

PM MEETS WITH TEREORA STUDENT LEADERS

Tereora College rolled out the welcome mat for a visit by the Prime Minister and the Minister for Education, the honourable Henry Puna. The Prime Minister requested to meet with the college's student leaders



on the morning of Wednesday May 4th, to speak on issues he faces as a leader and to encourage the students in their own leadership roles.

He said visits such as these where students have the opportunity to speak with local leaders are important to their development and future goals adding that he may just be speaking with future parliamentarians or even Prime Ministers. The Prime Minister was adamant they realise they are the future of the Cook Islands and their importance to our future.

"I think it went well as it gives our students the opportunity to experience leadership styles", said college Principal Tania Morgan.

Impressed with the level of interaction from students during his visit and with more to discuss, the PM is eager to make the visits a more regular occurrence.

APII NIKAO RECEIVES RECYCLE STATION

The Cook Islands Trading Cooperation (CITC) continues to show its commitment to the environment after installing the last of their donated recycle stations for schools around the island. Apii Nikao was the final school to receive its station in early April making a total of 12 lucky Rarotongan schools now sporting their own recycling centres. CITC Brand manager George George and Anthony Doel joined students and school Principal Elizabeth Kapi to hand over the recycle centre. Each station consist of four different coloured bins labelled for various

categories of rubbish making recycling a walk in the park for students.



Students pose with CITCs George George and Anthony Doel in front of their recycle station.

CITTI DONATES TABLES TO TEREORA COLLEGE

The Year 12 Building Academy students at Tereora College were beaming with pride on Monday, May 9th as they posed for photos with the finished products from their latest project, two BBQ tables. The tables were built by the students during their Building Construction and Allied Trades skills course (BCATS) at the Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute Arorangi campus and will now be a permanent fixture on the college's school grounds.

The course is a win win for the students as they earn NCEA credits, practical experience and knowledge and are on track to pursue higher levels of

building certification if they choose to pursue this pathway.



2016 NATIONAL PRINCIPALS CONFERENCE

Principals from schools around the Cook Islands gathered at the Crown Beach Resort and Spa for the 2016 National Principals' Conference earlier this month. The four day conference was officially opened by the Prime Minister and Minister for Education, the Honourable Henry Puna and focused on Performance Management in schools.

This is a process that informs educators of what is expected of them. Throughout the conference participants looked at ways performance could be improved to allow for a greater focus on professionalism and accountability.

Praising the participants for dedicating their lives to the noble profession of teaching, the Prime Minister shared his words of thanks and encouragement highlighting the much needed support from the Government and the Ministry of Education to allow educators to perform at their best.

"I believe that you as principals, are part of a very important covenant that Government has with our people. Particularly with our young ones because you are the embodiment of all our best wishes and hopes for our future generation", he said.

The Prime Minister also touched on the scholarship scheme that up until this year was administered by New Zealand and has now shifted to become the responsibility of the Ministry of Education. The scheme is currently under review and it is the hope of Mr Puna that this will result in scholarships becoming more accessible to all Cook Islands students without limitations.

Before ending his speech Mr Puna left the assembly with a final comment.

"What is important for us as educators, as principals and as teachers is the system we uphold, to improve the level of professionalism in teaching, should at the end of the day translate into a better environment in which our students can realise those opportunities for themselves", he said.

The Secretary of Education, Gail Townsend, introduced the events keynote speaker, the Chief Executive Officer of the Pacific Hotel Group Greg Stanaway.

Both Ms Townsend and Mr Stanaway pointed out that running a hotel is not so different from running a school.

"Our staff represent your teachers, our guests are your students and our director and stake holders are your committees and parents. And while you are an institute that facilitates learning, we are a learning institute", said Mr Stanaway.

Mr Stanaway took the participants through the fundamentals of Performance Management relative to being a CEO and a Principal. Throughout the rest of the conference principals discussed sample Teacher Performance Management (TPM) models, looked at how to apply it to our own system, worked as a collective to create a new TPM document for Cook Islands schools, went over the transition from the current system to the new and looked at online options to keep track of the evidence collected during the conference. For the principal of Avarua Primary School and the recipient of last year's Principals Leadership Award, Mrs Engia Baxter, having the opportunity for all principals to share their concerns and successes was a highlight.



From left Principals George Rasmussen and Engia Baxter.



From left Reverend Tinirau Soatini with Greg Stanaway and the Prime Minister, the Honourable Henry Puna.



Participants gathered for a group photo after the conference.



From left Principals Gaylyn Lockington, Christopher Story and Johanna Simiona-Gifford.

