

PATCHWORK

Auckland Youth Support Network Working for young people

Issue 4 • 2008



“Lose your colours, not your lives.”

Students say no to gangs

“Lose your colours, not your lives”. This is the message from a group of enterprising young people in Counties Manukau.

Six Year 13 business students from Aorere College in Papatoetoe, Auckland have designed and created a colourless wristband printed with the slogan “lose your colours, not your lives” to promote the anti gang message.

Student and Stretch Managing Director, Timo-lih Tatui-Fricker says, “we have grown up with the youth gangs in our community, but we don’t like them, and we thought others might think the same”.

“We surveyed over 100 people from the school on what they thought about gangs, and about our product idea. The overall response was they wanted to do something about the gangs and liked the idea of the wristband.”

“The feedback has been great, students and families are buying and wearing the wristbands, and the school has allowed us to wear them with our uniforms. We hope others will consider promoting and selling the anti-gang wristbands at their school or through their business,” says Timo-lih.

The students have sold over 500 wristbands and their target is to sell 10,000. They only need to sell another 200 to break even, with the profits going to a youth organisation.

The business project appears to have made the students think of future possibilities. Timo-lih says she is now considering social worker and business courses, and says “being involved with this project has really motivated us all, especially with what we can accomplish.”

Their company won Best Business Plan out of 25 companies for Counties Manukau, and fourth for the Auckland Finals. Other business groups developed a clip for books, a bored buster pack for families, and an anti child abuse badge.

The students took part in the Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme (YES), which offers students business and life learning experiences.

The wristbands cost \$3.00 each plus 50 cents for postage.

To order email stretch_ao@hotmail.com

The Auckland Youth Support Network members: Ministry of Social Development, New Zealand Police, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth Development, Te Puni Kokiri, Ministry of Pacific Island Affairs, Counties Manukau District Health Board, Housing New Zealand, Office of Ethnic Affairs, Auckland City Council and Manukau City Council.

What is a youth gang?

A youth gang is a group of youths, often from disadvantaged backgrounds, with a loose structure, use colours, a name, or hand signals etc), involved (mostly) with petty crimes, and who see themselves as a gang. See MSD [Research](#) for the youth gang classification and more at [www.msd.govt.nz /work-programmes](http://www.msd.govt.nz/work-programmes).

Cops in Schools launched

Five “Cops in Schools” are now based in ten schools in Manurewa, Otara, Papatoetoe, Otahuhu, and Mangere. The initiative was set up in response to youth gang levels in Counties Manukau.

One of the new Cops in Schools, Constable Bryan Ward says “we are about providing support around student behaviour, truancy, and safety. Yet there is also scope for the schools to interlink us with their other services and activities”.

“At Otahuhu College and McCauley College, teachers refer a young person with truancy issues to me. I personally visit the family at their home with the letter from the teacher and inform them about their child’s attendance.

“I am getting a good response. Pretty much after my personal visit with the parents, we find the young person starts to attend school on a regular basis. Previously parents would either not get the letter or ignore the situation. My visit ensures none of that happens.”

Constable Ward says that by having a community police presence in the school, the Police gain a better understanding on what is happening in the community, which helps inform them about possible areas to patrol and possible issues to deal with.

“Cops in Schools is not just about dealing with the negatives, it’s also about supporting the positives and being a role model.”

“For example, I was recently approached by senior students to help them with their idea to improve safety around the school,” says Constable Ward.



Constable Bryan Ward (far right) with three other Cops in Schools

“With my encouragement, the senior students proposed a staged release of students at the end of the day to prevent road accidents, which was put forward to the school board and accepted.”

Over time, the young people will get to see how the police contribute to community safety. For Constable Ward, a long time police officer, he is getting to see the positive side of young people.

“Since being based in the schools, I have been amazed at the number of good kids that go under the radar. They get recognition from the schools and parents, but not from the wider community.”

Cops in Schools are located at Otahuhu College, Mcauley High School, De La Salle High School, Southern Cross Campus, Aorere College, Mangere College, Sir Edmund Hillary Collegiate, Tangaroa College, James Cook High School, Manurewa High School

Do you have a story you think we should look at? Do you have any questions you want answered? Get in touch and email us at patchwork@msd.govt.nz.

