



WE NEED VOLUNTEERS

Me tonu mai koe hei kaitūao patu ahi

"I joined to help our community and to be a role model for my kids"

Odessa Ellis, Mum and Volunteer Firefighter

Come to our open night

7-9pm, Monday 16 March
Rangiora Volunteer Fire Brigade
134 Percival Street
Friends and whānau welcome



www.fireandemergency.nz/volunteer

Would you like to volunteer with us?

We do an important job to keep our community safe and we're looking for local residents and workers to join our team. We welcome people from all walks of life.

We respond to around 360 calls each year

About 40% of call-outs are to fires – vegetation and property. We also respond to motor vehicle accidents, medical incidents and other requests from people in need.

We need more volunteer firefighters

We have a dedicated crew of volunteers, but we need more people to help share the load. Right now we're looking for people to become volunteer firefighters. In particular, we need people who live or work near the station.

Training is every Monday night

We train our volunteers to save lives and respond to emergencies, and to do that safely. During training we refresh and learn new skills, building a supportive team spirit that extends beyond our brigade.

Interested in finding out more?

If you're aged 18+ (or 16-17 with permission from your caregiver) and available on Monday evenings, come to our Open Night from 7-9pm on Monday 16 March.

Open night

- Discover what it takes to volunteer
- Hear about the training and skills you'll learn
- Find out about the support available
- Meet our crew!

Unable to attend the Open Night?

Please contact Hamish Peter on 027 228 7357.



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MICHAEL MACDONALD

Girls can do anything, and Odessa Ellis sums that up.

She is mother to 5-year-old son Kyros, was working as a marketing assistant at Rangiora Mitre 10 before 6-month-old daughter Blake joined the family, and is a volunteer firefighter with the Rangiora brigade.

For three years, she has answered the siren and pager from work and home.

The brigade is recruiting, looking for more members who work locally so they can hit the ground running when the alarm is raised, says Rangiora's chief fire officer, Hamish Peter.

This campaign is the most extensive it has ever run, and there is a good reason for that, he says. "We put out the call for new members every year, but the population of Rangiora is growing so fast, we really need to look at how we can manage that," he says.

"We attended 399 calls last year, compared with 300 in 2018. That's more than one a day, looking after people and property. For that, we need more volunteers."

Most importantly, he says, those volunteers need to be working in town, so they can be there within minutes when the alarm is raised.

Two employers who are used to working around the flexibility required by fire

service volunteers are Ron van Til, of Artisan by Rangiora Bakery, and Robin Brown, of Rangiora New World.

"I feel that local employers actually have a social responsibility to support the fire service," Ron says. "I have one employee who's been with us for 18 years, and he's been with the brigade that long too."

"He plays a really important role in managing our export logistics stream, but we just make sure there's someone there to fill the gap when he is called out. If it were my house on fire, I'd want him there!"

Robin agrees. "Ever since the supermarket opened in the 80s, we've had employees who are members of the volunteer fire brigade. Currently, one of our managers is on the team."

"It can be a bit disruptive, especially when the fires burn for days, as we've had on the riverbeds in the past, but it's essential that we have people employed in town who can be there promptly – and essential that we have employers who understand that," he says.

It takes all kinds to be a firefighter, says Odessa. "I wanted to give back to the community my kids are going to grow up in. Regardless of your age or stage, if you've got integrity, commitment, and you want to help, you're perfect."

"It's all about being there when things are at their worst; making that difference on that day. If we weren't there to do it,



On call... Rangiora's chief fire officer Hamish Peter, with Odessa Ellis and her daughter, Blake Ealam. (PHOTO: MICHAEL MACDONALD)

who would be?"

Hamish urges people to visit the station, meet personnel, and have a look.

"Ask the questions, take a look at the info, and see how you can learn our skill sets and how they can be transferred outside the station."

"We're developing and supporting future generations in the service, and we're here to look after them because they are critical to our community."

An open evening is being held on March 16, from 7pm. To learn more, watch for the brigade's leaflets and posters.

