

HELP US SAVE OUR CENTRE!

The North East Valley Baptist Community Centre Trust, Valley Project and Valley Community Workspace have joined forces to help save a valuable community asset for our community for generations to come. However, we also need community financial support to get the centre in community ownership.

The North East Valley Baptist Community Centre (NEVBCC) is a community centre located in the former North East Valley Baptist Church. The church held its last meeting in the early 2020's due to a declining and ageing congregation, a reflection of the societal shift of religious importance outside the traditional Easter and Christmas Holiday periods. The centre has since been leased to the North East Valley Baptist Community Trust to provide educational programmes, community spaces and kitchen for the community to use for a small fee. This work has honoured the legacy of Mr Calder who helped found the North East Valley Baptist Church in the 1880's, and wanted it not to just be a church, but a space for the community to enjoy as well.

This first ever Special Edition Valley Voice has been brought together by the a team from The Valley Project, Valley Community Workspace and Valley Baptist Community Centre. We hope you are able to see the value this building has for your community. When a community is well connected, it is a thriving and healthy one. This connection is what the centre provides.

A brief history of the site:

Before the 1880's the site was a largely undeveloped area of land, close to the former

North East Valley Town Hall and North East Valley Normal School. The site was owned by Mr Calder (who Calder Ave is named after) who was an active member of the community and made his riches in gold and latterly the construction industry. The church opened in 1883. Mr Calder donated the land for the building of a church and manse to be located behind the soon to be erected church. The Church was already bursting at the seams by 1889 and by 1890 the church had further expanded to meet physically growing demand.

In 1901 the church severed its ties with the Hanover Street Baptist Church and a special service was held in April of that year to commemorate their independence.

The roaring 20's, the congregation had outgrown the original enlarged church's footprint significantly and after multiple delays including the Depression and World War II the foundation stone for the church we know today was laid August 1951. The church was declared open, by Mr George Calder (son of Mr Calder) who was the first person to enter the new church buildings. Significant demand for youth programmes in the early 1950's saw the planning and building of the Hall in 1954. In 1959 the all age Sunday School was commenced, North East Valley being the first Baptist Church in the South Island to do so. This proved to be a great blessing to the church as this new innovation saw it rolled out across the motu. The North Road house adjacent to the church was brought in 1965 to fulfill the office space and storage needs of the growing Sunday School.

From around the 1970's the congregation began to decline. The church remained an active player in the North East Valley Community, founding the North East Valley Playgroup, running support for those with disabilities and helping be a founding partner for The Valley Project. The church in later years played a pivotal role as providing a space with a good kitchen and sturdy floors after the demolition of The North East Valley Town Hall in 1971. The church hall became the de facto Town Hall for many decades since.

The loss of such a facility will be widely felt across the wider North Dunedin Community. Apart from The University of Otago, or schools (outside school hours) there is no community facility north of the Dunedin Public Library Dunningham Suite that is multipurpose, comes with a substantial kitchen for a relatively small rate of charge.

There is an argument, we have The Valley Project buildings. That is true, but The Project capacity sits around 50, where the centre can hold upwards of 200, for community events The Project tends to run them from the centre to allow for capacity, the recent community dinner of over 150 attendees highlighted the importance of such a large space.

Let's save the centre for generations to use in years to come. Flick to the middle section to see how you can help and the proposed plans for the building.

- James Sutherland



A bustling community hub

The Valley Baptist Community Centre (VBCC) is a bustling community hub that runs many programmes for families within the North Dunedin area and hosts many local groups.

Our weekly playgroup has been running for over 30 years and much of the population within NEV and surrounding areas has attended as a child or with their own children - or both. We also have a licensed early childhood centre running Space groups where parents/caregivers learn and grow with their under two year olds under the guidance of our fully registered teachers. In the March 2024-March 2025 period

we supported 74 families through our four weekly Space programmes.

Our facility is also home to a diverse range of community groups. Within a week we have four different dance groups, a local home based care organisations playgroup, a martial arts and tai chi group, Steady As You Go a fall prevention exercise program, a bible studies group, a first aid course and up to two different antenatal classes.

We also provide a permanent home base for the Dunedin City Toy Library that has a mostly local membership

of approximately 75 families currently and the Community Communications Technology Trust (Com2Tech) a group that provides technology help and donations for individuals, schools and not for profit organisations in the community and has a huge Ewaste reduction focus.