TEACHER TRAINEE WORKSHOPS CONTINUE

Participants in the Fast Track Teacher Trainee Program were back in the classroom, or so to speak, for a three day reflective workshop at the Ministry of Education recently. Eight teacher trainees came from schools on Rarotonga, Mangaia, Aitutaki, Mitiaro and Rakahanga to take part in the first of its kind workshop. According to the Ministry's Development and Training Advisor Ani Piri, this was the first time a reflective workshop had been held as part of the programme. The enthusiastic feedback from participants may result in the workshop becoming a regular fixture in the teaching programme, an idea Mrs Piri is definitely open to.

For Pa Enea teacher trainee Maggie Porea, the workshop was a helpful resource with the one on one time with advisors a great asset. Prior to their

arrival each trainee was given the opportunity to raise any issues they had encountered or areas of teaching they wanted help with enabling the workshop to be tailored to the requests of all the trainees following their first term working in the classroom. Each trainee was also given the opportunity to meet with advisors for individual sessions. The beginner teachers are in the first of a two year teacher training programme run by the MoE.



BLUESKY DEAL BENEFITS STUDENT LEARNING

It's been almost a month since the internet agreement between the Ministry of Education and Bluesky Cook Islands came into effect. While some schools are still in the transitioning stage before being able to fully utilise the perks of the agreement, some have already made the internet more accessible to students for school projects. For students at Apii Avarua, Tereora College and Araura College the agreement has allowed

for more in class research using a wider scope of educational sites and access to online text books. For Araura College Principal Tracy Spiers the agreement has resulted in classes becoming more visual as teachers are now using more online resources with less limitations. Students participating in the after school homework club now have access to the internet to continue their research.

BLUE SKIES AHEAD FOR COOK ISLANDS STUDENTS

The Ministry of Education has entered into an agreement with Bluesky Cook Islands that covers all of Education. The agreement supports Education's goal for enhanced student outcomes through equitable access to quality education and will provide unlimited internet data for all schools in the Cook Islands. This will allow schools to give students unlimited access to internet services to support learning in class. It provides greater opportunities for students to utilize internet services for inquiry, collaboration, learning programs and to improve digital literacy.

With greater internet access teachers have increased opportunities to collaborate with the global teaching community, conduct research, find resources and investigate innovative teaching and learning methods.

The Ministry of Education has many internet based initiatives running in schools and is excited about the possibilities to expand their support via the internet. Some of the current initiatives include:

- The online school Te Kura Uira that provides distance learning opportunities to the Pa Enea. This currently delivers programmes to year 9 and 10 in Mitiaro, Manihiki and Penrhyn. Increased data provides the potential to extend this to a wider range of subject areas that may not be accessible on island.
- The Cook Tertiary Training Institute is utilizing internet tools for the delivery of trade programs to the Pa Enea.
- Access to a large number of online learning courses at the both secondary and tertiary level.
- Ministry teacher professional development and training programs are supported via online resources and meetings.
- IT integration across the curriculum which sees students utilizing IT in every day work - building their skills in this area which will be prominent in their future workplaces or further study.



Philip Henderson - Bluesky Country Manager



This agreement and solution has been a while in the making, working closely with the Ministry to understand their requirements and develop a solution that leverages the technology that Bluesky has deployed across the country. The consolidation of all services enables the Ministry to manage the capability and ensures it is efficiently directed where they need it most. Bluesky will continue to work with the Ministry to further refine the solution and support other initiatives that enhance educational performance through the use of communications technology.

Gail Townsend - Secretary of Education

This agreement supports the Ministry in two ways. Firstly it allows us to increase efficiency at the Ministry level by consolidating communication costs. Secondly, and more importantly, it allows our teachers and students improved access to the wide range of learning and resources available online. A computer, and internet access, will never replace the teacher - but a teacher with access to relevant technology can expand the learning of every child in their classroom. The Ministry acknowledges the team at Bluesky and are encouraged by their support in sharing our vision for ongoing quality education in the Cook Islands.



SPOTLIGHT ON..

HEALTH, PHYSICAL EDUCATION & EOTC ADVISOR

'For students to be able to reach their full potential, their Health and Physical Well-being must be nurtured and enhanced. Well-being is a holistic concept. It has social, spiritual, mental and emotional, and physical dimensions that are influenced by family and other relationships, and the environment they are in. Attitudes and values are reformed through exposure to different thoughts, ideas, experience and practices. Through the learning done in the Health and Physical Well-being – oraanga e te tupuanga meitaki – curriculum students will develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and motivation to make informed decisions to act in ways that contribute to their personal well-being, the well-being of other people and to that of society as a whole'. – Health and Physical Well-being Curriculum MoE, 2007.

