

# Volunteer army of 100 will reunite father with family

## COMMUNITY HEROES



We celebrate the achievements of those who have toiled, often without reward, to make life better for others. Today we meet a community centre volunteer.

by Michele McPherson  
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A deserving Merivale family will receive the gift of a healthy home thanks to a \$75,000 community makeover project being driven by Mount Maunganui's Mt Mosaic church.

The 10-day makeover, set to begin on October 1, will be held at the Hampton Terrace home of Rhismanda "Babe" Hunapo, 29, and her four children, who range in age from 4 to 10.

"I totally believe that it will change our life. It's hard to believe that it's actually going to happen," Miss Hunapo said.

The family was nominated to receive the makeover by the committee at the Merivale Community Centre where Miss Hunapo works as a volunteer.

The project is the second led by Mt Mosaic. The first involved a weekend makeover of widow Margie Rewiti's Mount Maunganui house in October 2008.

During the upcoming makeover an extra bedroom will be added to the house making it possible for Miss Hunapo's par-



**MAKE UP:** The Makeover Project — Merivale project leader Joel Milgate (right) and head of the construction team Brian Miller at the makeover house in Hampton Terrace.

PICTURE / JOHN BORREN 040809JB18BOP

ents to move home from Australia where her father, who is in a wheelchair, is forced to live in a rest home.

At present the family home of 22 years is unsuitable for him to return to.

Tauranga builder Brian Miller, who is heading up the project's construction team, said work on the home had been designed with creating a safe environment in mind.

"It's more focused on a healthy home rather than a show home," he said.

At present the floorboards in the home are rotting and the exterior cladding is full of holes.

"It's just so mouldy,

everything's falling to pieces," said project manager Joel Milgate, who has been working since April to secure sponsorship, labour and materials for the project.

The makeover will also include an upgrade of the driveway, fences and gardens at the property. New furniture for the home will be built at Mt Mosaic.

Mr Milgate estimates about 100 people would be working on the project on each of the 10 days.

He hopes the Makeover Project, once complete, will become a community-driven initiative, with the format adopted by other volunteer groups or organisa-

tions in the Western Bay.

■ An art exhibition to raise money for the The Makeover Project Merivale will be held at Mosaic on August 15 and 16. *Such Great Heights* will feature the work of local artists including Bryce Brown and Lynn Smiley.

The exhibition will be open at Mosaic, 37 Newton St, Mount Maunganui from 5pm to 8pm on August 14 and 10am to 3pm the following day.

For further information, to make a donation or volunteer for The Makeover Project — Merivale, visit [www.themakeoverproject.org](http://www.themakeoverproject.org)

# ng house soon to be dry

Indoor flooding, peeling wallpaper and floating vinyl will be distant memories for Tauranga woman Rhismanda Hunapo when The Makeover Project-Merivale gets to work on her home in October.

Rhismanda's 1980s style house has become run down over the years and is now a cold and damp place to live, with a seemingly endless list of necessary repairs.

Wall paper is peeling from the walls, vinyl is floating in the bathroom and kitchen and cladding cracks and damage are causing significant mould in the rooms.

This is all going to change for Rhismanda and her family, though, after being nominated for the complete home makeover by Merivale Community Centre.

Mount Mosaic community activator Joel Milgate says the planned changes will be drastic.

"Basically we will leave the roof and start again," says Joel.

"We plan to add a new bedroom and en suite, remodel and renovate the existing house, add wheelchair access and open bathrooms. We will also landscape the property with veggie gardens and fruit trees. We want to present them with a house that is warm, dry and easy to move around in; something that adds value to the way they live."

Joel says Rhismanda was nominated for the makeover because she is a volunteer at the Merivale Community Centre and is an amazing and selfless woman.

She lives with her four children who call the house 'The Homestead'. Rhismanda's parents are currently living in Australia and would love to return to New Zealand but are restricted by the wheelchair her father uses.

The project is not cheap. Mount Mosaic is raising \$75,000 to remodel the house and is currently looking for volunteers and sponsors for the makeover to become a reality.

*Mt Mosaic will makeover the house of a Merivale family in October and is looking for volunteers and sponsors to help them.*

*Pictured: construction manager for the project Brian Miller and Mt Mosaic community projects coordinator Joel Milgate.*



"Right now we have one third of our target," says Joel.

"Thank you to those companies which have already come onboard, including Air New Zealand, Energy Options, Form Construction, v.marketing, Stanley Group, Ricoh, Kale Print, Urban Lounge Interiors, Chaos Harmony, Tauranga City Council, Stuart Stevenson Landscape Design, Eco Solar, Mico Plumbing, JA Russell Ltd, Open Doors, Tasman Doors, Tauranga Plasterers, Plumbing

Works and Gerrand Flooring for their donations and support."

The Makeover Project is a Mount Mosaic initiative aimed at doing practical projects that help change the way community members live and create pathways for people to give, volunteer and serve others in the community.

For information about The Makeover Project-Merivale and to become a sponsor, visit [www.themakeoverproject.org.nz](http://www.themakeoverproject.org.nz)

**By Kirsten Pope**

Mt Mosaic is hosting a collaborative art exhibition on Friday and Saturday, August 14 and 15 at its premise at 37 Newton St. Such Great Heights: Art Exhibition will display the donated and commissioned works of 25 professional and amateur local artists. All money raised from the sale of art benefits The Makeover Project-Merivale. The exhibition will be open 5-8pm Friday August 14 with live music and 10am-3pm Saturday August 15. Entry free.