

Akonga Pūrākau

Tō Mātou Ao, A Mātou Pūrākau

Hakihea 2023



Student Writing

Our Lives, Our Stories

December 2023

Karakia

*Tukua tāku wairua kia rere ki nga taumata
Hei ārahi i aku mahi
Me tāku whai i te reo tuhi-a-kōrero pukapuka mahi
rorohiko
Kia mau, kia ita
Kia kore ai e ngaro
Kia pupuri, kia whakamaua, kia tina
Tina!
Haumi e, Hui e, Tāiki e!*

Allow my spirit to fly to the highest realm
To guide me within what I do
As I pursue my reading, writing and computer
Hold firm, hold fast, that it may never be lost
Be steadfast
Join together and be one

Contents

Title	Author	Page
Working at Waipareira	Lisa	5
The Lemon Tree	Lakshmi Abeyrathna	6
Toxic Filter	Leigh Olding	7
A Mother's Strength	Subira Majanja	8
Celine Dion	Camilla	9
Adventures With My Children	Heba	10
Ali's Childhood in Ghazni	Tina T	11
Shake, Rattle and Roll	Roka	12
Double Whammy	Belina	13
My Weekend at Home	Michelle	14
My Journey to New Zealand	Marwa	15
Year 2000	George	16
My Wedding Day	Geeta	17
Beijing Roast Duck	David Xiong	18
Bryan Adams in Concert	Jackie	19
Hidden Bodhisattva	Kseniya Morein	20
No. 8: No Pain No Gain	Lauti	24
My Family	Lauti	25
Tina's Bad Experience	Ali	26
My Life Change	Tina F	27

Title	Author	Page
Carved Lizard	George	28
Mount Qasioun	Heba	29
To the Editor of the NZ Herald	Leigh Olding	30
Frank Sinatra	Catriona	31
My Fishing Trip to the Poor Knights Islands	Peter	32
Stand Up to the Bullies	Bassam	33
Lily's New House	Lily	34
The Best Moment	Sophia	35
My Birthday 2023	Melissa	36
Welcome to New Zealand	Akhtar	37
Gratitude	TE	38
The Soldier	Nela	39
New Stuff in Magnolia House	Roka	40
My Visit	Lily	41
My Classmates	Vee L	42
Letter to The Warriors	Helen Rose	43
Why did both Literacy Waitākere and Unitec work for me?	Ella	44

Working at Waipareira

For me, school was difficult. I often got in trouble for being disruptive in class. I failed in all my classes except for human biology. My teacher thought I must have cheated when I passed my exam for human biology. I think I passed because a lot of the exams were pictures and diagrams. I think I am a visual learner. I believe that is why I would like to go into a Bachelor of Science for a nursing exam.

I studied for the Mental Health Certificate as a trainee support worker. I was given a student placement at Te Whanau O Waipareira Trust. I was later employed by them for three years. I worked as a community support worker in West Auckland. I mainly visited people in their own homes. I often supported people in court and with doctors' appointments, with housing, WINZ and Children and Young Persons Services.

I learnt under the Te Whare Tapa Whā model which is the Māori health directive by Mason Durie. Te Whare Tapa Whā is the *whare* with the four walls being *te taha tinana* - the body, *te taha hinengaro* - the mind, also *te taha wairua* which is spiritual and, finally, *te taha whanau* is relationships or family. If one of the walls is not stable under the model of Te Whare Tapa Whā, it creates an imbalance, causing a deficit of the whole wellbeing.



Whare Tapa Whā (Four sided house) health model (Durie 1994)

I was made redundant after three years and was given a payout. I enjoyed working at Waipareira. They had a real Whānau environment. Quite a lot of us were laid off. I really liked working under the umbrella of Te Whare Tapa Whā because it covers all areas of wellbeing which are equally important.

Lisa

The Lemon Tree

Early in the morning in front of my beautiful home, the lemon tree gets bright sunlight from the golden Sun.

The golden Sun rays bring warm, atomic levels of energy pockets (which are called quantum energy pockets), which wake the little lemon tree up. Birds start to sing songs because the golden Sun tells them about the beginning of a bright, beautiful and sunny day.

The frequency of the morning sunlight stimulates the little lemon tree and helps it to produce food, grow more leaves as well as to bloom lots of flowers. Bees fly around the flowers of the little lemon tree and help to pollinate the flowers. This natural phenomenon will lead to golden fruit hanging beautifully all over the tree.

When the Sun sets, the frequency of the sun's rays signals to the tree that it is time to relax, to be ready for a quiet time and a cold night.

The atomic level of the energy pockets changes the lives of the whole animal and plant kingdom. The vibrations coming from these tiny pockets of energy have the ability to change the moods of humans, animals and plants. To change the moods, hormones play a big role. Plants react to these atomic levels of energy pockets enormously. This quantum energy changes the hormones of the animals and plants.

In the early morning, plants make their food by trapping energy from sunlight with its leaves. Plants also need sunlight to grow, bloom and produce fruits and seeds. In the evening they stop doing activities, like most animals. The Sun has the ability to influence the world by emitting active energy.

During the night, just like other plants, the little lemon tree with its yellow juicy fruit in front of my beautiful home is waiting impatiently to start flourishing the next day when it sees the Sun.

*Rathnayaka Mudiyansele
Lakshmi Malika Abeyrathna*



Toxic Filter

When you are anxious, you're learning through a filter. It gets in the way. And you try to learn through that toxic filter. You can't even see it. No one else knows. They think you are ok.

You're at war with yourself, trying to grasp what's being taught but it's turning into a battle. Learning should be free flowing - a gift, like you're saying, "Go away but come here," at the same time.

Leigh Olding



A Mother's Strength

In 2006, my eldest daughter was diagnosed with bone marrow cancer. For me it was something I had never heard of – I was shocked.

Everything was new to me; we went through the process – I asked the doctor if my daughter could be cured after the chemo. The doctor said it would just help her live a bit longer.

Then I thought, "What was the point of all this?"

