

link up

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Issue 03

Connecting Correspondence School students, whānau and their community

Te Kura ā-Tuhi
The Correspondence School



2009 student successes
Celebrating the achievements of our students in 2009.

Online te reo Māori course a first
TCS is developing New Zealand's first integrated online te reo Māori programme for NCEA.

What a life!
Television debut for a TCS student.



Message from Mike



To reflect the changes at The Correspondence School over the past 18 months, we are changing the way we refer to ourselves from The Correspondence School to Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu, and have updated our logo to incorporate this new name.

We chose Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu (Te Kura for short) because the meaning of the three components – te aho, te kura, and pounamu – is very relevant to our school, the role we play within the education sector and the vision for all our students to achieve their potential.

Put very simply, Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu is about connecting students with learning.

The common meaning of aho is rope or line, but the more traditional meaning is about genealogy and connections back to history and our ancestors.

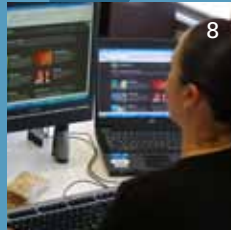
The modern meaning of kura that most people will be familiar with is school. But it also means knowledge, the concept of knowledge, and treasure.

Pounamu (greenstone) is the end result of the geological transformative process. It refers to transformation, such as the transformation that occurs when students are connected with learning.

You will see Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu appear on our website and some of our printed material in the coming months. This will be a gradual process to keep costs down, so other items will be updated as they come up for review or reprinting.

In the meantime, you can read more about Te Aho o Te Kura Pounamu on our website at www.correspondence.school.nz/about-us.





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Student Success

Congratulations to all our 2009 prize winners! Eighty two students were awarded prizes last year with 15 gathering in Wellington at the end of last term to receive their awards at our annual prize giving ceremony held at Pipitea Marae.

Chief Executive Mike Hollings congratulated all prize winners throughout the country for their hard work during the year.

‘A prize giving is a time to reward and give recognition to those who have worked hard and excelled. One of the most exciting aspects about today is that you have shown us what is possible,’ he said.

‘Distance learning does have its own challenges, and we do have an incredibly diverse student body, but your presence here today illustrates what can be achieved when students, teachers and families work together.’

Cross-school prizes

1. The Correspondence School Parents’ and Supervisors’ Association Dux Award for overall excellence in year 13
Beth Williams
2. The Willsher/Wood Prize for outstanding effort in Text and Information Management
Finn Stallmann
3. Award for excellence in Mathematics and Statistics in years 7 to 10
Alexander Smith
4. Māori Lifelong Learners Scholarship for a Māori student, enrolled for tertiary study in the following year, who has shown an excellent attitude and achieved at a high level.
Barrett Franks (prize accepted by his mother)
5. Rural Women New Zealand Golden Jubilee Prize for general excellence and attitude to schoolwork for any students living in a remote area
Maria Henderson

6. Mansfield (Fuchsia Trust) Prize awarded to a teen parent who has made the most of the opportunity to continue their education
Courtney Bennik
7. Māori Achievement Award for a Māori student who has made the most improvement in their studies
Monty Nahi
8. Elizabeth Boraman Memorial Prize for students who have responded to challenges and made good progress in their studies
Freda Osborne, Teoti Taylor, Michael Gardiner
9. Ruby Harris Prize for the student who has raised the standard of his or her education by courage and perseverance
Michael Casey
10. Parents' Association 75th Jubilee Prize for dedication and commitment to schoolwork
Woody Boakes, William Fitzgerald, Helen Jackson, Nicole Jordan
11. Ex-pupils Association Prize for outstanding determination in overcoming difficulties
Cassia Cheeseman

Full-time student subject prizes

12. The Janet McKenzie Memorial Prize for excellence in English in year 6
Praynar Kirbey
13. Award for outstanding effort in e-Learning or Inquiry Learning in years 1 to 6
Arved Hertwich
14. Janis Marsh Memorial Prize for outstanding effort in Technology in years 1 to 6
Matthew Beardsworth
15. Kathleen Evans Memorial Prize for outstanding effort in English in year 6
Anna Park
16. Prize for outstanding effort in Mathematics and Statistics in years 1 to 6
Abel Van Booma
17. Prize for outstanding effort in Health and Physical Education in years 1 to 6
Justin Roberts
18. Prize for outstanding effort in Science in years 1 to 6
Jacob Radon
19. Prize for outstanding effort in Science in years 1 to 6
Sarah Radon
20. Award for cooperation and leadership in an online learning environment in years 7 to 10
Ruth Barker
21. Award for excellence in English and Mathematics in years 7 to 10
Gina Lopez-Merrill
22. Award for excellence in Science in years 7 to 10
Robin Long
23. Award for outstanding effort in any or all of the Arts; Music, Visual Art or Dance in years 7 to 10
John Love

