



Karere Pāpāho/Media Release
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Kaikohekohe – growing young boys into great men

A new partnership between Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi O Ngāpuhi, philanthropic funder JR McKenzie Trust and Kaikohe Intermediate looks to ‘change the narrative’ - challenging and transforming deficit views and statistics by growing young Māori boys who live in Kaikohe, into great men.

A trend of reoccurring negative behaviour paints a bleak future for young Māori males in Kaikohe, particularly within the Year 7-10 age bracket. Students are disengaging in formal education with 77% of stand-downs in 2016 and 2017 being male; and an average of 87% also suspended.

The Kaikohekohe Education Project recognises these challenges but does not dwell on them as a defining factor. The project is a values and strength based programme for year 7-10 taitama (Māori boys) – the future fathers, partners, community leaders and the next generation of Ngāpuhi. Taitama are seen as key members of the Kaikohe community who are at their greatest potential to contribute, innovate and challenge how society functions and designs success.

Erena Kara, General Manager for Te Rūnanga-A-Iwi O Ngāpuhi says, “Through early intervention and positive reinforcement, we want to bring excitement and engagement back into the educational systems of the Kaikohe community, particularly for our young Māori boys. Current approaches just aren’t working so we’re doing things differently based on the principles and values of being proud as Māori and Ngāpuhi”.

The project seeks to strategically intersect the current educational pathways at critical moments, building positive and safe transitional spaces and walking alongside young Māori boys while they go through some of life’s most dramatic developmental times.

Kaikohe Intermediate School has been chosen as the first school to deliver the programme. Principal Freda Mocaraka says, “Some models have been used for a long time in other regions with positive results. We need to maximise our results by making the most of the resources available. The key lies in knowing how to mobilise and motivate our boys to take up the challenge. Meanwhile, we are mindful about what we do and how we do it with what little resources we have.”

Jim Matheson, Project Co-Ordinator at the JR McKenzie Trust says, “All young people deserve to experience success in education. We are supporting the Kaikohekohe Education Project because success is most likely to come from projects that are locally driven and developed. A key role of the trust is to support leaders of change in the community and the Ngāpuhi Rūnanga is an organisation that can lead sustained change. By working in partnership with Kaikohe Intermediate School they will bring expertise to the table that will raise the educational outcomes of this special group of young people.”

Enquiries and interviews

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Photos supplied: Taitama students of Kaikohe Intermediate.