

# **Building Resiliency & Emotional Literacy**

**Sabbatical Report  
2009**

**Linda Kelly  
Principal Takanini School**

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*"Life is not a matter of holding good cards but playing a poor hand well"*

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## Executive Summary

The purpose of the sabbatical was to explore the options for building resiliency and emotional literacy in low decile schools such as Takanini, so a consolidated and consistent approach could be developed.

There were three main questions to be answered. They were:

- Why is Resiliency an important life skill especially for low socio-economic students and does it contribute to improved student outcomes?
- Can a knowledge and understanding of Emotional Literacy benefit and raise our student's achievement levels?
- What does a co-ordinated and consistent approach to developing Resiliency and Emotional Literacy in our students look like?

Ensuring the basic needs of our students and families are met has long been the vision and focus at Takanini. We know that academic achievement does not happen in isolation. The sabbatical was an opportunity to explore options for developing the whole child and strategies that would support our families and school community.

The initial inspiration came for a sabbatical at the ICP conference 2007, where I attended a workshop by Annie Hamlaoui from the UK. Annie was working with a group of low socio-economic schools (13) in Thanet, Kent. Her workshop entitled '**Life is not a matter of holding good cards, but playing a poor hand well**' had a profound effect upon me. We are also part of a pilot programme in New Zealand called - The Roots of Empathy. This Canadian programme is an award winning evidenced-based classroom programme that has shown dramatic effects in reducing levels of aggression and violence amongst school children while raising social/emotional competency and increasing empathy. Our experience at Takanini confirmed that it was indeed a very powerful programme.

The sabbatical was planned around visiting schools, organizations and professionals in Kent, England and Vancouver and Toronto in Canada. As a result of these experiences and discussions with NZ educators, directions have now been clearly established. These include improved understandings, knowledge and confirmation of prior beliefs. I believe we are establishing good foundations for social and emotional literacy and skills in our students. To build resiliency we need to ensure the protective factors inbuilt in our children are enhanced through the consistent systems and the environment present within the school. At this stage, I am not sure what the final shape of a co-ordinated approach is like for Takanini School, because there are many options and possibilities still to

explore. However, we are well on track and 2010 will be a year to build and consolidate our current programmes and trial some exciting new options. Our emphasis on building our community resources will continue. At Takanini a high quality pre school education is essential, alongside access to parenting programmes, social and health professionals, advice and support for families.

This sabbatical has wider implications and messages not only for our parents and school community, but for New Zealand education, health and social agencies, government and society in general. These implications have been outlined within this report. The environments in which our children grow are critical to healthy development. The majority of children are fortunate in New Zealand and are nurtured in healthy responsive homes. For those children who are disadvantaged, we must continue to work hard at addressing this inequity and focus our investments in our young 'at risk' children and their vulnerable families..... for they are our future.

The key message has to be early intervention for 'at risk' children and their families. The critical periods for brain development occur between two and three years. The building of attachment and security during those early years in a supportive environment time is essential, so that an early foundation is laid for a strong cognitive, social and emotional capacity that can be developed to the level of the child's potential in life.

**Building Resiliency and Emotional Literacy**  
**"Life Is Not A Matter Of Holding Good Cards But Playing A**  
**Poor Hand Well"**

**Purpose:**

By the end of my sabbatical leave, options for building resiliency and emotional literacy, in our students, will be explored and a consolidated approach for Takanini students will be developed.

**Questions to be explored were:**

- Why is Resiliency an important life skill especially for low socio-economic students and does it contribute to improved student outcomes?
- Can a knowledge and understanding of Emotional Literacy benefit and raise our student's achievement levels?
- What does a co-ordinated and consistent approach to developing Resiliency and Emotional Literacy in our students look like?

**My Underlying Belief: "It is easier to build a child than repair an adult."**

## **Background to the Sabbatical**

### **Takanini School - Profile and Vision**

Takanini is a decile 1 Year 1-8 (U5) school with a growing roll. The ethnic composition is 63% Maori, 25% Pacifica (19% Samoan), 5% European and 3% Indian. It was a highly transient population, but this is changing and we believe that the programmes we have implemented have made the difference.

Takanini is situated 'between' Papakura and Manurewa. My aim always, has been to put the 'heart' back into Takanini. This means to giving the Takanini community, the social and public services it needs, centering them around the school.

Our strategic focus and action plan is around - 'Team Up Takanini' - together we can help our children learn. Our guiding statement is "Hei Haurahi Hei Hauora - On Track for Life". The 'Four Winds' (emotionally, socially, physically and spiritually) are paramount in supporting and guiding our children on the pathway of life.

As a Principal, my vision is to ensure our students have the very best opportunities to reach their potential and to become life long learners. Education is the critical key in breaking the cycle of poverty. We have worked hard to put in place a range of strategies, which I believe make a difference to our children's learning, social skills and engagement. We have successfully operated a breakfast club for nine years. Our SWiS has been based at Takanini for five years now and is an integral part of the social support structure for our children. We run the GEM Narrative Therapy programme and our Kaumatua teaches Taiha and Makau Ra. Leadership programmes are a focus of Years 5-8. We are a pilot school for the Roots Of Empathy programme. As a staff we have embraced the Kotahitanga philosophy of Russell Bishop and have become a Health Promoting School.

### **Defining influences in selecting the two overseas programmes to research:**

The Roots of Empathy a Canadian programme is an award winning evidenced-based classroom programme that has shown dramatic effect in reducing levels of aggression and violence amongst school children while raising social/emotional competency and increasing empathy. The programme at our school has had significant impact on children lives and the growth of empathy.

- In 2007, at the ICP conference I attended a workshop by Annie Hamlaoui from the UK who is working with a group of low socio-economic schools (13) in Thanet, Kent. Her workshop entitled 'Life is not a matter of holding good cards, but playing a poor hand well' had a profound effect upon me. In developing emotional literacy and building resiliency, Annie uses a collaborative approach, developing an understanding of how the brain functions and the importance of movement with her students. Her innovative approach to programmes has continued to inspire me to visit Thanet and see her work in action.

Our vision at Takanini is to build the community and resources to help our children learn and achieve. The 'Team Up Takanini' theme has been successful in building this sense of community. We are working hard towards establishing a Takanini Whanau Centre with a pre- school, social and community services close to the school. In this work I am fortunate to have the support of Louise Belcher the manager of the Kelvin Road Whanau Centre and Lesley Max of Great Potentials. A playgroup operated by our parents has run very successfully, two mornings a week in the hall. Parents are participating in a HIPPY Programme and we already have the Plunket using our meeting rooms in the hall one day a week.

**My Belief: "It is easier to build a child than repair an adult."**

## Summary of Educational Experiences and Programmes Investigated Related to the Sabbatical

### Thanet-Kent England

The schools visited were all in the Thanet area of Kent. This is an area of the highest deprivation index in the UK. The deprivation is related to the closure of mining and related industries in the area. There is unemployment, poverty, neglect, abuse and all the associated drug/alcohol problems.