24. Award for outstanding effort in Social Studies in years 7 to 10
Marcalla Pearce
25. Award for the student who has made an outstanding effort in English in years 7 to 10
Christina Floka
26. Award for the student who has made an outstanding effort in the Sciences in years 7 to 10
William Thompson
27. Prize for outstanding effort in Health and Physical Education in years 7 to 10
Ashleigh Ward
28. Reta Watson Prize for excellence in Graphics in years 7 to 10
Emily Hansen
29. Vic Watson Memorial Prize for excellence in Technology in years 7 to 10
Nathan Elen
30. The Special Education Award for significant achievement in supported learning of Life Skills in years 9 to 10
NOT AWARDED
31. Prize for excellence in Classical Studies by a senior student
Barrett Franks
32. Prize for excellence in English by a senior student
Alexander Garvey
33. Prize for excellence in French as a second language by a senior student
Theo Finlayson
34. Prize for excellence in Health and Physical Education by a senior student
Seth King-Wall
35. Prize for excellence in Mathematics and Statistics
Clare McDonald
36. Prize for excellence in Mathematics with Calculus
Christopher Reeves
37. Prize for excellence in Technology by a senior student
Euan Te Bogt
38. Prize for excellence in Transition by a senior student
Mitchell Wilford
39. Prize for outstanding achievement and making the best of the opportunities presented to them through their Gateway placement
Jesse Williams
40. The Willsher/Wood Prize for outstanding effort in Text and Information Management
Finn Stallmann
41. Prize for excellence in Biology by a senior student
Timothy Hallacy
42. Prize for excellence in Chemistry by a senior student
Beth Williams
43. Prize for excellence in Chemistry by a senior student
Marcella Jones
44. Prize for excellence in Physics by a senior student
Timothy Hallacy
45. Language Prize for adult students for achievement, progress and enthusiasm in Spanish
Frances Durham

Dual student subject prizes

46. Betty Guard Memorial Prize for outstanding work in NCEA Level 1 History
Sophie Arnold
47. Jenny Armstrong Memorial Accounting Prize for outstanding work in Accounting
Bradley Sherman
48. Joyce Cooper Memorial Prize for effort and achievement in the study of textiles
Shonaugh Frew
49. Judith Waugh Prize for excellence in Latin
Giles Graham
50. Judith Waugh Prize for excellence in Music by a senior student
Melissa Wells
51. Prize for excellence in Art History by a senior student
Alina Ostapenko
52. Prize for excellence in Chinese as a second language by a senior student
Cheng-Yueh Liu
53. Prize for excellence in Te Reo Māori for a senior student
Te Maire Martin
54. Prize for excellence in German as a second language for a senior student
Elizabeth Thomas
55. Prize for excellence in Japanese as a second language for a senior student
Caitlin Moon



Monty Nahi, winner of the Māori achievement award.



Chief Executive, Mike Hollings, leading staff and board members in a waiata at the pōwhiri for the student prize winners.



TCS students, staff and families during the pōwhiri to start the prize giving ceremony.

Regional initiatives connecting students

Regional initiatives around New Zealand are helping to connect TCS students with their local communities and improve their learning and achievement. In this edition of *Link Up* we focus on three current initiatives.

Tauranga

In Tauranga TCS is carrying out a small pilot project to provide one-on-one support for full-time and young adult students and their families.

The project was initiated by the Tauranga community after it saw a need for a different kind of support to help students make positive choices about their future and engage in lifelong learning.

The project combines support, guidance and mentoring for students as well as on-call support for students' whānau. A dedicated learning tutor is working in partnership with teachers and learning advisors involved with these students. He is actively engaging students in TCS work as well as sports and cultural activities, and is linking students with agencies or employment groups able to help them with their goals.

Although in the very early stages, learning tutor Stefan Nogaj says the students he has spoken with so far are keen to be involved. The project is a pilot and will run until Term 3, 2010.

Northland

TCS staff based at three Northland high schools, have been working with full-time TCS students to raise levels of engagement and achievement since the end of last year.

The Northland regional learning advisor pilot involves three part-time regional learning advisors working face-to-face with students in years 7 to 13 at Dargaville High School, Whangaroa College in Kaeo and Kaitaia College.

The pilot is aimed at supporting the learning of students with high learning needs and low support by providing quality, relevant teaching, working alongside the student's supervisor and whānau.

The pilot allows students to work in their communities and take advantage of local educational opportunities and facilitates including local schools, marae, runanga and libraries.