A PASSION FOR THE OUTDOORS GROWS INTO A REWARDING CAREER FOR OUR HEALTH & PHYSICAL EDUCATION ADVISOR



KATHLEEN WILKIE



A farm girl at heart with a passion for Te Reo Maori and the outdoors, Ms Kathleen Wilkie came to the Cook Islands from a small community on the lower east coast of the North Island. She was born and raised in rural NZ growing up on her family farm in Pongaroa.

Her 26 year old son, Zac shares the same sense of adventure as his mum as he is currently exploring the United Kingdom. Excited about the new opportunities awaiting her here at the Ministry of Education Ms Wilkie was eager to get stuck in to island life.

Four months into her new position she is adamant there is no place she'd rather be.

"I'm loving it here. I love the people and the activities I've gotten involved in like oe vaka and ura fitness", she said. She brings with her 15 years of experience teach-

ing Physical Education, Outdoor Education and Health in secondary schools within the Wairarapa to her role as a Health and Physical Education Advisor.

As a teacher she has always been heavily involved in extra-curricular activities with her students.

"I really value the relationships and experiences that you enjoy with students in these activities and so have run Kiorahi, Canoe Polo, Slalom Kayaking, Girls Rugby and Duke of Edinburgh to name a few", she said.

Because of her passion for the outdoors outside of school she was very involved within the community as an instructor for Mountain Safety Council and an active member of the Wairarapa Land Search and Rescue team. She was also involved in her local oe vaka team and recently competed at the New Zealand Nationals. Since arriving to the island she's jumped straight back into a canoe joining the Te Tupu o Te Manava club.

As well as the outdoors, Ms Wilkie is passionate about all things Maori and feels strongly about incorporating a Maori world view in all her teaching.

SPOTLIGHT ON..

APII TAKITUMU



Since the beginning of the school year Apii Takitumu has been under the leadership of Principal Carly Ave, previously the Primary Literacy Advisor at the Ministry of Education. In this article Mrs Ave writes about a change in teaching style and the creation of new digital resources at the school by teachers.

At Apii Takitumu we teach Maori reading and writing from ECE and take a bilingual approach from Grade 4 – 6. We have been discussing at large about the amount of children coming to school with English as a first language. 10 years ago – teachers were teaching Maori to Maori speakers. Today 95% of children who are attending Apii Takitumu are identified as first language English speakers. The teachers have realised that their audience has changed – this means we need to make some changes to our teaching and learning programmes. So this year our professional development focus is on Maori Literacy and second language acquisition techniques. This is a huge task but the teachers and I are optimistic that

there will be some positive outcomes. The teachers have been working hard to update our Maori resources and will begin taking on some second language techniques in term two. Taking a lead in the resource making project are Maine Mataio and Ngamata Vaine. They have been busy working on creating books for our beginning readers. Ms Vaine uses her knowledge of the language and together with Ms Mataio using her IT skills, together they create digital books and videos. They have already designed and written 13 books! This term we will be having them printed into big books – to help our teachers with teaching reading and writing in Maori. The books have local photos and include the children's voices.

The staff and I have been also thinking about what activities are best for children with Maori as their second language. First we have the task of building children's vocabulary and also establishing firm sentence structures (which differ from English sentence structures). When these resources are finished we hope to send some of the posters and activities home with children to encourage our families to use Te Reo Maori more in the home. We have been very lucky to have iPads throughout our school – and we have integrated them into throughout our teaching programmes. We hope to use the iPads to also motivate children to listen, read and record their own stories in Maori.



EDUCATION AND HEALTH WORKING TOGETHER TO SUPPORT THE YOUTH TO ADDRESS CHILDHOOD OBESITY



Childhood obesity is a problem for the Cook Islands, and if we do not address it our young people will face even greater obesity, diabetes and heart disease rates than their parents. Since 2003 rates of overweight young people have risen from 12% to 21% in primary schools and from 28% to 43% in secondary schools. The World Health Organization (WHO) is so concerned about childhood obesity globally that they formed a commission to investigate what to do about it. Co-chaired by New Zealander, Professor Sir Peter Gluckman, the 'Ending Childhood Obesity Commission' heard submissions from around the globe before finalising the report recommending a six-pronged 'whole of community' approach. The Ministries of Health and Education are working together with the University of Auckland's Liggins Institute on this issue and made sure that the voice of the Cook Islands was heard by the commissioners. While the commission heard from health leadership around the world, it was only in Auckland that they heard directly from Pacific youth, and teachers, including Delaney Yaqona, Deputy Principal of Nukutere College and Celeste Barrett-Watson, Head of Social Sciences at Tereora College.

"The message from the Cook Islands –Liggins collaboration was clear," said Gluckman, "we heard that teachers are concerned about the health of young people and their families.

