



DAYS FOR GIRLS

Every Girl | Everywhere | Period.

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Recent orders that NZ teams have completed

Nepal

Fiji

Vanuatu

New Zealand

Kenya

Indonesia

Sierra Leone

Belize

Templates

DfGI has created a set of templates which can be used to check sizing for shields and liners. We have ordered a bunch of these and will be sending a set to each team.

They allow you to quickly check the size of shields, liners and pocket openings. This will help improve quality control and will ensure that all your work is to the gold standard quality!

For people who do not belong to a team, you may borrow a set of these templates - get in touch if you'd like to do this!



Rosehill College

We would like to extend a huge thank you to Rosehill College. The Interact Club and Linda's social studies class, who have been researching social injustice, have been raising money for Days for Girls New Zealand.

The Interact group is supported by Drury Rotary, where DfG Auckland went and spoke at one of their meetings earlier this year. Linda Aitcheson, a teacher at Rosehill College, was at that meeting. She went back to the College and spoke to the Interact Club, and they decided to support DFG this year.

These wonderful young people raised the money by selling and delivering roses on Valentine's Day. In total, they raised \$1,000 for DfGNZ!

Raffle

We are doing another Christmas raffle this year! Once again, we have had a beautiful quilt donated to us which will be the first place prize. Watch this space for more information!

Welcome

Hello from Northland NZ Team! We are a brand new team consisting so far of myself Diane Sumner, Co-Leader and fundraising Co-ordinator Vivienne Harding, technical wizard and super sewist Viv Christensen, and super sewist Liz in Houhora. We also have quite a few ladies just coming on board - so a dream start for us.

We are currently making transport bags for Zoe Dawson (Children of Maasai) to take to Kenya and part kits for Helen and Team at HQ. At the same time, we are sourcing kit components in order to become more independent and capable of constructing whole kits. We are committed to doing our bit to assist HQ with the large Vanuatu order later in the year, and for anyone else that needs kits or kit components in the meantime.

The best part of this journey, for me, (apart from the obvious - which is helping women and girls Worldwide) is meeting these incredible like-minded women and making new friendships. A shout out to all of our long suffering husbands too!!

Diane Sumner from the Winterless and WET North!

Working with Enterprises

We recently had an order for 300 kits for a mission group to take to Tanzania in October. After going to the national conference and understanding how important it is to support enterprises and not kill them by distributing kits into the same area as an enterprise I thought I should check.

I went onto the DFG website and searched under the Get Involved tab for Enterprises. I then clicked on Enterprise projects and then on Africa.

This showed that there is an enterprise in Tanzania so I emailed africa@daysforgirls.org as instructed to check how close it was and discussed where our kits were planning to be distributed. After some emails back and forward we found that the area the team is going into is close to an existing enterprise and they gave me email contact details for the lady in charge of that. She sent me some info on pricing (ie did we want them to do supreme kits like we do here or other variances). We are placing an order with them for around \$11.50 per kit NZD for supreme kits which is a similar cost to us producing them. We get to support the enterprise, have local people distribute them (for a cost of \$18 per day!), fund the kits, avoid the airport headaches with transporting them AND the team will be part of the distribution and the girls will get their kits.

WIN WIN all round. We just have to figure out what sizes are needed.

I think this is a wonderful opportunity to participate in the process working at its best and for \$18 a day for the distribution to be done for us in their language is awesome and what a bargain!

Karyn, Hamilton DfG

Rotary Conference

The biggest highlight in May was hosting Celeste and Tiffany in our home in Matamata New Zealand.

We had a wonderful three days together, sightseeing Hobbiton, Rotorua and Taupo and sharing their busy Days for Girls lives with them. With both Celeste and Tiffany on conference calls with Days for Girls boards, directors, and teams around the world during the night, they certainly don't get much sleep ! Celeste takes it all in her stride with love and kindness for everyone she makes contact with, which is why the 'culture' of Days for Girls is so positive and encouraging. Days for Girls certainly has an amazing and a very special CEO at the helm and wonderful to be part of.