Wairarapa

A new initiative in the Wairarapa focuses on student's strengths and interest to re-engage them with their learning.

High schools around the region have teamed up with TCS and the Ministry of Education to identify at-risk students and keep or reintegrate them at their regular high school.

Students agree to a managed programme of learning and reintegration with their school, which sees them study at school and at home with TCS. They may also participate in work experience.

'The school manages the students with support from TCS. They tailor a programme to suit the student's needs, taking into account what they enjoy and what they are interested in,' says Central South regional manager, John Nisbet.

'It means they remain in touch with their school and their peers and they have access to the school's services such as sports teams.'

'It is an initiative that works to students' strengths and interests to keep them on a pathway of learning and gives them a second chance,' says John.

The initiative began at the start of Term 2 this year and John says the project is so far going well, with students staying engaged.

Te reo Māori programme a New Zealand first

Mā te ako ka mōhio
Mā te mōhio ka marama
Mā te marama ka rangatira

By learning you will know
By knowing you will understand
By understanding you will achieve

The Correspondence School is developing New Zealand's first integrated online te reo Māori programme for NCEA students.

In early 2011, NCEA Level 1 students studying with TCS will be able to learn te reo Māori with a step-by-step, online programme.

The programme will be accessible through the new online teaching and learning environment (OTLE), and will feature new content to match the latest NCEA standards. The programme will include online learning resources, teachers' manuals, videos, animations, forums, and podcasts. Students

will be able to complete verbal assessments online with their audio files sent directly to their teacher for assessment.

Senior Advisor Māori Education, Sonya Bishara says, 'our students already have a much different way of obtaining information than any generation before. They're demanding a new kind of education and this programme will help satisfy that need. This new online te reo Māori NCEA programme is designed to make learning te reo Māori more accessible and engaging for our students which we hope will in turn increase student achievement.'

'TCS will also work in partnership with Te Ipukarea (The National Māori Language Institute) to adapt the programme to our students needs. Te Ipukarea is hosted by Te Ara Poutama (The Faculty of Māori Development at Auckland University of Technology). Both our teachers and Te Ipukarea have a huge wealth of expertise in te reo Māori, so the programme will be second to none.'

Students without Internet access will still be able to learn with a printed version of the online programme.



Sonya Bishara – Senior Advisor, Māori Education

Learning beyond the textbook



Craig demonstrating an experiment.

Delivering fun, relevant learning is the key to making sure students achieve their potential – a concept that’s evident in the students TCS teacher Craig Rofe works with in Manawatu.

Craig, a science teacher at TCS, says relating content to the real world is important for students.

‘My aim is to keep students engaged. I want them to see beyond the textbook and find out how science works in the real world,’ he says.

As well as students in the Central South region, Craig also works with TCS students at two Palmerston North educational initiatives with schools, Tū Toa and Mana Tamariki.

Craig meets with 16 Year 10 students from the two schools every three weeks to put into practice what they have learnt from their studies. They meet to carry out experiments and visit places where they are able to see science in action.

‘We have visited places like the planetarium to learn more about how Matariki relates to science and

the rugby academy to learn about sports science, which was really exciting for the students,’ says Craig.

Craig has been working with the two schools since 2008, and he says the students seem to be much more engaged with their learning.

‘Being able to see how science relates to the real world has made learning much more exciting and real for them.’

And the students echo his thoughts. Tū Toa student, Keita Durie, says all the students enjoy the classes and look forward to meeting with Craig.

‘We like it because we have a teacher to help us ,and we can talk to the other students to get help,’ says Keita.

‘It’s just really fun. The classes are really exciting, and we always get to do activities and experiments. I look at things differently now, and science isn’t a boring subject!’

Experience of a lifetime for four Bay students

By Jerusha Tucker, Year 12, Papamoa

Four under 16-year-olds and their parents, who are all residents of the sunny Bay of Plenty, relocated to the base of Mt Ruapehu, carrot capital, Ohakune this winter. They moved from beach crazed Bay of Plenty, to winter wonderland Ohakune, for full-time freestyle snowboard training on Turoa's ski field.

TCS student Jerusha Tucker joined the three other students who signed up for the five-day-a-week training offered through Ruapehu Snow Sports. The four trained on Turoa ski field to extend their skills in the four competitive disciplines of snowboarding, which are Boarder-X, Slalom, Slopestyle and Half-pipe. The team trained with American freestyle coach, Ryan Enfield for five days a week, seven hours a day, weather dependent.

Jerusha is currently enrolled at TCS as an elite athlete to support her with her training. 'This was of enormous benefit to Jerusha, as it allowed her to focus on obtaining as many Level 2 credits prior to her training, so her focus could then be mostly on developing her snowboarding skills during the term,' her mother, Inez Tucker commented.