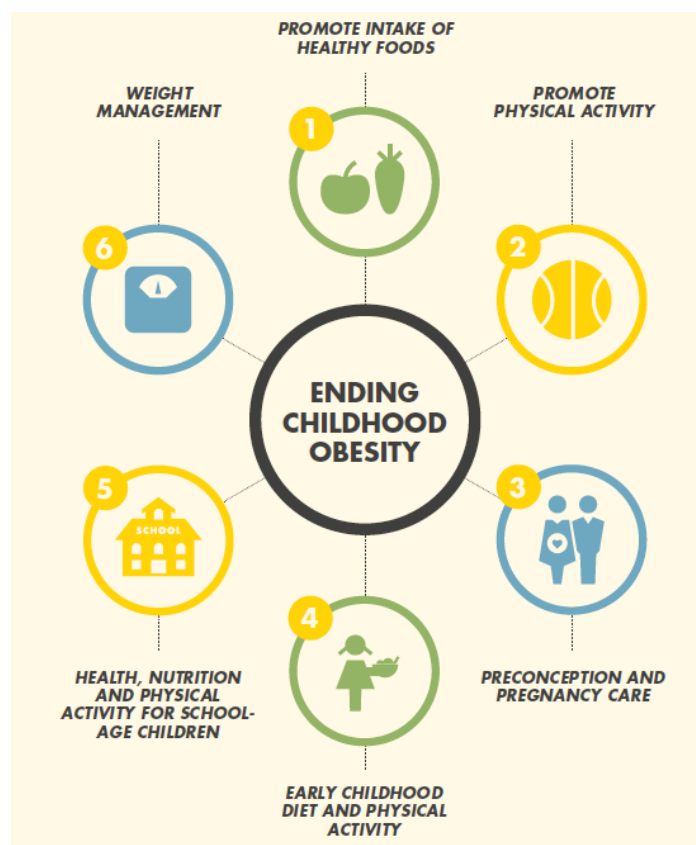
Teachers have the expertise to create learning programmes that can contribute to addressing this issue – not just in health and PE, but across the school. This can benefit young people and their families, as information is shared at home."

Secretary of Health, Elizabeth Iro and Secretary of Education, Gail Townsend are excited to see their ministries collaborating so strongly on this issue. "We have always worked well together" says Iro, "but getting the teachers to lead the education programme design has made a big difference". Health and Education teams including Tereora, Titikaveka and Nukutere meet regularly to plan learning programmes, update teachers on the latest health data, and update public health on what is happening in schools and the evaluation evidence coming from the learning programmes. As well as learning programmes crossing science, social studies, health and PE and English, both ministries are making sure that the joint

messages get through to parents and the community. "The Healthy Child messaging and related programming is very positive" said Gluckman. "It is the type of effort we hope to see developing everywhere."

Tereora Principal Tania Morgan sees the increased collaboration between Health and Education as a step in the right direction. "It is the young people who have to make the change" says Morgan. "The increased evidence is showing us how to support the students. For example we now have clear evidence that most of our students are not eating breakfast, so we can support students to understand through learning programmes why breakfast is important. The decision to change has to come from the students but we need to support them."

So while the outlook for obesity and diabetes globally and locally is challenging, our young people are being well supported. The evidence suggests they are determined to make changes that will improve health for themselves, their families and their future children. "Now we have learnt about why and about things we can do to prevent diabetes, we can make decisions".



The WHO Ending Childhood Obesity Report

READ A BOOK TODAY

It was a successful week for members of the Learning and Teaching team and Kuki the bird as they visited nine primary schools around the island as part of the Books in Homes project.

The assemblies are part of the project's yearlong initiative to promote reading in the homes which included visits earlier in the year sharing out books to students and members of the public to take home. During the week of Monday May 9th, schools hosted the team and guest speakers encouraging the youngsters to read including 88FM DJ George 'GDub' Williams, MoE Curriculum and Pedagogy

line manager Strickland Upu and the Prime Minister, the Honourable Henry Puna.

"As far as the assemblies went, they were very successful and the kids' response was magic", said MoE secondary school literacy advisor Kim Geddes. Each school was also donated reading material. Next up for the team will be meeting with parent groups before the end of the term to see how they can better encourage their children to get reading and later in the year students will be invited to participate in a book week competition and a literacy quiz.



POLICY AND DEVELOPMENT INTERN

There's a new face here at the Ministry of Education, 17 year-old Myria Rongo joins the Policy and Development team as a Policy Intern. This is her first year out of high school and she has her sights set on becoming a business lawyer.

For Myria the internship is a great stepping stone towards her goal before heading off to university in the very near future. She will be with us for 10 weeks assisting with the policy review schedule. Welcome to the team Myria!