Cancer was not common where I came from. My mum told me to take her back to my home country, but the doctor didn't agree to it.

I didn't know what to decide. In the end I had no option but to go ahead with the chemo.

In 2013, she passed away.

It was like another shock – from the grieving to the cost of the treatment and the funeral arrangements.

Six months later my husband and I got divorced.

Having to go through the documents of my daughter's passing and the divorce proceedings – I didn't even understand what the papers were saying.

My world fell apart but I had to carry on with life for the sake of my other children.

Subira Majanja



Celine Dion

I chose to write about Celine Dion because I like her. She is my favourite singer. My favourite songs are *My Heart Will Go On*, *It's All Coming Back to Me Now*, and *All By Myself*.



She is a Canadian singer born on 30th March 1968. She sings power songs. She has a strong voice. She sings in English and French.

She has a large family, 6 sisters and 8 brothers.

She became famous as a teenager. She won the 1988 Eurovision Song Contest with a French song. After learning to speak English, she became a pop artist in America and other places. She became a superstar all around the world with her song "The Colour of Love" in 1993.



With the Governor General of Canada.



With her husband, René Angélil, who died in 2016.

Camilla

Acknowledgement: Biographical details from Wikipedia

Adventures With My Children

I like to travel with my children, going driving and having some adventures.

In March we went to Rotorua and Taupō. We did the Zipline and Bungy Jump in Rotorua and parasailing in Taupō. It was so nice. Because it was so nice, I did it twice.

You feel like a bird as you fly, and you see the sea and Mount Ruapehu. There was some snow on top of the mountain.

Heba



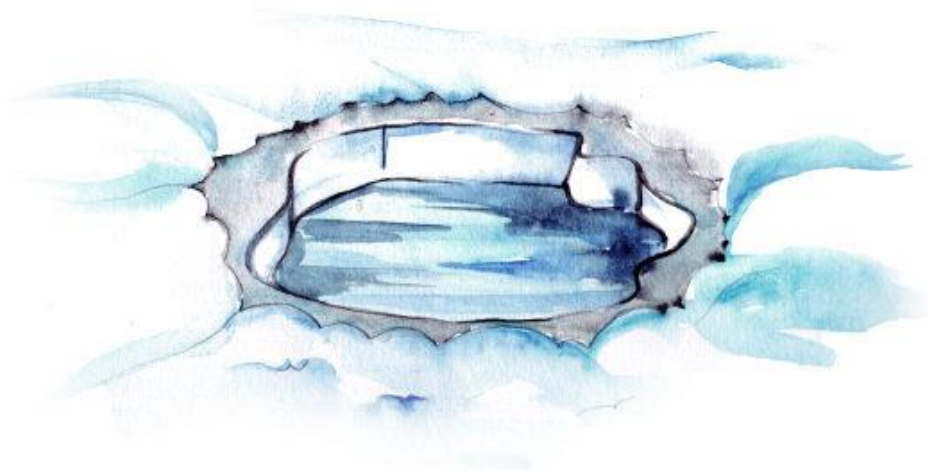
Ali's Childhood in Ghazni

Ali told me some stories about his childhood in his hometown. It was very interesting.

In Ghazni, there are four seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter like New Zealand. Especially in winter, the weather is cold, everything is white. The river is covered by thick ice.

Naughty boys always hit the ice with stones and found a lot of fish in the ice holes. Sometimes it was dangerous when the ice cracked. When they caught the fish, they could enjoy a delicious big meal: the most delicious fish in the world, they thought! Ali often remembers these happy childhood times.

Tina T



Shake, Rattle and Roll

Yesterday I went to Shake, Rattle and Roll at Kumeu Hall. I made friends at Shake, Rattle and Roll. My favourite thing to do is the Hokey Pokey song up on the stage. We do the chicken dance, play the tambourine and drum on ice cream containers with sticks. We put balls on a big parachute and shake the parachute with the balls on it. Most of us go underneath the parachute. Last time I went under the parachute I could feel balls hitting me, but they didn't hurt because they were only plastic balls. We wave big colourful silky scarves around. Each person has a scarf. My favourite-coloured scarf is red.

We use poi and sing. My favourite song to sing is Poi E. We have a water break and then we do 5 more minutes of something else. Then we have coffee or Milo and biscuits. My favourite biscuit is chocolate chippies.

After Shake, Rattle and Roll we go out for lunch at the closest beach. Sometimes we go back to the big house for lunch.

I also go to my drama group at Onehunga Hall. My favourite thing to do is the biddy bop game. My drama group is going to be on TV soon performing a play.



Roka

Double-Whammy

This happened when I was 12 years old, in the summer holidays.

My father was running a restaurant during the morning. The supplier didn't come, and the restaurant couldn't operate normally. My father drove his car to the market to buy stuff. Suddenly, the police came and asked my father some personal questions. After that he was arrested, also he couldn't contact anyone else.

After lunch, I went outdoors to play. I didn't see that the side of the road had a pit. I just fell and there were sharp stones, so I cut my knee. Then I went to hospital with my aunt, after that my aunt called my mum to tell her what had happened to my knee. At the same time, my mum tried to contact my father. Unfortunately, nobody could contact him until night.



When my father got back home, he told us what a really bad day he had had. The police suspected him of stealing a car; even though he tried to explain, it didn't work. Luckily, he saw a friend in the Police Station who testified for him, so finally he could go back home.

Belina

My Weekend at Home

On Friday I went home. We went to West City for lunch, and I had spinach and feta quiche and chocolate lamington. After that we looked around, then went across the road to a café called Esquires, and had afternoon tea there, then we went home.



In the evening we went out for dinner to a Vietnamese restaurant called Hansen's. Then after that, I came home and watched TV, had a cup of tea and a piece of chocolate, then got dressed into my pyjamas, stayed up a bit longer and then went to bed.