There were six schools visited:

- Dame Janet Junior Community School - Ages 7-11 years
- Dame Janet Infant School - Age 3-7 years
- Newington School - (a new school, two years old). Onsite 'Smart Start' pre school. Ages 3 -11 years
- St. Peters Church of England School - Age 7-11 years
- Lydden Primary - Small country school near Dover. 45 children 4-11 years
- Marlow Academy - Secondary School (a new school)- Ages 12- 18 years

#### **Dame Janet Junior Community School - Ages 7-11 years.**

Headteacher- Gary Rees.

Dame Janet caters for Key Stage 2 of the curriculum. They are trialing a more integrated curriculum based on four aspects Resilience, Resourcefulness, Reflectiveness and Reciprocity. Their focus is around Building Learning Power. This is based on Ian Gilbert and Guy Claxton's work.

I started the morning with a visit to the Breakfast Club that has been operating for seven years. These children also receive free lunches. Talked with the DP - Jo Brand about the school and the programmes in place for the most at risk children. There were discussions about three boys who had just started in September who were causing major problems, changing the climate of the school with their disruptive behaviours. All three had been suspended once in the first three weeks back at school. Talked with both the SENCO and FLOW about concerns and strategies for these children and their families.

I visited two classrooms that were working on creating their own powerful story characters. Teachers were using active boards. All rooms had a teacher support person working with those children who needed support because of the whole class teaching strategy. In the afternoon I

joined the Happiness Project group run by Cath Solly, the SENCO. This is a ten-session programme building self-esteem, emphasizing manners, sharing, being kind etc. Cath is an experienced facilitator of this type of programme.

On another day I observed a Numeracy group (third set = bottom group) working with a teacher - Wayne who then took a group of Year 4 boys.

This group aimed at improving listening skills, relating and supporting one another. This was their first session for the year.

I was able to participate in the after school clubs which run every day after school. They operate on a rotational basis for an hour after school and are run by the teachers. There was a cheer leading group and two sports groups (netball and soccer) but these were both hampered by the weather and the students watched a video instead. On other days there are homework groups, art, running etc and a parent club.

### **Dame Janet Junior School (3-7 year old)**

The visit to the Dame Janet Junior School was interesting as the two schools were alongside each other. First, I had a general discussion with the head teacher, Chris Humphries. Their problems are similar in nature to Dame Janet Community School. This year they are trialing anger management/social skills within the classroom setting. In the past they have used a withdrawal room for difficult students. The three boys currently causing problems at the other school were largely withdrawn from the regular classroom situation while at the Junior School. Again every class had a teacher aide and a learning support person plus in some cases a special needs one to one teacher. They also have a number of parents who come in to hear children read. I spent time with the SENCO teacher who worked in the withdrawal room. We discussed the strategies, programmes and development of in-class programmes this year to help overcome the problem of transfer of positive behaviour into other settings. The three boys had been largely under control in the withdrawal room situation but not elsewhere in the school.

### **Newington School - 3 to 11 years old.**

Newington is a new school (2 years old). It has a 'Smart Start' pre school attached. The funding for this pre-school comes from a different 'pot' of money. The head teacher, Cliff Stokes has worked very hard to set high standards and to create a new image for the school, as the previous school had failed and was demolished. He has set a very structured behaviour management system in place, alongside bookwork which transitions through from the pre-school. The pre-school was lovely with

a good atmosphere. Parents were encouraged through their involvement with their pre-schoolers to move smoothly into the main school. There was a good atmosphere throughout the school. There was a separate room for excluded students run within the school. This class was run by a specialist teacher. The grounds were well cared for and more like a NZ school. The head teacher came from Dame Janet Community School and he was trained in Reading Recovery. At this stage the school in its aims and vision seem to be successful.

### **St Peters - Church of England School - 7 to 11 year olds.**

This school was a delightful surprise situated in much the same area as the other schools, but with a different and more open atmosphere. The head teacher Sharon Irvine was very welcoming and outlined the school and its vision. I spent time with Maggie Poulos who had been trained as an Emotional Literacy teacher by Annie Hamlaoui. Maggie had a second set Literacy class who were working on the poem - Marie Celeste and later I viewed her Numeracy hour. The programme was structured and whole class based, but a warm and supportive atmosphere was created. Students were comfortable to take learning risks and voice their opinions in a supportive environment. The headteacher had then arranged for me to talk with a parent on their PTA, Kate Gardner, who has set up the most amazing parent/family programme. She had gained funding to have a social studies programme run mainly on Saturdays with follow up programme during the week. It was based on studying the five continents. Each family/child had a passport. They had already run two programmes, one based on Europe and the other on North America. The North American one, focused on the North American Indians and had been run over a weekend. They had camped overnight in the school grounds in tepees. The expertise and professionalism that had been built by this small group on the PTA was outstanding and involvement by the community was very evident in the feedback and evaluations. The weeknight sessions followed up with cooking and cultural events from the countries being studied. They were being very well attended.

### **Lydden School-a village school close to Dover for 4 to 11 year olds.**

This school catering for forty-five children was where the Happiness Project first started through Annie Hamlaoui the Emotional Literacy facilitator. I was able to be part of a group working with two teacher aides who had been trained in Emotional Literacy. On this day they were doing a Trust Walk.

Discussions with Carole Davies, the head teacher, indicated that the school was working well within its community. She had a strong belief in the importance of emotional and social skills and the visit to the five classrooms reinforced this working in action. Later in the afternoon I was invited to be part of their Harvest celebration afternoon tea with community members. The Year 6 students served afternoon tea to the guests and then each class entertained us with a Harvest song or activity.

### **Marlow Academy - Secondary School (a new school) - Ages 12- 18 years**

Ian Johnson is the Principal of this new school and he is proud to be different. He is a strong advocate of emotional and social literacy and he appears to model and practise it in all he does. He is very approachable and interactive with both the students and staff. His 'office' is an open space on the second floor that overlooks the central cafeteria where all the school meet and interact. On my arrival he was just finishing showing the new students and parents around the school. He spent time explaining his philosophy and the vision for the school that is developing.

We sat in the cafeteria area and he introduced me to the police liaison officer, the youth programmes and the EQ co-ordinators. They all spent time talking about their roles at Marlowe. The police liaison person has no legal powers and works as an intermediary breaking down barriers. She has developed trust and is able to support students at risk or in trouble with the police. The police are welcome and well accepted within the school setting and often appear and have lunch in the cafeteria area. The youth programmes are aimed at working with children, parents and families, both in and out of school. The EQ co-ordinator started as a counsellor and drama teacher but now works with 'at risk' youth, autistic and other students with special needs. He works in the area of transition with new students and now increasingly with teachers. He supports them to develop positive atmosphere and teaching styles as part of their professional development.

Time did not allow a fuller visit around the school but from my observations it would seem that Ian's vision is developing. He was adamant that teachers have to be selected carefully, so mutual respect, student engagement and motivation in learning was nurtured.