My succulent garden

Chad Cottle, Year 10, Kaeo

I enjoyed making a container garden and it makes good use of plastic that you would usually throw away. It was easy to find a bottle and cut it to shape and once I had all the materials it was also easy to drill the drainage holes, fill the bottle with dirt and plant the plants. The hard parts were having time to get the potting mix and finding a place to hang it. I have lots and lots of succulents as I collect them, so it wasn't hard to find something to plant in my container garden. I think more people should be doing this because it's a great way to recycle bottles.



Jerusha Tucker in action showcasing a midair grab.



Chad Cottle's succulent garden.

Haiku poem

By Ella Griffin-King, Year 8, who is currently sailing in the Pacific with her family.

Rocks tower skyward
Grassy mountains stretch onward
Foreboding anyone.
Choppy, white water
The strong winds snatch at the sail
Driving us forward.
Sparkling turquoise seas
Twinkle and dance for no one
Silence, all is calm.
Coconut palms lean
sun shining, illuminates
White, sandy beaches
Manta Ray coming
Towards me in the darkness
Awe, thrill and beauty.

Puawai's Rainbow

By Puawai Pickett-Te Aukura, Year 2, Aitutaki, Cook Islands

My rainbow comes from rain and sunshine.
The sun shines through the raindrops. On both ends there are pots of gold.

The rainbow follows me where ever I go. I climb up one side and slide down the other. The sun comes out from behind the rain cloud and my rainbow disappears.

At home there was a rainbow dancing on my wall. The sun was shining through the water in a jar and it made a rainbow just for me, a rainbow of my very own.

A snippet of my TCS winter snow camp diary

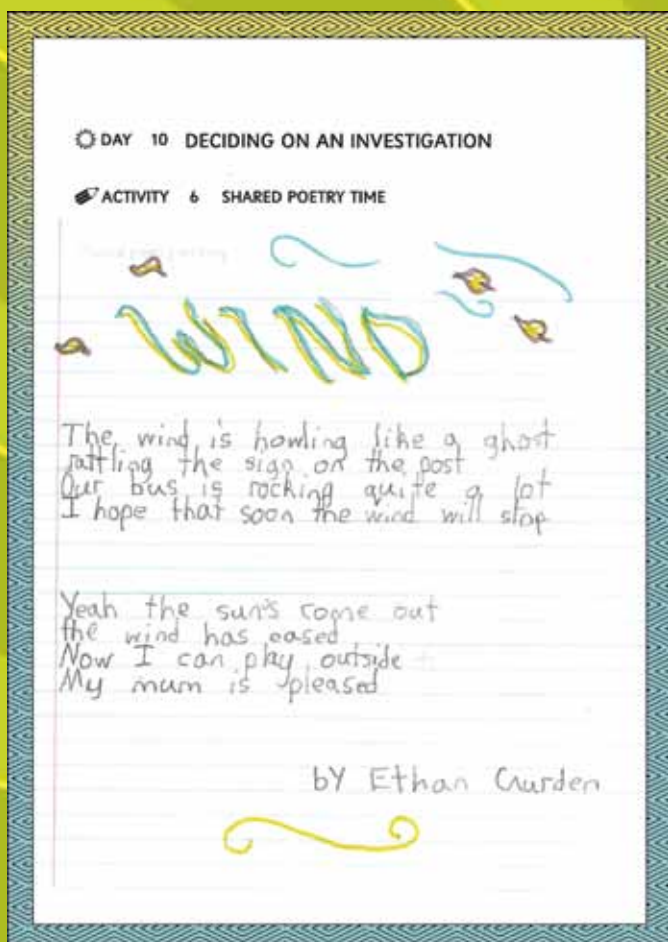
By Tull Coleman, Year 8, Taihape

Day 1 - Today we arrived at Mangatepopo school camp, which is an old school that has been transformed into a nice place to stay for schools who want to go up the mountain. The camp is on the plains by the mountains so it is surrounded by lots of tussock and shrubs like manuka.

Day 2 - We went to the Whakapapa Visitor Centre where we learnt all about how the mountains evolved and what happens during a volcanic eruption. After the visitor centre we went to an indoor climbing wall at National Park and spent the rest of the day trying to climb up some pretty hard walls but mostly falling off!

Day 3 - We headed up the mountain today. I helped a few people learn how to snowboard because I have boarded before and for many people it was their first time up the mountain. I felt really good when I saw people standing up on their board and not falling over and thinking, 'I helped them do that'.