On Saturday my mum and I went to the Bunnings Warehouse in New Lynn for afternoon tea and mum bought a plant. After that we went home, and I played on my iPad till dinnertime. On Sunday Mum and I went to the Coffee Club cafe in Mount Roskill for afternoon tea, and then went to the Warehouse to look around. After that we went home and then I came back to Hohepa. I really enjoyed my weekend.

Michelle

My Journey to New Zealand

Last year, when I came to New Zealand, I had two transits: from Afghanistan to Iran and from Iran to Dubai. All my boarding cards and visas were with me in my handbag.

When I sat in the airplane in Iran, I put my bag in the luggage locker of the plane, and all my boarding passes and visas were in it. But I thought that I had left the documents at the airport in Iran. All the way I was so scared because I was thinking I had lost my boarding passes and visas, and I didn't have any pictures of them. For the whole three-hour flight I prayed and was scared. What would happen to me and how could I get my next flight?

But when I arrived in Dubai International Airport, I checked my bags and saw I hadn't forgotten them in Iran; I was very happy.

Marwa

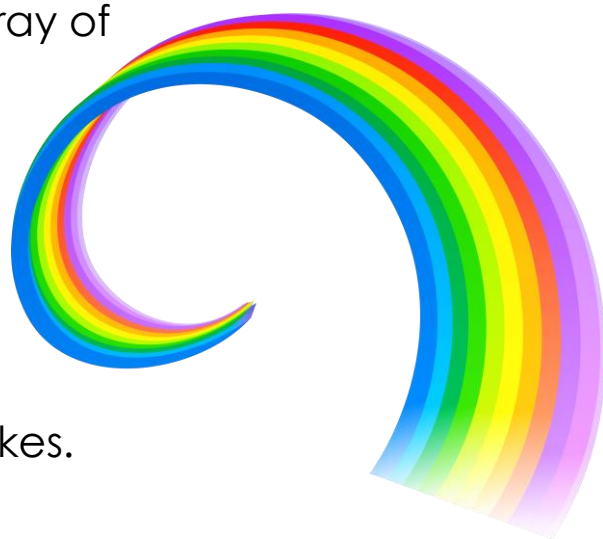


Year 2000

It's an interesting story. In the year 1997-8, I used to stay in the south of Auckland, before I came out West. It was a very hard life for me. So much sorrow and hardship. I managed to get along with the help of some communities. I was on Social Welfare in the year 1997.

I thought I would be doing some good by attending the community hall in Mangere. I was attending the Youth Group of the Samoan Baptist Church, even though things were hard for me inside. I was crushed by things that ordinarily are put upon. When I was 17, 18 or 19, I was doing marijuana, black gold. That's how I ended up in rehab. I thought there was something more for my life to learn about. In my younger teenage days I was confused. I think my neighbour joined the Mongrel Mob.

I was believing in God, standing in the light. Only a little bit streaming down from above. I was believing that I could be saved. I have learned over the days how strong is that virus of sin. What is deep within. I was crushed in the heart; my heart was broken. I'm lucky I survived. The ray of the rainbows came out of me. It came from the light of a little rock that was in my hand. The beam of the rainbow came from the light of this rock, a strong degree of fire, the surface beam of a rainbow. I was awake and having a bowl of cornflakes.



George

My Wedding Day

When I got married, on the same day we travelled to another country because my in-laws were there. We had a long way to go, and I thought that we might have to walk for a few minutes. Because I was a bride, I was wearing a fancy dress with high-heel shoes. We had to walk for about two hours, and I broke my shoe heel. It made me very angry at that time.

When we arrived, there were all my in-laws. They had another party for me and everyone was dancing around me, but I was so tired. Those are such bad memories for me.

Geeta



Beijing Roast Duck (Peking Duck) 北京烤鸭

Beijing Roast Duck has a history of more than 1000 years. It is roasted on a fruitwood open fire and has a special fragrance and taste. Beijing Roast Duck has three special features: its aroma, unusual flavour, and its cultural value. That's why it's very famous.

When cooked, the duck is cut into small pieces with a knife. It's called sliced duck. It is served with chopped green onion, sliced cucumber and a sweet sauce. It is served wrapped in pancakes.



David Da Hua Xiong

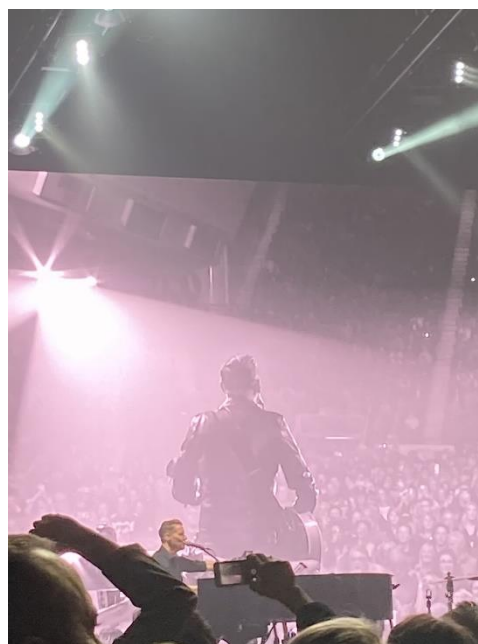


Bryan Adams Concert in Canada

I went to Canada to see my sister. She said to me I was going to see Bryan Adams in concert. I was so happy with my sister. I was excited because I love music.

At the concert, I was having a great time dancing away, but the security stopped me. I was upset with him.

Then a lady grabbed me and took me to see her son. She was a stranger to me. I was worried about what was going to happen to me. She introduced me to her son. My sister was worried about me. I had a good laugh later on. Here are some photos I took at the show.



Bryan Guy Adams, born November 5, 1959, is a Canadian singer, songwriter, record producer and photographer. He has been described as one of the best-selling music artists of all time. He is estimated to have sold over 75 million records and singles worldwide. He was the most played artist on Canadian radio in the 2010s.

He joined his first band at age 15. At age 20 his debut album "Cuts like a Knife" featuring its title track, and the ballad "Straight from the Heart", his first US top ten hit, came out.

