

FROM LUNCHBOX TO TOOLKIT

Auckland Community Learning Hubs Forum June 14th 2011



If we believe it takes a village to raise a child, what does this mean for relationships and collaboration between learning hubs and local communities? This powerful question was the gathering call for the "Lunchbox to Toolkit" forum held at the Onehunga Community Centre recently.

The purpose of the one-day forum was to:

- build relationships between those working in the 'family-centred, community-led development' space
- share ideas, experiences and practice
- explore what else could be done to strengthen a family-centred, community-led approach in Tamaki Makaurau.

The day started with a mihi whakatau from Bobby Newson from the Families Commission who said it was a privilege and honour to welcome everyone on behalf of the mana whenua of Onehunga. He spoke of the three kete of knowledge as the 'kai o te rangatira o korero' – the chief's food, the exchange of knowledge. He spoke as a voice of the many maunga of Tamaki Makaurau, and the Manukau and Waitemata Harbours.

The Forum's co-facilitators – Charlie Moore, Families Commission and Megan Courtney, Inspiring Communities – kicked off the day with a 'Kia ora wave' where each attendee stood and introduced themselves. It uncovered a group of over 130 people diverse in both background and geography but coming together with a common kaupapa of strengthening families and communities.

The two lenses of the forum – family-centred and community-led development – were introduced by Charlie and Megan, asking questions such as 'what does it mean?' and 'how will it impact our practice?'

The big message emerged was that both family-centred and community-led development are not a programme or intervention – it is a fundamentally different way of working. Core principles of both approaches put whanau/local communities at the centre of everything and thinking in collaborative and holistic ways. Charlie acknowledged that collaboration is incredibly challenging but vital as it is the glue that holds the spaces between all the things we are doing. He stressed that putting the time into building respectful and responsive relationships is essential for building the trust and resilience from which innovation can emerge.

Megan built on the idea of community-led development having 'place' at its core – strengthened by the cross-fertilisation of diverse people and agencies, working together to achieve local visions and build 'leaderful' communities. She spoke of the need for visions and plans but also flexibility and adaptability in terms of how action then happens on the ground.

SLIDESHOW

Community-Led Development Principles

- ▶ 'Place' at the core
- ▶ Local voice and leadership valued and empowered
- ▶ Working together across boundaries
- ▶ Strength and asset based
- ▶ Growing collaborative community leadership
- ▶ Being intentional, adaptable and demonstrating progress
- ▶ Whole systems change



Family-centred Principles

- Family whanau at the centre of everything
- Collaborative and holistic
- Respectful responsive relationships



COMMUNITIES DISCOVERING THE FUTURE - THE ONE YOU ARE WAITING FOR IS YOU

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: SAM CHAPMAN NZ LOCAL HERO OF THE YEAR 2010

Sam Chapman, one of Otago's long time community champions, introduced us to the Awhi model for education and transformational community development which he has developed from his work over many decades. He began with a key quote:

"What we focus on becomes our reality, and what we do today becomes our tomorrow"

Sam stressed the importance of shifting the focus away from the problems we face towards what we could do together. He stated that the perception that we must simply "face these realities" - is without a doubt the greatest single constraint on our imagination, vision and enterprise. He encouraged everyone - "to see with new eyes". Suggesting that transformation happens first in the mind, then in the healing of the heart, then by finding the resources we need to do the things we really want to do.

Sam drew inspiration from Sir Edmund Hillary's conquering spirit and said that to be effective we need to commit ourselves to that kind of epic journey - a set of goals for what our communities could look like.

"It is not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves"

In this shift - where people are empowered to take responsibility for both themselves and their communities - we can believe that collectively, and collaboratively, we can make it happen. He acknowledged that while government funding can be enabling for community development, to become truly empowered we need to find ways to shift this reliance and strive to be more creative and innovative in our approaches.

"We want to change but we don't know how. We don't want our kids to go through what we went through"

Roy Dunn - President of the Notorious Chapter of the Mongrel Mob.

