



Whangarei Youth Space safe, positive and caring

Life is real and for all the ups there can be downs, as Youth Leader Jacinta Hoek knows.

Jacinta is busy getting an education, being deputy chair of Whangarei District Council's Youth Advisory Group, being a Youth Trustee for the Whangarei Youth Space (WYS) and getting an early start on her own family, expecting a baby boy in February. Life is good.

But things have not always been that way. Jacinta has a message to young people who are finding the going tough, and for those who care about them.

She says Whangarei's Youth Space is a safe, positive and caring place established

especially to help young people thrive and be successful.

People can go alone, call or text, take their friends or just check it out for themselves.

"You feel valued there. There are youth workers, youth nurses, there's food, all those things you need when you, or someone you know, are struggling. The youth workers can go with you if you need to go to appointments to get help or benefits. You don't have to do it all on your own."

"There are lots of opportunities to do things – lots of activities, it's a safe place. Parents and relatives can contact Youth Space if they are interested for someone they know. People can come along

and check it out, come with their friends or on their own or just ring or text."

Whangarei Youth space was established in 2014, in Council's old Whangarei Art Museum building in the Rose Gardens.

The ASB Community Trust/ Foundation North, made a \$2million (over five years) grant to the Youth Space Trust enabling the building to be upgraded and fitted with activity spaces, study areas, meeting rooms, offices, private consultation rooms, computers, a café, and has wi-fi over its two storeys. The enterprise is supported by the Northland District Health Board and Manaia Health PHO,

Foundation North, Vodafone New Zealand, the Ministry for Vulnerable Children, Oranga Tamariki and Council. It is professionally staffed.

Membership is free for young people aged 12 to 24 years.

Youth Space is also the home of the free specialist youth health services, Octane, that has a general practitioner and nurses on site who can be seen privately and free of charge.

A community service, WYS is a charity and needs support to keep helping young people so it welcomes donations to support youth workers.

Are you aged between 12 and 24 years old? Then this is your space, join in the fun

Whangarei Youth Space is a safe and fun place where you can meet friends, get involved in what's on, find a mentor, join in school holiday activities, access free, private youth health services and get training and employment support.



Jacinta's story



Jacinta says Whangarei's Youth Space might be a good place for anyone who is worried or wondering about someone and doesn't know where to start.

"It's not always easy to find a place where you feel fully

supported, where you feel your opinions are respected and valued and that people believe in you. But it was all here for me when I found things very hard."

Of Ngāpuhi and Te Rarawa descent, Jacinta and her family moved up to Whangarei from Auckland six years ago, because it was a good place to be, (half way between the major city and her tūrangawaewae further north). Around then she lost two of her friends to suicide.

"It was very hard to cope, I didn't know what was going on or how to deal with it. I was mad at everything and everyone. When it's your friends, you tend to find someone to blame to try answer the question of why.

It tapped a well of depression within her but people who saw her potential helped her find a purpose in life by contributing to her community. The strength and empathy that her experiences and vulnerability gave her have

ignited a passion to help others.

In Year 12 Jacinta started to get involved as a youth leader in suicide prevention for He Ara Toiora and Kōkiritia Te Ora. She attended wananga with lots of other people, waka ama tutors, dance groups, Vincent Nathan (poet) and other events that included working directly with young people in pain.

In year 13, Jacinta had to move schools from Te Kura Hourua ki Whangaruru which was closed down. She continued onto Kamo High School completed NCEA level 3 endorsed with Merit she was also endorsed with Merit in the subject English. At the end of year prize giving she received the creativity in writing Radich Cup, Māori pupil endeavour leadership cup and the Principal award for 2016.

At the start of this year she also became involved in Whangarei Youth Space, became a youth trustee there, became Chair of

Council's Youth Advisory Group.

"I'm not trained but I am someone to talk to and I do have some advice from people who are worried about themselves or people they know. Keep an eye out for things like posts on social media, people isolating themselves, abusing substances, trying to blur things out.

"Young people feel very loyal to each other, but sometimes if you know something is going on you have to talk to an adult. Your friend might be mad at you for a while, so you'll need courage. It is more important to keep them alive."

Jacinta wanted to finish with a whakataukī for youth who are going through challenging times.

"Ahakoā ngā ūaua
Kia kaha, kia toa, kia manawanui"
"When you find things that are difficult in life,

Stand strong, stand tall and be of great heart."

How you can contact us at Whangarei Youth Space

Email: contact@youthspace.co.nz
Phone: 09 972 7248
Text: 021 765 838
Fax: 09 972 7249
Post: PO Box 1483
Whangarei 0140
www.youthspace.co.nz

Youth health enquiries contact a nurse on 021 756 724

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Whangarei Youth Space

Helplines for children and young people

Youthline – 0800 376 633, free text 234, talk@youthline.co.nz or www.youthline.co.nz/services/goforward/go-chat/thelowdown.co.nz
email team@thelowdown.co.nz, free text 5626
or free text / phone 1737 anytime for support from a trained counsellor

Help for parents, family and friends

Commonground – www.commonground.org.nz
Parent Help – 0800 568 856
Family Services 211 Helpline – 0800 211 211
Skylight – 0800 299 100