My two favourite Bryan Adams songs are "Die for You" and "Have You Ever Really Loved a Woman".

Jackie

Acknowledgement: Biographical details from Wikipedia

Hidden Bodhisattva

“**Bodhisattva** ([Sanskrit](#): meaning “Awakened Truth” or “Enlightenment Being”) refers to saviour-like figures found in Mahāyāna Buddhism that cultivate saviour-like qualities. The Bodhisattva figures are famous for embodying compassion and other noble qualities. *Bodhisattvas do not run away from the suffering of the world, but actively seek to end it for all beings.*”¹

My “story” is a tribute to one of the most kind, generous, noble, humble and patient people that I have ever met: to my beloved grandmother Nina Andreyeva.

Her life was full of challenges of different kinds; she went through tsunami



waves of emotional and physical suffering so many times, but she did not complain and retained the purity and shine of her heart.

My dear grandmother created and spread beauty whenever and wherever she could: her pieces of cross and satin stitch embroidery, her knitted clothes were just amazing. Most of Nina's life was during the Soviet period and it is absolutely astounding that her imagination was full of bright colours, patterns (many of them she created on her own) and plots, while her

environment was, to put it mildly, quite depressing.

Whenever I approached the multistorey building where she lived, I couldn't stop being amazed by how bright and colourful her balcony looked – blooming with flowers – in the middle of a grey and monotonous façade. Nina talked to her flowers, cared for them so gently and attentively that they couldn't help but respond to her with their blossoms.

My dear granny taught me reading and writing; she spent hours and hours with me when I was little. I'm sure that my subconscious faith in the surviving of goodness, inner light, unconditional love – you name it – despite

¹ <https://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Bodhisattva>

tremendous masses of evil and cruelty in the world, this faith is still in my mind stream thanks to my grandmother.

Rolan Bykov² said that a power (essence) of kindness (good) does not lie in the fact that it defeats evil. Kindness (good) does not defeat the dark side. But goodness will remain itself at the end of the day.

How powerful and true this statement is... Indeed, evil destroys and distorts everything around and finally it eliminates itself. Annihilation cannot continue endlessly. But the victory of good is that it remains itself. It remains itself... As my miraculous grandmother Nina did.

In Buddhism's vast culture you can find a phenomenon called a "hidden Bodhisattva". When a Deity manifests as a common person in your life, totally disguised by an ordinary appearance in order to help you in a difficult situation, to guide you, to reveal or develop your virtuous qualities or even save your life.

I suppose the same heroes were depicted in the fairytales and myths of all cultures: an old lady whom characters suddenly meet on their path, a beggar, an enchantress in the woods... She offers a challenge, or she asks for help (to pay back with a magical gift after receiving help) or she can just appear in the characters' life with a solution for their problem. No one can even think that there is an unbelievably powerful eternal Goddess behind the mask of an old human being.

Buddhist texts mention many signs that can help to identify "a hidden Bodhisattva". I tried to describe these qualities above when I was desperately looking for the right words for my beautiful grandmother in a language that is not my native tongue. The meaning of her name Nina is "Queen" - a word that is used so often to name a Bodhisattva.

We were so careless not to have videoed Nina. We perceived her as an integral part of life that will always be with us. Nina died a couple of years after my immigration to New Zealand. Only one very short video record is left where she tells one of her unusual dreams. At least I can show Nina's gentle soft voice to my son who was born years after my granny passed away.

Do not make the same irreparable mistake as me: look around. Find a person who brings light and love to your heart and ask them to have a talk with you while you do the video recording. Ask about their life, what is the

² a famous Soviet and Russian stage and film actor, director, screenwriter and pedagogue

most important thing for them in relationships, in bringing up children, in their profession or what is a passion in their life. Years will pass and you will value this video recording a lot. More than that: your children, nephews, or grandchildren, who probably will not have a chance to meet your dearest one, will see one of the sources of kindness and love that you are passing on to them.

Vasily Zhukovsky, a Russian poet of XIX century composed a poignant poem "Remembrances". I hope it will inspire and support you as much as me in moments of grief:

"How many dear companions who enlivened for us
The world's rough road are gone, each fellow traveller
Much missed; yet **say not sadly: they have left us!**
But rather **say, with gratitude: they were.**³

Pictures of Nina's embroideries:

1. "Flowers" used as pillowcases for decorative cushions, cross stitch



2. "Violets" decorative napkin, satin stitch embroidery

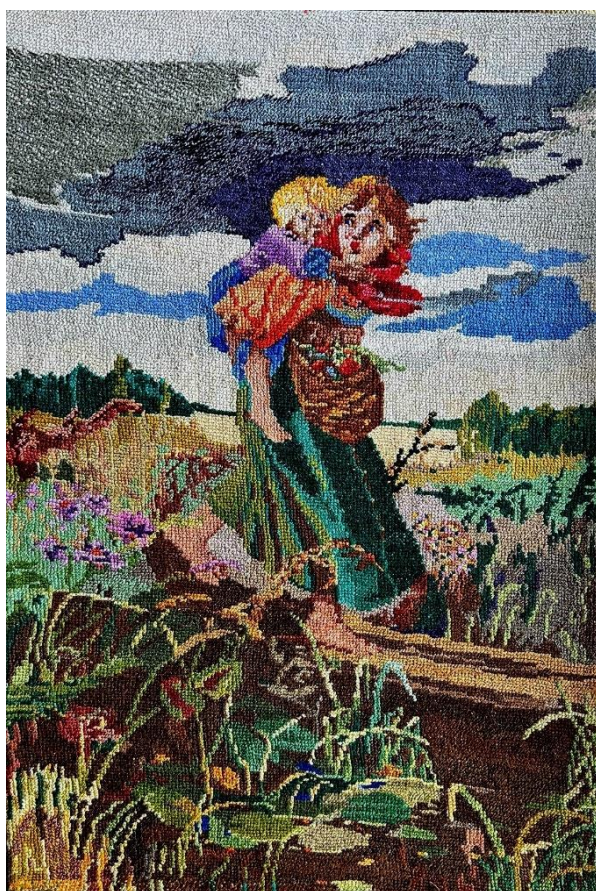


³ *Vasily Zhukovsky "Remembrances". February 16, 1821 Translated by Babette Deutsch*
<https://ruverses.com/vasily-zhukovsky/remembrance/>