Having worked with Roy and others every Thursday night for 15 years, Sam identified the biggest challenge as finding how to reconcile people back with the world that has alienated them. For Roy and his colleagues, society was seen as the enemy and the mob was their whanau, hapu and turangawaewae - the place they had belonging, and worth. For Sam, the hope and way forward lies in a paradigm shift in each of our minds from alleviating problems to dreaming new futures and finding the paths to achieve them and understanding the journey is a 'long haul' one.

He emphasised that he doesn't see himself as an expert: "I'm not an expert in anything. Experts try to fix things with their formulated questions, reports and policy. We just do it." The key message is that "you are the one you have been waiting for [to make the transformation]." By encouraging our communities to see with new eyes, our future generations will come to say "I belong to this wonderful thing called whanau. I have responsibilities as part of that."

This bottom-up model of enabling people to discover their dreams has achieved amazing results and more than a decade on, a dream for children in Otago to have an after school centre to help with things like homework and amazing access to new technology, has been achieved. Sam has been part of the dream to establish '274' - a community-based computer clubhouse in Otago. This initiative has now been extended to three other communities in Auckland through an international partnership with Intel that has been recognised as world-leading.

"Before Hillary, many fell in the ice on the way to conquer Everest and so it is in community work too. What we must do is keep on trying and along the way, leave a trail of evidence about what works that others can look for".

By the time Sam finished his address, the room was alight with the feeling of pure inspiration and possibility. Charlie Moore wrapped the session by highlighting Sam's message that everything is connected - the solutions lie in our own communities and whanau - and our role is simply to unlock them by facilitating their dreams, not telling them what they should do or be.

THE AWHI WAY

1. Who knows best?
2. Mirror analysis and information gathering
3. Establishing baselines - process not projects
4. Paradigm shift and smart dreams
5. Monitoring
6. Party time
7. Do it all again

PROCESS OF PARADIGM SHIFT

1. Exchange one system or set of rules for another
2. Identify new models or systems for solving problems and exchange them for the old
3. Journey to the edges of your paradigm
4. Exchange the rules or guidance on how to be successful within your boundaries
5. Establish new boundaries

STREAM 1 - LIFELONG LEARNING



Parent Participation in School-Based Preschool Education

DEBORAH WIDDOWSON AND ROBYN DIXON

The Parent Mentoring Playgroup Project in Manukau is a community-led, family-centered approach to preschool education that provides continuity between learning communities and supports home-preschool-school transitions through playgroups on school sites. Designed to encourage parent engagement in learning and establish links between early childhood education and schools to ease this transition, the programme involved Community Liaison Workers in schools to provide information and guidance for parents to get involved in their child's learning.

KEY INSIGHTS

- Parental involvement is key to a child's educational success and an accurate predictor of school achievement
- Focus on facilitating transitions from preschool to school resulted in enhanced achievement in subsequent years
- Importance of Community Liaison Workers being from the community, being inclusive and having community respect
- Parents really valued the support they got to help their children write and read, as before the programme they hadn't felt confident in helping their children

Auckland Libraries

GREG MORGAN

The Auckland Council Libraries are now the largest library system in Australasia with 54 community library locations, 4 mobile libraries, 14 rural volunteer libraries plus outreach and online services. Their collection holds over 3.5 million items. This is a huge community resource which aims to be a place of discovery – somewhere to develop a passion for life-long learning and a love of reading.

KEY INSIGHTS

- Libraries are no longer places to hear a pin drop – they have evolved into community hubs of multi-media information and connection
- Auckland Libraries are actively bridging the digital divide through community learning spaces and innovative web platforms - providing access to computers, internet and online resources
- Collaboration and partnerships are essential to lift academic achievement
- Libraries aim to be places of intergenerational learning and showcase local history and heritage
- Have a whole-family focus – building skills in literacy and numeracy – beginning with programmes such as Wriggle and Rhyme (for 0-2 year olds).

Leataata o Tupulaga o le Pasefika Preschool

LEATA LAINE TIPI AND FA'AMALUA TIPI

Leataata o Tupulaga o le Pasefika Preschool is more than an ECE – it is a community hub that welcomes parents and family members, listens to their needs, and finds ways to support them. So far this has included acting as a peacemaker to resolve community conflicts, providing workshops on nutrition and cooking, setting up groups for youth, young mums, fathers and grandparents, a tree planting project, literacy classes, driver licensing support, a gardening project and bringing together support organisations for a CYFS workshop.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- If you listen to what people want and then provide that, the community will get involved
- By tapping into local resources, it is possible to provide a range of services within existing funding sources
- Being a community learning hub means being open to new ideas and working with multiple partners
- Engaging and supporting children and their families raises educational and wellbeing outcomes for all.

