

Māori Wardens

Katikati kids teaming up with Māori Wardens for a brighter future

Te Puni Kōkiri in partnership with the New Zealand Police supports more than 600 voluntary Māori Wardens in Aotearoa so that they can serve their communities they live in.

Māori Wardens were created by statute in 1945, though their origins date back as far as the mid-nineteenth century.

Over the course of their existence, Māori Wardens have become an icon in Māori communities, both rural and urban.

They play an important role in providing community reassurance and safety at community events.

Katikati youth open up to Māori Wardens

Travelling from Katikati down to Taumarunui, a group of rangatahi find themselves deep in the cold, wet limestone caves at the Blue Mountain Adventure camp.

Some of the kids are eagerly investigating the cave's nooks and crannies, while others hang-back, intimidated by the unfamiliar environment.

Māori Warden Shaan Kingi says the rangatahi are on a mission - they have to work together to get a human dummy through the caves.

"The ones that are confident are calling out and encouraging their claustrophobic mates to climb through the caves," he says.

The challenge is part of a series of camps run by the Katikati Māori Wardens Youth Project, for at-risk young people in the north. Shaan is the project manager.

"The camps teach them how to get through difficult times. They learn that they can work with other people and they can overcome challenges."

About 80 young people attend the camps. They come at no cost to the students and their families; some whānau contribute a koha or a loaf of bread to the camp.

That is because Katikati Māori Wardens are collaborating with

Project Name:

Katikati Māori Wardens Youth Project

Year:

2017/2018

Rohe:

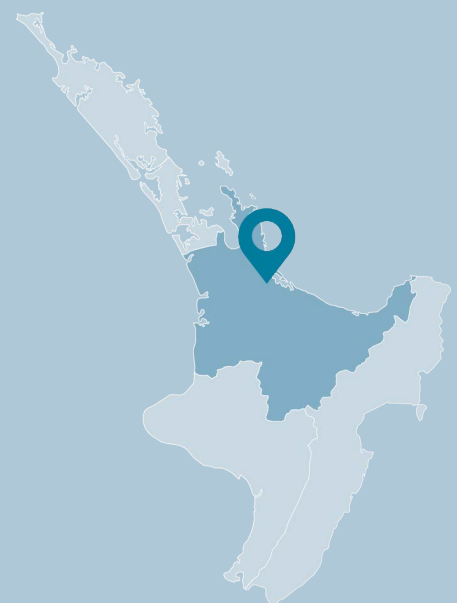
Katikati, Bay of Plenty

Project Owner:

Katikati Māori Warden Group

Scope:

\$30,000 was committed from Te Puni Kōkiri and an additional \$45,000 from other local organisations to run rangatahi programmes focused on preparing rangatahi for employment and further education



Māori Wardens have been operating at a grass roots level for over 150 years and their networks through New Zealand are deeply rooted within our communities.

Their relationship with Māori and ethnic communities enables them to closely support rangatahi and their whānau.

For more information about Māori Wardens go to www.tpk.govt.nz.

agencies such as Te Puni Kōkiri, the local council and the NZ Community Trust to run their programmes.

They also offer services to help students gain credits in NCEA over the school holidays, and they pair teen mothers up with kuia who teach them life skills.

Te Puni Kōkiri has announced an extra \$1m in Budget 2018 to invest in the positive work Māori Wardens do with rangatahi.

A change in behaviour

Shaan got involved with the Māori Wardens when he was 15 years old. His aunties have been wardens for almost 40 years, and supported him to join too. Now, he is 23 – an executive member of the Katikati Māori Wardens, and not much older than the young people he mentors.

“A lot of these kids come to us quite angry and aggressive... we get them referred to us by the police and their school teachers,” he says.

“You have got to understand that these families we work with really

have nothing to offer their kids in terms of pūtea (money). Some of the kids have 17 siblings.”

The Katikati Māori Wardens Youth Project Facebook page is filled with posts asking young people if they are at home bored, and inviting them to a range of activities.

Unlike other authorities, Shaan says Māori Wardens are able to connect and engage with at-risk rangatahi.

“Just being Māori helps us because we can relate to them,” he says. “Our kuia awahi them because they might not get that at home.”

The change in their behaviour is evident at home and at school. “These kids are going from angry and swearing at home, to watching what they say, and clearing tables after kai when they never would have done that,” Shaan says.

He says teachers are noticing that the kids are thriving to learn and engage with the class. “A lot of the change is in their behaviour. It can make all the difference.”



Katikati Māori Wardens Shaan Kingi and Huhana Tukaki.