3. *“Tsar Guidon and the Swan Princess”* based on the fairy tale by A.S. Pushkin – Russian poet of XIX century,



4. *“Children running from a Thunderstorm”* based on the painting (1872) of the same name by Konstantin Makovsky – Russian artist of XIX century⁴



Kseniya Morein

⁴ <https://www.wikiart.org/en/konstantin-makovsky/children-running-from-the-storm>

No.8 No Pain No Gain

The person I admire is my older brother, who is five years older than me. His name is Vea Taumoefolau. He started playing rugby at the age of seven. He always played smart and hard, till he reached college.

My brother had tough times when he was training but he still managed to get through it. Vea was a person who believed he would be good at rugby because he had confidence in himself and that he would make it to the finals and get selected to be in the Auckland Under 16 team. Vea was a boy who loved rugby ever since he was small but as the years went by, he has become a man worthy of playing rugby at a high level. He plays in position No. 8.

When I was a kid, my older brother would watch rugby on Sky thinking to himself "I would make it up there one day". As the time went by my older brother started to improve in rugby to the point of making it to the Auckland Under 16, they won all their games.

As a young boy Vea didn't like being looked down on so he decided to train himself to get better. One day, Vea came to us and said "I got a scholarship to study in Japan".

In 2016, a Japanese rugby coach saw Vea play for his school and scouted him to play for his school in Yamanote. The coach offered Vea a scholarship to study in Yamanote High School in Sapporo, Japan. Yamanote High School is a famous rugby-playing school in Japan. Michael Leitch also went to Sapporo Yamanote High School. He is the New Zealand rugby player who became the captain of the Japanese national rugby team. Vea looks up to Leitch as a role model.

In 2018, Vea came with his school in Japan to play against MAGS (Mt Albert Grammar School). My family was very proud and came to watch his game. I was still at intermediate school – I was too young and did not pay attention to my brother's game. I was playing with my siblings and cousins.

Vea studied at Yamanote High School for three years. He is in his last year at Kyoto Sangyo University now. Vea has been



A life-size statue of Michael Leitch was donated to Sapporo Yamanote Senior High School.

studying and playing in Japan for seven years and he is fluent in Japanese. When he was at high school, he lived with a Japanese homestay family, so he feels at home in Japan.

My parents have always been proud of Ve'a because of all the tough times he endured when he was young. My siblings and I have looked up to him as a role model. He has leadership qualities from a young age and we have always been proud of him.

My Family

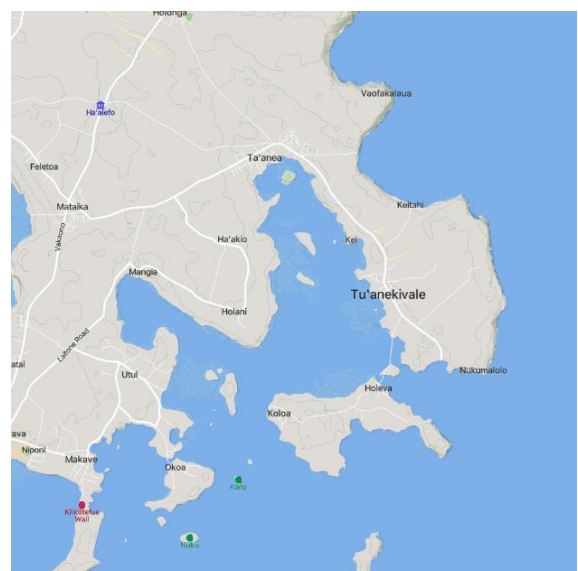
My parents were born in Tonga; my father came from Holeva and Tu'anekivale in Vava'u. My mum is from Nuku'alofa.

My parents came to New Zealand in around 1999 – 2000 to have a better life. My mother gave birth to my older brother in 2002, a few years later my older sister was born, then me.

My whole family visited my dad's home in Vava'u. Although me and my siblings were born in Auckland, we felt at home when we were in Tonga. We speak Tongan fluently and it is good to keep the language and culture alive.

When we visited Tonga as a family, we went to the bridge that connects Holeva and Tu'anekivale. We jumped off the bridge into the water. It felt nice. Tongan parents are strict with their kids and we weren't allowed to speak any language except Tongan at home. I go to the Siasi 'O Tonga Tau'atai church which is part of Tongan culture.

Lauti Taumoefolau



Tina's Bad Experience

Tina talked to me about last Saturday. She had a bad experience. When she was driving home, she saw a bad accident on the North Shore. One of the cars was up the right way, but the other car was across the road. It was on the opposite side of the road and had hit the one there. One man was lying down in the road and a lot of blood was coming out of his body.

After a few minutes, three police cars, two ambulances and three fire engines came. It was a very bad experience for Tina.

Tina was planning to go hiking, but she didn't go. She stayed home because she was scared to drive after seeing the accident happen.

Ali



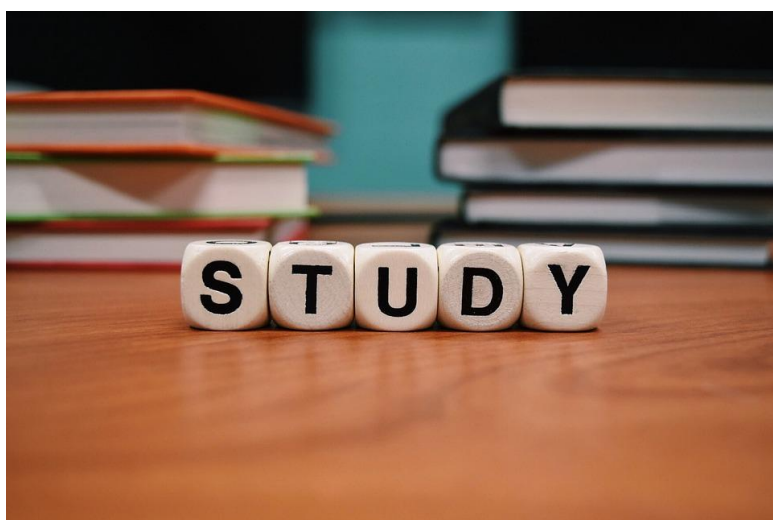
My Life Change

When I was a kid, my family was poor, but my parents did their best, so we managed to survive. They did everything just give us a good life. Every day my parents pushed us to go to school so we could have a better future. I grew up, graduated from primary school and moved to college. It was really the toughest and most difficult journey when I started college life, but I had to fight for my own future.

