

## **SOUTH CENTRE COMMUNITY HOUSE**

**13 March 2008 \$66,000**

GROWING pressure on a south Invercargill social services organisation from families in need will ease thanks to significant funding from the ILT Foundation.

That's the word from Judith Petersen, the manager of the South Centre Anglican Care, which was struggling to cope with increased community demand in its small Jenkins Street facility.

Ms Jenkins said a \$66,000 grant from the ILT Foundation was a big relief because it would be used to erect a secondary building in the playground area at its centre.

"That will allow us to take on more staff because we'll have the space for them now," Ms Petersen said.

"And more staff will allow us to run more education programmes, like parenting programmes, self-esteem classes and things like that, which will all help strengthen the family unit."

ILT Foundation Chairman, Alan Dennis, said the South Centre Anglican Care was doing a fine job but had simply outgrown its premises and something had to be done.

"A new building and more staff will allow the centre to offer even more support and assistance through community programmes and the all-important social work they provide," he said.

Ms Petersen said her organisation assisted Invercargill's isolated and lonely elderly and the disabled with no family support.

Her team also worked with 35 families in crisis on average per week.

"We work with the family to strengthen the family unit to prevent the children going into care," she said.

"It is hard work."

She said much of that hard work resolved around families' financial problems and relationship issues between parents, with many involved in custody disputes for their children.

"We've also got a lot of kids who are under specialist care at the hospital with their medical difficulties. All of that keeps adding pressure, too."

Petersen said the funding would not just have a big impact on the services and extra staff it could provide for struggling families.

"But it would also help other groups that meet here, like the AA group, the multiple birth group, Barnardos kids and other community groups that use the facilities," she explained.

"The Southland District Health Board even use our facilities for diabetes and their cardiac education. They find people that will come here in greater numbers than they would if they had to go to the hospital for that community education.

"So that's a boon to us because we're helping the community by providing the facilities for them to do that. And now we'll be able to provide even more facilities."