On the Friday we were off to the Rotary District 9930 Conference in Taupo where Celeste was the Saturday afternoon Key note speaker.

The conference was attended by nearly 400 Rotary delegates and not surprisingly Celeste was given a standing ovation after her presentation. I had the privilege of introducing her and was so proud to be part of Days for Girls.

Our team had a 'stand' in the main foyer where attendees just could not miss us. I had a large background banner made of a huge photo of girls and their kits and Celeste and Tiffany also brought 2 pull up banners from the States HQ. There was also a TV playing footage of some of our team's kits being distributed in Africa by one of our Rotary Volunteers Ross Bay who travels there often. On our stand I had a huge help from Anne Blewden and her husband David from Cambridge talking to many people. We had a lot of interest, donations and also made contact with a Rotarian in Paeroa who is willing to try and Laser cut our shield fabric for us. Hopefully if this is successful we can help other teams with shield fabric cutting and take pressure off our wonderful Helen, NZ Country Director, who does so much die cutting for all our teams around the country.

Since the conference, one of the Rotary clubs that attended conference have registered to become their own Days for Girl team in Hastings New Zealand , yay !!!

My husband David was the Conference Chair and this has taken up 3 years of our lives organizing towards it. It was such a great success and we were just so pleased that Celeste was able to travel out to New Zealand to be one of the main speakers. With representatives from 46 different Rotary clubs in attendance from Huntly down to Waipukurau, it has certainly boosted awareness of Days for Girls in our area.

Lisette Hulme

Matamata Waikato Team Leader

Conference



I was lucky enough to be able to attend Day 1 of the DfG conference held in Auckland last month. I wanted to attend to meet Celeste and Tiffany of course, but also Helen Griffin and her team, and others I had heard of and wanted to put a face to a name. Besides, I'd just registered as the Northland NZ Team so I wanted to learn as much as possible in order to get this team off to the best possible start.

I wasn't disappointed! The room was filled with incredible women from all

walks of life. The amazing stories that all these ladies shared about their work and experiences for DfG were inspiring and humbling at the same time. I laughed and cried, made new friends and became even more inspired (if that was possible). The atmosphere in the room was palpable and hard to describe but I came away feeling part of something extra special and determined to work as hard as I possibly can for this amazing cause - not just for the girls and women that need our help - but for the joint collective that is DfG. Unfortunately I had to return home after that to tend to a sick husband but I would like to thank every one involved in making the conference special - particularly Helen Griffin and her team who worked so hard to make it such a success.

Diane, Northland DfG Team

We are encouraged and renewed to go on with enthusiasm.

We remember Celeste and Tiffany, the chatter and networking, the lovely caring people all there to help others, and all the way through it the wonderful realisation (and proof, if you like,) that **WE REALLY ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO GIRLS' LIVES.**

And the Ambassador training absolutely showed how the whole package of the kit and the education indeed turns periods into pathways.

Jeannie and Rachel, Auckland DfG Team



I was most delighted when my boss agreed I could attend the conference as part of my professional development where the focus needed to be on social change. In the promo for the conference there was a quote from Tiffany, “If you are involved, in any capacity, learning the stories and experiences from Celeste will change your experience with DfG. You will sew kits differently and with a different purpose in your heart. You will feel deeply connected to the whole BIG picture and what DfG is about.” This quote is true for me. I have shared about the conference with so many people, men and women. Every aspect of Days for Girls resonated with me from the beginning of our conference with the whakawhanaungatanga, building those connections and the sharing of resources. There was no evidence of grandstanding. The humility of the women involved and the philosophy and approach of the whole organisation was very impressive. I am delighted to more fully discover what I am now apart of and I am spreading the good news. Thank you everyone. It was a pleasure to be amongst you all and I'm grateful for all the learning and growing that took place.