The large wooden floored hall we have available for hire is a huge drawcard for the community and is regularly used for community/group dinners, birthday parties, dance festivals and other events.



A Place of Welcome and Connection

When the dancing stops the true cost of losing our community centre.

Like many newcomers, I was searching for connection when I arrived in New Zealand in 1995. The community centre quickly became a cornerstone of my new life here through Adult and Community Education workshops. What began as participation gradually evolved into contribution as I found my place in this community.

Very quickly I began teaching various dance traditions in these spaces. The modest hall with its well-worn wooden floor wasn't fancy, but it was accessible, affordable, and welcoming to all.

The dance activities I've been able to facilitate at the community centre deserve special mention, as they illustrate how vital affordable, accessible space is to cultural enrichment. Over the years, these rooms have hosted countless hours of dance in many forms: West African Drumming and Dance, Jane Austen tea dances, English country dance sessions, French dancing workshops and classes that culminated in several Bastille Day celebrations.

Beyond my classes, the centre provided space for essential preparation—for our performances and for community parades (graduation parades, mid-winter carnival parades, Santa parades). My dance groups needed somewhere to rehearse, and the community centre made these public celebrations possible by providing an affordable rehearsal space.



Recently I unearthed old photos from one of our early Bastille Day Bals. I was struck by how many familiar faces appeared - people I hadn't realised had been with me since those early days. Some of these same people still attend events and classes today. Without the community centre, these enduring friendships and cultural traditions might never have formed.

My collaborative dance work with Michael Parmenter illustrates another dimension of what these spaces enable. As pioneers of Balfolk Dance in New Zealand, we've spent countless hours in the community centre researching, exploring, and developing our approach to this European community dance form. When Michael travels from Auckland, the centre becomes our studio.

This important work simply wouldn't be possible without an affordable, suitable space. Our dance research, which connects New Zealanders to European cultural traditions and creates new communities of dancers across the country, has its heart in the wooden-floored hall of our community centre.

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A place that makes things possible

The potential loss of our community centre is not just about losing a building. It's about losing a hub that has fostered connection in an age of increasing disconnection. The centre's central location, versatility, and accessibility have made it possible for people of all ages and backgrounds to gather, learn, and celebrate together. Its affordability has allowed grassroots initiatives to flourish where they might otherwise have remained just ideas.

If we lose these facilities, we won't just lose a building, we'll lose decades of community memory and the infrastructure for future connection.

Spaces that bring people together face-to-face, resources that serve the broader, intergenerational community are more vital than ever. They provide something that cannot

be replicated online or in commercial venues - genuine community.

For me personally, this community centre has been instrumental in everything I've accomplished locally - both in dance and in community work. Without these facilities, I simply could not have made the contributions I have to our community's cultural and social life over the past 30 years.

If it has touched your life as it has mine, please join the effort to save it. Together, we can ensure that this space continues to foster connection, creativity, and community for decades to come.

This place has made so many things possible for our community over the decades. Now it's our turn to make something possible for it—a future where it continues to serve generations to come.

- Kate Grace



A place that connects communities at every stage of life

When I was the sole community worker for the Project and editor of the Valley Voice, my work included finding ways of bringing the community together. One of my initiatives was establishing community dinners at the centre. These weren't just meals—they were carefully designed opportunities for connection across different segments of our community that might otherwise never interact.



These dinners have bridged divides between newcomers and long-time residents, between generations, and between different cultural groups. They've provided a dignified way for people experiencing loneliness or isolation to connect with others without stigma.

My office at the time was located in a high mezzanine above the main hall.

Friday mornings were - and still are - reserved for a dance class for older people. From my perch above, I would pause my work to watch them gather. They came as much for the social connection and customary cups of tea as for the dancing itself. I remember being deeply moved watching these older dancers. They moved slowly, carefully, and there was something profoundly beautiful in their determination to keep dancing despite age, despite physical limitations, despite all the reasons that might keep one seated on the sidelines.

When my children were small, the weekly playgroup held in these facilities became my lifeline. In the beautiful chaos of early parenthood, those few hours were a precious respite. I could arrive with my little ones and simply breathe—watch them explore while I enjoyed rare, uninterrupted conversations with other parents who understood exactly what I was going through.

Now, years later, my own daughter brings her baby—my grandchild—to a parenting programme in the very same rooms where I once found such solace. Three generations of our family have now found support within these walls. This continuity across generations isn't unique to my family; it's a common story among long-time community members.