Day 4 - Today was the best day of all because all the slopes on the mountain were open and dad and I spent the whole day over the far west side of Whakapapa ski field where I learnt how to do little jumps!





Artwork by Joseph Delamore, Year 11.



Artwork by Lucia Graham, Year 7.

Connected Kids



A pilot project in the Central South region has connected 10 TCS students to the world of online learning.

The Connected Kids project has seen selected Te Ara Hou students set up with reconditioned computers and Internet access so they can learn and achieve online at home with TCS.

‘The students would otherwise have had limited or no access to the Internet, perhaps relying on their nearest local library,’ says Senior e-Learning Advisor, Andy Kirk.

‘The project gives the students the opportunity to be part of the TCS online learning community and experience rich, engaging learning content,’ he says.

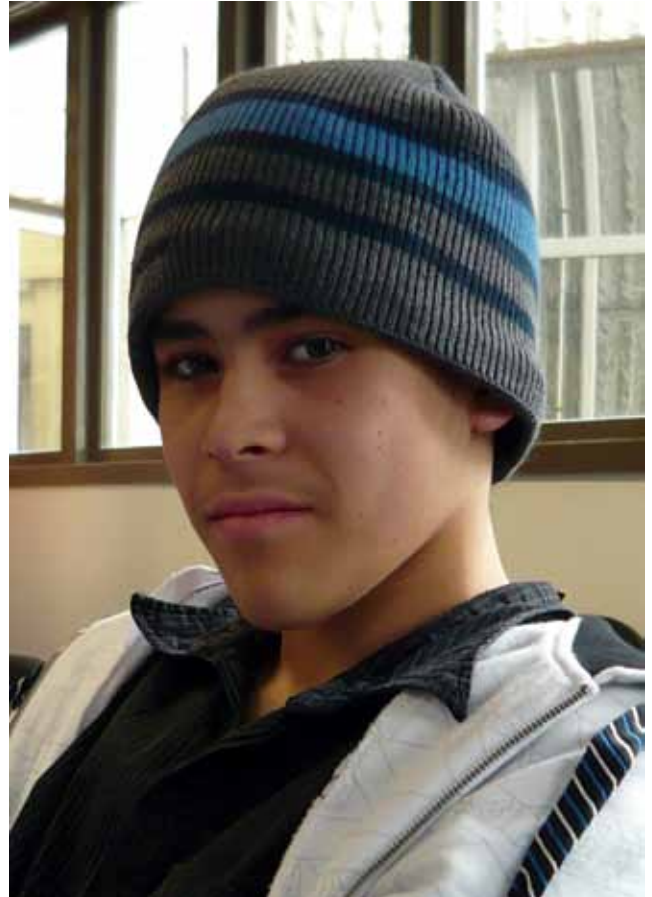
Computer equipment has been provided by Wellington-based company Remarkit Solutions Ltd who recondition old IT equipment.

Over the last term the students have been studying an online Te Ara Hou course with their teacher Janet Stribling. TCS has also been working with the students and their supervisors to create personalised learning opportunities and to get supervisors engaged in their students’ learning.

‘The project is going really well for most students; they are really enjoying being able to connect online with other students about their work,’ says Janet.

‘For some students writing can be a struggle so being able to use technology to do school work is a real advantage and makes learning much more interactive and fun.

‘Families have embraced the opportunity too, the Internet has opened up a new world for them – we know that students achieve much better when their families are involved with their students’ learning,’ she says.



Profile: Isaac Erueti-Sim

One of the main things Isaac Erueti-Sim likes most about being able to learn online is being able to interact with his teacher in real time.

The Wellington student has been on the Connected Kids pilot project for two terms and already his study with TCS is improving. He’s returning more work and he is interacting with his teacher every day.

‘I like being able to ask my teacher questions and get answers straight away. I also like being able to chat with other students,’ he says. ‘Learning this way is much easier than before.’

Isaac finds typing on a computer keyboard much easier than writing with pen and paper. ‘He’s a very visual person so he doesn’t like having to write too much,’ says his mother, Lavinia. ‘We do try to do a bit of both though,’ she says.

‘Having Internet in the house has brought learning to Isaac’s fingertips and he is often telling me things he has learnt from researching the Internet!’

Curriculum profile: technology

In this edition of *Link Up* we speak to Curriculum Leader Technology, Peter Renwick.

What courses are included in the technology curriculum?

From years 7–13 students can study a number of subject areas including:

- materials technology
- food technology
- ICT (computing)
- structure
- control
- biotechnology
- graphic design.

Is technology compulsory?

Technology is compulsory for full-time students up to, and including Year 10. It is also useful for students in years 11, 12 or 13 who would like to gain university entrance, go to Polytech or enter a trade.