Te Whanau Ara Mua

SUSAN WARREN AND ROSE TOKI

COMET and Manukau Institute of Technology partner with local schools and ECEs to support intergenerational learning, through their joint programme, Te Whanau Ara Mua. Parents and other family members can study for a qualification in family learning and child development, delivered at their child's school and linked to their child's learning. Families who have participated are reporting positive changes in their parenting practices, school-parent relationships, family relationships, ongoing study and employment. One ex-student has even become a lecturer in the course, after graduating with a degree in ECE teaching.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Adults who had a bad initial experience with education need to access learning where they are at – focused on their family and delivered in their community
- Current funding mechanisms make it hard to sustain intergenerational learning programmes because no one agency values outcomes for children, adults and families.
- "I thought we are here to be cleaners and factory workers. Now I have bigger plans for my kids - they are going where I am going – university."

STREAM 2 - IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO RAISE A CHILD



Creating synergies in West Harbour, Massey East

VICKI HITCHCOCK, GRECIA MCNAMARA, MARY NICHOLAS AND JENNY TANNER

Tatou West Harbour is a journey in community engagement towards whanau and community wellbeing - a collaboration involving West Harbour School, the Back2Back Project, Local Massey Board, Auckland Council and a wider stakeholder network. Coordination is assisted by a School/Community Liaison (funded by the Ministry for Social Development) and the Auckland Council. The project is now into its fourth year and initiatives have included Family Fun Nights, neighbourhood street activities, a Manutewhau Restoration Plan, local food production and 'pride in place' events. A community hub based at the school is also now in planning phase.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Importance of Liaison position as a bridge between school and community – meeting with every new family of children who attend the school to make sure they are supported
- Significance of school as a community hub to connect people both to each other, and their place
- Getting relationships right and establishing trust from the first interactions



Otara Boards Forum

BILL TAKEREI, JANE LOTO, TUPE GALU AND SARAH GIBSON

The Parent Network Programme initiated by the Otara Boards Forum works with parents to empower them to play an active role in their child's education. This is achieved through diverse programmes to build confidence and skills ranging from literacy and numeracy to cooking, gardening, budgeting, line-dancing and Zumba. The aim is to make learning fun for them and their children, working with the three principles of engagement, community leadership and participation.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Seeing education in the context of wider community
- Being proactive about change – challenging the Ministry of Education to raise student achievement
- Making learning fun through creative engagement and events
- Committing to the long journey and hard slog – developing leadership at the grass roots
- Importance of relationships – fostering collaboration across schools and taking a network approach



'TU' the 'MANA' born: Taonga Teen Parenting Unit

ANNE CANDY, GEORGINA KUPA AND ERANA DOOLAN

The TAONGA (Totally Acknowledging Our Next Generation's Abilities) Teen Parent Unit has a mission of creating a positive response to teen pregnancy and valuing their offspring – creating a paradigm shift to instill a sense of privilege in young parents and their tamariki by ensuring students have all the resources and benefits they are entitled to. The programme was started in Clendon by representatives of the Maori Women's Welfare League and now has now grown to include 36 staff, 30 students, 2 early childhood centres and a support house.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Teen mothers and their babies need to be treasured like harakeke. They need a safe place to flourish.
- Reconnecting with Maori values such as tino rangatiratanga (absolute integrity), whakakoha rangatiratanga (respectful relationships), kaitiakitanga (responsible trusteeship), and mauri ora (wellbeing) is the foundation of the programme.
- Setting new precedents - "Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail"



