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Contact Energy Renal Fund Reduces Stress

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Press Release: Northland District Health Board

The last two winters have been a little easier to get through for Ruakaka renal patient Desiree Goldsmith thanks to a \$1000 grant she received from the Contact Energy Renal Fund that helps pay hefty power bills to keep her lifesaving dialysis machine running.

Desiree has Alport Syndrome which is a disease that damages the tiny blood vessels in her kidneys. She was first diagnosed in 2001 and had eight months of dialysis before her mother donated one of her kidneys for her to have a transplant. Since then, her kidney function has reduced to 20 percent, she has lost part of her eyesight and hearing and is now unable to work because she has no immune system.

Because of her situation, social workers at Northland DHB put Desiree forward to receive a payment from the Contact Energy Renal Fund. All Desiree needed to do was to decide what would be the best way to use the money to help her remain independent. She already had a lazy boy chair to dialyse in, so decided to put the money towards her power costs.

Desiree tries to keep her costs down by turning off switches around the house and has been contributing some her own money towards her monthly power bill since she first got the fund in 2016 to make the money last as long as possible.

She said she would be stressing without this support, which in turn would make her sick. "It's a lifesaver. I just couldn't have coped and I'm so thankful to Contact Energy."

Since the monies were distributed in 2016, 24 renal patients in Northland have benefitted from a payment of up to \$1000 per applicant to help ease the hardship that their condition puts on them and their families.

The Fund has not only affected the lives of these patients directly, it has also allowed 46 patients and their family members to attend seminars where they have had the opportunity to share their experiences and gain invaluable knowledge about their conditions.

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