Model designed and built by Andries Delpert.



Jandals created by Nathan Elen.

How do students know if studying technology is right for them?

There are a range of reasons students decide to study technology. Mostly they are linked to the students' interests and career choices. Often students who study technology enjoy developing a practical and creative solution to a problem and may communicate their ideas by drawing or modelling.

What can students learn at each level?

At all levels, students are involved with practical projects, which involve identifying a need, problem or opportunity and investigating and designing a solution. Students are also encouraged to follow their interests and create solutions to real life scenarios.

What does technology involve?

Technology gives students the skills to design new products and to improve how a system or environment might function. Technologists see opportunities to change or create something that will improve the lives of others.

What are some of the possible careers for students interested in using their technology skills?

Possible career options include: engineer, architect, fashion designer, web designer, food technologist, IT professional, dietician, dressmaker, electrician, animator, sign maker, plumber, gasfitter, pattern maker and jeweller.

What are some helpful links?

- www.futureintech.org.nz has a wide range of information on careers in technology.
- www.techlink.org.nz showcases a range of technology from experts and students.
- www.biotechlearn.org.nz has a range of interesting information for students interested in biotechnology.
- www.yda.org.nz the Young Designer of the Year website can give you ideas of how technology can help you achieve.

How can students get more information?

Call our toll free phone number 0800 65 99 88 and ask to speak to a technology teacher or visit our website www.correspondence.school.nz



Bridge designed and built by Isaac Williams.

What a Life!



Louise Stevenson filming.

Student Louise Stevenson appeared in January on TV screens across New Zealand and Australia when she starred in an episode of the Disney series *What a Life!*

The series gives a child's perspective of their parents' job and Louise was recently selected to profile her father's job as a high-country farmer. The year 7 student and her family live at Upcot Station in the Awatere Valley, near Blenheim where they farm merino sheep and cows on 35,000 acres of isolated hill country.

Louise spent two days with the film crew showing them the different areas of their farm and what her father's job involves.

'One of the main bits was to explain what we do during the autumn muster. We stay up at a hut for three nights and muster as many sheep as we can, then we put them in a holding pen until we herd them to the sheds where they get shorn,' says Louise.

'It was quite scary at first to be in front of the camera but they [the film crew] made me feel relaxed and my friends and family all think I'm quite lucky to be on TV because it's a once in a lifetime opportunity.'

Louise has three sisters and hopes to take over the family farm one day.



Louise working with her father on the farm.

Hannah's pedal power

Pedal power has seen 12-year-old TCS student Hannah King-Turner raise more than one and a half thousand dollars for orphans in Cambodia.

The Te Ara Hou student, who lives in Cambodia with her family, recently cycled 43 km from her home in Svay Rieng to the border with Vietnam to raise money for the children at Kmaing Gompreakh Baptist Orphanage.

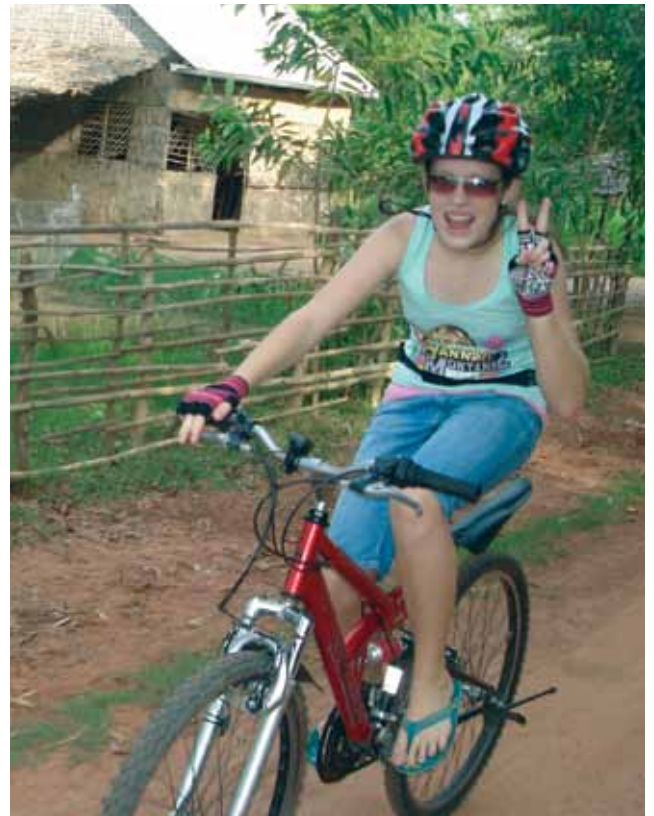
Hannah started the project as part of the Te Ara Hou unit 'I can change my world'. She developed an action plan, which saw her train three times a week for three weeks and asked family, friends and TCS staff to sponsor her an amount for every kilometre she rode.