I graduated from college and was accepted to go to university, but it was too bad that my mom passed away. It was really sad and hard to accept that my mom was no longer here with us anymore, but me and my family tried to accept the fact.

In 2020, I moved to New Zealand because my older sister adopted me and my youngest sister. When I got here, I stopped school, but I went to work straight away to help my dad in Samoa, and I waited for a good time for me to go back to school. Now, it's the right time for me to go back to school, like the phrase says "Seize the moment!" and here I am now.

Tina F



Carved Lizard

At my mother's house in Brisbane, when I went overseas to Australia, she gave me a carved lizard. She told me she worked cleaning houses in Perth, where the miners are. She stayed there for a couple of years before she came back to Brisbane.

She must have worked hard for that carving because I asked her where she got it from. She said it was from some lady whose house she was cleaning. My mum said she would donate it to me. I didn't ask her. As a son, things that you hear from your mother are sacred.



At the back of my brother's house there is a picture that looked like a million-dollar picture. He said he picked it off the side of the road.

George

Mount Qasioun

Damascus is known for its Mount Qasioun. It is in the capital city of Syria. Its height is 1,151 metres. It has a range of restaurants, and you can view the whole city from there. People need to drive to the top to a point, and then they can walk on foot.

The most spectacular view for me is at night, because I can see the lights of the whole city and especially the green lights from the mosques. Also, at night in the summer, the temperature becomes lower, and it is very lovely and cool.



Heba

To the Editor of the NZ Herald

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Across the road from Hillsborough Road by the Z petrol station is a new housing development. The issue is the height of the house, which is three levels and taking our view of the park. Griffin Park has been our view to look out on for more than 40 years. Also, the house is casting a shadow on the surrounding properties and the main road, which has made everything darker.

Growing up in West Auckland where there was ample property and gardens, the noticeable change from infill housing has changed Auckland's landscape forever. We used to be regenerative in growing our own food. Growing veggie gardens and maintaining them gave us great pride in our area. Now there are no gardens to maintain, and the skills are lost to time.

With the advent of infill housing, concrete has replaced ground dirt that naturally absorbed ground water and thus creates more floods.

Also, there is nowhere to ride our bikes. We used to have property to ride around on. Now the parents of children have to take bikes to dedicated areas, sometimes hours away.

We are a third-generation family living in the area. We pay tax, land rates, and have to pay more for even smaller land and views disappearing. This impacts on our wellbeing. We would like to see a renegotiation over the height of three level housing, as well as a recreational space for bike riding established.

Kind regards,
Mr Leigh David Olding

 **The New Zealand Herald**

Frank Sinatra

Francis Albert Sinatra was born on December 12th, 1915, in Hoboken, New Jersey, USA. He died on 14th May 1998 in Los Angeles, California, USA. He was married three times.

Some of the songs Frank Sinatra sang are “My Way”, “New York New York”, “Fly me to the Moon”, “Let It Snow”, “Strangers in the Night”, “The Way you look Tonight”, “Something Stupid” and “I Love You Baby”.

“I’m not one of those complicated mixed-up cats” Frank Sinatra told his fellow musicians in New Jersey. “I’m not lookin’ for the secret of life. I just go on from day to day taking what comes”.

For a while Frank billed himself as Frankie Trent. “Everyone says Sinatra is too Italian, but when Dolly Parton learned what I was doing she kicked my ass. The next day I was Frank Sinatra”.

I chose to write about Frank Sinatra because he sang good songs that I enjoy. My favourites are “My Way”, “Fly Me to the Moon” and “Something Stupid”. I enjoyed his movies, like “High Society”, “On the Town” and “Anchors Aweigh”.

Catriona



Acknowledgement: Biographical details from Wikipedia

My Fishing Trip to the Poor Knights Islands

My workmates and I drove up to Tutukaka Marina, which is to the north of Auckland, on the east coast of Northland. We boarded the boat on the Saturday morning and headed for the Poor Knights to do some fishing.

We caught some fish near the islands, then we went further out to sea to try game fishing. Game fishing is when you go offshore and catch big-game fish like marlin or swordfish. These big fish put up a strong fight when you try to catch them.

We tried for a number of hours; in the meantime, I got seasick.

We did not have any luck catching a marlin, so we headed back to the islands to stay the night in a cave full of water. The boat drove into the cave.

The next morning, we came out of the shelter of the cave and the wind was blowing at 35 knots. It was a rough trip back to Tutukaka Marina.

Peter



Stand Up to the Bullies

My story is about my school. When I was young, I hated my classmates because they bullied me, and I felt stressed when they got into a group.

They wanted to fight me, but I wasn't scared of them. I stood up for myself against that bullying.

I said, "Don't fight me, because I don't want to fight you." I wanted to be respectful of other people, that was why I wouldn't fight them; I wanted to say that to them, but saying that was hard, so I didn't like to say it. Then they went back to sit in their places.