The constant flow of activities and people made networking effortless. I witnessed



firsthand how the unique layout of the building created natural opportunities for different groups to meet and connect, cross-pollinating ideas and forming relationships that might never have happened otherwise.

Seemingly random connections are actually the invisible infrastructure of community resilience. They create networks of support, spark creative collaborations, and build understanding across different ages, backgrounds, and interests. This kind of organic community-building can't be planned or programmed; it needs physical space to happen naturally.

From toddlers to seniors, our community centre has provided space for people of all ages to gather, learn, and connect. Few other facilities in our area can claim such broad intergenerational impact.

- Kate Grace

Dunedin's Digital Technology support started here in the Valley



The Community Communications Technology Trust (Com2Tech) is all about community. Their goal is Digital Inclusion and equitable access to technology for all. We originated as a family organisation begun due to interactions based on the VBCC. Supporting people of all ages needing help navigating this new digital world we live in.

The CEO Amy Souquet is well known around the VBCC, having been a part of the running of the playgroup, Space programme, building administration and management of the facility for the last 17 years.

The Community Centre was where Com2Tech started. The Com2Tech logo we love to this day was even designed by a past NEVplaygroup mum and the current Valley Voice editor herself, Krystiana Brzuza/ Hardesty.

Com2Tech started providing support for the VBCC groups and attendees, problem solving the digital issues brought to Amy by members of the centre. Then, eventually extending that support further into the community. Creating a template for digital support dropins that were copied and now run in 5 community spaces around Dunedin.

During COVID the VBCC became an important part of safe delivery of internet and devices to families as it provided us a safe pickup and drop off point for people that were suddenly isolated from the world due to lockdowns or needing to get online to do schoolwork with no access to a computer or internet that were able to very quickly provide from their growing e-waste. By building our community trust within the VBCC connected to the community we have been able to truly say we are community-led.



Com2tech would not be the organisation it is today if not for the support the community centre and its people working to support all the organisations working under its roof inclusively, connecting attendees with all the support they know are provided throughout the year.

The North Dunedin Community has nothing like this multi-use space available throughout the week for organisations groups to support this Community. If it is lost it will be irreplaceable. Please help us save our centre.

- Amy Souquet



North East Valley Steady As You Go (SAYGO)

The steady as you go falls prevention program designed and coordinated by Age Concern is for older adults. It focuses on improving strength, balance and flexibility.

The group has been meeting weekly since 2011 and is a vital part of our local community providing a safe and social space for older residents to stay warm, active and healthy. Where else would we find a space where we can hear the laughter and singing of the mums and baby group from the other room?

We have recently been informed that the venue may no longer be available to us. This news has come as a shock to our members and we are worried about the impact it will have on our SAYGO group. Our group is more than just an exercise group, it is a social hub, a support network and a lifeline for many of our members.

Without this venue we risk losing the connections and friendships that have been built over time.

We urge anyone who values the health and wellbeing of our older community to support the fundraising to retain this iconic venue.

- Norma Dick Peer, Leader SAYGO



Folk dancing for fun

We are a small group of people who enjoy themselves dancing mainly European folk dances.

Although we are taught what to do, when the music starts the dance has been known to become a little freestyle but this is normally corrected with a laugh and all comes together with a good natured banter that adds to the enjoyment.

Socialising is important and we have a break with a hot drink and often a homemade cookie. Discussions take place on many subjects.

Although many are NEV residents, people come from all over Dunedin to enjoy the fun.

The community hall is a great place to dance. It has a classic wooden floor with great heating from heat pumps and good kitchen facilities. Most importantly the hall has office staff that are always welcoming and helpful.

- Stuart & Yvone Reid



Kung Fu and Tai Chi

Each Tuesday and Thursday evening people gather at the NEV Community Centre to learn and practice Tai

Chi Chuan. Our group practices Sing Ong Tai Chi as the Dunedin branch of Chan's Martial Arts International which this year is celebrating its 50th anniversary. For more information see www.chansmartialarts.com. I also use the hall for Kung Fu training.



Tai Chi Chuan originated in China as a system of exercise and self defense, and is a great way to relax and exercise at the same time. People who practice regularly enjoy many health benefits such as reduced muscle and mental tension, and improved posture, balance, stability and coordination. For those recovering from injury, or seeking to improve their ease of movement and stamina it can provide a simple and convenient way forward.

