

# McKenziePlus

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**McKenzie Centre**  
Realising a child's potential

## 40TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

McKenzie Centre turned 40 and we celebrated at Hamilton West School in Hamilton in early November.



*Cutting the McKenzie Centre 40th anniversary cake is Tuscany Davis Havill watched by from left: Archer MacDonald, Holly Jones, Ismail Mohamud and his mother Felicia Wood, Sam Morrison and Aaron Douglas.*

About 240 people attended the celebrations with families from today mingling with those from the past including Ewen Lee from Cambridge who first attended the centre in 1985 and is now 40 himself. Long-serving McKenzie Centre director Trisha Bengé teared up as she reflected on the 27 years, she had worked at the Waikato early intervention facility.

Speaking at the centre's 40th anniversary celebrations at Hamilton West School in Hamilton, Trisha said it had always been a place for family. "We have always involved families and parents and thought of the whānau as experts on their children. Our jobs have been to add what we know to the family, so they have the skills and the support necessary to realise their child's potential."

Trisha, who recently left McKenzie Centre, was one of four speakers who talked of the positive impact McKenzie Centre had made on families since it opened in 1984 for children with developmental delays and disabilities, within a 50km radius of Hamilton.

Ken Williamson, a trustee for 30 years, said of all the organisations he had been involved with, McKenzie Centre was the closest to his heart. "I've witnessed the profound impact we've had on countless children and their families and together we've built this very special place where lives are transformed and futures reimaged."

Rae Hooper, who was the Ministry of Education official who issued the centre's first licence, said Waikato was fortunate to have such a wonderful service.

"None of this would happen without good governance and management."



Claire van der Most, the newest trustee, talked about why McKenzie Centre merged in 2018 with Te Awamutu-based Enrich Group, a family of organisations that supports people with disabilities and those living with autism and neurodiversities.

“(It was) in line with the person-centred approach and they complemented each other.”

McKenzie Centre supports children in the early years and Enrich Group supports people from their late teens until old age.

“We recognise that there is a gap supporting children and their teenage years and we are currently exploring that,” she said.

“The aspiration is to grow the organisation to meet the demand for (wrap around) services,” she said to support all children with disabilities.

McKenzie Centre Trust was established in 1982 with donations from the McKenzie Education Foundation and the Telethon Trust. Philanthropist Sir Roy McKenzie was patron for many years until his death in 2007.

## WATCH OUT FOR OUR UPDATED SHORT VIDEO OF MCKENZIE CENTRE

This will be out in the new year and include some current whānau, some of our history and 40th celebrations.

## STAFF AT MCKENZIE CENTRE

We say farewell to Trisha Bengé, who finished up at McKenzie Centre on October 31.

Trisha started as an Occupational Therapist in 1997 and was appointed to Centre Director in 2006.

In the 27 years that Trisha was with McKenzie Centre she was able to follow her passion: creating a better life for families and whānau who have children with disabilities.



*Lady Shirley and Sir Roy McKenzie*



Under Trisha's leadership the service that McKenzie Centre provided was always innovative and responsive to the ever-changing needs from children, whānau and the community.

Trisha is a one-of-a-kind leader who looked after all the people that she was involved with - staff, whānau, tamariki and the community, with one thing in mind - 'to realise a child's potential.'

Trisha's knowledge of and passion for supporting children with disabilities and their families is second to none. Thank you, Trisha, for all your mahi that you have done for all of us, no words can describe how lucky we are!

We all thank her for her many years of service to both McKenzie Centre and the Enrich Group.

## A VISION FOR TUAKANA

Linda Depledge-Brooker started at McKenzie Centre as a parent, coming along with her son Stan. She began helping during music time as she is very talented, and music was the highlight of the session for Stan!

When the Ministry of Health invited suggestions for Innovation Fund Projects, we proposed the Tuakana - whānau to whānau model of support and thought of Linda as the lead.

The vision for tuakana was to support whānau to intentionally build parent capacity and better futures by using a peer workforce, Tuakana - parents/caregivers with lived experience, to enhance family experiences and improve partnerships between whānau and providers. McKenzie Centre wanted to ensure the focus is on what is important to whānau.



When peer work is done well, it has the potential to create a mind-set shift through the sharing of personal experience and perspectives and is complementary to our existing family centred services.



Tuakana who share a lived experience of disability can offer insight, support and leadership to build whānau capacity. This is now embedded in our early intervention sessions. All whānau have regular access to Tuakana. They meet and engage with families, to establish rapport and connection, and taking on the responsibility of the first vision and goal-setting assessments with whānau. Tuakana also organise group social events for whānau, including those on the waitlist, outside of the Centre setting, so that whānau families can connect with one another for support in a range of forums.

Tuakana are included in the wider McKenzie Centre team planning sessions, to ensure we are fully

utilising the voices of parents in our service development, design, practices and resourcing.

Having Tuakana gives a new dimension to the meaning of working in a transdisciplinary model.

The support network around whānau, stronger social cohesion with one another and as members of our online community is key. This grows capacity of whānau resulting in stronger, more connected whānau.

Feedback from parents includes: "You have been an anchor and encourager from the very first session... You will never know how much you have impacted our family (and I'm sure many others) in a wonderful way. I know your burdens are not light, yet you serve this community in such a wonderful way. I have loved our conversations each week."

In our recent Parent survey 88.1% report that Tuakana/Peer Support has helped them feel less isolated, 81% of the parents report that Tuakana/Peer Support has helped their ability to advocate for their child and 83.3% find it helpful to learn about the Tuakana/Peer Support's lived experience. Nearly 80% percent report that Tuakana/Peer Support has helped them feel emotionally supported and 85.7% report that Tuakana/Peer Support helped them feel empowered and optimistic.

This feedback encourages us and signals that having Tuakana as part of McKenzie Centre has a positive impact on whānau lives.

Poipoia te kakano kia puawai - Nurture the seeds and they will blossom

## Thanks So Much To All Our Volunteers & Sponsors.

We are very grateful to the many people and organisations that support McKenzie Centre and the work we do. We could not do it without you!



### Best wishes from:

Suzanne, Rachael S, Henny, Lillian, Steph, Emma, Rachael F, Richard, Susie, Linda, Eram, Victoria, Siobhan, Diana, Larissa, Keren, Shanayd, Liesl, Chrissy, Joanna, Michael and Trisha.