New youth worker coordinator

A new position to help coordinate and support 23 youth workers in Counties Manukau is now in place.



from left: Magnum Tuipulotu, Regional Youth Development Advisor, Sarah McGhee, Regional Team Manager from the Ministry of Youth Development and Lance Watene, Youth Worker Coordinator

Lance Watene has taken up the new role of Youth Worker Coordinator. He is hosted by the Manukau City Council and based at the Papatoetoe Chambers office in Manukau.

Lance says, "over time, I hope I will be seen as part of the team, and can assist the youth

workers develop good outcomes for the young people they work with".

"My first job is to get to know all 23 youth workers and the five providers funded through the Action Plan." This will help him ascertain what coordination is already in place, and what is needed to strengthen and support the youth work.

Lance will also facilitate the MSD Youth Worker Cluster meetings previously run by Ministry of Youth Development.

Lance previously worked in the sport and recreation area, including three years as National Junior Manager for touch rugby.

Some of his work included looking at how to encourage positive behaviours and grow confidence among the young people the organisation worked with.

The Youth Worker Coordinator role is part of the Improving Outcomes for Young People in Counties Manukau and Otahuhu Action Plan and is funded by MSD's Family & Community Services.

Contact Lance Watene on 027-2258909 or email lance.watene@manukau.govt.nz

What does a youth worker do?

Youth workers roles are diverse, depending on the community and organisation they work with. The commonality is a focus on the wellbeing of the young person.

For those funded through the Action Plan

◆ The youth workers only work with young people involved with a youth gang or at risk of joining a youth gang in Counties Manukau and Otahuhu

◆ Often a youth worker will work with only a small group of young people and support one or two of the local school's programmes.

◆ Their focus is to encourage young people into positive pathways and provide mentor support.

◆ Prevention and intervention work includes linking the young person to wrap around services, being a positive role model, school support, and implementing youth activities.



Back to school

In schools in Otago, it's not only the children who are learning.

Through the Otago Boards Forum and its Parent Support Network, parents and caregivers are meeting weekly at four Otago schools to learn more about parenting and life skills.

Bill Takerei, CEO of Otago Boards Forum says, "our programme is about empowering the parents, building their confidence and resilience. It's about being guided by the parents and caregivers, listening to what they want to learn and making it happen."

What makes the programme succeed is the Parent Support Network gets a parent who has children at the school to lead the parenting group. They know the families and have experienced a little of what the other parents face themselves. The programme gets regular attendance and the Parent Support Network develops a programme to suit the local community.

"Everything the parents learn at the programme is something they have requested themselves or because the Lead Parent sees a real need. We have four Lead Parents who meet once a week to discuss the parenting programme and the issues and questions discussed at their school, says Bill".

These Lead Parents format the term's programme, source speakers and learning materials. This school term, the Parent Support Network has had speakers from Hippy, the local library, Keep Safe Neighbourhood Watch and ICT who taught the parents basic computer skills.

Bill says, "we also had Work & Income, and Manukau Tech come and talk about how to get young people into a career. This week, the parents are learning budgeting and banking tips from the Otago Budgeting Service and the Westpac bank."

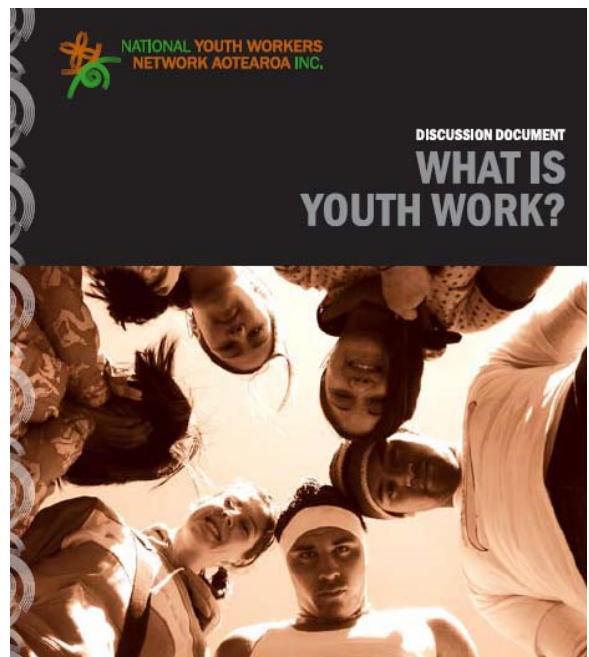
In the past year, some of the positives changes seen by the Parent Support Network team include families making healthy school lunches instead of buying pies every day, to

parents stopping their sons wearing gang colours and saying no to family violence.

