



## Inspiring Communities Newsletter #46 *March 2015*

### Kia ora Neighbour!

Coming up on March 28 & 29 is New Zealand's fifth annual celebration of neighbourliness. It's great to see [Neighbours Day Aotearoa](#) now a key part of our national events calendar.

In this issue, we share three diverse examples of creatively engaging communities to encourage and inspire local voice, participation and contribution.

This year Inspiring Communities has set a target of sharing 100 new stories about community-led action and change. If you have an inspiring story (big or small) that's about communities leading change in your part of Aotearoa, please [let us know](#).

If you're wondering what happened to the CLD learning links that used to be part of our newsletters, we are now sharing them via our facebook page and we suggest you [Like us](#) to be connected to inspirational ideas and learning more regularly.

We valued participating in the Community Development conference that Unitec hosted in February and look forward to presenting at the NZ Community Boards [Conference](#) in May.

We're also looking forward to seeing many of you at the "Our Place" we're co-hosting with Inclusive NZ and Be.Accessible from June 29<sup>th</sup> - July 1<sup>st</sup> at Te Papa – mark it in your diary now.

*Barbara, Denise, David, Peter and Megan from the Inspiring Communities Team*

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## Yo Future

**Wellington-based theatre company Barbarian Productions partnered with young NZ performers to create 'Yo Future' in 2012-14**



How does it feel growing up with headlines like 'Our Planet's Questionable Future'? How do you deal with such uncertainty as school is urging you to make long-term career plans? When the opportunity arrived to create a theatre-work with Wellington's Long Cloud Youth Theatre, I knew I wanted to find out how young adults related to that enormous concept of *'the future.'*

Our company works with different groups and communities to create new artworks which express their own ideas. Using theatrical exercises, Long Cloud and I formed a set of 'stereotypes' of how these performers felt they were seen. These were great clowns to play, with a biting edge: wasters, layabouts, shallow materialistic party-ers, purposeless sheep. We were able to 'clown' the prejudice which they felt, helping us to see it as a stereotype. This invited the show's audiences to recognise their own prejudice against a younger generation. We then blew the stereotypes away and created a giant metal Pandora's box which literally opened to reveal many different possibilities for the future: from an optimistic 'the future is whatever you want it to be!' to 'ice caps are melting and one Pacific island will disappear every year.' We wanted to represent the diversity of orientations about the future, and possibility of our actions to shape many different outcomes.

We closed the show with acapella song, and left audiences challenged, sad and hopefully more connected to the realities of this generation. When we completed the Wellington season, we knew we had been part of something special, and people from around the country asked us to continue the work. But how could we continue a project created specifically with one group of local performers? We decided we could take the physical template, like a ballet score, and re-make the work with different communities in different locations.

The Wairarapa was keen - we took half of our original cast and paired with school-aged performers from the Wairarapa. This performance was equally pivotal, with our whole company of performers staying together on the local marae – life-changing for many performers. ‘It was so amazing to be in a room of people who didn’t judge you on how you smelt’ was the comment which continues to haunt me – I had forgotten how unforgiving your peers can be in a school environment.

In Invercargill, there were different angles and issues. Particularly a theme of ‘letting local talent shine’: strong dance/song offers were a key part of the performance. We had a very diverse cast, with some local performers of Kiribati heritage who had very personal connection to climate change. In Auckland religion, ‘booze-hags’ and cyber-activism came to the fore, and a street busker composed an original song which the whole cast turned into a three-part harmony. In Hamilton, the cast revealed the phenomenal information that a small box in their town square emitted a high-pitched tone to drive young people away (older ears cannot hear the high frequency). I was sure this couldn’t be true, but you can find the newspaper articles online.

As a company, ‘Yo Future’ hugely excited us as we got to know so many younger performers and hear their thoughts, and it was a privilege to voice these for a range of audiences. The project also totally confirmed the power of using the arts to provoke societal conversation, and highlight lesser-heard views. Clowning continues to be our most useful tool in this regard!

Article submitted by Jo Randerson & Thomas LaHood. Picture by Phillip Merry.

For more details contact Jo Randerson & Thomas LaHood, at [www,barbarian.co.nz](http://www.barbarian.co.nz) .



# Youth voice makes a big splash.

“Youth Voice” is Rotorua’s newest initiative to engage rangatahi and youth energy, enterprise and thinking into Rotorua’s planning and action. It’s seriously by youth for youth, and is in addition to the Rotorua Youth Council. It’s being led by one of New Zealand’s youngest local government politicians, Cr Tania Tapsell, who’s 23 years old and was elected to Rotorua Lakes Council in 2013.