## Discussions with other educationalist and teachers included:

- **Annie Hamlaoui** - currently working with at risk youth in the area. Annie was the reason I visited Thanet having been inspired by her workshop presentation on Emotional Literacy at the ICP conference in Auckland in 2007. Annie had been the Emotional Literacy co-ordinator for 13 Thanet schools. This was a three-year project funded by the MOE. She discussed her current role, but more importantly the work she had done as Emotional Literacy co-ordinator and the programmes that were still in place and the outcomes of that work. She started as a careers advisor in the secondary area and had good outcomes for boys who were finding the transition to secondary school difficult and girls who were at risk in their behaviours. She started the Happiness Project and the Penguin appreciation club - an anti-bullying programme for shy students. This was an after school club. She had successfully run a Purposeful Acts of Kindness Club that built empathy and inclusion and the Hereson Heroes. She is currently writing a pick and mix book on Emotional Literacy book for de-motivated semi-literate boys in Dubai. Annie is a strong advocate of the importance of early brain development and runs workshops for the National Playgroup network encompassing nurseries, pre-school provision as well as playgroups. Her workshops are practical and focus on the relationship between attachment theory and brain development. She also works with young mothers in this area. Annie has a wonderful sense of humour and was deeply committed to the work she was doing. It underlined for me the importance of the person and the relationships they create when working in this area of emotional and social literacy. A programme can be full of huge potential but without the important relationship connection in place it will not succeed.
- **Yvonne Capland**- an experienced special needs teacher (30 years) who has worked mainly in the secondary area in Thanet. Yvonne had just taken redundancy and some time off to reflect and refresh and look at her direction. She talked initially of the politics and the merger of the two secondary schools that lead to the opening of Marlowe. Currently the school is operating from three sites the girls school, boys school and Marlowe which makes life difficult for teaching staff who often have to travel between sites during their teaching day.

Yvonne taught Year 7-10 boys the 'Golden Curriculum'. This class was initially set up in the basement area of the school where she engaged these demotivated and at risk boys in learning and taught them to read and experience success. She was part of the Emotional Literacy work that Annie Hamlaoui introduced in the Thanet area. Annie set up the Hereson Heroes and Yvonne worked with her on this project. Yvonne was accredited as an outstanding OFTSTAT teacher. The curriculum she taught was practical, hands on, creating a positive environment for learning. She did not use worksheets and had a minimal use of books. Once these boys had experienced success and were capable of working within the normal classroom they were transitioned gradually back into the mainstream environment. She agreed to send me a copy of the Golden Environment.

### **Kent Area Educational Strategy**

The educational strategy operating in this area of Kent is to close failing schools, revamp/rebuild and remarket them in a different /new form. Both Newington and Marlowe were examples of this strategy in action. In the case of Marlowe the Girls and Boys Secondary Schools that were failing were still operating on a small scale until building on the Marlowe campus was complete. This meant teachers were operating at three locations. Whilst the Kent County Council and the Arts Council had initially funded the development of the Emotional Literacy in this area of high deprivation and good results were being achieved with students at risk, this funding has now ceased. The initiative was successful in building teacher skills and programmes were still evident in the schools I visited. However, other curriculum pressures and expectations of Key Stages and League Tables overshadow the emotional and social needs of many of these children.

## Toronto - Canada

**The Ontario Ministry of Education** - co-ordinated an extensive programme for me based on my area of interest. An overview of education in Ontario was part of the welcome and brief by Ted Whittaker the Programme Analyst, National and International Liaison. This was followed by presentations on:

- **"Speak Up"** -Ontario's student engagement strategy. Jean Courtney - Implementation and Training Unit Officer and Kim Sorbara, Senior Policy advisor, Research, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, Student Success/Learning to 18. Implementation, Training and Evaluation Branch spent time outlining the "Speak Up" project. The aim of the project is to increase student engagement and reduce student drop out. The programme has been operating for 18 months fully supported by the Ontario's MOE Minister. Initial results are very positive. The Minister of Education has promoted and been very engaged in this programme.
- **Character Education** in Ontario's public funded schools was outlined in a full presentation by Lorraine Gruzuck - Student Achievement Officer and Character Development Lead, Capacity Building Team, Literacy and Numeracy Secretariat, Student Achievement Division.

A copy of this document- *Finding Common Ground: Character development in Ontario School, K-12* was given to me alongside all the curriculum documents and the Ontario First Nation, Metis and Inuit education policy framework.

### **Roots of Empathy Foundation-**

Roots of Empathy is an evidence based classroom programme that has shown significant and lasting effect in reducing level of aggression amongst school age children. Takanini School has been part of the pilot programme for the last two years.

- At The Roots Of Empathy Foundation, I was welcomed, by the senior manager, Annie Bratton. Time was then spent time talking with Mary Gordon, the founder and president about the current direction of the ROE programme world-wide including NZ.
- A presentation followed around the programme and further discussions were held with Penny Dickie -Key Point Person and Kathy Kathy Facilitator Trainer and Mary Gordon. This included Takanini's experiences with ROE, the cultural appropriateness of

the programme and the recently published results of the NZ pilot programme.

- This ROE experience was enriched later in the week by visiting two programmes in action in schools of excellence within Toronto. One session was facilitated by Kathy Kathy.

### **Pathways to Education Programme**

- Pathways is a Not for Profit Organisation. It is now in five locations in Toronto and expanding. It is a community partnership programme aimed at increasing student engagement and lowering the drop out rate amongst high school students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. It is a comprehensive and integrated approach. It provides four major supports:
  1. Academic - tutoring,
  2. Mentoring - Focused on social skills in Grades 9 and 10 and Career skills in Grades 11 and 12.
  3. Counselling and Support - a full time student/parent support worker acts as a counsellor and advocate for the young people and their families.
  4. Short term incentives (such as bus tickets and lunch vouchers). Long-term incentives (\$1,000 a year scholarship towards any accredited post- secondary education).

This programme has a strong sound research component and the results are impressive. Time was spent initially with Maureen Thompson who outlined the history of Pathways and its implementation in two sites after the pilot project at Regent Park.

- Following the presentation and discussions I went to meet with the co-ordinator of the programme in two of the Pathway sites. He discussed his role and the programme implementation and from here we went to see programmes in action. The first was at Rexdale. The students were participating in after school academic mentoring and tutoring. The programme was being run from the local library complex. The second was being held at Lawrence Heights Secondary School. The students were working in groups on social skills through a technology challenge activity.

## **The “Speak Up” programme - visits to participating schools**

### **Fletcher Meadow Secondary School.**

Mary Nanavati, the Principal, outlined the philosophy driving the school. It runs interdisciplinary programmes and a multi credit programme that targets students at risk of dropping out, called the ACES programme (Alternative Character Education Students). The results they are achieving are very positive. Time was spent with Carey Mottram, the Counsellor of student services who explained in detail the programmes and I viewed the school in action. The Speak Up project they were specifically involved in was a Peace Quilt. They were the co-ordinating school. Overall there were 16 participants schools as well as community groups. The quilt was currently on tour in the district and would eventually hang in the foyer of Fletcher Meadow. The most significant benefit of this Speak Up programme has been the network group that has formed in the community. It is strong and will continue. Then I was treated to a wonderful lunch in the student run Bistro-Restaurant.

