

The residential home at Glenbrook offers under 17s in trouble a second chance – a ‘second home’ where they are visited by providers for their specific needs, receive cultural tutoring and either attend outside schooling or are tutored at the home. Some receive alternative education at Home Builders in Tuakau. “These kids come from all the abuse issues – domestic violence, sexual abuse, self-harm – there are huge psychological problems and we work in with other social services, counsellors and specialists. We also have to be careful about who we take in. Some of them have serious charges. It’s all about returning the kids home, so we need to work with their families or look for extended whanau.

“For me, it’s been a huge learning experience and can be very sad. These children have been born innocent into the world and dropped into an environment that determines their future. At the end of the day, it’s about taking kids back to who they are – some have really drawn the short straw. There are some good parents, but you can’t always save kids from themselves. Working with other supportive networks is a huge help to us at Huakina, as we realise we are not alone.

“We have had some really good outcomes. One of them was a ‘bad boy’ who was into graffiti and tagging, roaming around town at night. His father was in gaol in Mt Eden and his mother couldn’t handle him. Our aim was to channel all of those energies in a positive direction. After his stay with us, he spent five years in the army, served in Iraq and learned skills to gain employment when he left the army.”

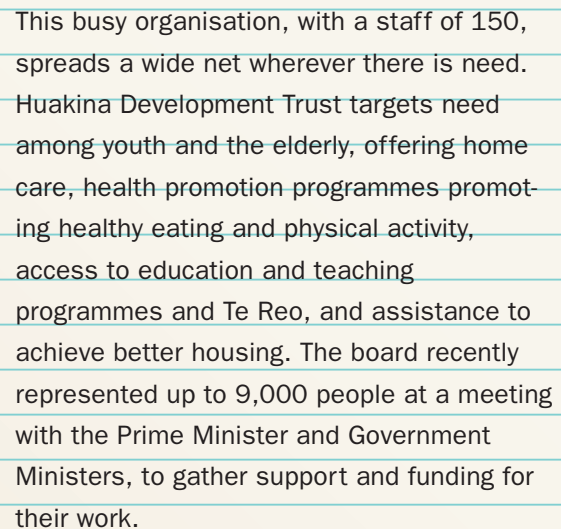
Livaine Ratu coordinates Oranga Pai programmes at local marae, promoting physical activity and healthy eating. The Marae Haurua Project was developed after local iwi asked the Trust board to look at their health needs. It is a highly successful example of how Maori providers and local iwi work together with other boards, in this instance, Counties Manukau District Health Board and Counties Manukau Sport. Again, low income lies at the core of the problem, with families unable to afford to buy quality food. Even in Franklin – home of the potato, comprising a staple part of the diet for 90% of the district – prices have risen beyond the reach of many. Oranga Pai aims to teach healthy and affordable options.

“Many of the children at our programme couldn’t identify potato when it was in the form of potato salad. It’s important that people get to know vegetables, their uses and seasons and get involved in physical activities. There is a fantastic response to the Weetbix Tryathlon each year and the mid-winter Marae Challenge. There are 14 marae in Franklin and the support for Huakina has been phenomenal.”

Kids don’t know where they come from – it’s all about loss.”

“Our work is really about mending broken hearts.”

“These children have been born innocent into the world..”



This busy organisation, with a staff of 150, spreads a wide net wherever there is need. Huakina Development Trust targets need among youth and the elderly, offering home care, health promotion programmes promoting healthy eating and physical activity, access to education and teaching programmes and Te Reo, and assistance to achieve better housing. The board recently represented up to 9,000 people at a meeting with the Prime Minister and Government Ministers, to gather support and funding for their work.

For Huakina Trust, marae offer a return home to the heart centre and renewing peoples’ pride in who they are. It’s also about equipping them through education – with achievers providing welcome role models (90 from 180 students graduated last year). Most of the students are women taking advantage of getting a second chance at tertiary education. Students are offered opportunities to study for diplomas, bachelor degrees, post-graduate or Masters.

The people at Huakina Trust know first-hand the social problems faced in the community, by people of all cultures, including young teenagers falling out at High School. “We could have caught them 15-20 years ago, so now our staff use what has worked for them, providing a link back to our marae,” says Chief Executive Tim Tahapehi. “Another aspect we address is good housing – everybody aspires to owning their own home, but debt can be a number one killer. We can put plans together to look, maybe two years down the track, when families could be ready to take that step.

“Huakina Development Trust is in the community, building trust. Sometimes people don’t want to know, progress at times seems small, but as more people experience what is being offered to them, to change their lives and that of their whanau, it is slowly growing. Our work is really about mending broken hearts so that people are encouraged to make a difference in their lives.”



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