



● Clive and Linda Hullett, and dog Kara, in Langford House's barbecue area.

A chance to grow

CLIVE HULLETT is an entrepreneur with his heart in a very special place.

The result of his skills and energy is Langford House, which opened nine months ago in Te Atatu.

The wooden building with its leafy garden is home to Hullett, his wife Linda, their two sons and 12 people who are clients of the West Auckland Living Skills Homes Trust Board. Clive is director of services, Linda is house mother.

The fact that the 12 have experienced periods of psychiatric illness is less important in their relationship with the Walsh trust than their status as clients whose needs the trust must fulfil and to whom it is accountable.

This, says Hullett, is the key to the difference between proper community care and that of institutions.

Hullett is also distancing himself from other service providers, in the area of mental health, whose concerns are for people as patients.

"Providers must be accountable to the consumers. Until we have this, we will only have institutions. These are incestuously ac-

Langford House illustrates the direction mental health is heading as emphasis is placed on community, rather than institutional care.

PAT BASKETT reports.

countable because true accountability challenges the status of the professionals who work in them," he says.

walls are tidy, but in a homely way. Some bedrooms are single, some shared. Those of newer arrivals have the spartan appearance of recently left institutions, those of the more established residents express their blossoming individuality with trinkets and pictures.

Residents are accepted for a six-week trial. They must abide by a set of rules. The trust undertakes a set of commitments to each resident. These include providing a normal living environment, while giving a high standard of service and care that will encourage residents to become socially, physically and financially independent.

"Everybody has different strengths and weaknesses. We sit and talk about what each person's programme should be," Hullett says.

Work is crucial to self-esteem and Langford House offers work experience. Seven residents are starting an organic garden and a coolroom has been made to store produce. Money from the sale of vegetables will go into an incentive fund to be paid to those working in the garden.

Seedlings are raised in a glasshouse and sold. Furniture is made and restored in a workshop. The trust has decided to help one 24-year-old resident manage a cottage industry in upholstery and restoration.

An occupational therapist from the Auckland Area Health Board is part of the work-related programmes. Early next year it is hoped that these will include an animal husbandry project based at 3.6ha in Henderson Valley Rd, where planning approval is needed to run sheep, heifers and pigs.

The trust owns a 12-seater minibus for weekend outings and a small car for individuals to drive under supervision as part of their preparation for independent living.

Langford House has the warmth and char-

acter of a home. Twelve people were found who shared his vision.

"We put forward a full proposal to the Area Health Board, with costing, budgets, programme delivery, and said we would run it if they would fund it."

A contract of partnership was signed and the board bought Langford House, originally built by the Social Welfare Dept for children at risk, for \$400,000. The board spent a further \$13,000 on furnishings and provides a support team of a psychiatrist, a psychiatric district nurse, social worker and occupational therapist.

Aware that communities don't always welcome former psychiatric patients in their midst, Hullett canvassed opinion in the street. There were no objections, and one neighbour became a trust member. He has adopted the same approach at the site of the proposed farmlet.

The second stage of Hullett's vision opens on January 20. It consists of five two-bedroom flats in New Lynn, four of which will be rented by Langford House resident and one by a supervisor. The term of occupancy will be five years but the trust hopes to negotiate with the Housing Corporation for another set of flats with the right to lease for life.

JANUARY 20 is the anniversary of 28-year-old Louise Cate's arrival at Langford House. She had been intermittently sick for ten years which she describes as a "treadmill" — in and out of Carrington, going home, living in boarding houses.

"Here, they believe everyone can be something. You're not encouraged to do it, it is assumed you will behave in such a way.

"It was a bit of harsh reality and I found it hard at first. In hospital you become self-