### **St. Ursula's School - Age 5 - 11 years**

This catholic school has 520 students and a behaviour class with children from the local district. I met with the Principal Julie Bryce and her Deputy Wendy. Despite the outward appearances of good quality new housing, it would appear high-risk migrant families live in relative poverty and beyond their means in this area. This school applied for eight Speak Up projects and were successful with all of them. The students came and talked about their experiences and what it has meant to them. Then we all celebrated with a “Speak Up” cake and a drink! The projects ranged from raising money for a goat for a community in Africa to an after school club in music appreciation. It was a steep learning curve for everyone including the students and the teachers supporting them, especially in accounting for finances. The total for the eight projects was \$5,000. This school like Fletcher Meadows had a student population at risk, low socio-economic, mainly migrant families. There was a warm positive atmosphere with an emphasis on high expectations, being consistent and strong virtues.

**Doorsteps Neighbourhood Services -  
Chalkfarm Neighbourhood Centre, Daystrom Neighbourhood Centre in  
Daystrom Public School and Falstaff Neighbourhood Centre.**  
(Showcasing schools as community hubs)

**Daystrom Public School - Age 5-11 years  
Family Resource Programme**

- Morris Beckford the Doorsteps Community Director met me at the Daystrom public school to view the Family Resource Programme in action. This is a programme aimed at 0-5 year olds participating in a pre school programme three times a week with their parent/ grandparents etc. The programme targets migrant families so all are ESOL. Thirty children and caregivers were participating with enthusiasm. The programme has proved very popular over a number of years and has impacted positively on the child's readiness for school and the willingness of parents/grandparents to participate in partnership with the school.
- I had discussions with the principal of Daystrom School, Joanie Tabacoff. She confirmed the positive effect of the Family Resource programme. Joanie has a whole language focus at the school with Reading Recovery. In talking about Takanini and our philosophy she introduced me to the 'Tribes Learning Communities'. This is a programme they have been using very successfully. She gave me the book that is the basis of the programme. She was very interested in corresponding.

**Chalkfarm Community Centre.**

Here every Thursday they have a large get together of community members for mid-day lunch. The members are predominately migrants with little or no English. The Healthy Heart Lunch is prepared by community members for community members. There were some thirty adults there an almost equal numbers of male as well as females and a diverse age range. There was a crèche for the pre schoolers. The lunch began with some warm up activities and games. Then a simple lunch followed.

**Doorsteps**

Morris then took me to the Doorsteps main office on the estate where I viewed a documentary of the Doorsteps summer programme. The Doorsteps and Black Creek Health Centres combined to employ five youths to run a dance camp with the Dusk Dancers. Morris also explained

the funding relationship and organisation that makes up the Daystrom/Chalkfarm and Black Creek Community Centres. The main funding partner is United Way of Greater Toronto (60%). They have funded a research project - 'A community fit for children and youth: enhancing resiliency in children and youth living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods'. Morris gave me a copy of this research which we discussed.

### **Beverley Heights Middle School**

The first after school programme was at Beverley Heights Middle School. The students have either self-selected to be a part of the programme or came on teachers recommendation. The funding allows for thirty students to be catered for every night from 3.30 -6pm. There are two facilitators funded by United Way. The students start with a healthy snack and then move into homework or an activity. At 5 o'clock they move into the hall for a physical activity time. This group have just begun a six-week dance programme. The programme varies throughout the year.

### **Amesbury Middle School**

The second after school programme was at Amesbury Middle School. This group were just completing a social skills/ peer pressure activity when we arrived and then went on to complete homework with the support of the facilitators. This group meet in the Food Technology room and twice a week cooking experts are brought in from the community. The programme is around teaching the students to prepare, simple healthy meals. The final hour was in the gym where the student participated in team games based around physical activities.

## **Roots Of Empathy Programmes in Schools**

Initial discussions were held with Penny Dickie and Kathy Kathy from the ROE foundation around the ROE programme and its delivery in Toronto. The discussion was widened to look at the NZ experience and the pilot beginning in the Isle of Mann. We also talked about the Seeds of Empathy programme for 3-5 year olds and its slightly different focus and approach.

**Oakridge Junior Public School- Principal Rita Garry.** Observed the ROE programme in a Grade 3 classroom -Mother Hana Watanabe and Baby Mei. The facilitator was Kathy Kathy. The theme for this second session was

crying. An extra bonus was that the father was also there for the first time. The session and interactions made it a memorable experience.

### **Willow Park Junior Public School – Principal Heather Groves.**

The second ROE school was Willow Park Junior Public School – Principal Heather Groves. This school has three ROE classes including a Seeds of Empathy programme using the junior curriculum. The Seeds of Empathy programme has two facilitators. One focuses on the Literacy area of the programme while the other focuses on the attachment/parent area. There is more artwork at this level. This session was facilitated by Linda Armstrong. The theme was meeting the baby. The mother was Billie Jean Ellero and the baby Shayla. The class was a Grade 1 group. The session set an excellent platform. The mother, initially nervous, gained considerable confidence during the session, because the climate created by the facilitator was warm and accepting. The participation by the class developed as the session progressed and the baby and mother were their complete focus. The mother had previously been involved in a parent literacy programme at the school and this had given her the confidence to be part of the ROE programme.

- The Principal of Willow Park, Heather Groves had been involved as a ROE family with her second child at the school. She was naturally very affirming of the importance and worth of the programme. Willow Park is a 'School of Excellence' as an inner city school. The three-year programme they had been a part of was backed by research and funded by the MOE/Government. They had developed the 'Tribes Learning Community' philosophy. They were using 'On Tracky' - T= Teamwork, R= Respect, A=Attitude, C=Choices, K=Kindness, Y= You are responsible for you. Students earned either a foot (like a shower hook) which became a bracelet/necklace, or a footprint with their name on displayed in the corridor. They also had some beautiful papier mache jungle animals on display in the foyer made by the students. The positive atmosphere and interactions at the school were very evident.

## **Vancouver – Canada**

Larry Haberlin was the ROE trainer for the pilot programme in New Zealand. He has visited New Zealand on a number of occasions. My contact with him at Takanini had led to the possibility of including Vancouver as part of my Sabbatical. He indicated that there was interesting work being undertaken throughout Vancouver district in the area of social and emotional literacy. He was right.

My discussions with Larry while in Vancouver led to additional opportunities furthering my sabbatical. Larry had worked until recently in the Vancouver School Board. He had responsibilities in the area of Social Responsibility and was instrumental in setting up the SACY organization. He still works closely with them and has been very involved in the Roots of Empathy programme as a trainer. He now works as a trainer and consultant and is passionate about his work and the importance of the social and emotional aspects of human development.

### **SACY – School Aged Children and Youth Alcohol and Drug Prevention**

SACY is a community approach to alcohol and drug prevention. This is a co-ordinated, comprehensive school/community based effort that aims to prevent, delay and reduce youth substance use.

The SACY work programme has four strands – the youth engagement stream, parent engagement stream, curriculum and teacher-training stream and STEP stream – an alternative to suspension programme. The streams are interrelated and bring together youth, parents, professionals, teachers and administrators to engage in open and frank dialogues around alcohol and drug use and other common issues facing youth.