Kelston Schools Cluster

DARREN SMITH

The Kelston Schools Cluster is a collection of principals, boards of trustees, teachers and community stakeholders across 8 schools in the Kelston area. Together they are working together with members of the local community to support children and whanau and strengthen education outcomes. The collaboration was established in 1996 by the principal of Kelston Boys High School to promote a 'village of schools' working cooperatively to become the schools of choice in the Kelston/New Lynn area through a culture of excellence. In 1995 the schools ranged from decile 1-3. Now they are all decile 3.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Importance of strong links with the surrounding community and awareness of the challenges and opportunities that exist there. If you want to raise achievement you need to work with parents as well as students
- Strength in a partnership approach – developing a strong identity in West Auckland as a leading hub of learning with continuity from early-childhood-education through to high school has made a huge difference
- Value in promoting a culture that celebrates successes and achievements in both the schools and wider community

STREAM 3 - CLASSROOMS WITHOUT WALLS



Auckland Diocesan School for Girls - Building active citizenship and leadership skills

REBECCA ABBOTT

To give is better than to receive' is a Year 10 Education Outside the Classroom initiative. It focuses on growing student leadership and active citizenship through community service projects relating learning to real-world contexts. The programme empowers students to recognise their own potential to make a difference in their community each year by working alongside organisations such as Auckland City Mission, the Motuihe Restoration Trust, LIFEWISE and Mercy Parklands Retirement Village. Each team is charged with learning about the organisation, raising \$500, then completing a project over a week and presenting back to other students on outcomes and learning.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Value of building a relationship with the wider community and learning in real social and cultural contexts
- Recognising that learning is a journey that is shared between students, teachers, families and their communities
- Enabling students to lead their learning and contribution to the community organisations they're working with
- Realising the worth and empowerment that comes from giving back



Edmund Hillary School - Engaging families via community gardening

KATARAINA NOCK AND NAOMI LEES

The Papakura Mahinga Kai Gardening Project aims to connect families and communities and re-engage tamariki and families both in school and the belief that they can achieve. Principal Kataraina Nock is determined to work creatively and courageously to help heal a broken school and disillusioned community. Over the last four years, a major refurbishment of the school has been accompanied by the creation of a large community garden and by facilitating back yard gardens for 45 local families.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Importance of leadership and continuity
- Reaching out to engage parents – go out to parents and community rather than expect/wait for them to come in
- Build from 'old wisdom' – for Kataraina this meant thinking back to her early years and the importance of gardening to produce kai & connect with the whenua
- Empower local residents
- It takes a long time to transform a community – intergenerational cycles of poverty are truly challenging
- Seeing is believing – as gardens grow, so do smiles on faces and the belief that things can change.



C-Me Mentoring Trust - Trades at School

JOHN KOTOISUVA

The C-Me Mentoring Trust runs a highly successful two-year programme for Years 12-13 students, helping them to facilitate and manage their transition from school to tertiary education, trade-training or paid employment. The vision for the project is to align education with industry, linking companies into schools and giving students who struggle with NCEA purpose. The Trust is currently working in 10 high schools across Auckland and promoting industry and trades to students in these schools – giving interested students a realistic purpose for their subjects and life after secondary school. The main aim is for each participating student to complete all Year 1 apprenticeship unit standards before they leave school - making them much more attractive to future employers.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- The school system is letting many students down - teachers spend so much time administering rather than building relationships
- Young people need an education that empowers them to express themselves and find where they fit into the world
- When students are listened to and given opportunities that match their values they will excel.



CAYAD West Whole School Approach to Drugs and Alcohol

CAITLIN BUSH

The CAYAD (Community Action Youth and Drugs) programme was established in 1999, aiming to reduce drug-related harm to young people with a unique grass-roots, evidence-based approach. CAYAD West showed how community action can work across a whole school community to raise achievement and engagement of students using alcohol and other drugs. Key to their approach is also collaborating with community organisations such as ZEAL and the Youth Horizons Trust to involve the community in tackling this problem.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Adolescent drug use has a strong correlation with failure to attain qualifications and can lead to addictions later in life
- Important to get people talking about the issue – we all need to be part of the solution
- Schools tend to punish students for drug use – what's needed is a coordinated intervention/prevention process that spans policy/curriculum, pastoral care and community
- Information often does little to solve the issue – what's needed is support for at-risk students looking at the whole context – poor family relationships, drug-use, poor academic achievement are also part of this.

