

Transcript - Kotahitanga – Working as one at Tuahiwi School

Melanie Taite-Pitama: This is a relationship between ākongā, kura and home. There is a triangulation of that relationship.

Dr. Sonja Macfarlane: The doors are open. We are one community.

Melanie: All of the people that work within kaiāwhina or kaiārahi te reo position in our kura are whānau. They all either have tamariki currently at the school, live in the village, or are related to somebody that is a part of our kura at the moment.

'Auntie Liz' Tira: Mel asked if I could come and support in any way I could. I do many things. I work with a number of children just to enhance te reo Māori, to piki tō rātou reo to help with their reading, lots of things. But the main thing is really to enhance their mana by helping them to become confident, building up their self-esteem. It's about the connection, having the relationships, the open door policy, and trying to encourage families to come in and be involved with what their children do.

Melanie: Why shouldn't our kids get opportunities that are going to value their identity, language, and culture as Māori children? To learn about the whakapapa of harakeke, right through to making a beautiful piece of art for our kura that's based on our values. So for a whole day a week, for three terms, twenty of our tamariki who had to apply for a position in that group, were able to learn about their own cultural identity and language. I've got to celebrate what that does for self-esteem and the confidence of an ākongā, but also what it does for a whānau. So when we had that creatives night, and one hundred percent participation from whānau, with extended whānau, the whare was full. The kids were so proud of what they had achieved.

Liz: All the kids have a place here. Everybody who comes, whānau, no matter what, you have a place, you belong here.