Thirty rangatahi and young people aged 12-24 years are meeting fortnightly and working together to become confident at sharing their own thinking in different ways as well as ways of engaging other young people to express their thinking and contribute their gifts. Event organisation and project management is also on their agenda because activities that attract young people are great places to have conversations and seek other views and ideas

“You can’t think about the future without thinking of young people. That’s who’s ‘in’ the future. There’s absolutely no substitute for them being directly involved in the real issues that effect them, and being active contributors to solution-finding and decision-making” Tania says.

Last weekend the team were out and about at the Rotorua’ Summer Splash Festival. This inaugural event was underlined by water safety messages. The Rotorua District is a place of many springs, rivers and lakes and fun events at and around the water for whanau and young people are great opportunities to both build community and share important messages. The Youth Voice Team were active at the event and collected 600 responses for the Youth Voice Project.

Tania contends that “It’s adults who need to learn to work more closely in collaboration with youth and help them articulate their needs and develop strategies to enhance their own well-being”.

The Project is a Partnership between the Rotorua Youth Projects Trust and the Rotorua Lakes Council and is supported by the Ministry of Youth Development.

- Check out Tania’s perspective on Rangatahi Leadership and why youth voice matters so much for community futures!  
<http://www.boprc.govt.nz/media/373566/Tania-Tapsell-Rangatahi-Leadership.pdf>
- For more about Rotorua’s Summer Splash Event see  
[http://www.nzherald.co.nz/rotorua-daily-post/news/article.cfm?c\\_id=1503438&objectid=11417903&ref=rss](http://www.nzherald.co.nz/rotorua-daily-post/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503438&objectid=11417903&ref=rss)



## The Clinic

***Ngaio School's community learning space is committed to empowering individuals in the learning process and creating a sense of belonging.***

The Clinic, Ngaio School's community learning space, is an initiative managed by a group of parents at Ngaio Primary School in Wellington. They run hands-on learning sessions for students at school lunchtimes out of their disused dental clinic (hence the name of their project "The Clinic").

The community-led learning centre, established in 2012, is independent of the school *curriculum* and focuses on student engagement and also on building networks within the school community. The pilot started from a perceived lack of science activities at school, requests from children for more science and an awareness of a largely untapped parent resource in the area.

Over the years support continues to grow and the range of topics offered has also expanded from science to arts and craft sessions, historical topics and even cultural days. In the beginning, the sessions offered were influenced by the available pool of volunteers. Today students have a strong sense of The Clinic as their space; they have been voicing their wants. Some sessions are asked for again; other requests place the thinking caps on. We endeavour to nurture their joy of learning and discovery and recognise the learning process as a two-way street. On occasion children have even run sessions (with adult support). Much of what The Clinic does goes beyond the scope of the classroom and children enjoy the freedom to explore extracurricular activities. Simulating tsunamis, creating circuits from playdough, and woodwork keep the audience coming back for more! We don't shy away from messy play opportunities. Healthy food exploration has also been introduced with children making art with food. A few reluctant consumers of healthy options have been tempted to try something new. The children love attending The Clinic, they are the driving force behind its success, bringing with them a contagious joy and desire to see what else The Clinic can share.



A core project team manages The Clinic, supported by a database of 60 other volunteers sourced from the wider Ngaio School community who help facilitate sessions. Some of the volunteers are sharing their professional expertise with the students (in the mix are GPs, scientists, nurses, lecturers, and a retired zoologist), others share their hobbies or interests (we've even enjoyed live backyard chickens at The Clinic!) and others are simply willing to pitch in and help, while exploring fascinating experiences themselves alongside the students. At Ngaio School children experience the wider world with visits from community members willing to share their knowledge. Scientists working in Antarctica have brought their wears for the children to explore and wonder over. Children lined the corridor waiting for their chance to try on oversized goggles and snow boots, examine rocks and fossils found in Antarctica and to huddle in the tent scientists and explorers may use!



The Clinic's sessions are open to students at all levels, emphasis is placed on the process of learning and not the outcome. Exploration is key and learning through play forms the basis of The Clinic's approach to hands on learning. Intergenerational learning is vital to The Clinic's success, with family and school community members involved in the sessions.