STREAM 4 - LEARNING HUBS



Our journey to become HubSTARS

LINDA BIGGS, MAILE YOUNG AND NOLA HAMBLETON

The Manurewa Parenting Hub was established in 2008 with the aim of 'supporting families in our community'. It began with flyers inviting parents to sessions on how to assist their children with literacy and numeracy from their car office. Since then it has grown to a staff of 5, based at Manurewa South School, who provide parents – their HubSTARS – with co-created learning opportunities to both boost the parents' confidence and capabilities and the home-school partnership between parents and teachers.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Confident, capable parents create confident, capable children
- To give the parents what they really need, trust needs to be developed so that they can be honest about what is happening for them e.g. managing anger
- Support from school principals is critical
- As confidence grows, parents are now comfortable to step into leadership and employment positions within the Hub structure. Parents are now employed as teacher aides and others are being trained as budgeters to provide budget services through local schools.

Mutukaroa - Sylvia Park School

BARBARA ALA'ALATOA AND ARIANA WILLIAMS

The Mutukaroa Community Learning Partnership initiative at Sylvia Park School arose out of a concern about the educational underachievement of their Maori and Pacific Island students. The school knew that this could be significantly improved with greater parent engagement and set about designing an evidence-based programme to help close the gap between community and school. In particular Mutukaroa aims to foster robust 'learning conversations' between parents and teachers – including empowering and supporting parents to ask demanding questions of teachers as part of the student-family-school learning partnership.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- If parents know more, they can do more to support their child's learning and have a more productive relationship with the school
- Attitudes that parents are disinterested or ill-equipped bystanders in their child's education are extremely limiting to young people achieving their full potential
- Centering the programme's intention on raising student achievement helped Sylvia Park accurately measure the impact of the work
- Key to success is working with parents to understand their child's assessments.

Great Potentials

DAME LESLEY MAX, LOUISE BELCHER AND JANE HALL

Great Potentials Family Service Centres are one-stop-shops for families in low income communities. Their vision is for 'well-nurtured children and young people within well-functioning families, contributing to safe communities and a prosperous nation'. The Service Centre provides a whole range of services from HIPPY (Home Interaction Programme for Parents & Youngsters) to budgetting, a variety of health clinics including Plunket, parent education programmes, counselling and social workers, as well as an early childhood learning centre.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Families' needs do not follow government agency boundaries. What was needed were one-stop shops that would see a family as a whole rather than a series of pieces. Research has since proven the model and Service Centres are now funded by MoE and MSD.
- Metaphor of 'mothering' to support and nurture community
- Children whose parents get involved in their education early on (i.e. through HIPPY) are prepared for success at school
- Important to see the links between school-readiness, parent involvement and community development.

McLaren Park Henderson South (MPHS) Community Initiative

REBECCA GEORGE-KOTEKA AND ROCHANA SHEWARD

MPHS was established in 2002 after the area was identified by Waitakere City Council as having high social needs. Their mantra is People, Pride and Place – developing, supporting and providing projects that bring long-term benefit to the whole community. The initiative has grown from being housed in a broom cupboard to taking up residence in a shop, and is now in the process of building a new community facility. MPHS works by speaking the language community understands and asking local people what they want. This has resulted in a diverse range of projects and programmes – from youth camps to beautifying power boxes, after-school care and school holiday programmes, a computer clubhouse, community treasure hunt and Men's Shed initiative.

KEY INSIGHTS:

- Don't give up learning
- Stay connected to the grass-roots – that's where the greatest impact lies
- Connecting people to place and fostering pride creates strong resilient communities
- Partnering with other organisations such as schools, churches, and businesses is vital for success.

REFLECTIONS AND LEARNINGS FROM THE DAY



For many Forum participants, being in the room with so many 'like' minds who were involved in similar journeys was heartening and energising.

