



12 February 2009



Willie is led by his son back to the clinic after surgery. | Photo: Laura Treacy

Dear Supporter,

It's almost two years since I last wrote to you about my experiences working with The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ in the West New Britain province of Papua New Guinea.

I have been based here for over three years now and am pleased to report that we have made some fantastic progress in that time, making a real difference to so many people here.

One of those people is Willie, a widower with seven children from Akam, a remote village on the south coast. When we first met Willie on an outreach last March, he was gradually losing his vision in both eyes due to cataract and had retired from his job in the palm oil industry.

Hoping to retain his independence, Willie tried to tend his vegetable gardens and sell the vegetables so he could send his younger children to school. He would walk slowly along the paths to his garden, feeling the way, often falling over. His children helped him when they could but he could not be sure what they were doing, and they often ran off leaving him alone.

As his vision deteriorated he was reduced to being led by others using a stick, which he called his 'faithful friend'. He had been a wise person in the village, a respected decision maker, but now he felt increasingly isolated and depressed.

Willie heard about our work on the radio and asked his son to help him get to Kimbe, the provincial capital. This involved a two-day trip on foot to the eastern coast of the island, tripping slowly along rough mountain paths, sleeping in the bush overnight and two long boat trips.



The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ

YES I would like to make a donation of:

\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other \$

Whatever amount you choose to give, your gift is truly appreciated.

My cheque/money order payable to The Fred Hollows Foundation is enclosed.

OR, please debit my (tick as appropriate):

Amex Bankcard Diners Mastercard VISA

Card number

Name on card Expiry /

Signature

Telephone

Please send me (please tick)

details on becoming a member of The Miracle Club by making regular donations by direct debit, automatic payment or credit card.

details on making a gift to The Foundation in my will.

I have already made provision for The Foundation in my will.

Donate online at www.hollows.org.nz · Freephone 0800 227 229

I saw Willie near the end of the operating session the next day. We operated on one eye that day, and treated the other eye the next. Later that night I cheated and lifted his eye pad.

His sombre face broke into wreaths of lines as he smiled and tears rolled down his face as he realised he could see again. Two days later his vision was clear and he threw away his stick forever.

Late last year, I went on an outreach to the south coast. By coincidence, the boat we travelled on was moored a few minutes from Willie's village. I asked some of the canoeists if they knew him, and that afternoon we went to find him.

A gentle, reserved man, Willie was so happy and proud that we had found him again. He has now completely regained his independence and is able to fish, wearing sunglasses to avoid the glare.

Once again he is highly respected in the village and, by helping to dispel local fears about cataract surgery, he encouraged others to come forward to have their eyes checked when we visited his village.

Later that day he visited us with his granddaughter and gave us a huge bunch of greens from his garden.

It is really humbling to hear what people suffer as a result of visual impairment, and how so many manage against the odds. Willie's experience shows that a relatively low cost surgery really can transform lives.

Please give as generously as you can so our work can continue.

With best wishes

Lindsay R Dewhurst

**Lindsay Dewhurst
PNG Ophthalmic Nurse, The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ**

PS: In 2008 85% of all funds raised went directly to our program work. If you would like a copy of our newly produced 2008 Annual Report, which gives full details of our activities in 2008, please let us know on the attached donation form, or contact us on 0800 227 229 or info@hollows.org.nz.



Some months after his initial surgery, Willie greets a visiting FHFNZ outreach team | Photo: Lindsay Dewhurst

Please use this space to tell us your views, what you would like to read in future, and why you support The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ.

Do we have your email address? Our newsletter is now available by email, so if you would like to receive your newsletter this way, please confirm your email address below.

Please return your completed form in the envelope provided to:
The Fred Hollows Foundation NZ, Private Bag 99909, Newmarket, Auckland 1149.
To speak to our Fundraising Department, please call (09) 304 0524.