'I wanted to do something for them because they have so little and we have so much,' says Hannah.

'Once I had done the bike ride I felt great! It was a huge achievement and I never expected to raise so much money.'

Hannah was able to buy the fifteen orphans necessities like mosquito nets, bedding, bikes, school uniforms, books and pencils.

'They were really excited to get all the stuff. We see them biking down the road with their new school uniforms and bags on and none of them have to walk to school now,' says Hannah. Thank you to the TCS staff who sponsored Hannah \$220.



Hannah cruising on her bike in rural Cambodia.

World stage for Mikayla



Mikayla in action at the New Zealand Secondary Schools Cross Country Championship in Nelson.

Year 11 TCS student, Mikayla Nielsen, is set to take on the world’s best at the World Secondary Schools Cross Country Championship in Slovakia next year – one year after she took up the sport.

Mikayla joins 24 of New Zealand’s top secondary school athletes to compete at the competition held in the northern Slovak town of Liptovský Mikuláš in April.

‘I’m really pleased to be going because I only started competing in running events at the end of 2008 – it’s pretty exciting,’ says Mikayla.

The Hamilton student won her place on the team after finishing second at the New Zealand Secondary Schools Cross Country Championships in Nelson earlier this year. Mikayla is currently training every day and is also combining swimming training to improve her aerobic fitness.

‘My aim is to come first at the event! But I am also looking forward to going overseas for the first time and meeting lots of new people.’

TCS teacher, Geoff Shaw has also been selected to go to the championships as Deputy Head of Delegation (manager and organiser).

Special celebration at Government House

Four TCS students had the chance to meet New Zealand’s Governor General, Sir Anand Satyanand, at a special ceremony to celebrate the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child late last year.

The ceremony, held at Government House in Auckland, was held to celebrate 20 years since the adoption of the convention, which helps to protect children and young people, and makes sure their voices are heard in all matters affecting them.

UNICEF New Zealand and the Office of Children’s Commissioner observed the anniversary to highlight the success of the treaty, as nearly every country in the world has ratified the convention, making it “the most universally-supported human right treaty in history,” according to the UNICEF New Zealand website.

To share in the celebration, Year 8 students Arthur Hertwich and Halyley Gray, and Year 11 students, Reyne Hepi and Brylee Sharp, were the TCS students selected to attend the event, and joined a group of 30 in attendance.

Reyne told his local newspaper, the North News, that he was excited to be the only student representative from the Far North.

‘This was the first time I have attended an event such as this and I greatly enjoyed it,’ Reyne said. ‘I really enjoyed meeting people of high political placings of previous years and present.’



Reyne Hepi meeting the Governor General. Photo courtesy of UNICEF.

2009 ERO review

The Education Review Office (ERO) findings following its 2009 review of TCS are very positive and show that significant progress has been made over the past few years to improve our performance in the areas of planning and review, student engagement, and success for Māori students.

The findings of the review of our early childhood service are particularly positive. They show that staff are skilled at establishing trusting, responsive relationships with children and families/

whānau and continually work to improve how they meet the diverse needs of students on its roll.

Chief Executive Mike Hollings says the review is a very positive, which our staff and students can be proud of.

‘ERO identified many areas of good performance as well as areas for improvement, a number of which we had identified and are working on already.’

A summary of the findings in each of the four focus areas is included with this issue of *Link Up*.

First Teacher Aide Certificate for supervisor

Kelly Henderson has become TCS’s first supervisor to achieve The Open Polytechnic’s Teacher Aide Certificate.

Kelly, whose son Zack studies with TCS, completed the certificate last October and is pleased to have the qualification under her belt.

‘Just even completing the certificate has given me so much more confidence,’ she says.

‘I have a much better understanding of the New Zealand school system and curriculum and I know how to apply my new skills to get the access we need for our sons; I don’t feel so intimidated now.’

A baker by trade, Kelly says it was a hard road getting back in to studying

again, while also looking after her two sons who have autism and Asperger syndrome.

‘I wasn’t a good student at school and when I found out that I’d failed the first two modules of the course it brought back horrible memories of being back at school – it knocked me a bit.’

‘But in hindsight I’m so pleased I finished it, it has given me another arrow to my bow and I hope to work as a teacher aide in the future.’

For more information about the new Teacher Aiding Certificate please contact Adele Harris on 0800 65 99 88 ext 8244 or email adele.harris@correspondence.school.nz

Survey winners announced

Congratulations to the winners of our recent New Zealand Council for Educational Research survey prize draw.

