

Greener pastures

The sister of slain New Plymouth cashier Fiona Taylor has overcome her grief to save a life.

Isabel Park braved atrocious weather to make the Kaimanawa wild horse auction on August 28, and rescue a yearling filly from an uncertain fate.

Despite the at-times crippling misery she has felt since the murder of her elder sister last April, Isabel says when she learnt of the plight of the wild horses "my heart went out. I felt so sorry for them. I had to help them."

The instant she saw the pretty red bay foal Isabel knew she could not risk it ending up in the abattoir like some of the other horses.

"I only saw her for a couple of minutes," Isabel says. "She was in the middle of a pack but she stood out. She's absolutely lovely."

With Isabel at the auction was mother Gisela. The pair are only just coming to terms with the shattering ordeal of Fiona's death - four weeks before her 30th birthday - and the subsequent murder trial and acquittal of security guard Stephen Geange, Fiona's boss at Securitas.

But Isabel says the filly they have taken home to Wellington "will be a real tonic". "Mum's saying she'll be really committed to

Kaiwa (the name Isabel has given the foal). It will definitely take her mind off Fiona - she's a lot better already.

"The way I look at it is, I'm saving a life, stopping another tragedy."

The Parks nearly missed out on their mission of mercy, when the paperwork for the auction arrived just three days before the sale. Then atrocious weather blocked the southern road to Poronui Station, near Taupo, where it was held.

"Buyers had to be screened to

make sure they didn't have a history of cruelty to animals, and I only got my acceptance on the Wednesday," Isabel says. "Mum and I decided to go up on the Friday and stay overnight in a motel, which was just as well because on the Saturday the Desert Road was closed with snow."

Isabel bought Kaiwa for \$200, and has taken her to a property near the Ngaio home she shares with her mother. For com-



■ Above: Isabel Park and Kaiwa, the foal she rescued from an uncertain fate.

■ Left: Gisela and Isabel have a new focus in their lives.

■ Below: Mother and sister, still devastated by the murder of Fiona, are trying to put it behind them and get on with their lives.



PHOTOS: KEVIN STEWART

pany, the filly has another recipient of Isabel's kindness. Six-year-old mare Zala has been in Isabel's care for two years, since she learned of her from horse welfare authorities. Zala was lame and in a neglected state, but has recovered and enjoys life at Ohariu Valley Horse Club. A keen equestrian, Isabel won ribbons in show and jumping as a junior rider.

While Kaiwa is helping take her and Gisela's minds off the tragic loss of their daughter and sister, Isabel spares a thought for



Fiona's killer. "Whoever did it [the murder] will pay for it in some way or other. Fate has way of dealing with these things."

It is a much kinder fate, however, which has brought mother, daughter and foal together.

Lee Umbers