Ngā mihi nui Helen S, Palmerston North

What an amazing two days, I feel incredibly blessed to have joined Days for Girls and be able to attend the conference with such an amazing group of totally inspirational women. So diverse, all ages stages and walks of life brought together with a common cause to reach out and change the future of woman all around the world and change it they are, each in their own unique way.



That in itself would've been amazing, but to have the opportunity to hear from Celeste “Wow “ her story, her passion, her strength, her enthusiasm were awe inspiring. A total privilege to meet our founder.

I came away smiling, energised, uplifted and proud, to be part of a sisterhood of woman each determined to change the destiny of so many globally . To say I am hooked is an understatement I am shamelessly passionate about Days for Girls.

This wouldn't have been possible without the amazing efforts of Helen aka St Helen and her team, who fed us beautiful meals catered to all our food whims and kept the programme flowing so smoothly. Thank you Helen

Viv, Northland DfG Team



I attended the DFG NZ conference with a goal of connecting with some of the people here who are involved in DFG like we are from a range of walks of life and ages. It was a wonderful couple of days of learning, networking, collaborating and getting to know some of the stories of the amazing group of women we have. I thoroughly enjoyed hearing the backgrounds and stories of what each team is doing and tips from everyone. I was totally inspired by Celeste and felt a huge amount of aroha for this humble lady who shared stories with us of girls and women receiving their kits and the difference DFG is making in the world not only for these women but for the whole community. I felt so encouraged and appreciated all the wisdom that everyone had to offer.

What an amazing organisation to be part of!

Regards, Karyn, Hamilton DfG Team

I happily sacrificed two annual leave days to enable me to attend the conference and am so glad I did! it was wonderful to meet other women with a commitment to such a worthy cause, and also an honour to spend time with Celeste and Tiffany - two inspirational women! Also still in awe of the amazing work that others are doing - for you Helen and Kate, to you Zoe, and to the others who work away quietly to benefit others. It really did fire me up and hopefully pass on some of that enthusiasm to our wonderful Grey Lynn group. Thanks to everyone.

Deb, Grey Lynn DfG Team



Thank you so much for an awesome weekend at conference, thank you both for the catering and every other detail that made it so enjoyable. I came feeling a little anxious and unsure but left inspired and overawed by the work DfG do and keen to get on and do my bit.

Jenny, North Canterbury

There are 2 terms that keep ringing in my ears since attending the DFG NZ Conference “ripple effect” and “The Helen G Effect”

The ripple effect is a great analogy of what can be done when someone decides to take action. It was lovely to witness the ripple effect with so many dedicated women who share my passion for supporting women to better health and wellbeing.

In terms of the “Helen G” did anyone else notice, that “Helen” was a constant in the “how did you get involved in DFG NZ” round the room discussion? Helen G – you really have made a significant difference to the lives of women outside of NZ – many of whom we will never know. However I believe you have significantly impacted on women throughout NZ – many of which you have given a purpose. Your drive, dedication and willingness to help others come on board is genuinely inspirational. I love your approach – no judgement – just get on and do it – make it happen!

On behalf of the women of Vanuatu – tank yu tumas.

Belinda, Vanuatu

The conference was a great opportunity to meet the founder of the International organisation and the NZ support teams who were previously only email or phone friends.

The invitation to meet with these women who run the worldwide organisation and those who support ‘Meri’s Malo’ from NZ was too good opportunity to miss.

As I looked around the circle of those participating, all ages, I had no idea what was about to unfold.



Everyone had a special story with their link to DfG & the way they started with DfG was just amazing and totally humbling.

It reminded meeverybody has a story if we just take the time to listen.. and these were worth listening to.

One that stood out for me was Zoe, young student from Invercargill who regularly travels to an orphanage in Kenya, supports a scholar in Cape Town, and does all this on a student allowance... Wow.