TCS students Shaun Cave and Jack Crawford were among the winners of an MP3 player each, while Heather Waite and Ruth Dawn were two supervisors

who won \$100 worth of petrol vouchers.

The survey indicates the level of engagement by students and supervisors at TCS, and the results will be used for future planning at TCS in particular, planning for learning delivery in 2010 and beyond.

Vision for student achievement

‘All our students achieve their potential’ is the vision that underpins our new strategic plan for the next three years.

‘Our annual prize giving is a celebration of student achievement and reminds us of the great work students can do when they are engaged in their learning and well-supported by teachers, supervisors, whānau and their communities,’ says Chief Executive Mike Hollings.

‘The strategic plan builds on the work we have been doing to get closer to our students and their communities, and to increase student presence, engagement and achievement.’

A key focus in the plan is to gradually increase the number of teaching and support staff working from regional locations rather than from Wellington. We will also work closely with organisations in our students’ communities – including schools, iwi and Māori, social service agencies and other education providers – to provide more support for students.

We are already trialling different ways of working with students, their whānau and communities to increase engagement and achievement – our projects in Tauranga, Northland and Manawatu on page 7 are examples of this. These projects will be

evaluated to identify what works well and could be extended to other communities of students.

This year we will also be working with communities to develop authentic learning experiences for full-time students in years 9–13 through internships and mentoring arrangements. Our aim is to make learning relevant and engaging for students, and to give students real world skills that will take them on to further learning or employment opportunities.

We will develop new ways of supporting the success of our Māori students, many of whom are not achieving at the same level as non-Maori students. e-Learning is fundamental to the delivery of personalised learning programmes to our students, so we will continue the focus on becoming a leader in e-Learning to better connect with students and engage them in learning.

We will be publishing our strategic plan early in Term 1, 2010. You can download it from our website at www.correspondence.school.nz or call us on 0800 65 99 88 to ask for a printed copy be sent out to you.

What do you want in 2010?

What science subjects would you choose in 2010? That was the question TCS science teachers asked a group of students in years 9–11 recently, to find out what you want to learn in Year 11.

The results showed that you want to be able to select topics you find interesting and be able to network and study online, but you still want the option of working from booklets and on paper as well.

Teachers found out that students prefer internal assessment for NCEA and they love the idea of studying topics relating to forensic science, hunting, fishing, marine biology, motor vehicles and sport, in preference to the traditional courses.

‘We plan to keep offering the traditional courses, but also add new, exciting topics to the mix,’ says Curriculum Leader Science, Kerry Parker.

Long-time success celebrated

Stephen Mander is proud to be one of TCS's longest standing students. At 21 years of age, he's been with us since his mum enrolled him as an early childhood student.

'Stephen was born with Down syndrome so I started immediately educating him and heard about The Correspondence School from one of Stephen's therapists. I applied and my work load halved!' says his mother, Christine.

'I used to spend hours making flash cards and searching for any information I could find to help Stephen's learning, and all of a sudden there was a team who knew just what our needs were. They sent toys, books and endless music tapes with the odd instrument for him to have a go at.

'We were able to do schoolwork whenever he was feeling good and miss the days when he was unable to concentrate well enough.'

'We have met some incredible teachers and some who have had personal knowledge of the situations we have been in, and some truly inspiring people too,' says Christine.

Biology, science and agriculture have been Stephen's favourite subjects. He has worked very hard to achieve Level 1 NCEA, and has since earned additional credits in agriculture.

Last month Stephen and Christine visited TCS

in Wellington to meet his teachers and to say 'goodbye' as a full-time student. Stephen will be back as an adult student in 2010 to do social studies and perhaps geography in his own time without deadlines.

'I shall be more able to do other things and would like to do some conservation stuff if I can,' he says.

'TCS has been a great contributing factor in my life and I really enjoyed saying "goodbye" to everyone in the School. It was lovely to meet John Nisbet again, he was my teacher for a long time a few years ago. I have enjoyed my chats on the phone with Rachel and Sharee this year too.

'I feel honoured to have been able to work with the school for 20 years. I have met some good and helpful teachers. Two teachers I remember that I had for a very long time were Rowena Somogyvary and Beth Drummond.'

Winning an award or two for his progress and getting his picture and school work in the school magazine have been highlights for Stephen, as well as having visits from his teachers and making some special friends.

Christine says she will always be so very grateful to the school for many years of support and friendship.



TCS Science teacher Rachel Wastney, Social Studies teacher Sharee Chapman with Stephen (centre), Chief Executive Mike Hollings and Central South Regional Manager John Nisbet.