In class we encourage a friendly, relaxed environment where the members can learn and study Tai Chi together, and enjoy each other's company. Where Tai Chi Chuan is practised also enhances the benefits it offers. A venue that is calming and pleasant, with warm, good air is desirable. Around the world, Tai Chi Chuan is often done in contemplative places such as gardens, or natural areas near mountains, lakes or forests. While training outside in Dunedin is not possible all year round, the Community Centre provides an excellent location, with its generous hall, beautiful wooden floor, and warm, airy feel. This was something I noticed as soon as I first went to view the hall as a potential new location for classes a few years ago. It has proved to be just right, with some special features that we all appreciate: the heat pumps that quickly warm the room in winter, the spacious wooden floor and ceiling, ample seating and the convenient kitchen. Being just off North Rd, the venue is easy for people to get to.

We would be disappointed if the Community Centre closed, as it is a very good place for us to learn and practice. A new venue might not offer the special mix of benefits that the Centre provides, or may prove too costly or inconvenient for people to have regular practice. I believe this would take away an important community venue that offers value to the North East Valley and Dunedin. Tai Chi is fun, rewarding, healing and strengthening for individuals and communities, and has benefits for everyone.

Marcus Simons
Instructor, Chan's Martial Arts International



How can you help?

There are multiple ways you are able to help save the centre!

1. Buy a brick. You have the option of buying a brick of the building. Your name will be recorded on a brick supporters wall to be placed in the hall. There are three options for buying a brick:
 - a. 500 bricks available at \$1000 each (preferred option for businesses to buy)
 - b. 1000 bricks available at \$500 each
 - c. 1000 bricks available at \$250 each

All of the brick donations are tax deductible.

2. Give a donation via our donation portal raisley. The portal will generate a tax receipt for you to claim back on your taxes at the end of the financial year. You can find the page here: Save Our Centre (<https://save-the-valley-baptist-community-centre.raiselysite.com/>)

3. Give a loan to the Community Centre. This is a social enterprise investment where an amount can be donated and a social investment contract is signed where over a 30 year period your loan will be repaid at a 2% interest rate over the life of the social investment loan.
4. If you have any ideas or connections where large sums of money are able to be raised, the working group is very keen to hear from you. Please get in touch with office@nevbctrust.org to share your thoughts.

The working group currently has almost \$250,000 committed to the proposed sale. We are also applying to funders throughout the country. The Baptists have indicated that the three properties are worth \$2.1 million all together. We are wanting to raise at least the majority of this capital before considering taking out a loan with a bank to cover any shortfall of fundraising.

This is why we are asking the community to come together to save this asset, the loss of such a facility will be felt for generations to come and this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to own a community space for the community by the community.

The working group has made it clear that if sale of the properties is unsuccessful then the money will be returned to the donor or the donor will have the option of donating their funds to another charity in the community.

Your donation can help save the centre.



Future Plans for the Site

If the working group is successful, a new charitable trust will be set up to manage the facilities on behalf of the three organisations that have come together to form the working group. Costings have been done on the assumption that the two houses on the wider site are included in the sale. The rental income from the two houses would cover any form of loan repayments and cover all expenses related to the heating of the buildings.

Within in the first 10 years of ownership the working group is wanting to undertake the following:

- Replace the roof across the hall and church,
- Instal solar panels to offset energy costs,
- Upgrade the internal heating system,
- Upgrade the kitchen to meet new commercial kitchen standards,
- Repair and renovate the two upstairs spaces to convert into office space to rent/meeting rooms,
- Instal a movable dividable wall into the church space to allow for better use of the space,
- Renovate the interior of the church and hall,
- Install a social enterprise cafe in the former Sunday School rooms to provide employment and upskilling to some of our most vulnerable in the community, or where employment may not be possible elsewhere. We are also hoping to partner with the Bowling Club to deliver a satellite of the club in North Dunedin,
- Develop the lounge, which the Space programme currently operates from to be more user friendly and fit for purpose,
- Undertake extensive renovations to the housing to ensure Healthy Homes standards are maintained or exceeded,
- Installation of 'The World's Steepest Street Post Office' and gift store to capitalise on the close proximity to Baldwin Street and tourism market.

These projects have been estimated to cost around \$2 million dollars at most to complete. Majority of this work will be funded through funding applications. It is the working groups wish that the space retains its core function to be for community use, whilst increasing revenue streams to create long term sustainability.