Another mother & daughter team involved in sales & distribution of Menstrual cups for women.

The team that support us here in PNG are really exceptional & are keen to do more if we can solve the transport issues....

Great to see that DaysforGirls New Zealand works across many borders with their involvement into India, Vietnam, Kenya, Philippines, Vanuatu and Papua New Guinea.

Great to see the passion of the NZ DfG teams and their desire to support those involved in improving the lives of the young women, who are recipients of the DfG Kits.

Wendy, Papa New Guinea



I'll let you in on a secret. I haven't been to many conferences. Actually, I've been to none. Nope, not one. In my singleton, girl-about-town, legal secretary phase, as long as my typing speed was above 60wpm, I was considered fully trained and no further professional development was required. Since marrying and running a business with my husband, any pseudo-conferences we may have are very low key. Usually held at the kitchen table, over a cup of coffee after we have pushed the children out the door to school! So, I faced the NZ Days for Girls Conference with a certain amount of excitement and trepidation, sprinkled with more than a little nervousness.

However, jitters flew out the window as soon as I started meeting other attendees from around the country. From my gorgeous room mates, (take a bow Helen C. and Viv!) to each and every wonderful woman I got to share time and stories with, I could tell this was going to be a very special weekend indeed. Just in that first evening hearing about some of the extraordinary work being accomplished by outwardly appearing, ordinary women, was uplifting and humbling (yeah – I'm looking at you – Zoe, Olie, Wendy, Belinda et al...) I was inspired and motivated in equal measures. And this was all before I even got to meet Tiffany and Celeste from the USA...

And then there was Celeste. How on earth do you describe the phenomenon that is Celeste Mergens? CEO? Ambassador? Advocate? Educator?

She is all of those things and more. She is a force of nature. Not a tornado, hurricane or tsunami agitating us all to action - nothing so wild or frantic. Rather she is the balmy warmth of a summer's day - her lightness, positivity and enthusiasm contagious to all who surround her. Her words of wisdom, shining brightness on the dark realities of global inequalities. Her frequent tears, sun showers borne of empathy and compassion.

Yet this force of nature is so categorically humble in every word, every conversation and every interaction, the geeky fan-girl part of me wanted her to be my sister, mother, best friend, counselor and guru all at the same time. Upon trying to explain this oddity to a good friend upon my return, she very sagely said, "It's often hard to explain the qualities that make a good leader, but we all know when



we are in the presence of one.”

And what a leader she is! Not charging from the front, nor shoving from behind. In the words of John Maxwell, she is a leader that “Knows the way, goes the way and shows the way,” through love, kindness and enthusiasm laced with big doses of practicality, pragmatism and reality. More importantly though, Celeste manifests the best quality of any leader - she

doesn't create followers, she creates more leaders.

I have really struggled to verbalise what conference meant to me. I threw adjectives around like confetti:- amazing, wonderful, fantastic, awesome. But even this deluge of superlatives failed to fully express externally what I felt internally.

I felt touched on almost a cellular level. Not by the knowledge gained nor the training given, but by something less tangible and more magical. Something not so easily explained nor reduced to bullet points to be discussed by my team upon my return.

I'm not a woman of faith. Nor am I a particularly spiritual woman. But I do have a sharply honed sense of intuition and every instinct in my possession was telling me I'd been part of something unique and rare.

I'd been in the presence of a warrior for women - a woman deeply passionate for her cause and deeply compassionate in nature. A person compelled to uplift each and every woman she comes into contact with - and to uplift millions more women she will never even get to meet. A leader who lives by the mantra, “if the odds are a million to one, be the one.”

Not just that, in that funny little church hall, in that semi-circle of women, I had the privilege of being with a staunch uplifted cohort, each individually inspired by Celeste to go home and “be the one.”

I know in the times ahead, every one of us will be motivated to enrich and improve our teams and communities using lessons learned at this conference. Our own leadership style will progress and strengthen because we have seen and experienced a maestro in action and some of her magic rubbed off on us.

