



Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust

Literacy Tuition for Rural/Isolated Adults & Teenagers



CATCH-UP LITERACY ONLINE

Newsletter August 2021

NO MORE HIDING.
NO MORE SHAME.

Tuhituhi Rangatahi

In April, we named our entire youth literacy programme Tuhituhi Rangatahi. (Tuhituhi means writing and Rangatahi means youth). It's a name which makes perfect sense, as we work with teenage students daily, helping them with their reading and writing! #winning! The name is already gaining traction as when we used it on a recent Facebook post it brought in many queries. Who would have thought that renaming our youth student service would make such an impact!

We have seen a steady increase in students signing up for our free service. Letting people who have trouble with reading and writing know about our service is a challenge and so this is encouraging – it means we are reaching

those who need help to improve their reading and writing. Recent feedback is that we are also helping them boost their self-confidence, self-awareness and confidence to take risks.

Our Youth Literacy Manager and Youth Literacy Training Manager have been busy planning secondary school visits to offer Tuhituhi Rangatahi to students who need support. We want to continue to be part of the solution to increase literacy at a time when three in ten NZ high school students struggle with reading and writing (UNICEF Report 2020). We are confident Tuhituhi Rangatahi will do just that.

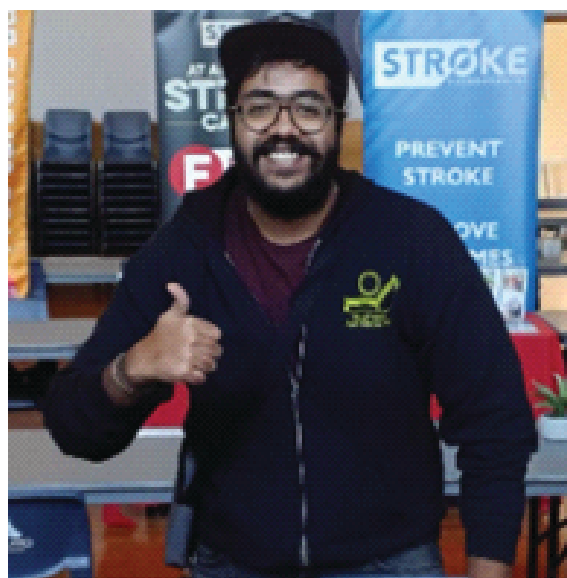
Farewell to Two Amazing and Much Loved Employees

In July, we farewelled Student Coach Coordinator (recently renamed 'Adult Literacy Training Manager') Joanna Hayman and Marketing Manager Rahul Krishnan.

Joanna joined RYALT in early 2020 and has been a key member working with coaches and students. Her experience in the training sector helped her thrive as a coach coordinator. She brought the care factor, was empathetic towards students, was great at supporting coaches, and always saw the best in people. Joanna had a natural knack for breaking down stereotypes and was always willing to offer help and a solution. She would say, "Literacy is about helping people have a voice", and through her guidance, she has helped many people find that voice. She never underestimated the difference her coaches made in students' lives and the remarkable difference that even small changes could make in a student's life. Joanna has decided to retire and take a well-deserved break. She is not sure where in NZ she will go but we are sure it will be somewhere beautiful and quiet!



Rahul joined the team in early 2020, too – just before Joanna. He came to NZ from India to do a masters degree in digital marketing and joined RYALT as a volunteer looking after social media and advising on marketing. When the



opportunity arose for the marketing manager role (of 15 hours a week), Rahul was successful in getting the job. His vibrant personality was infectious and brightened up the Port Waikato office where he would travel weekly from Hamilton for work. Rahul was not afraid to take on challenges and addressed any task with a positive outlook and persistence. He explored all avenues and turned roadblocks into solutions. Working alongside Miriama, Community Coordinator, this power duo came up with the Sponsor-a-Student Initiative, which they offered during their cold call visits to local business. This has helped the organisation a great deal. They also increased brand awareness and had overall positive results in marketing. Rahul decided to take up an opportunity with FedEx as a customs clearance representative, with the goal to climb the corporate ladder and make his mark. We know he will do well in his new role!

We will miss Joanna and Rahul as they both brought something special to the organisation, leaving it a better place than when they started, and we wish them both success with their new ventures.



Introducing Our New Team Members

As we farewelled Joanna and Rahul, we welcomed our new team members, Tim Fisher and Chrissie Wardle.