"A lot of ordinary people in Tamaki Makaurau are doing extraordinary things"

"There is no apathy in this room today"

"Today was inspiring and encouraged me in my own role in the community to innovate, connect, network and reignite the passion that is still present to serve our community"

KEY REFLECTION THEMES INCLUDED:

- The importance of coming together to share and learn from each other –affirming not just our own work but others' too and actively show casing passion and success
- Proactively sharing models and examples that can be adapted by other communities in order to stop reinventing the wheel
- Acknowledging that money's not the main constraint – it's about creating a different way of thinking.
- Needing longer term, more sustainable funding streams that recognise the long term nature of this work
- Understanding that while having a clear plan of action is important, some things don't always go to plan
- Getting more creative with our biggest asset: our 'people'
- Realising it takes everyone to make a difference – everyone has a part to play
- Building community pride matters – being proud of where you're from is key to individual and community wellbeing
- Understanding this work means small steps over years and being prepared for the long haul
- As a society putting the sacredness back into family/whanau/community - making parents and local places feel special and valued....and that this all starts with inclusion.
- Collaboration and strong relationships are the

keys to success in this work – not just between agencies but within communities too

- That 'bottom up', local community driven is important – experts need to learn from the 'grassroots'
- Bureaucrats seeing themselves as part of the overall community solution – not separate to it. Stopping compliance issues getting in way of great community ideas.
- Taking risks, but risking less by taking others with you eg. churches, businesses, young people
- Building our evidence base so that we can demonstrate the difference this work makes
- Not seeing education and community development as two separate silos – both can work into together....some things may start in a school and move out and others vice versa
- Growing more community hubs – need to be accessible, locally driven and owned, responsive and continually changing to suit local needs
- Need to have focused local dreams for whanau and communities that are backed up with values and principles
- Succession planning – how to keep long term visions alive when key people leave??

"Sam's keynote of 15 years of Thursday nights brought home to me that real change takes time and commitment but allows people to drive things themselves and doesn't necessarily need lots of extra funding."

NEXT STEPS - FOR STRENGTHENING FAMILY-CENTERED, COMMUNITY-LED DEVELOPMENT IN TAMAKI MAKAURAU



"You're the one you're waiting for"

– Sam Chapman

Picking up from Sam's suggestion above, many forum participants acknowledged the need to take action themselves, for example: maintaining new connections made at the forum, asking parents about their needs and dreams and "translating learnings from today into our own mahi."

A large number of suggestions for next steps were made both at the forum and in the post forum survey for further action. These included:

- A website to link ideas, connections and good practice ideas to support families and communities
- Making decision makers like government, council and local boards aware of the outcomes from the forum
- More time and encouragement for schools to network

with communities locally and regionally and share good practice between schools

- Hearing progress reports on Whanau Ora
- Ministry of Education being more actively involved in community forums and discussions like these
- Surplus school dental clinics being strategically used as community hubs
- Proactive and flexible funding to support learning hubs like schools and communities to work together in new ways
- Learning more about new energy and initiatives in the ACE sector (adult and community education) post 85% govt funding cuts
- Schools and teachers thinking beyond curriculum to support tamariki, whanau and communities to be their best
- Issues of language, power, fear, funding, time, risk and innovation and willingness to change being talked about by funders, policy makers, government agencies and communities themselves

"I've had the entrée – now I want to come back for the main course"

Of those who participated in the post forum survey, 88% supported a further forum being held later in 2011 to connect up learning and ideas from the national Victory Village Forum. Many have also volunteered to be part of a collaborative organising group for a potential next session. Clearly, there is much interest and energy in strengthening and supporting family-centred, community-led approaches in Tamaki Makaurau – watch this space!

FURTHER READING AND RESOURCES

LUNCHBOX TO TOOLKIT PRESENTATIONS

All the presentations from this forum are available on the Inspiring Communities website [here](#).

PATHS OF VICTORY

This case study research project explores the innovative practices and outcomes associated with the convergence of health, education, social and community development goals at Victory Village. Read the report [here](#) and watch the video [here](#).

INSPIRING COMMUNITIES THROUGH COMMUNITY-LED, FAMILY-CENTERED LEARNING HUBS IN TAMAKI MAKAURAU

A think-piece from Megan Courtney on how working differently can help our villages raise their children for COMET's annual report (p14-15). Click [here](#) to view.

SNAPSHOT OF AUCKLAND'S EDUCATION LANDSCAPE

Filled with interesting facts and figures about Auckland's education scene. Click [here](#) to view.