SACY works from the belief that health promotion plays an important role in working with youth and addressing AOD issues. The work is research based building on the premise “that young people who feel connected to their school, who have a supportive family and who take part in activities that foster self-esteem, social skills and a connection to the greater community are more resilient and lead healthier, more capable lives”. The programmes outlined were wide ranging and flexible to engage, meet needs, build networks, develops resiliency and protective factors in both the youth and their families.

The SACY group of highly motivated professionals are working together from a positive preventive framework and have a presence in all the Vancouver district high schools. The group included parent engagement workers, youth probation officers, counsellor, prevention worker, STEP workers, experts in the field of addiction and the newest member with a

background in social work was also a Hip Hop expert who had been recognised by UNESCO for his positive stream work in this area. He was employed to build further rapport and developing relationships with youth/community. The co-ordinator Art Steinmann focus was building positive support for social and emotional resiliency in youth. Their philosophy is about engagement. The youth is reached through clubs at the schools, involvement in developing school policy around AOD and events etc. There had been a very successful art programme and a mixed Martial Arts programme. The Martial Arts was seen as a positive way of connecting with fathers. The Harbour Lights programme worked in conjunction with the Vancouver police and the SACY group around drug issues. Social networking with the use of Facebook is also being developed.

The most successful strategy has been the Capacity Cafés. It is a meaningful way to engage youth, have training and develop policy around drugs and alcohol. The youth are supported in running these events but are pivotal to the process. As a result of being involved in the skills based preventive programmes they volunteer to work with either groups of parents or teachers answering questions about youth/drugs/ alcohol use etc. The parents/teachers are involved in their own workshop sessions before the Capacity Café. They develop questions that are sent in beforehand by parents and teachers so that students can prepare themselves. The benefits of this are parents and teachers can gain a real insight into the teenage world and the pressures tensions etc. The students work with a different school community from their own. (The whole programme is outlined in the SACY Youth Engagement Manual.) (The experience of being part of this dynamic group and their stream meeting was very special).

## **Vancouver School Board -**

### **Lisa Pedrini - Manager of Social Responsibility and Diversity**

The Vancouver School Board personnel were to prove pivotal in the high quality of the remainder of my time in Vancouver. My first meeting was with Lisa Pedrini who is the Manager for Social Responsibility and Diversity. The curriculum focuses in British Columbia are Literacy, Numeracy and Social Responsibility and all are considered "foundational skills". To become socially responsible students need self-awareness, self-control, awareness of others, empathy and good relationship skills.

- The document - Social Responsibility - a framework for British Columbia Schools has been developed for voluntary use. This has been in place now for ten years although it is still a 'work in

progress'. The MOE BC have performance standards based around Social Responsibility which include four categories:

- Contributing to the classroom and school community
- Solving problems in peaceful ways
- Valuing diversity and defending human rights
- Exercising democratic rights and responsibilities

As a result of this focus the programmes and research that is happening in Vancouver and British Columbia were of significant interest to my sabbatical. In the following days I was able to see and hear about the impact and potential of some of these initiatives.

While with Lisa we talked in general about social responsibility and the importance of social and emotional development on academic performance. She introduced to me to a number of programmes currently underway within Vancouver:

- The Second Step programme developing impulse control
- Mindfulness/ MindUp - a programme to equip children with social and emotional skills that they need to lead smarter, healthier and happier lives. It is proving so effective in schools and popular with teachers that they cannot keep up with the demand for professional development.
- The HELP partnership - Helping Children to Thrive - a research programme which aims to understand and enhance the quality of children early years. The Early Child Development Mapping Project is a key part of this and of significant interest and relevance.
- Strong Start Centres in disadvantaged neighbourhoods for pre school children
- Roots of Empathy and Seeds of Empathy
- Moe the Mouse - Speech and Language Development programme
- The website CASEL and the Committee for Seattle as key links to programmes focused on social and emotional learning.

## **Vancouver School Board- Early Childhood Initiatives**

**Nanci Farrel- the Early Learning Co-ordinator** was introduced to me by Lisa. This led to discussions and an invitation to attend a full day workshop on the 'Moe the Mouse' a new speech and language programme. We briefly discussed the 'Strong Start' Centres whose

aim is to raise school readiness in 'at risk' children in deprived neighbourhoods. 'Strong Start' BC is a free early learning programme for preschool aged children accompanied by a parent or caregiver. Time, unfortunately did not permit further discussions or visits to any of these centres.

## **HELP-Third EDI Mapping Report Presentation by Dr. Clyde Hertzmann**

I attended a presentation by Dr. Clyde Hertzmann reporting on the third EDI data for the Early Childhood Mapping Project. Clyde is part of the Human Early Learning Partnership (HELP). In 1999 HELP launched the Early Childhood Development Mapping Project. It has evolved to become the first of its kind in the world, tracking the development of British Columbia's entire population of kindergarten children. HELP is now considered a global leader in early childhood development research and monitoring from a population- health perspective, and as such is recognised by UNESCO. They recognise that the quality of a child's early years is a critical influence on the course and outcome of that child's life.

### The Mapping includes:

- The child's development instrument (EDI)- this measures physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development and communication and general knowledge.
- This is combined with the socio-economic characteristics of the neighbourhood - income education, single parent families and
- Finally the community assets that includes libraries, child care spaces, parenting and literacy programmes.

The EDI provides population-based data about early childhood development to communities and governments so programmes and policies can be in place to support healthy child development in all families. The strength of their reporting methods illustrates clearly the disparities in child development in BC and has inspired action to redress these inequities.

The 15 by 15 - A comprehensive Policy Framework for Early Human Capital Investment in BC prepared for the Business Council of British Columbia Opportunity 2020 Project, is an example of this work.

## School Visits in Vancouver

- **Henderson School** - is an elementary school with a high ESOL population of Asian and Indian children. Henderson is at the lowest 5% on EDI HELP scale. Principal, Darrel Cavanagh has a strong code of conduct around social responsibility with contracts for each child - Be Safe, Be Fair, Be Kind. This is central to the whole school community. This philosophy was evident especially during a break observing the interactions in the main corridor between child to child, adult to adult and child/adult interactions.  
The principal talked about his community and its concern, issues and strengths. They are a Strong Start School with a pre- school attached. This is making a significant difference to the readiness of the children starting school in the Kindergarten Grade.  
Darrel identified with similar problems to Takanini. The biggest concern currently is the transition on to High School. The boys are the greatest concern often dropping out and becoming involved with gangs. They are working with the police and the local high schools to try and address this issue.
- **Brock Elementary School** - Principal Jan Miko Brock has a changing population base at her school. A large high-rise low cost housing has recently been demolished to be redeveloped. This has had a positive flow on effects to the school in terms of the children enrolling. The school has a strong focus on the importance of social and emotional development as part of their teaching of social responsibility. They are a Roots Of Empathy school and I was able to observe a ROE session taken by the equivalent of our SWiS around recognising emotions and being assertive.  
Brock has been involved in the MindUp programme for the past two years. Jen Erikson is a trainer for MindUp and has been on leave of absence as teacher from Brock. I was able to meet with her at the school and she worked through a presentation on the background to MindUp. Jan Miko was also involved in the discussions and she spoke about the enthusiasm of her staff to be involved in MindUp as they saw the positive flow on effects on the students. Later I was able to be part of a MindUp session at the school in the special needs class with autistic children. It was impressive.

