

To the Wonderful Surgites

After so much preparation it was awesome to get stuck into the Surge weekend with you all. Our hopes and expectations really were exceeded by what happened over the weekend. The Surge team served over 35 houses and I still have people coming to the office asking if it's too late to get put on the list.

Many of the families were amazed at the concept of people travelling from around the country, volunteering their time and doing manual labour to help others.

For many of the families you did jobs that there was no way they could have done without assistance.

For some of the new families you gave them a wonderful welcome to NZ

We had over 20 people from the community volunteer during the weekend and some have asked if we can do this regularly. So we're setting up a volunteer group for those keen to do gardens and cleaning for the new refugee families. Surge will live on in Hamilton! One man enjoyed doing the gardens so much he went the next weekend to 2 other houses in the community and dug gardens for them.

One family called to say they loved their plants so much that they had just finished watering them even though it had just rained. (possibly not a good idea...) But they were so keen to look after them.

I'm pretty sure you've blown your budget on tip fees and ethnic catering but in the process have demonstrated such wonderful generosity.

I quite liked this comment emailed to us by a family...

In my house, went a group of young people, and my daughter was so happy with them. Was a nice team, they were not lazy, they had a lot of energy. They taught me to do my garden. They did a good teamwork. They didn't receive anything, just because my daughter insisted, finally they took a drink. They just wanted to give and receive nothing in return

The fundraiser dinner raised over \$1,100 which we now arranging to be sent to the Horn of Africa famine relief.

On behalf of Refugee Services we would like to extend our appreciation to you. You have really made a difference to our community.

Kind regards,

**Rachel O'Connor**

WAIKATO MANAGER

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