

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HOW THE PUBLIC CAN HELP SET A HOMELESS PERSON UP IN THEIR NEW HOME

To mark World Homeless Day on 10 October, Lifewise have teamed up with GrabOne on a unique deal: Helping set a homeless person up in their own home. For just \$20, people can buy a 'welcome pack' for a newly housed homeless person, with essentials like toothbrushes and toothpaste, toiletries, and cleaning products.

"As many New Zealanders will know, by the time you've paid bond, rent and utility bills, often there isn't any money left to buy the essentials. It's that much harder when you're homeless and don't own anything to begin with," says Lifewise General Manager Moira Lawler.

Lifewise's team of social workers will make up special welcome packs for every person they house – whether that's razors for men, sanitary products for women, or even toys for families with children. "We're excited to launch this deal to give homeless people the same home comforts and essentials that many of us take for granted, helping give them a sense of pride in their new home," says Moira.

Lifewise focuses on solutions that work to end homelessness, not just manage the problem. This has seen the organisation make some tough choices, including closing their soup kitchen in 2007. "We started to feel that by giving people food each day that we weren't doing anything to change people's situation, and we had an increasing sense of disquiet that we may in fact have been contributing to the problem," says Moira.

These days, Lifewise uses Housing First, an internationally recognised model that has been used by cities like Utah and Arizona to completely end homelessness. Housing First gives people a permanent home, and then connects them up with the support they need to work through the issues that led to them becoming homeless, such as mental health and addiction issues.

People who are struggling with homelessness can come to Lifewise's community café, Merge at 453 K' Road and connect with Lifewise's team of social workers. Since 2008, Lifewise has successfully housed hundreds of people off the streets and into permanent homes.

For more information on Lifewise's work, visit www.lifewise.org.nz

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