The lead Parents for the Parent Support Network are Perise Armstrong from Bairds Mainfreight School, Steve Martin from Dawson Primary School, Davina Witika from Rongomai Primary School and Jane Momoh from Wymondley Primary School.

The parenting programme was set up as part of the Action Plan and is funded through MSD's Family & Community Services.

Are you interested in youth work?



Why not add your voice to the discussion around "what is youth work?" and "the risks and benefits of a professional body for youth work".

Visit www.youthworkers.net.nz for a copy of the discussion papers.

From the Frontline

We recently caught up with Palale Elia, the programme Manager for the Lighthouse reception centres in Auckland.

Three reception centres were set up a year ago as part of the Improving Outcomes for Young People in Counties Manukau and Otahuhu Action Plan.

Two Lighthouse Reception Centers are jointly run by Youth Horizons Trust and Youth Link, a third centre is run by the Open Home Foundation. They are funded by MSD's Child Youth and Family.

What is it about the reception centers that make them so important?

"They are the first of their kind and are literally keeping hundreds of young people out of police holding cells and secure custody.

We are providing agencies and the Courts a community based accommodation and supervision while Child Youth and Family find a long-term alternative. Prior to June 2007, there were very few alternatives available in Auckland."

These facilities are for short-term, emergency placements only, and it is working really well.

How many young people have stayed at the centers?

"Since June 2007, there have been 500 children and young people come through the doors of the three reception centers in Auckland. The average length of stay at the Lighthouse is less than five days."

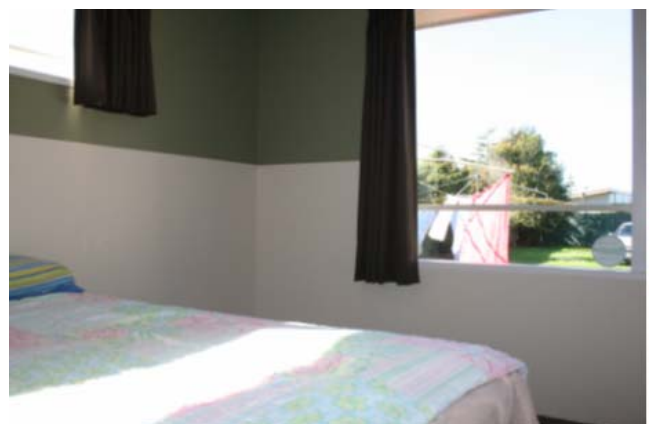
Who is helping these young people?

"We have 23 staff, 18 of whom are specialist youth workers who work a three-week roster in the homes with the young people. There are four night staff who work awake shifts and oversee the homes.

In addition, one social worker works closely with Child, Youth and Family social workers identifying whanau and suitable community based placements for the young people following their release."

What is the best part of your job?

"Knowing that we are helping to keep young people out of a restricted lock-up environment and integrating them back with whanau is particularly satisfying."



Inside a Reception Centre

Any particularly story you would like to share, that shows how your team operates?

"We recently had a 16 year-old come through the reception centre who had been picked up by police for his offending.

While he was in the centre and awaiting an appearance in the Youth Court, he worked with our youth workers. By the end of his five-day stay, he had written a letter to the Judge apologizing for his offending and detailing his commitment to getting his life back on track and details of his career aspirations.

After his release, he chose to serve his community service hours cleaning up the reception centre garden!

While the reception centre by its very nature has a revolving front-door and a 5-day limited stay, there is scope for our staff to do some really important work with these young people at the most critical time."

Youth Worker and Integrated Case Management Contacts

The Action Plan Youth Workers and Integrated Case Managers (ICM) Counties Manukau & Otahuhu Only		
Organisation	Focus	Contact Details
Genesis Youth Trust	Youth Workers and ICM Otahuhu and Papatoetoe	Rob Woodley 09 2500503
MMAD (Mangere Making a Difference)	Youth workers and ICM Mangere	Bill Peace /Tamaki Ki Raro Tel: 09 275 4428
Nga Wahine Atawhai O Matukukureia Manurewa Maori Woman's Welfare League	Youth workers and ICM Manurewa	Willie Te Kira Tel: 09 2687016
II MUCH Trust	Youth workers Manurewa	Lana Anae Ostler Tel: 09 2685108
274	Youth Workers Otara	Alan Va'a Tel: 09 274 7966