We aim to run at least two lunchtime sessions per week, with between 20-50 students attending any one session! The door is always open and students are free to come and go as they please. Teachers have also been drawn in to see what captivates the students. Once the session is over we are encouraged to hear that the learning continues - teachers are known to acknowledge the children's enthusiasm during class time and have themselves been inspired to incorporate interests engaged by The Clinic into classroom learning. Students talk at home about their experiences too; they are our biggest advocates.

The Clinic enjoys ongoing support from the Board of Trustees who granted us funds to purchase our popular microscopes and other equipment to increase the possibilities operating on sessions. Many of the resources have also been made available for class use along with willing volunteers from The Clinic's operations team to support the teachers in using them. The Parent Teacher Association makes it possible for us to keep moving forward and provides a modest fund to cover our day-to-day operating costs. These include consumables on sessions such as popsicle sticks for bridge building



The Clinic's contribution to learning has also been acknowledged by [The JR McKenzie Trust](#) , who supported The Clinic with a grant to cover the cost of a Clinic banner further creating a sense of belonging and presence on the grounds at Ngaio primary school. It is fast becoming associated with The Clinic being open and ready for play. The other day while waiting for the children to descend on us we heard squeals of delight from children upon seeing the banner blowing in the breeze! The JR McKenzie Trust also seek to empower other communities to empower whanau to learn alongside their children, and have a [learning fund](#) that can support visits to The Clinic for those who would like to learn about our work.

The Clinic creates a fundamental link between the school and the school community and provides whānau with a way to be more consistently and effectively engaged in the education of their tamariki and backs up recommendations noted about the importance of parent engagement in their children's education as noted in the Education Select Committee's [report](#) last year.

Our thanks to Andrew and Natasha Evans for submitting this story

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<https://theclinicngaio.wordpress.com>



## Neighbours Day Aotearoa – new resources and inspiration 2015

It's not too late to promote Neighbours Day within your networks, agencies and community. Neighbours Day provides an opportunity for new connections and engagement across all parts of our communities - every business has neighbours, so do schools, churches, sports clubs and marae! By [signing up](#) on the Neighbours Day website, you'll help us keep tally of the various people, places and activities that form part of this year's campaign.

New on the Neighbours Day [website](#) are ideas and resources to help people take [first steps](#), [next steps](#), and begin thinking [bigger](#). You can also download [editable posters and invitations](#) and tailor them for local activities and events.

If you haven't seen it already, check out the [awesome video](#) that Tamaki's Tamati Patuwai created at their Neighbours Day event in 2014 to explore what whanaungatanga (kinship) and tūrangawaewae (place to stand) mean in the context of their multi cultural urban community.

## “Our Place” – creating a conversation about identity and belonging in Aotearoa, New Zealand

When hosting Margaret Wheatley late in 2014, we were reminded about the power of communities to frame their own narrative and support positive change. To enable this movement we are excited to be working alongside [Be.Accessible](#) and [Inclusive NZ](#) to co-host a national conference – “Our Place”. This is an opportunity to explore and learn what happens when local communities affirm diverse identities and strengthen belonging. How do we support accessible and inclusive places?



“Our Place” moves the conversation beyond sectors utilising the lens of ‘community of place’ to engage citizens. Our conference programme will feature a range of international and national story tellers and thinkers like [Mark Potter](#) who will share what being inclusive means at a local school. If you are keen to share a story or insights from your place we’d love to hear from you. Deadlines for expressions of interest has been extended to March 27<sup>th</sup>. [For more information.](#)

We’re ready for a transformational conversation and hope you will join us at Te Papa, June 29<sup>th</sup> to July 1<sup>st</sup>. Conference programme and registration to follow shortly!



**Inclusive NZ** (formerly  
VASS)  
a network for change

## Growing Communities through food.

***An Edible Communities, Community-led Korero***

**When: 9.45am-12.45pm - Wednesday, 29 April 2015**

**Where: Pataka, 17 Parumoana Street, Porirua.**

Fantastic, locally-led initiatives are happening in communities throughout the Wellington region. Food is at the heart of so many. Through the growing and sharing of food, we develop greater community connections and wellbeing. You are invited to hear about some of these initiatives and to learn from each other about successes, challenges, mistakes – the inspiring and the tough!

For more information and to register for this free event click [here](#).

Places are strictly limited so be in quick!

*This first Community Korero: Edible Communities – “Growing Communities through Food”  
is supported by Porirua City Council.*