

Media Release

From: Jill Stringer
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Subject: Inspirational learning

Making a difference for Maori is the real motivator for the 17 students who graduated from the Te Hotu Manawa Maori course at the historic Papawai Marae in Greytown recently.

“We want a happier and healthier future for our whanau - a better quality of life” says Kurawari Panere. “Especially around our Marae. We’ll work with groups and anyone else who wants to join in – we’re looking at both activities and meal preparation.”

Te Hotu Manawa Maori is a ‘train-the-trainer’ course designed for people working with Māori communities committed to promoting healthy lifestyle changes. Last month was the last of three 3-day modules taking an in-depth look at nutrition and physical activity.

“Participants use the knowledge and skills they gain to influence change within their whānau, hapū and Iwi,” said course facilitator Hereni Coffin. “Most past course participants have been Māori Health Workers who were able to incorporate nutrition and physical activity promotion into their work. This group of graduates included representatives from both of the Wairarapa Maori Women’s Welfare leagues, and public health staff from Masterton, Wanganui, Wellington and Hutt Valley.

“The course has given me a really good basis for the future,” says 18year old Ellery Wilson from Hutt Valley. Ellery is off to Sydney next year to play League with the West Tigers – and study nutrition at Sydney University. “I’ve been on a cadetship with Hutt Valley DHB looking at different areas of health. This has given me a pathway to the future because I’ve found my real interest is in nutrition and physical activity.”

We cover a really wide range of topics,” says Hereni. “We focus not only on food, nutrition and physical activity, but also on the historical patterns that have emerged, and why this is so. We also look at presentation skills and how to use the media to reach people, and the special needs of different age groups.”

Te Hotu Manawa Maori were contracted by Wairarapa DHB to provide the course in the Wairarapa free to participants.

“This group has been providing train-the-trainer health related courses throughout New Zealand for more than 10 years, and have left a legacy of grass-roots knowledge that continues to flourish wherever they go,” says Healthy Lifestyles Coordinator Sue McAuley. “Nothing beats the ability to enrich communities from within. Bringing in outside experts has it’s place, but training local people to work in their own communities means they already have the contacts and the understanding of the realities of the people they are working with.”

In keeping with the healthy content of the course, Te Peka o Ruamahanga, Wairarapa’s southern Maori Women’s Welfare league was contracted to provide healthy meals to sustain the participants.

“We got given some guidelines so we set a menu from that,” said Kurawari, who is the branch president. “I was a bit hard – I sign the cheques so I had Susie reading every label in the supermarket to find the healthiest choices before I’d put pen to paper. It took hours, but now we

have a good list for the Marae for the future.”

The League baked their own wholemeal breads, sourced fresh fruit and vegetables and chose the lowest fat and sugar options for prepared foods. And the participants loved it!

“We’ve done the hardest bit now,” says Kurawari. “We want to make the healthy choices easier, lower cost, and don’t want to make it more work. We want to offer more fruit and less puddings, and use smaller plates so people take healthy sized portions.”

“We’re working from the ground up,” says Sue McAuley. “Health begins at home and in our communities, our workplaces, churches and schools. That’s where we need to start, not leave it until people need medical and hospital services. This course is about reaching into homes and communities to help keep people healthy and active throughout their lives.”

Ends.

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Attached: photos by Pete Nikoliason

1: Hereni Coffin, course facilitator, Whaea Anne Armstrong, Kuia of the Hutt Valley DHB and Lisa Beech, Health Promoter, Wairarapa Public Health Unit show off their pedometers, used to keep track of physical activity levels by measuring the number of steps taken each day.

2: The Wairarapa participants line up in front of the historic Papawai Marae. (Left to right) Front: Mere Kerehi, Ngaraima Jordan, Sue Jones, Lisa Beech
Back: Te Putu Mete-Smith, Jo Matiaha, Leigh Warburton, Karawari Panere, Karen Brough, Michael Hullah, Susan Hullah. Absent: Anne Hemi

3. ‘Fun’ goes with ‘Food’ and ‘Fitness’ for Te Putu Mete-Smith, as course facilitator Hereni Coffin (right) checks out how she ‘measures up’ with their healthy lifestyle knowledge. Hereni is assisted by Rawhinia Finaly, regional diabetes coordinator from Wanganui and Ivana Clausen, project manager, Maori Health, Hutt Valley DHB.

4. Hereni and Mere Kerehi of the Wairarapa branch of the Maori Women’s Welfare League look at the balance between ‘food in’ and ‘energy out’.



