



A Community Coach inspires Healthy Lifestyles: Teremoana's story.

Location: Tamaki

Theme: Working together in place

Teremoana's story shows how personal journeys are interwoven with those of the communities we contribute to.

Teremoana Teura has lived in Glen Innes for 10 years and after living in many places including her home in the Cook Islands, she can recognise a great community when she sees it. She says

"I love Glen Innes. I am well known here and I feel comfortable here."

Teremoana has always had an active lifestyle, playing netball and exercising and when she completed the local Green Prescription Programme, she was selected to become a community coach. The Green Prescription Team sponsored her and she trained with an organisation called Nitfit in 2011. She built on this with a four week training course ran at the Tamaki Campus of Auckland University on sports training for people from the Pacific Islands. Since then Teremoana has completed a Healthy Kai course and a gardening course.

These courses Teremoana has completed have led to her holding low impact exercise sessions, in open air locations within the Glen Innes shopping centre, outside the library and in local halls. She is a sprightly 49 year old and says her oldest participant is 89 years old. She changes the music and style to suit each class. She and her husband eat more mindfully now too and she proudly says they grow kumara at home. Teremoana is a well known, positive and informed communicator of healthy living.



Teremoana teaches and inspires at Glen Innes shopping centre.

‘Education is not the piling on of learning, information, data, facts, skills or abilities – that’s training or instruction – but it is rather making visible what is hidden as a seed.’ Thomas Moore 1477-1535

Since late 2011 Teremoana has been involved in the Tamaki Community Action Research Project (CAR), voluntarily working four days a week interviewing randomly selected households in the community. She has found a sense of family at charitable trust Ka Mau Te Wero, the name means ‘rising to the challenge’. Teremoana is an inspirational role model for the trust as she works daily to encourage healthy living in her community. She says she values her connection with her colleagues and her mentor, coordinator Tess Liew, which have been life changing.

For example, several students from the Auckland University of Technology Health Sciences course have volunteered at the CAR project. Teremoana has had a role in mentoring and assisting them and keeping them safe as they undertake interviews and work within the group. She was “touched” that a group of three students who graduated recently thanked her for her influence and assistance. On a community level, positive change is illustrated when, after meeting strangers as she interviews them, she finds their paths frequently cross again in the shopping centre and greetings and smiles are exchanged. Both of these examples show the growth of a sense of connection in the community, between people who may not otherwise have met and how that is personally very fulfilling for Teremoana.

Community connections are also influenced by the physical attributes of the area and for Teremoana, the Glen Innes library is the community hub and one of the most comfortable places in the community.

“This is one of the best places we meet- it is so good because it is open, warm and free. The librarians welcome people of all ethnicities and we sing and dance in this library. The librarians are awesome, really good people, they control the children well. This is the best library in New Zealand.”

Teremoana’s Cook Island group meet in the library every Friday to sing and share and eat healthy food together. She says the Council run Community Hall is too expensive and groups she is involved with cannot afford to meet there. They would like to meet there but cannot. The hall is not meeting the community need.

Intent:

Sharing ideas and skills by learning and practicing together in the local community.

Learnings:

- Local people offer many different skills, gifts and dreams to their local community. Accessing these and supporting them to happen can happen in many ways, one of which is through local courses and opportunities. This way local people learn and practice in their local area, which is most relevant to their daily lives and enables them to more easily bring other locals along with them too.
- Using well known community minded locals to go into homes as part of the Community Assessment and Research project helps open doors and “hearts”, and ensures local voices are forefront in the ‘evidence’ that results, and the activities that are developed based on that evidence.
- Strong effective communities don’t happen with people alone. They require accessible spaces in which to meet, greet and live life. In this case the library and community have a mutually beneficial arrangement that makes fabulous use of space while allowing locals to co-create a place where they can nurture what is important to them. In many ways this is contributing to the growth of many versions of what it is to be ‘home’, and illustrates that ‘working together in place’ is about people, organisations and the physical place all working together.
- An asset-focussed approach helps to galvanise communities into action. When the conversation is only about deficits, the outcomes are deficit focussed too. Using local strengths to build futures also helps bridge gaps and supports the growth of local resilience.

Outcomes:

- Glen Innes is a vibrant and engaging community that offers many opportunities for learning and practicing new skills and growing new connections. Key to these is the availability of locally-based courses and spaces such as the library, as well as community minded people who are prepared to act, share and learn.

- Sadly, the high cost of hiring council run facilities such as the community hall is a barrier to community groups who might like to use them. This means certain facilities are underused, but has also prompted other spaces to evolve to meet the local need.
- Local role models are constantly growing and shining. This helps local people to have aspirations and dreams and to know that they have the abilities to make them happen.

Story by Teremoana Teura and Stephanie Burgess

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