The aim is once any loan is paid off and sufficient capital is put aside for repairs and maintenance that a dividend is to be paid annually to the three organisations to help continue their work within the community as well, this would also help keep any financial gain from the site is recirculated within the local community and economy.



Toy Library

When the Dunedin City Toy Library needed to relocate in 2019, the Valley Baptist Community Centre Trust provided us with a welcoming home in their excellent central location on North Rd.

From the sunny ex-Sunday School room, our toy library runs sessions twice weekly for our 60-plus member families. We have members that bus, bike, and walk to the library and the building's drive-through driveway is a game changer for families as cars can pull safely right to our front door for easy loading, weather dodging or kid wrangling. We get more than a few Baldwin St tourists learning about toy libraries for the first time, and kids love to try out our wheeled toys in the hall when it's not in use.

The building has been a fantastic home for us and we have loved sharing the space with other groups and contributing to a well-used and well-loved and vibrant community centre.

While our toy library will continue regardless of location, we support the trust's efforts in preserving an accessible community space for the benefit of all valley whanau.



Tūranga mō ngā Mokopuna

Kia ora e te whānau!

Ko Kate McAnelly tōhoku ikoa, my name's Kate McAnelly and I'm the Lead Practitioner of Tūranga mō ngā Mokopuna, which is a small not-for-profit kaupapa I founded in late 2021 to support early childhood kaiako (teachers) to strengthen the inclusivity of their practice through the provision of bespoke, research-evidenced disability, equity and rights-oriented professional learning and development.

Tūranga mō ngā Mokopuna, which translates as a place of belonging for all children, has been fortunate since its inception to be able to call on the support of the North East Valley Baptist Community Trust as an umbrella organisation. This support has taken many forms, but has consisted primarily of the provision of a physical space in which to undertake Tūranga mō ngā Mokopuna's mahi (work) - that physical space being the Valley Baptist Community Centre.

Having this space available to me has allowed me to progress and grow Tūranga mō ngā Mokopuna's kaupapa and reach - locally, nationally and internationally - while also benefiting from a warm, well-resourced, safe and friendly 'home' environment. As a result, the Valley Baptist Community Centre can be said to have played a critical role in (and thus be directly responsible for) having supported many, many early childhood

kaiako here in Ōtepoti Dunedin, within Aotearoa New Zealand, and around the world to transform their practice as a result of participating in Tūranga mō ngā Mokopuna's kaupapa. This is one thing amongst many that the Valley Baptist Community Centre can be exceptionally proud of in serving its community.

Losing access to the Valley Baptist Community Centre would have a significant adverse impact on Tūranga mō ngā Mokopuna's ability to undertake its mahi going forward, and so it's my sincere hope that we can band together to secure its future as the beating heart of our community, the best neighbourhood to live, learn and play that ever was.

Kā mihi manaaki
Dr Kate McAnelly
Mātanga Ārahi |
Lead Practitioner
Tūranga mō ngā
Mokopuna



Not everyone that comes to the table sits.
Some lie on the floor underneath, some stim and flap nearby, some run around the table, some twirl and dance at the side.

Everyone is valuable.
Even if you don't sit, you still deserve space at the table.

STALEN'S WAY



Playgroup at the Community centre has been running for over 30 years now. It started out under the church congregation as a way for the families that attended to meet and socialise outside the services and provide a support system for each other. Over the years the playgroup moved away from being solely for the church and into the beloved community playgroup that we have now with anyone from any walk of life that cares for children under five welcome to come along and stay for as long as they want during a session.

In its heyday playgroup ran for two days a week, all day Tuesday and Wednesday in reaction to many parents having children that attended the nearby kindergarten and/or school and not wanting to go all the way home with younger children. After dropping the other children they would come and spend time here giving their children a chance to socialise and let off steam in our big open space - a sanity saver in the colder winter months when cabin fever is a real thing! In later years we have reduced the sessions to just once a week on a Wednesday but it is still well attended most weeks with families building great connections and relationships with others in the North Dunedin (and sometimes greater Dunedin) area.

One of the things we pride ourselves in is our ability to help our families in tangible ways and not just as a safe welcoming space. We provide a hot lunch to the parents that attend, some firm favourites are dahl, pizza and of course the often requested macaroni cheese. There is always tea and coffee and

a snack available as well. Making sure that people leave here with a warm full tummy makes us feel like we have done our job. There is often clothes swapping going on between attendees, passing on baby supplies that families have grown out of and lots of practical advice and help that goes on every week.

