

Tiakina ō Tātou Tamariki Keeping Our Kids Safe



Tiakina ō Tātou Tamariki started from the belief that **positive change can be driven by a local neighbourhood.**



Local residents wanted to build trust and care within their Kaiti neighbourhood of Titirangi, to increase children's safety, reduce abuse and to help all whānau and families flourish.

How did it happen?

Supported by Te Ora Hou, Tiakina ō Tātou Tamariki helped local residents set a ten year vision for their future. With initial funding support from JR McKenzie Trust and the Todd Foundation, Tiakina ō Tātou Tamariki took what was already working and built on it, focusing efforts on nine streets that are home to about two hundred households.

The project works to increase trust and care among residents and improve the overall neighbourhood environment. It employs a number of part-time 'Community Animators' who originally acted as catalysts for activities but now support residents to drive their own development. They live in the local area and are an intentional presence in the community – involved in everything that's going on. They support residents to do a lot – ranging from; running events like a Kids' Christmas Party and street cleanup days, to neighbourhood planning and consultation events in partnership with the local authorities, to helping local whānau in times of crisis.

One of the Community Animators is Annette Toupili. A key part of her role, part-funded by Plunket and the Tindall Foundation, is to connect neighbours and promote parenting skills to parents uncomfortable with the usual agency training approach. Rather than being talked at,

the parents attend a coffee group that's hosted at a local school. People come to connect, share and ask questions. Annette unearths what parents already know and she shares her knowledge.

She's doing what a parenting course would, but in a relaxed setting. There's no judgement. If you're having a hard week that is OK to come and share. Around 15 people attend, up from two when they first began, and residents now run it themselves. More than 100 parents have been involved, making friends with one another, and being supported to take on board new ideas to try with their kids at home.

What has changed?

Manu Caddie, the Project's Manager has noticed a number of things over the last 6 years:

- Residents organising things for themselves.
- There is pride in the neighbourhood, people are positive and more hopeful.
- Physical changes in the environment, such as a revamped playground and a mural provide inspiration and optimism.
- Increased social capital has coincided with a marked decrease in Police callouts for violence and substantiated CYF notifications. As positive changes occur in local families, school principals have also noted increases in participation at school.



*More pride in
the neighbourhood*



*Revamped playground
and a new mural*



*Participation at school
has increased*

In 2010, 67% of people said they enjoyed living in this neighbourhood.

In 2013, 100% of people said they enjoyed living in this neighbourhood.



Tiakina ō Tātou Tamariki has regularly surveyed residents to capture the upward trends in social capital measures that are resulting from taking a strengths based, neighbourhood approach

- In 2010, 67% of people surveyed said they “enjoyed living in this neighbourhood”. In 2013, this had increased to 100%.
- In 2010, only 41% of people had shared phone numbers with their neighbours. By 2013, 72% had shared numbers.
- In 2010, 84% of people knew their neighbours names. In 2013, this had increased to 97%.



What's been learned

- Being there for the long-haul. Tiakina ō Tātou is based on a ten year commitment. Sustainable change takes time. It is slow work undoing decades-old culture of disengagement and low self belief.
- Employing local residents as part-time Community Animators assists success. Respected residents who are well connected and can be supported to dedicate some significant time to organising and encouraging other residents provides legitimacy and mana to the project.
- Funders need to be flexible – open to being more experimental. Tiakina ō Tātou Tamariki has benefited from supportive funders who were also open to new approaches.
- To achieve the ultimate goal of the safety and care of children, the child cannot be the sole target for “interventions”. Taking a neighbourhood approach helps catalyse positive relationships and sparks shared responsibility and action for making ‘the village’ to better everyone – especially its children.
- Local residents are the greatest asset for mobilising positive change. That means supporting action that is locally-generated, rather than plans and expectations that are externally imposed. There is a big difference.



For more information about Child Rich Communities visit everychildcounts.org.nz/resources%2BIndex/Community+led+development

If you would like more information please contact Manu Cadie: manu@ahi.co.nz
www.teorahou.org.nz/index.php/resources/community-development