Tim lives in Mt Eden, Auckland, and moved around a lot as a child in rural Taranaki. He is definitely not a city dweller at heart! His background is varied and includes serving in the Navy, farming, performing arts, security, sales, human resources and education. He views education as the key to unlocking potential and has been fortunate enough to be involved at all levels (community, primary, secondary and tertiary) for more than 20 years. When he isn't assisting tutors and students for RYALT, he works with primary and secondary students. Tim thinks "it is so important for people like us who are able to provide support to assist those who have 'slipped through the cracks' or have been ignored for having literacy difficulties. The difference we can make can be profound. The return on investment is not hyperbole."

Chrissie is replacing Joanna as Adult Literacy Training Manager. As an English teacher, she has always had a passion for supporting literacy development. Her teaching career has enabled her to develop a range of skills which she hopes will enrich the coaching team. She is also keen to get to know the coaches and learn how they get the best from their students. Chrissie is a firm believer in life-long learning and is currently studying at AUT, hoping to complete a PhD in lifestyle medicine. She is also involved in a community project to promote wellness for women in Pukekohe. In her spare time, Chrissie likes to keep fit and is a keen cyclist. She takes part in cycling events throughout the year to raise money for charity. Running a small animal



sanctuary and breeding Kunekune also keeps her active. She enjoys reading and writing, and published her first novel in 2013. Her work life has always focused on getting the best out of people and she is totally committed to achieving this in her role as Adult Literacy Training Manager!



We would like to welcome Aroha Kukutai as the Youth Literacy Project Manager, replacing Ngareta Wairepo. Aroha brings with her a wealth of experience from having worked in the 'youth industry'

for the past four years. She started her journey with the Papakura People Potential, where she found her passion to help our rangatahi. It has not taken Aroha long to stamp her mark on RYALT. She has hit the ground running, bringing enthusiasm and a can-do attitude to the job! We definitely believe she was made for this role! Aroha has the heart and passion to help people who struggle with the essential things in life and lives up to one of her favourite quotes from Mahatma Gandhi, "Be the change you wish to see'.

National Volunteer Week

From 20-26 June 2021, the nation celebrated all volunteers across New Zealand. At RYALT, we acknowledged our volunteers by sending them a massive thank you for the gift of their time! We would have loved to provide them with a gift but weren't able to since we are a non-profit organisation and our funding is tight. Our volunteers play such an important role in our organisation, and without them, we could not have done half the things we are able to do. Our amazing coaches are impacting lives by donating their time and care to help adults and youth across NZ with their reading and writing. We have heard some wonderful success stories including:

- "I am immensely grateful to Michael (volunteer coach) and RYALT for all the support! Your work is so vital. It's not just the reading, it's the social connection and confidence to take risks." (Mum of a student)
- "I like the two half-hour lessons I have with my coach. I learn more than I do with a whole day at school!" (Student)
- "I have been working with a student for five years at the local library – meeting twice a week for an hour at a time. My student has hearing problems and tends to shout. While at times, I wasn't sure if progress is being made, the librarians who overhear us said they have noticed the difference and have commented on the progress in my student's reading." (Volunteer Coach)

Our call centre and e-reception volunteers have also been amazing! Their passion and commitment to providing excellent customer

Thank You!

With your help, we are making a difference to our students' literacy and we can confidently say we are getting there one step at a time. There is still a lot of work to do, to spread awareness of our service and helping those in need – slowly but surely!

On behalf of RYALT, Jo Poland and the entire team, we extend our heartfelt gratitude to our amazing volunteers and sponsors who continue to support us in our journey.

*Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi,
engari he toa takitini*

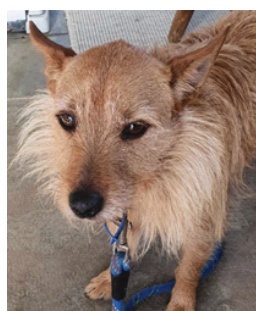
*My strength is not as an individual,
but as a collective.*



service has been outstanding. Most people think speaking to people and organisations over the phone is easy but it takes a lot of skill to be consistently positive, patient, empathetic, a good listener and have attention to detail.

We also have behind-the-scenes volunteers who help us with the website, graphic design and much more. All our volunteers are our unsung heroes!

Joy, Maggie and Freddy are local volunteers who come into our office every week to fold flyers, make up contact card packs, laminate, bind and more. They always have a smile and a can-do attitude plus we get to see Freddy, Joy's adorable dog! It's always lovely having them come in each week. The work they do saves us a great deal of time but a bonus is the



energy and enthusiasm that comes sweeping into the office with them. We were also fortunate to have Jenny Butler helping them for quite a long time. She is still missed.