



# The Te Hononga Waka Journey

## A Mural Art Programme

### Outcomes Evaluation Summary Report

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## **Author**

Amanda Hunter, Research & Evaluation Advisor,  
Presbyterian Support Northern (PSN)

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## **Conflict of Interest Declaration**

Presbyterian Support Northern ran the Te Hononga Waka Journey Programme and this evaluation report has been conducted by the Presbyterian Support Northern Research & Evaluation Unit.

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This document has been designed to complement The Te Hononga Waka Journey Video Evaluation. It is recommended that you view the Video Evaluation after reading this document. The Video Evaluation can be accessed through the PSN website or via this link:

<https://www.psn.org.nz/te-hononga-waka-journey-evaluation>

# THE WAKA JOURNEY

## About The Waka Journey

In January 2021 Family Works Te Hononga alongside the crew at '312 The Hub' Onehunga ran "The Waka Journey" programme: a week-long mural art programme that wove together the stories of 18 young creatives into a mural that now brightens the hallway of the Family Works Te Hononga site.

Students were — at the time of the programme — involved with Family Works Northern in a variety of different ways. Many were social work clients through the Social Workers in Schools (SWiS) service that Family Works delivers in schools across the North Island. Others had whānau or family who were engaged with services such as budgeting or counseling. The students were all school age, ranging from seven through to twelve and all showed an interest in or an aptitude for art.

## This Evaluation Summary

The purpose of this evaluation was firstly to evaluate the effectiveness of The Waka Journey Programme at achieving its short-term outcomes of providing an art project that participants find engaging and enjoyable and that allows participants to learn something about art and themselves. Secondly, the evaluation looked to capture the process and outcomes of the Mural Art Project in an engaging way so that the programme and its outcomes can be shared with the wider organisation and community.

The primary data collection methodology for this evaluation was video footage. The evaluator was present for the entire week filming, taking images, speaking with children and observing their levels of participation and enjoyment.

Participation in the evaluation was completely voluntary. All participants and their caregivers completed a consent form that clearly stated that the imagery captured during the week could be used in a video about the programme.

## Programme Aims

- Provide an opportunity for eighteen young students to learn about visual art and develop new skills.
- Facilitate connections between students and likeminded peers in their community.
- Allow students who were also social work clients to get to know their social workers in a laid-back and enjoyable environment.
- Provide an opportunity for students to use the mural creation process as a tool to engage with past memories and life events.
- Provide mentorship opportunities for students through exposure to a professional muralist.
- Generate professional development opportunities for artists who are committed to working collaboratively in communities.
- Improve the aesthetic of the Te Hononga site through the display of community created artwork.

# THE PROCESS



## DESIGN

Participants considered their important memories and what makes them significant. They developed timelines showing how the events in their lives contributed to who they are today.



## COPY

Students copied their designs onto wooden triangles ready to be painted.



## SKILLS

Students travelled to the 312 Hub in Onehunga where they learned technical skills such as gradient painting and line-work.



## PAINTING

Students put their new skills to use painting their designs onto wood



## MURAL PREP

Students helped to fill in the background imagery and text along the Te Hononga hallway. This set up the backdrop for the artwork to be hung.



## HANGING

Students hung their own artwork along the hallway with support from the team.



## SHARING

Students invited whānau and friends to visit the Te Hononga site and see the artwork that they has created.



# OUTCOMES

## Friendships

A key outcome for the programme was creating an environment where students felt like they could make new connections and friends. One of the social workers spoke about how her clients felt unsure about the programme at the beginning of the week, but quickly engaged with other students:

*"I have two clients that I work with that have come on the programme. On the first day they kind of freaked out and stuck with each other to start off with. As the day went on they started talking with other people and making new friends. The next day they were super excited to see*

*all of the new friends that they have made and I have definitely seen their confidence build more."*

When asked what their favourite part of the week had been, the majority of students identified the friendships that they had made and the people they had met as being the highlight of the programme:

*"My favourite part of the week was probably meeting new friends".*

*"We've been doing art and activities with strangers who are now friends"*





## Art as a Therapeutic Outlet

Students were encouraged to use art as an exploratory tool and a way to think about important events in their lives. A number of students produced artwork that spoke to emotional or painful memories in their past. One student talked about how the artwork helped her to feel more comfortable talking about these memories with a trusted adult.