We have had so many valley residents come through our doors to playgroup that we are now seeing parents bringing their children along that attended as a child themselves. We have people that have lived in the valley their whole lives that look on the place with fond memories and nostalgia as a place where they were able to share the early years of parenting which are some of the hardest but most rewarding times that were made that much easier by the people that attended playgroup with them.

I'll never forget moving to the Valley myself 12 years ago and not knowing a single person there. I read the Valley Voice not long afterwards and saw a tiny ad in the 'what's on' section that mentioned playgroup. I plucked up the courage to ring Michael who was the supervisor at the time and asked if I could come along. I never in a million years thought that 9 years later I would not only be the playgroup supervisor myself but one of the building administrators and facilitating our Space sessions as well. I see it as a true testament to the Community Centre being the heart of the Valley and playgroup is a space where anyone in the Valley whether new or old can come and find their village.

- Rachael McCann



Contra Dance

I have been teaching various forms of community dance in Dunedin for at least 30yrs and during this time I have seen the gradual loss of venues. We used to dance in community halls, church halls and school halls but many of these have been condemned or just redeveloped and in many cases turned into flats. School halls have been carpeted which might be great for the kids but means they are no longer suitable for dance groups. The Baptist Community Hall is one of the last of its kind and if this is lost to us, many groups are unlikely to find anywhere else to meet. We keep being told that dancing is great for the brain and for fitness but we need a place to be able to do it. Please help us keep this venue for the Dunedin community.

- Bernadette Berry



In 2014 whilst at the NEV playgroup there were nine people attending with their children that were all pregnant. We realised that of those nine less than a quarter of them had family in Dunedin or a significant support structure to help them with their older children or the impending baby. A few of us that had been at playgroup for a while were early childhood teachers and/or home based carers wanted to find something more that we could do to support the families in and around North East Valley. After some searching we found the Space program and realised that it was the perfect fit.

It took a while (and at least one of our own babies) for us to work through the training and get things set up but in February 2016 we were ready to go with two sessions and some enthusiastic knowledgeable facilitators.

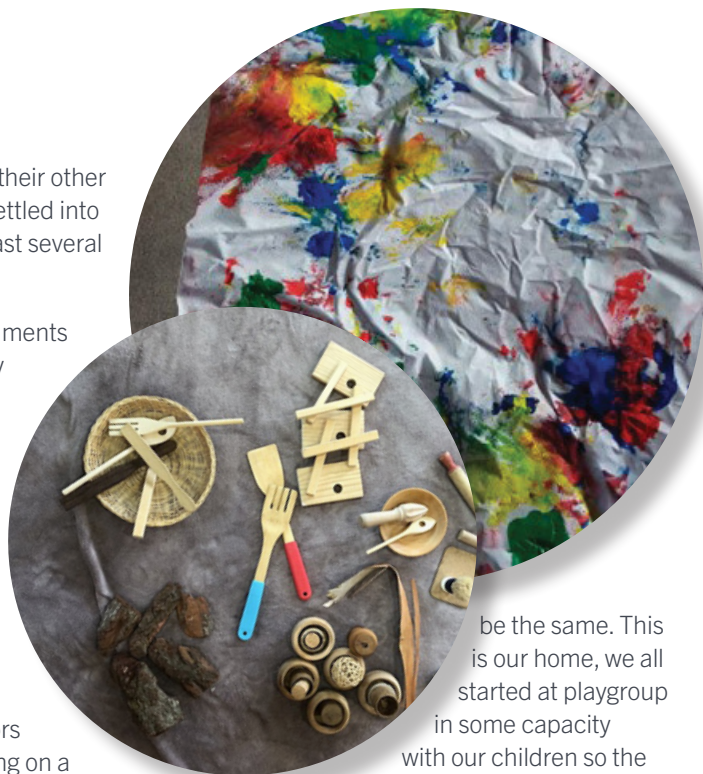


We set up the Valley Baptist Community Centre lounge as a warm, welcoming space for a group of eight new parents on the first Monday afternoon and five parents on the Friday morning. Since then we have grown more and more, at one point we were running five sessions a week with up to 10 whānau attending each session

but due to our facilitators and their other work commitments we have settled into four sessions a week for the past several years.

