big step in our journey.

The following day – 22nd April 2015, was the day The Kai Kitchen was born. I made 12 school lunches - one for each of the children on the breakfast programme at Hawera Primary school. I then approached all the local primary schools in Hawera. I figured if there was a need at one school there must be more kids out there.

I created a Facebook Page this same day, sharing our story (very discreetly) and asked the public for school lunch food donations. **The response was overwhelming - I would often arrive home and my front porch would be full of donated food.**

With lunch numbers rising we soon realised that we had started something amazing but there was a problem. We had no money to purchase things that weren't being donated that were needed. Like luncheon, ham, cheese etc

My friends and I would often get together and started to document our ideas etc ... we had formed a committee with the help from Marcia Millard (South Taranaki District Council who has now moved to The Wheelhouse). Soon a bank account was opened, we were sizzling sausages etc to raise the money we needed for those extra things.

By this time were making about 40 lunches on my kitchen bench at 5am each morning. Our rule of thumb is we deal directly with school and by-pass the parents.

In 2016 we did something that people all over the world would talk about, and this actually put us on the map. We became the recipients of a gold coin collection at our local brothel when they had an open day for the public to view in the side of this brothel. We raised \$340.

Little did we know that this would make international news ... we had phone calls from all over the world, Germany, UK, Australia... we were receiving around 20 phone calls from TV and radio stations from all over the world... they wanted to talk to us about feeding children with 'dirty money' as they called it. Whilst people were talking about us it was time to act and come up with a plan to capture their hearts and their money.

We created **Adopt-a-lunch**. For just \$5 a week you can adopt a child's lunch. This was our saving grace, we had found something that people could afford, and it didn't really affect their own budget. The money would change a child's life.

The Changes we have made

- Our golden rule is that we deal directly with school and by-pass the parents. This way we know children are getting the food.
- In the past 4 years we have had a little girl on our lunch programme have her very first slice of cake, she had no idea what it was as she had never seen cake before ... she was 7 at the time.
- We stopped a young man from bin diving (taking food from the rubbish bin for his lunch). We not only gave him lunch but the kids also stopped bullying him.
- We now also supply our lunch kids with school stationery, school camps and school uniforms where needed. AND anything else that we see fit.
- We also created The Cinderella Programme where we take year 12 and 13 students and give them a magical makeover on Ball day, all expenses paid. This day is actually life changing for them in every way.

We are now a registered Charity and are called The Kai Kitchen Trust

The money side of things !

- BBQ – allows us to be seen by the public and raises awareness
- Social Media – its free and we are building a huge awareness and it's a great way to get people talking about our charity
- Our best asset: \$5 adopt a lunch is a minimal amount, but people know they are really making a difference.
- Grants: we have really struggled with grants, but the team at TSB Community Trust have been amazing and extremely helpful, we owe a lot of our growth to them.

We have found that by building trust in our community the money will come

We hold annual events such as annual school mufti days and a Car Rally, again this is about being seen and raising awareness in the home.

What hasn't worked for us!

3rd party events – having a show on stage that we are supposed to get the revenue from.

So where to for us !

- We aim to be Taranaki wide in 5 years
- To be self-reliant in 5 years by using our adopt a lunch scheme
- To be that charity that everyone talks about and loves
- To keep changing lives and offering hope to children in our communities

Thank you

From The Kai Kitchen Trust Team

Web: <http://www.thekaikitchen.co.nz/index.html>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TheKaiKitchen>