## **Moe the Mouse Workshop**

Following an invitation by Nanci Farrell of Vancouver School Board I spent a full day attending a workshop on Moe the Mouse - A pre-school (3-5 year olds) speech and language programme developed by Anne Gardner. She is a speech therapist who has developed the programme with funding and support from the Vancouver Board Aboriginal Education led by Debra Martel. The programme uses soft toys- Moe the Mouse and eighteen animal friends help to build self esteem and confidence in language while addressing individual and group difficulties with simple and more difficult sounds.

The other participants in the group were from 'Strong Start' pre- schools and Kindergarten Grade teachers. The teachers were from schools identified as having students at risk through the HELP EDI Mapping. They were to be part of the research for this pilot programme and received the kit free. I decided to purchase a kit and adapt and trial it with our new entrants and the pre- school once it is operational. During the day it was a good opportunity to talk with teachers and the presenters about initiatives in Vancouver, experiences, celebrate successes, and share common problems and issues as well.

## **University of Vancouver - Dr. Kim Shonert-Reihl**

My final experience was at the University of British Columbia where I spent time with probably the most respected person in Vancouver in the area of Social and Emotional Learning. Dr. Kim Shonert-Reihl is the Associate Professor of the Department of Educational and Counselling Psychology and Special Education at the University of Vancouver. She was a featured educator who spoke about heart-mind education at the 2009 Vancouver Peace Summit. Kim has been the chief researcher for the Roots of Empathy programme and MindUp. She is part of HELP and is the principal investigator in the new research they are doing on middle childhood - children from 9-12 years (MDI). The research is called Middle School Inside and Out: The psychological and social world of children 9-12 years. The four dimensions of development being studied are:

- Social Emotional Competence
- School Experiences
- Physical Health and Well - Being
- Connectedness with Parents, Peers, School and Community

I was able to talk with Kim around some of the work that she is doing, hear the passion and experience the actuality. Not only has she been the chief researcher for the Roots of Empathy but she will do research on the ROE pilot for the Isle of Man. All schools on the island are involved and the follow up effects will be relatively easy to follow because of the relatively stable population. Kim is hopeful it could be a 20 year project following these children through to parenting and look at how ROE might influence their parenting practises.

### **MindUp**

Kim has been very much involved in the development of MindUp which is to be published by Scholastic Books as a training manual. MindUP is currently being assessed by CASEL, the Chicago based organisation for research and inspiration in the area of social and emotional learning. (CASEL - The Collaborative for Academic Social and Emotional Learning is considered a world leader in the effort to make social and emotional learning an integral part of the K-12 education system). Kim also talked about the Positive Psychology movement and the important work that was being done in the education field with this philosophy.

### **In class observations**

I was invited to sit in on her class for the afternoon. The pilot group that she is working with on their post- graduate pre-service teacher training has an additional focus of social and emotional learning (SEL). The group self-selected the option and have come from a particular area of Vancouver district (Surrey) which is an outlying area. There are thirty-one students in the group. Kim already knew that two of them would not be present as they were unwell.

- The first session was a debrief of a recent experience they had working as volunteers at an educational conference. It was a relaxed environment of sharing. Then Kim invited them to tell me a little about how this SEL option was for them. The students talked about the high trust in the group, caring for each other, recognising when others were stressed and being co-operative not competitive, wanting all the members of the group to succeed. Several talked about friends who were in the normal option and how increasingly they were envious, recognising what was happening for the SEL students. (Kim shared after this session her reaction to this feedback as it was quite authentic and unprepared!)
- The second session was the responsibility of a group of students to present Chapter 8 of the main text. The group had prepared a

“Who wants to be a millionaire” quiz, that was fun, had high levels of participation and met its objective.

- The third session was a presentation around the MindUp programme. Kim then talked with the students about the professional development that was being planned for them and then we all experienced the Mindful tasting session.

Kim is a dynamic facilitator with excellent social and emotional skills. The high energy and levels of engagement of her students for three hours on a Friday afternoon are testament to her skills. The students she is currently working with are going to be very special teachers. I encouraged them to keep in touch as they would be an asset on any staff! What a way to finish!

### **New Zealand Follow Up**

Back in New Zealand I have continued to talk with a range of people who are working in this wide area either from the educational perspective, health or social work. This has led to a greater understanding of the NZ programmes available, the immense possibilities, the dedicated and passionate of the people working in this area, the need for change and support so our children and families so that they can truly be .....

*On Track for Life..... Hei Haurahi Hei Hauroa.*

## Findings Related to the Questions Posed

### Question 1.

**Why is Resiliency an important life skill especially for low socio-economic students and does it contribute to improved student outcomes?**

### Summary of understandings

This view of Resiliency and perspective on children's development comes from work by Gibbs, (2006, p. 40-43)

- Resiliency is the capacity to survive, to progress through difficulty, to bounce back, to move on positively again and again in life.
- Research on human resiliency has identified factors that create competency, wellness and the capacity to overcome stress.
- There are a number of 'protective factors' that if present enhance the person's ability to be resilient. These protective factors are positive or health enhancing behaviours and conditions that can be created within schools, families and communities. These 'protective factors' can be grouped into three categories: caring and support, positive expectations and active participation.
- Resiliency is not a basic skill we can teach, rather it is what we do to change the human systems (families, schools, communities, peer group, work place) surrounding children that will make the difference. If schools and families can work to ensure the children within their care are surrounded by a daily environment consistent and full of protective factors, then children will use the capacity, the resiliency they have within them to meet inevitable life stress and succeed in spite of it.
- Resilient children have social competence, problem solving skills, autonomy, and a sense of purpose. The greater number of attributes the person possess the greater their ability to be resilient.
- At the heart of resiliency are the relationships between us.

And as summarized by Waldegrave and Waldegrave (2009 p. 5-6) in our low-socio-economic environment it is particularly critical to have and build positive human systems surrounding our children because: -

- Experiences of sustained neglect, stress or trauma can impair higher functioning and impair both neurodevelopment and cognitive development through the release of stress hormones.

- The role of parents and caregivers is critical in mediating the interaction between the child and the environment whether it is for good or ill.

### **Other relevant understandings and findings related to Question 1**

- The current research and growing knowledge of the interaction between genetic endowment and experiences in the development of the mind and brain.
- A greater understanding of how young minds and brains develop, and the factors that enable children to reach their full potential or prevent them from doing so, as they interact with each other, their parents and caregivers.
- The importance of pre- school years and the sensitive periods in early brain development for vision, hearing, emotional control, habitual ways of responding, language and symbols. Equally important but ongoing through the school years is the development of number knowledge and peer social skills.
- The fact that early years are critical in laying foundational capacities for later development in linguistic, cognitive, emotional, social, regulatory and moral development, but these capacities can develop further into adulthood.
- The inverse relationship between low socio- economic status, poverty and healthy development.
- The importance of temperament and attachment theories.
- The results from longitudinal evaluative research studies of early childhood programmes that correlate with positive outcomes in later life, particularly in terms of educational outcomes, employment and earnings. (It is largely the enhanced environment in terms of cognitive and neural stimulation that is key to these outcomes).