One of our biggest accomplishments was becoming a licensed Early Childhood Centre in February 2018 after two years of hard work behind the scenes with paperwork, building upgrades, staff training and lots of checking. As well as meaning that we had the backing of the Ministry that we were doing things right this also meant that we were finally able to pay our facilitators who until now had been working on a completely volunteer basis even though over 50% (now 100%) of them were fully trained ECE teachers. It is harder to track exact numbers of families that came through our Space groups before we were licensed but an estimated 60 families attended in those first two years. Since we have become licensed though it is much easier to track and from Feb 2018 - April 2024 we have provided a Space group for 274 families who have lived as far south as Henley, north as Waikouaiti and east as Harington point meaning this is a place for anyone in the greater Dunedin area not just North Dunedin and many of those families have come with subsequent children as they cherished the support and information that the groups provided.

As facilitators we are in it for the long haul and will do our best to continue running our Space groups elsewhere if we lose the Community Centre, but it just won't



be the same. This is our home, we all started at playgroup in some capacity with our children so the Community Centre means

more to us than just somewhere to work. It is somewhere that we got to build our village and find other parents to share the parenting burden with when we were new to this parenting game. Now we love that we are able to provide a place where people feel safe and secure enough to share with us some of their most vulnerable parenting moments and build incredibly supportive groups and would be devastated if we lost that privilege.



Families testimonials

- Having a SPACE and playgroup venue within easy walking distance is a fantastic benefit to those living in the Valley with young children. The venue is large enough to cater for active children and also operates a well-resourced toy library. Losing the venue would be a real shame for our community. - Sim, Owen & Finn.
- “Our SPACE group was a lifeline during the first year of our child’s life. We met so many people at the same stage as us, and made friends to lean on. Without the community centre, our SPACE group wouldn’t have been able to operate and provide that vital support”. - Anonymous
- The Baptist Community Centre has been a huge part of my journey into parenthood and I don’t quite know where I would be without it! - Anonymous
- From antenatal classes, to SPACE parenting group and weekly playgroup, the centre is a community hub for parents of young bubs. A place where we can ask questions, make friends, learn about ourselves and our babies, and where our babies can also play, learn, and grow. A place to find a listening ear, a muffin or biscuit, and a spare pair of hands to cuddle bubs while this tired mama has 5 minutes to enjoy a still hot cup of tea. The centre closing would be a huge loss for parents both within North East Valley and further afield. They say it takes a village, and without the centre I know my village, and that of many other new parents would be much smaller. - Amanda
- I'd recommend joining Space at NEV for a great opportunity to meet other parents, learn about child development and support your babe to interact with others. - Anonymous
- When me and my family first moved to New Zealand, the NEV playgroup was one of the first place we found for our child. We were so grateful to have it as a great place for my 2 yo daughter to have fun and make friends. I especially appreciate the way the playgroup allows a diverse group of kids and parents to connect. We need to keep it running! - Christal
- I have loved coming to the Valley Baptist Community Centre for SPACE. It is a toasty, safe and welcoming centre, in a convenient location with parking. The facilities are just what I need to care for my baby and enjoy time with my community. I have learned so much, made such good friends and enjoyed many events, I truly can't imagine the NEV without the Valley Baptist Community Center. The world needs more third spaces and especially more child friendly places- NOT LESS! - Cori
- From the year I moved back to North East Valley as an adult in 2010, there have been a wide range of community events and support that I've accessed via the community centre. From my first ever community dinner where I met new people and found connections, to accessing kai, to utilising the kitchen and hall space for groups, hiring the space for a family event, volunteering at things like the Winter Warmer Market and taking my nephew to the Toy Library, there have always been needs met for me and my whānau in this space. Additionally, although I haven't utilised them myself, I have recommended the space programme and playgroups to many friends, family and clients over many years, as well as the services for youth and whānau for digital inclusion. All of these opportunities and resources have supported the creation of a much more resilient community and the lack of space would create an enormous gap. It is a space that serves to support social cohesion across ages, ethnicities and economic backgrounds, similar to the role community centres and libraries play in other suburbs. - Anonymous
- I'm thankful to have enrolled in this Space Mum and Bubs programme. Being able to go to a Space that welcomes new mothers with their new babies is vital for my mental well-being as motherhood can be challenging. I hope to go to this Space for as long as they are able to host it as I have met so many lovely people there whom I would like to keep in touch with. The hosts are also wonderful in their roles and as people - they are truly a blessing. I hope the Valley Baptist Community Centre will stay and continue their legacy of serving mothers and the next generation. - Alyce
- My family attended the Space sessions and it was such an essential part of (especially first-time) new parenthood. The discussions with other new parents and support from the facilitators was both a highlight of the week and a way to make new friends. Our group still meets occasionally but I would see individual families more often than that and one of my child's best friends is another child from space. An added benefit of the North East Valley space programme is that as your child grows up further there is the opportunity to continue with the same venue and Rachael through the playgroup and toy library and continue the relationships and support. - Tarn
- As a new mum, having been able to come to Space at the community centre has been a godsend; connecting with other parents, being guided by Rachael and socialising with my child has been truly amazing. I would be sad to see the community centre closed and not being able to carry out the important mahi currently taking place - Anonymous
- Being new to motherhood and the community, SPACE provided me with support to help navigate the challenges and share the joys of this most special time. I'm forever thankful for the connections I've made and for Frankie, my wee girl, to make some of her very first friends. Having a group of parents and amazing facilitators where I could freely ask questions and get practical advice and help truly made all the difference. Groups like these are a saving grace to parents without family and/or “a village” nearby to help ease into parenthood. - Nadia
- SPACE provided a vital connection and support group for me and my daughter Freya when learning the ways of being a first time parent. I so appreciated having a safe space with friendly teachers where we could learn, laugh and share hard times. This was also an amazing space for Freya to feel safe to explore the world and make new friends. 100% love SPACE. - Catherine
- I attended the antenatal classes, SPACE and playgroup at the centre, and I am a frequent user of the toy library. The centre served as a huge part of my life when I became a Mum. I highly value the staff, groups and other offerings, and I would be sad for myself, and all those Mum's to be, that won't get to experience such a vital support network at the centre if it is taken away from the community. - Ellie
- The Valley Baptist Community Centre has been a cornerstone of the Valley for as long as I can remember. From attending playgroup as a child, to spending time there while my mum worked for the Valley Project, to the many dance classes and events organised by her, to now attending Space with my own child. The Baptist Hall provides so much to the community. Losing it would be losing an integral part of NEV. - Ondine

