

# Youth workers in Rawhiti Primary School Report 2024



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*Emma covered Melissa's Maternity Leave from Term 3 2023 to Term 2 2024, when Melissa returned on decreased hours. This report covers support work by both youth workers over 2024. Melissa is now the only youth worker at Rawhiti School in 2025, and is in school primarily on Wednesday & Thursdays from lunchtime onwards. At present we do not have the resources to put a male youth worker alongside Melissa in school, but if resource was available we could recruit someone suitable.*

## THE ROLE OF A YOUTH WORKER

Youth work is the process of creating an environment where young people can engage in informal educational activities, support a young person's development and help them build healthy connections with family, peers, and their community. It encompasses role modelling, being accessible to young people and being around to help young people make good choices.



## Programmes and Support

- Girls Groups
- Mentoring
- Friday Winter Sports
- School Camp
- Surfing
- Lunchtime Support
- Community Programmes
- Community Activities



*"Children and adolescents who have a formal or informal "mentor-like" relationship with someone outside their home are less likely to have externalizing behaviour problems (bullying) and internalizing problems (depression). This group is also more likely to complete tasks they start, remain calm in the face of challenges, show interest in learning new things, volunteer in the community, engage in physical activities, participate in out-of-school time activities, and be engaged in school. Additionally, those who have a caring adult outside the home are more likely to talk with their parents about "things that really matter."*

[Caring Adults: Important for Positive Child Well-Being Research 2013](#)

## GIRLS GROUPS

Emma and Melissa have been facilitating Girls Groups with students in Years 7-8 and Years 4-6. The programme focuses on developing friendships, emotional awareness, positive affirmations, and fostering self-assurance. It has been inspiring to observe the girls' excitement throughout the year and seeing the positive changes in their confidence week to week.

Teachers have told us they have seen changes in the attitudes of some of the girls we have been working with and are keen to see us run more groups in 2025.

## LUNCH TIME

Emma and Melissa are at school during various lunchtimes throughout the week. Connecting with a wide variety of ages, our youth workers are able to build relationships in a relaxed, informal way, which often leads to problem solving, emotional support and encouragement. This could be through 1-on-1's, group chats or joining in a game or sport. It's not just about offering support, but also having fun and engaging with the students in ways that feel natural, helping to create a positive and welcoming environment where they feel comfortable and valued.

## SURFING

On Wednesday and Friday mornings in Term 1, Melissa was at North Brighton Beach with some of the intermediate students. Surfing has been a fantastic way to connect with the young people as we are able to learn, laugh and have fun together. It is great seeing the intermediates learning a new skill, cheering them on and celebrating when they first stand up on a wave.

"The seniors have also loved surfing and I have noticed boosts in their confidence since the start of the year, so thank you for being a part of that too!" -Teacher



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## FRIDAY SPORT

Emma helped the Capture The Flag team on Friday on afternoons during winter as they played against other schools in our area. These sessions not only help the students develop their sporting abilities, but also teach valuable life skills such as leadership, the art of winning and losing gracefully, and the importance of teamwork.

YAT also hosted the inter school Table Tennis competition, with Henry hosting up to 100 students each week playing doubles.



## EXTRAS

Koru Games is a South Island sport tournament that both Emma and Melissa attended with Rāwhiti students. YAT were also able to lend a couple of our vans to help with transport. Tournaments are a powerful way to build positive relationships and support their personal growth. This kind of positive reinforcement helps boost their confidence and encourages them to believe in themselves. We're always keen to support and be involved in the extras of school life like camps, trips and events!



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## MENTORING

Emma and Melissa met individually with students throughout the week who are referred by teachers. These sessions can either be informal, one-time chats or more structured one-on-one weekly meetings. If you have a student who may not require support from Sandy or Mana Ake but would benefit from a one-on-one conversation, please feel free to reach out to us or to Paul, who manages our schedule.

*Teacher's feedback: This young person is now coming to school smiling and has developed an understanding of how to manage her lows when at school and home. She has been engaging more with her schoolwork and almost seems like a totally different student.*

*Mentee feedback: Emma has helped me with my schoolwork, learning and mental health. She is the best mentor I have had. When I've had ups and downs Emma has always been there to help me. I want Emma to be there for others when they are in need because she has an amazing personality and is really helpful, kind and loving. She always makes my day when she comes into school.*

## CAMP AND FUN DAYS OUT

Emma joined some of the camps and fun days. She attended the Year 7 Camp end of 2023, and the Year 7-8 overnight camp at Spencer Park early 2024. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with the young people outside of the classroom in a different environment. It was awesome spending the day with the students and teachers getting to know them more as well as getting to connect with some of the whānau who were parent help.

## COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES

We have the pleasure of seeing many Rāwhiti students and their whānau at our various community activities such as Family Fun Night and I Love Brighton as well as our weekly clubs like Rock Solid, Tamatāne Boys Club & Kōtiroiro Girls Club, holiday programmes, and through the students learning instruments and performing with our Amplify School of Music. It's been fantastic to watch several of them step into volunteer roles.

