

PROJECT BASED, AUTHENTIC, REAL LIFE LEARNING

TAITA COLLEGE, GIVING BACK TO OUR COMMUNITY

Project based, authentic, real life learning is a big focus of education at Taita College.

Currently we are embarking on a project which gives back to our local community.

“Connecting to our community is so important. It is through these powerful partnerships, there is an absolute collaboration in order to collectively bring about success for all involved. Programmes are enhanced when they are real, they make sense, and when there is a capacity established to work alongside community groups” ... *Principal Karen Morgan.*

At Taita College our technology team is working on a project to enhance the community’s enjoyment of Walter Nash Park, which was once a jewel in the crown in Taita.

The school is working collaboratively with Community Enabler Sue Rei and others from the Common Ground group set up to work with the Hutt City Council, to make the park more ‘user friendly’ for all.

To begin the project the technology classes, under the guiding hand of HOD Technology Shakuntla Awmee, and Tutor Isimeli Tukua, made a hikoi to the park to see what was lacking.

Based on student assessment of the park and the facilities, the students decided to plan two projects to further enhance the area.

The first project for one group focused on the lack of drinking water available at Walter Nash Park. Students felt the health and well being of the community was important, so this was to become part of their planning and promotion. The students also wanted to incorporate a sugar free approach, so provisions were made for this. Students investigated the possibility of providing an aquifer or drinking water fountains. As part



Taita College students promoting sugar free drinks at the recent Tumeke Taita Summer Festival .



Taita College Technology teacher Isimeli Tukua watches as Gilbert Tana and Matthew Gogo discuss their prototype designs for new seating for Walter Nash Park. These will now go forward to the Hutt City Council for consideration.

of their project they gave a presentation at the Tumeke Taita day, and are hoping to promote this concept to the Hutt City Council.

The other project focused on the fact students in the class noticed there was no seating for the elderly who walked in the park, particularly those from the Aroha Home across the road. There was nowhere to rest – and so providing seats in the park became a priority for those students.

The technology students researched park seating around the world, looked at the materials available, costed them out, made sure their designs were feasible (“wood only bends certain ways”), made 3D models and came up with some uniquely New Zealand designs and a pleasing variety of seating. Some of the designs can be moved around to suit either a large group or a few people; others are decorated with inspirational sayings and some have carvings representative of the area.

This project has encompassed many stratas of their classwork in technology, and has translated into a real-life-outcome situation.

Two of the students, Gilbert Tana and Matthew Gogo, explain their work.

Gilbert says it is a project which has real meaning for him, as he had his own auntie in mind when he made his design, and for Matthew “it is a way of giving back to my teachers and the community for all they have done for me – my way of saying thank you.”

Sums up Principal Karen Morgan:

“It is a very exciting time to be in education and to be able to create opportunities for students to work within their communities, to foster engagement, build strong relationships and affiliations. In life it is often not what you know it is who you know, so our students are getting the chance to link with key players in their community and to make a difference. Success builds success, and in life we are all lifelong learners – community members involved comment how impressed and how much they learn from the students (ako at its best, where learning is reciprocal). These projects are just one example of our direction at Taita College, where holistic success is the key!”