## **Question 2**

**Can a knowledge and understanding of Emotional Literacy benefit and raise our student's achievement levels?**

### **Understandings**

- Emotional Literacy is literacy for the whole child, not simply the child's mind. This is literacy for the feeling life and it provides languages for the heart, which is at the centre of the wellbeing of each of us and especially our children.
- The school systems in western cultures have traditionally focused on the psychology that separates the head from the heart. This has given supremacy to the cognitive aspect of thinking at the expense of the motivational and emotional aspects of thinking. In an effort to redress this inequity Goleman (1996) argued for the need to develop emotional intelligence as much as cognitive intelligence. He defines these abilities as knowing how to express one's emotions; manage one's moods; motivate oneself; persist in the face of frustration; control impulse and delay gratification; empathise with others; hope and exercise interpersonal skills. Goleman maintains the crucial competencies can be learned and improved upon by children if we take the time to teach them.
- Goleman's work is a springboard for a focus and growth of the whole area of emotional and social learning.

Goleman's work and experiences in Canada led to a widening of the original question to include the importance of the social aspects of intelligence which are inextricably linked to the emotional side of intelligence.

### **Additional Understandings**

- An appreciation of the importance of social and emotional learning and an understanding of the strength and momentum of the SEL movement throughout North America. The Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a scientific group devoted to advancing the science and evidence-based practice of SEL. There is now a vast amount of research in this area, which connects the SEL interventions with improvements in academic areas, including standardised test scores. Many school districts and states in America and Canada recognise that social and emotional skills are essential components in education.

- Our own NZ curriculum has built in SEL through its vision of young people and its key competencies and values.
- Social emotional learning or SEL is the process of acquiring the competencies to recognise and manage emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make decisions, and handle challenging situations effectively. These skills can be taught through nurturing and caring learning environments and experiences.
- Research by Zins, Weissberg, Wang and Walburg in their book *Building Academic Success on Social and Emotional Learning: What does the research say?* - makes the case for SEL in school through research showing how it leads to:
  - Improved student attitudes, including motivation and increased sense of belonging to school
  - Positive behavioural changes including reductions in bullying behaviours and risky health behaviours and
  - Improvements in academic achievement as assessed via a variety to measures including achievement test scores and grades.
- Educating the heart as well as the mind has to be our focus. A combination of academic learning, social and emotional skills is essential for an effective education for the world we now live in.
- The school curriculum is critical too, as it lays foundations and guidelines for teachers and facilitators. (The comparison between the excitement and passion evident in Canadian educators, especially Vancouver, British Colombia where the three foundation area are Literacy, Numeracy and Social Responsibility and English educators where the focus is entirely on Literacy and Numeracy and driven by the Key Stage requirements and League Tables was very evident.)
- SEL provides a framework within which seemingly disparate programmes and initiatives can coherently work together.
- The school environment needs to be very focused on the whole child and their development.
- The programme is not the critical element for success - it is the relationships that are formed, the qualities of the people involved and the connections that are made between individuals that are the most important. It is the social and emotional learning that makes the difference!

### **Question 3**

**What does a co-ordinated and consistent approach to developing Resiliency and Emotional Literacy in our students look like?**

It is an approach that has at its heart the relationships between people. The school environment and climate has to develop and support the individual's genetic resiliency through promoting their protective factors. The school has to be caring and supportive, hold positive expectations and promote active participation. Programmes developing social and emotional skills have to be consistent and targeted to individual and group needs. A range of programmes that are flexible and meet identified needs should be implemented, while ensuring that the facilitator/leader has the necessary social and emotional skills themselves to build those vital relationships.

After-school programmes would compliment what can be achieved during the school day and could provide mentoring, coaching and developing important physical and mental fitness.

Outside of the school, parents and local community need to support the development of these social and emotional, life skills. This means for our community, the availability of a range of parent education programmes and more community facilities, including a high quality pre-school within walking distance of the school. A Whanau Centre with a range of basic social services is vital to support the overall ability of our families to cope with their lives more effectively.

Government policies and interventions can have a significant impact either for good or ill and recommendations are made in the next section of this report for both New Zealand education and our society as a whole.

If we succeed in our aims, then we will be building citizens who will achieve their potential in life. They will contribute to our society as well connected young men and women, actively involved, confident, life long learners fulfilling our NZ Curriculum vision.

## **Implications for Takanini School**

**At the heart of resiliency are the relationships between us. As a school we must continue to:**

- Express positive expectations
- Encourage goal setting and mastery
- Encourage pro-social development (altruism, empathy and co-operation)
- Provide opportunities for leadership and participation
- Foster active involvement for all students (whatever their learning style or capacity)
- Have teachers who know the importance of and use co-operative learning strategies
- Involve parents
- Have staff who view themselves as caring and supportive people

This will create a nurturing, caring climate and environment within the school that enhances the protective factors within our children to cope positively with their lives. Gibbs (2006 p. 42)

**However we need to work in partnership with our families and the community.**

- As a school with very low uptake of pre- school for our 0-5 years old it is critical to continue to work with the Great Potentials Trust and the MOE to establish an ECE facility within walking distance of the school.
- This ECE facility needs to be affordable and of the highest quality.
- Alongside this facility a range of high quality parent programmes must be available. HIPPY was offered in 2009 with a limited uptake. Plunket already operates from the school and this service will need to be sited within the new facility as planned.
- A range of parent programmes including pre-natal and support programmes for teenage mothers need to be evaluated and possibilities for offering these types of programmes in our school community explored.
- We need to work closely with our Community Health providers who have identified through their research a detailed Papakura Community Profile.
- If Resiliency is not a basic skill we can teach, then as parents, schools and communities we have to surround our children with a consistent set of protective factors as suggested by Gibbs (2006 Pg.42)

- The climate within the school must be conducive to the development of social and emotional skills in our children.
- The conclusion and discussion in the Families Commission research report - *Healthy families, young minds and developing brains: enabling all children to reach their potential*, Waldegrave and Waldegrave (2009 p.52-53) states four directions which are absolutely critical in achieving equity for our children and their families.
  - Firstly we need to package the message about child well-being in ways that will be understood and received by the families that are at risk of abusing and neglecting their children.
  - Secondly access and participation in high quality ECE is essential.
  - Thirdly access to adequate income, decent housing, and affordable healthcare are foundation stones for a stable upbringing.
  - Fourthly more research is needed to how in NZ we measure the effectiveness of both targeted and general public education programmes designed to prevent children becoming at risk and ways to promote safe, secure and loving family and other environments.