Not just her magic on me, but yours too - your energy, your oomph, your vivacity, your stories, your lessons, your eagerness, your zeal and your enthusiasm. I know I've squirrelled all these amazing emotions and examples away in my leadership toolbox for future use and reference.

But best of all? You guys. Conference was a place to meet you, to put names to faces that previously were nothing more than random email addresses. To hear about the fabulous work you do here in NZ and overseas. To be amazed and awed by you. It was a place to recognize our own national leadership team and acknowledge their unstinting hard work and dedication. If I'm going to be a little cog in the wheel of this mighty organization, I'm glad you ladies are screws, washers and sprockets along with me!

I am so very proud to be part of the Christchurch Team, the New Zealand Team and the Global Team that is Days for Girls.

So, as far as first conferences go, it was marvelous. When's the next one?

Reetah, Christchurch DfG Team

How I can I begin to describe an experience that not only touches you, but completely changes you on the inside?

That's the only way I can become close to describing my 3 days at the first NZ Conference for Days for Girls held in Auckland on 20, 21, 22 May .

First impression: It wasn't the topic so much as the people. My daughter said to me before going – "How are you going to talk about reusable sanitary pads for 3 days?" Well we didn't so much talk about them as share together the many stories of ordinary people doing amazing things.

The people.....first there is Celeste Mergens, the founder of Days for girls. Dressed low key in jeans and T shirt, she was the most unassuming, genuine, passionate and remarkable person I have probably ever had the fortune to meet! So passionate was she about Days for Girls that tears welled up in her eyes time and time again as she relayed the experiences she had had while delivering Days for Girls kits throughout the many parts of the world she has travelled to. Stories of hugging the kits, crying, dancing for joy with them purely so that they no longer have to hide, be used by men, miss out on playing sport and more than anything, miss school.



Tiffany was the other half of the American contingent. Young, gentle, supportive and a good listener, she is the International Chapter Director. She remembers witnessing the change in one woman who said she didn't want to be a woman because she had been informed that she had an "unfortunate liability" She has seen girls transform from a glum posture to having a Girl party after they receive the kits!

Wendy from Tauranga was another memorable person. Her husband is on a 3 year contract to Papua New Guinea and so she began working with women in the prisons. She had to start at the very basics

of using a hand turned sewing machine (as electricity is intermittent) and now the girls are producing hundreds of kits!

Belinda from Nelson, who has set up an enterprise in Vanuatu with 8 women and one man! She is tapping into local and national government to further the Days for Girls cause.

And best of all there was Zoe – a young 19 yr old Student nurse from Invercargill who began the Children of Maasai Educational Programme in 2015 to help alleviate poverty in the township of Kumpa in Kenya. Check out her on Childrenofmaasai.org. Using her own money through a part time job, she provides school meals, mobile sight and eye clinics and Days for Girls kits. She repaired a disused church and set up a centre for special needs children who were previously hidden away. The centre now has 13 children. Her love for the Maasai people was catchy as she showed us photo after photo of “her beloved children” We could only wonder at the good this young girl will do in the world for the rest of her life!



Helen C. DFGNZ trustee

My thoughts coming out of conference were that we have an inspiring and, quite frankly amazing, bunch of women involved in DFGNZ! It is truly an honour to work along side of you all. The lessons I have come out with are that quality is all. That kits should be the best we can do, to aim for that gold standard. My personal resolution was to improve my communication with DfGI around the reporting side of things. So to ensure that when kits are ordered the person ordering fills out a Kit Request form, or if that isn't done, that I fill in a Kits are on their Way form.

Thanks to everyone who came - it is your contributions that made the conference a success. Thanks to everyone who couldn't come but still sew for us. Together we do make a difference in the world, and who would have thought you could do that just by sewing at home!

Love to all, Helen G. DfG NZ Director