*"[My art] is about when I was 10-years old and I was feeling sad when I went to school. My Mum and Dad didn't have time to talk to me. My Poppa had just gone into hospital. I got sad and I did something called self-harm - which I didn't really like. The art helped me express what I did"*

Providing an environment where young people feel comfortable sharing their stories also benefitted the social workers, who regularly work with the students involved in the programmes. One social worker spoke about her client sharing a story that she hadn't shared before:

*"One of the girls has been able to share a memory that - I've worked with her for 6-months - but I never knew about the*

*memory. It's obviously been in the forefront of her mind if this is what she has chosen to paint about so this has been a cool way for her to express it. I think activities like this are so important because when you sit down with a kid and you're asking them questions most of the time they shut off. Especially if they have been through a traumatic event. Often they don't want to talk about it. So having art as a different means to express how they feel is awesome."*

## Art Skills

The Waka Journey looked to equip young people with skills that they could use to express their stories through their artwork. A portion of the programme was dedicated to teaching the students basic art skills such as blending, using gradients, fine line work and cutting-in. When asked about what they had learnt during the week, most students named the specific art techniques that they had learnt and practiced.

*"This week I learnt how to use a paintbrush properly and how to blend colors together".*





Many of the students indicated that they were inspired by the programme and that it had helped them to imagine what kind of career paths in the arts could be possible:

*"I do art at school but I get told off for drawing in my math books and stuff. When I'm older I probably want to be either a digital artist or maybe draw tattoos for people. That would be fun."*

*"[When I'm older] I want to work here at the Hub. My favourite thing about this week was coming to the Hub because I got to paint and do more with my art."*

## Strengthening Connections

One of the main benefits for social workers was the opportunity to develop the relationships that they had already built with clients. Being able to 'hang out' with clients in a relaxed setting meant that children were

able to open up to their social workers and get to know them outside of the formal school setting.

*"The highlight of my week has just been hanging out with the kids, honestly. I love having the opportunity to spend time with them outside of the formal school setting. Being able to sit on the ground and paint with them and be more relaxed so that they are able to see who I am and just spend time with them on a different level."*

*"For children who have to access our services for whatever reason - a social worker can be quite scary and for their families it can be a bit uncomfortable. So for the children to see their social workers on the ground, lying down with them, doing some painting with them. Supporting them. Having a laugh with them. Eating with them. It just helps the children see their social workers as people".*





# KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS

## Engagement in The Waka Journey Programme

### **Student attendance: did participants show up every day?**

Of the eighteen students who began the programme, two dropped out after the first day. The two students were older than most of the other students in the group and cited disinterest in the programme as the reason for disengaging. The remaining students attended every day.

### **Participant activity: were all participants actively taking part in the planning and creation of the mural, e.g. painting and contributing ideas?**

Students engaged in all of the activities throughout the week. When asked what could be improved one student said nothing and said "even the parts where we just talked were good". All sixteen students created murals, discussed what their murals were about and hung the murals in the Te Hononga hallway.

### **Participant communication: were participants communicating with each other and the mural artist to create the mural, learn new skills and build relationships?**

Most students, when interviewed, said that they had made friends on the programme.

The students are visibly smiling and laughing together throughout the Video Evaluation. In particular, two students quickly became friends on the first day after looking through a sketchbook together. The pair sat together for the rest of the week and discussed shared interests such as manga and comic-book art.

Students were also comfortable communicating with the adults on the programme, reaching out for advice and help with their art work. Even the evaluator was pulled aside at times to consult on student's work which speaks to the level of comfort that the students felt in their environment.

## Enjoyment of The Waka Journey Programme

### **Satisfaction with process: did students enjoy the way that days were laid out, the way that the project was organised etc.**

When asked how the programme could be improved almost every students interviewed said it couldn't be - it was great the way it was. One student advised that he would have liked there to be more outdoor activities and another said that they would have liked more breaks for food. These were both improvements that the organisers spoke about in their interviews and plan to implement in the next iteration of the programme.

**Satisfaction with outcome: are participants happy with the mural overall? Are they happy with the part that they have contributed?**

Students were not directly asked if they were proud of their artwork but there is a great deal of mana and pride evident in the shots of students hanging their art on the mural wall at the end of the Video Evaluation (reference final shots of the Video Evaluation). One student wanted to wait to hang his artwork so that his grandparents and siblings could watch him hang it. This particular student clearly felt a great deal of pride in his work and his contribution to the mural overall.

**Art Skills and Techniques**

**Art Skills: Did participants learn any new art skills? Were they able to talk about the techniques that they have used?**

All of the students interviewed spoke about the techniques that they learnt and each one was able to name the techniques (e.g. blending) and how they used these in their art work.

A key skill that was taught was the use of gradient and many of the students can be seen practicing this technique in the Evaluation Video.

**Leadership: Did any of the students demonstrate leadership during the programme?**

The evaluator did not witness any opportunities for leadership through the programme. The organisers may simply wish to re-assess this as a desired outcome when running the programme again, or they may wish to introduce specific opportunities for students to take up leadership roles throughout the week.

**Investment: Did students show an interest in future participation? Did students talk about wanting to pursue artistic pursuits?**

Many of the students cited wanting to pursue art as a career in the future - students talked about careers in tattoo design, digital art, cartoon sketching and even mural art. All students interviewed to said that they would participate in the programme if it were run again.