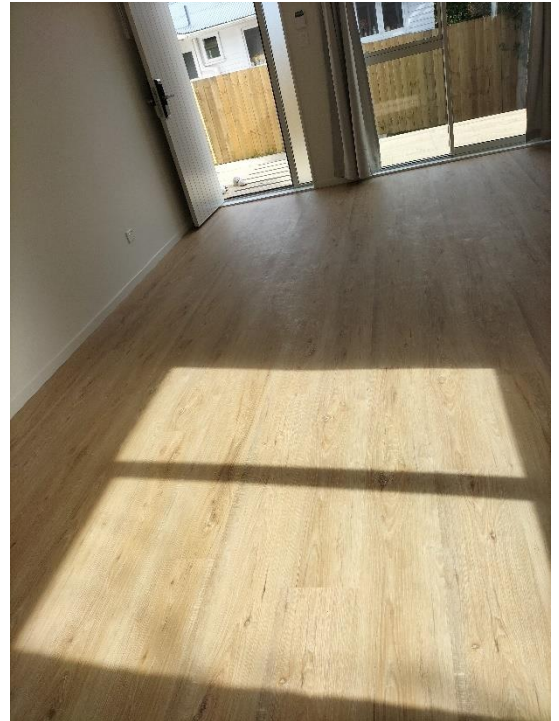


Bassam

Lily's New House

I looked at the new house on Friday. My new house is in Kelston. It's got two bedrooms. It's a quiet neighbourhood with good neighbours.

I got a call on Tuesday saying I got the house. I got the key the next day. I moved in on the weekend. I'm happy. I got the photo of my new house. I'm so happy to be in my new house.



Lily

The Best Moment

In 2003, I graduated from school and sat the exam to go to university. On the day of the exam, I had three choices, and I chose Law, Economics and Journalism. After three months the results came; I was very scared. When I saw my classmates and they had failed, I was really scared about my results. I came 3rd in the school.

One day, I went to university with my father, and he found my name on the Economics board and called me. I was very happy and started crying. My father was proud of me, and it was the best moment of my life.

I miss you, Dad.

Sophia



My Birthday 2023

My birthday was Thursday 30th March. In the afternoon I went to the movie Red, White and Brass.

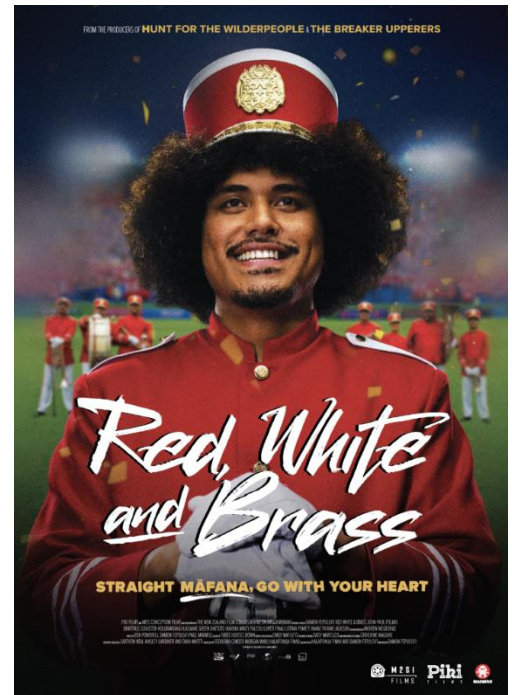
It was a story about a Tongan family. Maka and Veni missed out on the tickets for the rugby game that the Tongan team was playing in. They decided to make their own marching band.

In the beginning it was a bit silly because they didn't have any instruments. They used mops and plastic bottles as pretend instruments. Eventually they went to a school band to learn to play more of the proper instruments.

At first it was a disaster, but eventually they practiced and got better. They learnt to march to the music, but they were afraid to perform at the rugby game in front of the Tongan supporters. They did. They made the Tongan supporters proud.

It was a good movie, but it was a bit slow in the beginning. I enjoyed it. It was beautiful, and it was so funny. We had popcorn at the movie then. After the movie we went home. I had a chocolate birthday cake. My cousin gave me the cake. I had a great time.

Melissa



Welcome to New Zealand

When I was living in Indonesia, our lives were very stressful because we didn't know about the future or how long we were staying there. I was especially worried about my child's future. But one day we got an acceptance letter from Immigration New Zealand. That was the best day for us. After a few weeks we got tickets to fly to New Zealand.

When we arrived at Auckland Airport, we were surprised because Immigration came with more than ten people to say welcome. They also brought an interpreter.

We will never forget that day.

Akhtar



Gratitude

When I turned thirteen, my uncle took me to his workplace. He told me that from now on this is what I'd be doing every day after school. My job was painting the outside of houses we worked on. And since then, I've been working with him.

Ever since I've been working with my uncle, it's had a big impact on my life because it humbled me and made me look at the world differently. Working with him has taught me a lot of stuff, like learning to be grateful for what I have and never to take anything for granted.

My advice to people who want to work young is to go for it because you will learn a lot of things about yourself. Working at a young age is a good thing because you get some work experience.

TE

The Soldier

This is a soldier that went to war. I drew this picture because I like soldiers from New Zealand. I think they are cool, and they protect our country. They also help people during a disaster.

Nela



New Stuff in Magnolia House

I live in Magnolia House.

My story is about a new TV, a new carpet, new toaster, a new sandwich maker, a new rice cooker, a new fridge, a new bread bin and a new bread stand. In the kitchen we've got four new colour-coded chopping boards. The red one is for meat, the blue one is for fish, the green one for vegetables, and the brown one for baking and cooking.

In the TV and living room we've got 2 new couches and 8 new cushions.

I feel happy. I'm glad we got new things in Magnolia House.

Roka



My Visit

I went down for a ride on the train to Te Kuiti, to see my aunty and cousin for a night. I was going to my cousin's house for a night. I was back down to my hometown for a holiday. I came back on Friday 27 April.

I got a new laptop and a new mobile. I cooked a steam hangi in the big pot for my dinner. I got picked up by my family to go for dinner over to my brother and sister in law's house in Ranui.

Lily



My Classmates

From the beginning of 2019 'til now I have had amazing classmates, because they light up the room and we get along together. We always laugh at silly stuff and each other's jokes. I've lots of memories of them although they are not here at Literacy Waitākere throughout the whole year. I have had enormous pleasure spending time with them.