- Being an immigrant and first time mum, SPACE class was an awesome opportunity to get out of the house, meet other parents and their babies. It became part of our routine, it was nice to have something to look forward to every week. Would be an absolute shame if NEV would lose the centre. - Yoshi
- We have attended SPACE, playgroup, the toy library and other events at the Valley Baptist Community Centre, and hired the hall for dance classes and birthday parties. It is such a valuable asset to the community and I hope it can remain that way. - Clare
- I have recently discovered the Valley Baptist Community Centre as a safe and comfortable place to connect with other new parents in the Community. Often during our meetings there we see other people and small groups arriving for a dance class, exercise, or playgroup for older children. To lose the Centre would be losing a valuable and valued space for all in the community to make use of and enjoy. - Anonymous
- We've been extremely lucky to attend SPACE groups hosted at the Valley Baptist Community Centre. It is a very welcoming place, perfectly located for those of us learning how to move around and care for little ones. While there, we've been lucky enough to see other folks using this treasured community resource - showing how it is the beating ngākau of our NEV/Pine Hill/Opoho community. It would be a massive loss if this facility was no longer available as a community hub. - Alana



Thank you

Thank you for taking the time to read and celebrate the importance of the Community Centre. As chairs of The North East Valley Baptist Community Trust, The Valley Project and Valley Community Workspace, we have seen the good this space provides not only for community groups, but also as a space where The Project can hold community dinners, winter warmer events and preserving workshops. The centre is a constant hub of activity. The plans for the centre have been worked through in detail to ensure that any investment in the site will be for the good of the community and for your future communities to enjoy as well.

Times are tough currently, we understand that it may be a push to find any extra cash available. That is why we wanted to explore the option of the loan scheme. Any

donation or form of support is significantly appreciated. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity and we hope that the sale can be pulled off.

A community that is well supported and connected is a thriving community. To be a thriving community you also need a base that the community can use with low barriers to entry. That is what the centre provides.

On behalf of the working group we would like to thank the committed members from the three organisations that have come together to explore the purchasing of the centre and surrounding two houses. This highly motivated group has developed a plan of development that will see the centre meet the needs of your community and future generations to come.



James Sutherland
Chair of The Valley Project and Valley Community Workspace
Board Member North East Valley Baptist Community Trust



Michael Gaffney
Chair of The North East Valley Baptist Community Trust