**Programmes to further investigated and possibly trialled as a direct result of this sabbatical will be:**

- The Tribes Learning Community - (Jeanne Gibbs) "Tribes is an ongoing goal-orientated process based on sound principles and practises that maximise academic, social and emotional development and learning for today's children". (pg. X) This is a CASEL SElect programme that has been extensively researched.
- Mindfulness/MindUp - (The Hawn Foundation) is a programme to equip children with social and emotional skills that they need to lead smarter, healthier and happier lives. This programme is currently being assessed by CASEL and is due to be published by Scholastic Books.

- Investigation of the International Positive Psychology Association and the research and programmes that are resulting from this movement.
- Rock and Water, an Australian based programme that builds skills through physical and social teaching. It is primarily focused on boys but has been used with success with girls as well. The programme offers a framework of exercises and ideas about students and manhood to assist boys to become aware of purpose and motivation in their life.
- Moe the Mouse - A speech and language programme for 3-5 year olds currently being trialled in Vancouver BC and targets at risk communities and children.
- The HELP EDI mapping project with its assessment of risk factors in 5 year olds. This assessment tool measures the whole child and could be the key to developing valid baseline data for low decile schools like Takanini. If we can use this tool, add the socio-economic characteristics and the community assets, we would then have a clear picture of where we are starting from and what our children and families needs are to be successful and make the most of their potential.
- Investigate after school programmes using the Toronto models of Pathways and Doorsteps Neighbourhood Services to possibly sit alongside our own developing after school activities
- SACY - School Aged Children and Youth - A community approach to alcohol and drug prevention. This is a co-ordinated, comprehensive school/community based effort that aims to prevent, delay and reduce youth substance use. This could have merit and may well work within our current Life Education Trust and DARE (Police) programmes.
- A range of parent programmes from England, Canada and New Zealand. The Anglican Trust for Woman and Children in NZ offer a range of programmes based on the Circle of Security approach, an international intervention protocol designed to support and secure attachment in high-risk populations. The Family Start programmes, the Incredible Years project and HIPPIY are all possibilities for

development in conjunction with the Takanini Whanau Centre project combined with the Takanini Pre-School once it is built.

- Programmes for teenage mothers currently operating in New Zealand and Canada.
- Other programmes that may be available in New Zealand through the additional funding announced in November/December 2009 by the MOE to support parents and schools with troublesome children.
- The current programmes operating at Takanini School that build social and emotional skills will continue, including the Roots of Empathy programme that is being funded for a further year by the MOE.

## Implications for New Zealand Education

- The need to recognise the importance of the education of the whole child, a balanced approach that values the “Heart” as well as the “Mind”. Teachers and parents recognise that academic success, as with success in life, rest on a foundation of social and emotional competencies.
- The need to celebrate our new NZ curriculum and its ability to developed the whole child through its vision statement. This curriculum has the potential to lead the world in education.
- An intensive investigation and evaluation by our Ministry of Education of the Canadian HELP EDI Mapping Project should be undertaken. The Canadians recognise that the quality of a child's early years is a critical influence on the course and outcome of that child's life. The Mapping includes:
  - The child's development instrument (EDI)- this measures physical health and well-being, social competence, emotional maturity, language and cognitive development and communication and general knowledge.
  - This is combined with the socio-economic characteristics of the neighbourhood - income education, single parent families and
  - Finally the community assets that includes libraries, child care spaces, parenting and literacy programmes.

The EDI Mapping Project has provided population-based data about early childhood development to communities and governments so programmes and policies can be in place to support healthy child development in all families. The strength of their reporting methods illustrates clearly the disparities in child development in BC and has inspired action to redress these inequities.

This research is critical component in addressing the inequity that exists between communities that has led to the development of 15 by 15 *'A comprehensive policy framework for Early Human Capital Investment in British Colombia'*. This has been prepared for the Business Council of British Colombia Opportunity 2020 Project. HELP is now considered a global leader in early childhood development research and monitoring from a population- health perspective, and as such is recognised by UNESCO.

**New Zealand needs to be serious about assessing the value of this research. Government departments of Education, Health and those with Social responsibilities need to combine their resources and begin to address the inequities that exist within New Zealand.**

- Instead of developing National Standards from NCEA downwards it is strongly suggested that New Zealand should start our focus from or before birth and develop a co-ordinated strategy to enrich the environment for our most vulnerable children and families. We need soundly based research upon which to develop the fullest capacity of all our children. The HELP mapping project provides an excellent model on which to base our own research.
- Investigate the training of teachers in terms of producing teachers that not only have the ability to teach at the highest level academically, but who are also rounded individuals themselves. They need to recognise the importance of social and the emotional intelligence and skills and can demonstrate these qualities in their relationships with their students.
- The conclusion and discussion in the Families Commission research report - *Healthy families, young minds and developing brains: enabling all children to reach their potential* Waldegrave and Waldegrave (2009 p.52-53) has four recommendations for effective action to achieve equity for our children and their families :-
  - Firstly we need to package the message about child well-being in ways that will be understood and received by the families that are at risk of abusing and neglecting their children.
  - Secondly access and participation in high quality ECE is essential.
  - Thirdly access to adequate income, decent housing, and affordable access to healthcare are foundation stones for a stable upbringing.
  - Fourthly more research is needed in NZ around measuring the effectiveness of both targeted and general education programmes designed to prevent children becoming at risk and to promote safe, secure and loving family and other environments.

## **Conclusions and Evaluation of the Purpose of this Sabbatical**

The directions for Takanini School have been clearly established through my new understandings and the consolidation of prior knowledge as result of this sabbatical. I believe we are establishing good foundations for social and emotional literacy and skills in our students and will need to continue this process.

To build resiliency we need to ensure the protective factors inbuilt in our children are enhanced through the consistent systems and environment present within the school. These need to be centered around caring and support, positive expectations and active participation.

At this stage, I am not sure what the final shape of a co-ordinated approach is like for Takanini School, because there are so many options and possibilities still to explore. However, we are well on track and 2010 will be a year to build and consolidate our current programmes and trial some exciting new options. Our emphasis on building our community resources will continue. At Takanini a high quality pre school education is essential, alongside access to parenting programmes, social and health professionals, advice and support for families.

This sabbatical has wider implications and messages not only for our parents and school community, but for New Zealand education, health and social agencies, government and society in general. These implications have been outlined within this report. The environments in which our children grow are critical to healthy development. The majority of children are fortunate in New Zealand and are nurtured in healthy responsive homes. For those children who are disadvantaged, we must continue to work hard at addressing this inequity and focus our investments on our young 'at risk' children and their vulnerable families for they are all our future.

The key message has to be early intervention for 'at risk' children and their families. The critical periods for brain development occur between two and three years. The building of attachment and security during those early years in a supportive environment time is essential, so that an early foundation is laid for a strong cognitive, social and emotional capacity that can be developed to the level of their potential

Personally, I have been enriched, invigorated and extended by this sabbatical. My new understandings and knowledge has increased my resolve to continue to work for what I firmly believe. Our efforts must

be directed towards - **building the child rather than repairing the adult!**

The people that I have been fortunate enough to meet and the support networks established during this sabbatical will nurture me going forward. This is not the end but a new beginning.

Thank you.

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