

Taranaki Kura Waiora

Health Promoting Schools Newsletter



Enhancing the emotional, social, physical and moral wellbeing of the whole school community

Welcome



Tena Koutou - greetings to you all

Wow, 2008 sure has flown by, especially the last two terms, which have been full of exciting developments! Our Health Promoting Schools team has expanded with new additions Amanda, Marnie and Eloise. We also welcome five new schools to the programme. You will find out more on these changes in our new-look Kura Waiora newsletter.

In this issue we take a look at some of the international evidence behind Health Promoting Schools. We highlight the annual Health Promoting Schools Cluster Forum, which focused on prioritising and planning. We also cover how to put research and theory into practice, especially when involving families in school life.

The journey of Waitara East School features as part of our "Interview with a Health Promoting School" series. Also, Rahotu School took some time out to share their experiences of student engagement with Taranaki Fruit in Schools at their quarterly Cluster Hui.

We hope you enjoy the revamped Kura Waiora newsletter and wish you all the best for the end of the year.

Nga mihi nui

Warm regards from the Health Promoting Schools team

Sarah, Alisha, Amanda, Marnie & Eloise



From left, Sarah Wilson, Marnie Reinfelds, Eloise Pollard, Amanda Brien & Alisha Stone.

Changes on the Health Promoting Schools team

Comings...

We warmly welcome three new faces to the Health Promoting Schools team. These women come from a range of backgrounds and bring different experiences to the team.

Amanda Brien - has worked on Nutrition and Physical Activity within the Health Promotion Unit for the past three years and is looking forward to broadening her horizons with the Health Promoting Schools way of working.

Eloise Pollard - has a background in community development locally and internationally, having spent time working with children in Nepal. She has an interest in education and enjoys working with children and young people.

Marnie Reinfelds - is a former secondary school teacher who has worked in the health sector for four years. She has a keen interest in Māori health and research and is undertaking postgraduate study in this area.

Goings...

Sarah Wilson - our current programme leader, is heading off on maternity leave at the end of November. She has worked on the Health Promoting Schools team for the last three years, but has been a health promoter for the Taranaki District Health Board since 1999. We wish her all the best and look forward to her return in a years time.



Taranaki Together, a Healthy Community
Taranaki Whanui He Rohe Oranga



Health Promoting Schools continue to grow in Taranaki

Over the last two terms, five new schools have adopted the Health Promoting Schools way of working. Here we highlight the awareness raising activities of St Josephs Patea and Whenuakura Schools.



Making smoothies at St Josephs Patea.

St Josephs Patea

Participating in the Fruit in Schools programme since 2006, St Josephs Patea held their Health Promotion Whānau Day to celebrate their progress and identify their priorities for the future with their community as a Health Promoting School.

Principal Erica Stephens explains, "We had a wide range of support from parents, grandparents, siblings, parish and the local Kōhanga Reo. We begun by gathering as a whole community for a blessing and getting active with Jump Jam. We then split into our Mission groups and rotated around stations, all designed to keep us healthy. This included making healthy kai buns and smoothies, as well as a variety of activities run by Sport Taranaki, and of course community consultation.

"The feedback was so pivotal to the development of our school, especially in health, Māori and our special character. We are now busy planning for the future of our school from the ideas of our school community."

Whenuakura School

South Taranaki's Whenuakura School raised awareness about becoming a Health Promoting School at their recent Lamb and Calf Day and took the opportunity to consult with their school community about their wellbeing. Reflecting on what becoming a Health Promoting School means for Whenuakura

School, Principal Nadia Ballantine explains, "We will be working to empower all members of our school community to actively participate in identifying and addressing health issues, and creating life long skills, values and behaviours that can increase our students' and families' potential to live long healthy, fulfilling lives."

Also congratulations to Waitara Central, Waitara East and Waverley Primary for their recent launch efforts. We look forward to sharing your journeys as Health Promoting Schools in the future.



The all important judging at Whenuakura's Lamb and Calf Day.



Research and theory into practice

In August, the team attended a two-day workshop featuring internationally renowned Health Promoting Schools expert Associate Professor Lawrence St Leger (pictured above).

Lawrence St Leger is an Associate Professor of Health and Social Development at Australia's Deakin University. He began his career as a teacher, and is now considered one of the world's leading health promoters and educators. He is widely published and has been commissioned by the World Health Organization to develop teaching and learning materials on health. His latest research focuses on how the environment shapes the mental and physical wellbeing of young people.

