

HIPPY – a programme that can change lives

GREAT POTENTIALS FOUNDATION

You may have noted that the Trust has supported the ‘Great Potentials Foundation’ for several years now. The Foundation is funded to run the HIPPY programme out of Rongomai School which is in Otara and draws from the Trust’s Area of Benefit.

So what is the HIPPY programme and how successful is it?

HIPPY is an acronym for Home Interaction Programme for Parents and Youngsters. It’s a two-year programme that helps parents learn skills that will enable them to create a positive learning environment in the home. This leads to an increase in the child’s attention span, improved concentration and discovering the fun of learning – all key factors in being well prepared for starting school.

The Foundation has been a flag-waver for early intervention for years – an idea that the Government is now endorsing. Funding from the AACT has enabled the programme to be established in Otara and to build its reputation in the area since 2008. Without the Trust’s support, the programme would not have been available to local children as no funding has been forthcoming from the Government. But the best part of this story is that this is all about to change. HIPPY has so impressed the decision-makers that in the Budget this year, the Government has set aside money to cover 85% of each HIPPY programme’s operating costs.



Benefits for children

- ☑ Encourages a love of learning
- ☑ Maximises chances of enjoyment and doing well at school
- ☑ Promotes language and listening skills
- ☑ Builds self-esteem and confidence in learning
- ☑ Improves communication between parents & children

Benefits for Parents & Families

- ☑ Helps create a learning environment at home
- ☑ Increases parents’ knowledge of child development and the way children learn
- ☑ Provides parents with opportunities to enjoy positive time with their children
- ☑ Enables parents to be actively involved in their children’s education
- ☑ Supports parents to meet regularly and promotes a sense of inclusion and connectedness with their community
- ☑ Increases parents’ self-confidence
- ☑ Has an overall positive impact on family relationships
- ☑ Creates employment and training opportunities

The Trust has pledged to top up this amount for the next three years at HIPPY Otago to ensure the continuation of the programme at Rongomai School.

Rongomai's principal, Tina Voordouw, an enthusiast for the programme, believes: "The fact that the programme nurtures parents alongside their tamariki is precisely what we need. It's useless attending to one without the other because it's the relationship that's the key. And if we get that right within our families, then it can ripple out further. The parents actually become resources for our community."

The programme in Otago is led by a co-ordinator, whose role is to train young parents, who have already participated in the programme, to support the learning of other families which are just starting HIPPY. Although there is a significant commitment required from the parents, most are motivated by their desire to give their children opportunities that they may not have had themselves.

Tina Voordouw maintains that "the graduates of the HIPPY programme are easily identifiable within the school, not only because of the many relevant skills the children have acquired, but because their parents are so tuned in to their learning".

Some components of the programme involve getting the co-ordinator, tutors and parents together. These sessions have provided opportunities for parents to meet others within their community and to learn other skills such as CPR and gardening.

One father, who at the time of joining the programme, was a Stormtrooper gang member, describes his involvement as "a 'gift'". A year into the programme, he left the gang and describes it as "the best thing I've done for my son in my life". His partner uses the word, "miracle".

It's a programme that can change lives.



Parents celebrate the children's achievements through rap.