

In February 2012, Dr Krystal Short and her partner Rob Turner featured in the New Idea magazine. They were part of a story called "Courage From Chaos" which was an Anniversary Tribute for Cantabrians, sharing their stories of hope, courage and determination, one year on from February 22, 2011.

CHRISTCHURCH TRIBUTE

RADIO PAIR CLOSER THAN EVER

More FM Christchurch radio hosts Gary McCormick and Simon Barnett have always been a tight-knit team – but Mother Nature brought them even closer.

'We have certainly weathered this storm together,' Gary admits.

The comedian was in Christchurch CBD when the February 22 quake hit and, after his wife, Katherine Cottier, it was Simon he rang.

'I probably used every swear word I could possibly think of to describe how I felt,' Gary says of the call.

Both are committed to the Garden City, a place they love. But because both are fathers – Gary's twins, Bridie and Florence, turn one on February 11 and he has another baby due this March, and Simon is dad to four daughters – they confess they've considered leaving.

'It annoys me if people badmouth others for leaving. That is grossly unfair. It's no easy feat to walk away,' says Simon, 44, whose house, although habitable, will be demolished and rebuilt.

'We're making decisions for small, vulnerable people too,' adds Gary, who is in the midst of repairing his Lyttelton home, but will move to another next month. 'You have to ask yourself – what is really at stake here? Is it your career, your ego? Is it your friendships you have here? And you have to weigh that up against the chances of another big one, which could cause an enormous effect on life. Do we go or do we stay? We have decided to stay. We didn't go over it lightly, believe me.'

While the two are philosophical about the events of February 22, Gary is also deeply dismayed.

'I was so angry when I saw the crumbling buildings,' he says.

'I was furious because I was stupid enough to think after September it would all wind down. I feel like we were betrayed. The anger is still with me.'

While Simon has adapted somewhat to the seemingly endless shakes, they still strongly affect his wife, Jodi, and daughters.

'Jodi is so upset by them. If one happens during the night, the little ones come in and they're really scared, it's genuine fear. I console myself with the fact we are still alive,' says Simon of his four daughters, Samantha, 18, Sophie, 16, Isabella, 13, Lily, 11.

'With some families, every aftershock must be a constant reminder of those they've lost.'




Simon with his four daughters.

DIY COUPLE HELPS REBUILD SPIRIT

A young couple whose dream of renovating their first home is at the mercy of the constant earthquakes is determined to stay in the city.

Krystal Short, who moved to Christchurch in 2010 to be with her furniture-maker partner Rob Turner, is putting her chiropractic skills to good use by establishing her first business, Krystallos Healthcare in Waltham.

'I turn up to practice every day and help people through some level of trauma,' Krystal explains. 'I deal with quake-related distress.'

'It's sleepless nights, constant adrenaline in the system, exhaustion, and just when you think you can get on with life, another aftershock throws everything out again.'

Krystal says she and Rob are lucky because their house is structurally sound, but they can't do any work on it until it's cleared with the EQC.

'We have cracks throughout the house, and every time another tremor happens it just delays everything further.'

Rob and Krystal realise it may take years, but remain upbeat the city will one day be rebuilt.



ANCHOR IN AWE

Hilary Barry, news anchor for 3 News, is in awe of Cantabrians' 'human spirit' one year on from the disaster that cost 182 lives.

'The Christchurch people are still suffering without homes and doing their best to clean up yet more liquefaction from just before Christmas,' Hilary says. 'I can't believe how many aftershocks they've lived through!'

Hilary won best news and current affairs presenter at the Aotearoa Film and Television Awards last year, largely for manning the Auckland studio during the catastrophe. 'There's this weight of responsibility to pass on the information compassionately, professionally and not be a mess yourself. I wanted to burst out crying. But people needed information and a calm, concise picture of what was going on.'