At the workshop, St Leger presented Health Promoting Schools research from many parts of the world. A key theme was looking to this existing evidence to guide our practice in

New Zealand. Participants were able to explore and apply these international findings to their local contexts. Health Promoter Eloise Pollard reports, "developing 'action competencies' in students was a new concept many took away. This focuses on nurturing real life skills that can be used beyond the classroom, in other words learning how to cook a meal instead of just learning what's in it!"

This new concept was further explored in a video presentation from Danish Professor Bjarne Bruun Jensen, who like St Leger is interested in the role the environment has on health for young people. Jensen highlighted the importance of talking about health in everyday language with students. For example, movement including dance and play has more meaning to children than 'exercise'. Children are agents to influence change, so actively involving them can lead to successful projects.

School connectedness and building positive relationships with the wider community was another important talking point. Studies show learning outcomes are improved when students believe in themselves, are happy in their work and feel respected by teachers. New evidence predicts that by 2020, mental health will be the second biggest health concern worldwide. Developing good relationships, life skills, and support are vital in maintaining mental wellbeing.

In closing, St Leger challenged us to always look to the evidence about what works and we were given a key question to ponder - **Why undertake school health promotion approaches? Because healthy children learn better.**

For more information on the works of Lawry St Leger visit www.deakin.edu.au



Connecting families with your school

Feeling a sense of 'connectedness' or link to the school is extremely positive for families and whānau. Evidence indicates this can enhance children's educational achievement. Success in education is the ultimate goal for schools and is a well known determinant of health and wellbeing. Therefore, the health and education sectors share the same goal.

Engaging families and whānau is a core element of the Health Promoting Schools philosophy, framework and process. Creating positive relationships with families and whānau is not just a 'good' thing for schools to do. Actively engaging the wider community in school life has a range of benefits:

- Strengthens links between home and school life
- Improves communication between families and school staff
- Leads to better understanding of the school community needs
- Focuses on the shared responsibility schools and families have in children's education
- Reinforces to children that education is important

- Makes children feel more connected to the school and value education

It is really important for schools to reflect and get families and whānau involved in setting goals. Levels of involvement range from simply informing your community, through to higher levels where there are opportunities for joint responsibility and working in partnership. Use the list below to consider how involved your school community is:

- **Informed** eg newsletters
- **Takes part in activities** eg attending events
- **Dialogue and exchange of views** eg conversations at interviews
- **Helps make decisions** eg surveys of parents
- **Responsibility to act** eg meeting to discuss issues and explore ways forward together

Meaningful engagement is not always easy to achieve. The Health Promoting Schools team is here to support schools with practical advice for making positive connections with families and whānau.

TIPS

- Use a 'personal approach'. Stand at the school gate to just say hello to parents dropping off their kids
- Design creative ways to engage families and whānau on school policies and procedures
- Invite families and whānau to assemblies, special events and meetings
- Develop a buddy system for new families and whānau. Find parents to help these newcomers get to know the school community
- Identify family members with specific skills or talents. Ask them if they are able to assist with special projects
- Be available to meet with families and whānau
- Phone to give positive or encouraging updates about their child
- Ensure the school environment is welcoming to families and whānau
- Make it easy to find the school office and friendly staff
- Always thank families and whānau for any support they provide the school

Taranaki Health Promoting Schools get focused on planning

The Taranaki Health Promoting Schools recently got together for their annual Cluster Forum. This was an opportunity to share ideas and experiences, as well as professional development on priority topics.

Twenty-one people, representing eight schools, attended the evening focused on prioritising and planning. This theme was selected in consultation with schools and is a core part of the Health Promoting Schools process.

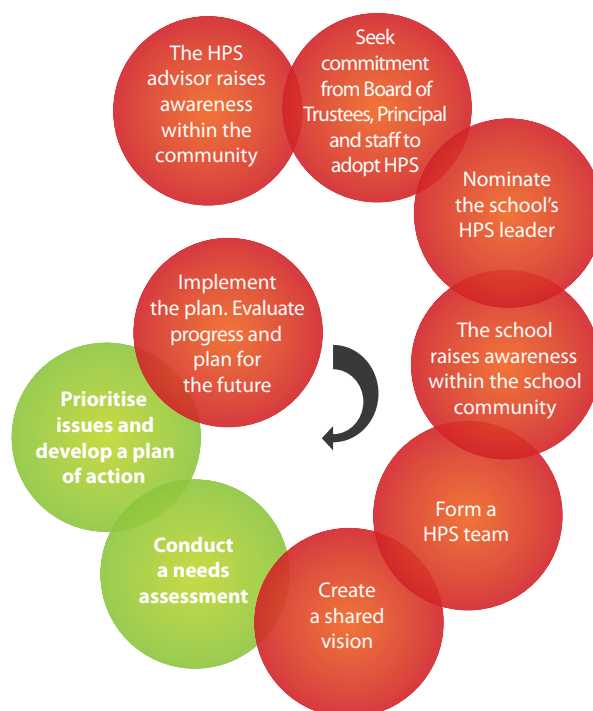
Mini presentations and activities based on a hypothetical school were used to breakdown the planning process into manageable steps:

1. Needs assessment and community consultation
2. Stock takes of what is currently happening
3. Developing ideas to meet the identified needs
4. Impact matrix tool to assess and prioritise ideas
5. Pulling together specific plans for action

An evaluation of the Cluster Forum showed that all attendees found the night useful. Highlights included the opportunity to share ideas with other schools, practical experience with planning, having time to discuss processes in-depth away from school and exploring ideas in a group situation.

Overall, it was a successful and enjoyable evening. We look forward to seeing fabulous plans coming through from local Health Promoting Schools.

Health Promoting Schools process



The workshop focused on the later stages in the Health Promoting Schools process

Student participation in action

Student engagement and participation was the theme for term three's Fruit in Schools cluster hui. The hui looked at the evidence that supports student participation in all areas of school life.

Representatives from Rahotu School shared their experiences of setting up a student health team, the 'Hauora Helpers'. Health Promoting Schools Lead Teacher Elaine Wilson spoke in depth about the process Rahotu School used from selecting the 'Hauora Helpers' to running the first meeting. To begin with this was led by adults, but with time and support the students are now driving the team.

Hauora Helpers Bailey, Leticia and Hannah were a key part of the hui and described the way their student health team works. For example, they have a secretary to record minutes of their meetings and reporters

who give content for the school newsletter. They talked about their involvement in reviewing the schools discipline system and revamping the peer mediation programme.

Besides behaviour, the group have also identified other key priorities of healthy eating, water and the toilets.

The students also shared their perspective on the benefits of student participation. Being a Hauora Helper means: "Everyone has a say" and "It's a good opportunity, it's fun and you can change things."

Health Promoter Sarah Wilson says: "It was great to have Elaine and the Hauora Helpers speak of their experiences in strengthening student participation in their school!"

We understand that some schools can be a

little apprehensive about what student participation could mean. It's about empowering students and a working partnership between adults and students.



Health Promoting Schools Lead Teacher Elaine Wilson, along with Hauora Helpers Bailey, Leticia and Hannah, presenting at the Fruit In Schools cluster hui.

We feel the Rahotu School's Hauora Helpers are an excellent example of how giving students a meaningful voice can enhance school life.

Interview with Waitara East School

Waitara East School joined the Fruit In Schools programme when it began here in December 2005. Principal Gary Dent shares his school's recent journey of becoming a fully fledged Health Promoting School.

1. As a Fruit in School, you have committed to becoming a Health Promoting School. Why have you chosen to do so now? We had a focus on student engagement and how behaviour impacts on this. We took up the offer of the Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) programme through Special Education and this involved much consultation with whānau, children and staff. It made sense to use PBS as our Health Promoting Schools platform. In terms of community consultation in particular, it was the right time to begin the Health Promoting Schools journey.

2. How are you finding the transition from being a Fruit In School to a Health Promoting School? This has been easy. Although our PBS focus is different from Health Promoting Schools, it has become an integral part of the school and therefore everyday 'business as usual'. Health Promoting Schools has aligned perfectly with PBS because PBS is all about

respectful relationships, as well as feeling safe, happy and secure at school. This includes a lot of aspects of hauora as shown in Mason Durie's Te Whare Tapa Wha model.

3. How have you raised awareness with your school community about becoming a Health Promoting School? We carried out considerable consultation and included children in this all the way. We already had fortnightly PBS meetings where families, school leaders and staff work together on making the school a better place to be.

We had a Health Promoting Schools launch day and invited all of the community. This was supported by the Health Promoting Schools team, who surveyed whānau on what they saw as important for health in our school.

4. What do you see as some of the strengths or benefits of Health Promoting Schools for your school? The school can identify and choose what is important for them to focus on in Health Promoting Schools and the team are available to help. They are very knowledgeable and have resources to support the school.

5. What advice do you have for other schools considering adopting Health Promoting Schools? Don't feel you have to stick to the four Fruit In Schools areas of healthy eating, physical activity, Sunsmart and Smokefree. If your school has another health area that is important to you, go for it. Use the expertise of the Health Promoting Schools team. We have found their assistance to be invaluable. Involve your community as much as you can, you will be surprised at how much support you can get.



Community consultation at Waitara East's Health Promoting Schools launch.

For more information on the Positive Behaviour Support programme contact: Juliet.lewis@minedu.govt.nz