

Sisters' \$30,000 bid to unmask abuser

By Max Towle

TWO CHRISTCHURCH sisters who were sexually abused as children are trying to raise \$30,000 to take their battle to unmask their attacker to the Court of Appeal.

Their abuser was convicted for indecent assault in 1995 for sexually abusing the women in the 1970s.

In August, a district court judge lifted name suppression for Anne-Marie Forsyth and Karen Beaumont, but a legal clause prevented him from doing so for their abuser.

Ms Forsyth and Ms Beaumont now need to raise the money for a judicial review of the decision.

Next week, they will publish a Givealittle page with the aim of raising \$30,000 to pay for legal fees and court costs.

"We don't like to ask for help, but this is really the only way to do this," said Ms Forsyth.

She works as a store manager for a rural supplies business. Her sister is a self-employed painter.

"We want to make a difference for the next set of people – that our children have the right to be protected from molesters," she said.

Ms Forsyth and Ms Beaumont were granted automatic name suppression when their abuser was convicted in 1995.

However, until a few years ago they didn't know the man who



BATTLE: Marie Forsyth and Karen Beaumont need to raise \$30,000 to take their battle to reveal their attacker to the Court of Appeal.

abused them was also granted name suppression.

They successfully won their battle to lift their own name suppression in the district court in August, but a judge said he was unable to do the same for their abuser.

"A suppression order is made to protect the victims, not the offender. It has now been lifted, so it's no longer required or necessary," said the sisters' lawyer, Nikki Pender.

She said she hoped the judicial review would go before the Court of Appeal, but did not want to comment on its chances.

"It seems like a no-brainer, but it's so unknown because no one has ever tried to do this before," she said.

"It's a law that should be tested."

Ms Forsyth said she would never stop fighting to unmask her and

her sister's attacker.

"We've been kept in silence for 40-odd years... there are so many other people suffering in silence too. This is a hidden epidemic," she said.

"We want offenders to know that the people they hurt do grow up, and we will come back to haunt them."

Ms Pender, of law firm Franks Ogilvie, said the court application was ready to be filed once \$30,000 had been raised.

Part of that sum will cover contingency costs should they lose.

"You can bet your life [their abuser] will come back at us if we lose this," she said.

The sisters' donation page will be published next week here: www.givealittle.co.nz/member/reeand-karen