I have met generous and energetic classmates who have had different life circumstances. I have bonded with my brothers and sisters in the class. This has helped me to be more involved in my learning and more outgoing. My classmates became my family because I'm genuinely amazed by their sense of humour. I'm glad to be in my class.

Vee



Letter To the Warriors

I am a huge fan of yours. I have come to some games of yours. You won every single one of the games. I have a couple of fav players. They are Tohu Harris, Dallin Watene-Zelezni, Shaun Johnson, and Bunty Afoa, but you are all great players. When I was at the game, the one the Warriors vs St George Dragons, I was yelling at the top of my lungs "Up the Wahs!". I also made friends at the match. I was yelling at the top of my lungs "Up the Wahs!"

The one thing I love about you guys is when you have a home game, you have a pukana cam not a kiss cam. Wow. Shaun Johnson - he is a great kicker and Dallin - he has a mean curly mullet and Tohu Harris - he is a good tackler, and Bunty Afoa - wow, I love his hair! I love how everyone who watches the Warriors game yells when we get a try. I lost my voice at the game.

There are these people called the SPI-Wah-men. They dress like Spiderman. It is so funny because they are becoming famous. I want to dress like the SPI-Wah-men because they make people happy.

Helen Rose



Why did both Literacy Waitākere and Unitec work for me?

Unitec and Literacy Waitākere are both places where I felt I belonged, full of nice people with different abilities of all sorts. I honestly didn't know how I was going to fit in at first, but everyone was so welcoming, and I knew that I was in the right place. I made a lot of friends but some didn't stay with me for that long.

What did Unitec do for me?

Unitec helped me to be more independent and they helped me find out ways for money management. At Unitec I studied The New Zealand Certificate in Skills for Living and Working.

Unitec helped me find my people. By that I mean that they helped me to realize everyone has their different abilities. Some people were a lot higher than most and I do admit the drama that went on sounded a lot like high school drama, but that is what came with people with different levels of understanding.

Honestly, though, I don't live or thrive on the drama. I did mostly enjoy finding people who understood me and mostly finding people to love me as I am. The teachers did so much for me. Some teachers were okay but all were supportive. They would get me to where I wanted to go. I honestly don't know where I would be if it wasn't for them. They pushed me to be the best me I can be and I'm glad they did because they are a part of the reason I'm here right now and have come so far.



What made Literacy Waitākere work for me

When I found out about Literacy Waitākere it was actually because of the Unitec people. When I first joined the following year, I was nervous, and was the only one my age when I joined. I didn't mind. It was a nice group and they made me feel more than welcome. I may have been here for 5-7 months but it's still pretty good. I've got to say, they make it a whole lot easier here than in high school.



Why was high school difficult for me?

High school was difficult for me when I was 15 years old because I had a kidney infection. Having all that made me stronger. Yeah, I got it all, but honestly, I'm one big mix of imperfections but I see them as my own perfections.

By easier than high school, I mean that growing up wasn't easy. I have a loving family and friends but people can be so mean. I was bullied through primary and

high school. I don't mind talking about it as much as I used to. When I was younger, like 5+ years old, the teachers back then didn't believe in kids with a disability. The teachers thought we were stupid, or in my case, a typical dumb blonde! When I was in primary school, the bullying made it worse for me.

I started high school when I was 13 years old. The following year I was 14 years old when I found out that I had a disability. I was in my 2nd year in high school. We all knew something was wrong. Well, not wrong, just something was up with me. I had been diagnosed with Aspergers, Dyspraxia, and Neuropathy, and I was born with one malfunctioning kidney. I had to go to the hospital.

I fell into a deep depression for 4 years and I'm not proud of it. I used to cut. Not to a point where I would bleed but to a point where I knew there was a mark. Because of how badly I was bullied, I was constantly picked on for my weight, no matter my size. I was called a whale when I was skinny and when I got fat, I got called pig or lazy. I mostly got called a whale. It hurt like hell!

I had a really shitty job, too. I loved the people, just hated the job. Let's just rewind. I worked at New World Warkworth. I started there when I was 17 years old. It was good money but it got tiring after a while. I worked as a supermarket assistant for about four years and six months. I was so stressed at that job; I barely got any sleep. Studying and working at the same time did my head in as I only got one day of proper sleep.

What it was like for me during work and study?

On the days I was free I was hardly home because I was out with my friends or my partner or my family. I was barely home on most weekends. The days I had work were the Fridays and Saturdays but I woke up "dead as" in the morning if I wanted to finish early. After a while that got to my head. I didn't want to go to work but I had to. At the age of 21 years old I finally left. Now I work for my parents doing cleaning at their funeral home. And yes, I do see dead bodies.

I have a much better environment that I work in, for that I am grateful - fun people, and better and safe hours. My old work was stressful the last two years of my life there. I enjoyed working with the team and just didn't like the work. My health, my stress levels and my sleep have gotten so much better since I left my old job and started my new one.

What do I hope to achieve with all this study?

What I hope is that once I get my studies in order, get my money in order, I hope to get into my dream study for early childhood education. Getting into this study, getting my money in order and finding another flat to move into, from there things will fall into the right place.

Okay, but I need to get into the course. I first need to pass this test I'm taking and as many trials and errors as I have, I will always pick myself up again. I will not give up till I get into this study, one way or another.

My motto is: *"Never give up on the things you want to do in life; things may be hard, but it's harder not to try. Just do."*

Another one I say, and that I once told one person I love when they were stressed and upset, is this quote I said was my own, but it has a deeper meaning to it;

"You can never stop the river from flowing, until you stop trying to stop the river from flowing."

My quotes mean: that no matter what life hits you with, it's okay to cry. The more you let out, the better you feel when your emotions are out, than keep it all in. No matter what happens I'm going to keep moving forward.

Ella

Note: Ella passed her test and has been accepted for the Early Childhood Education course next year.





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