

ASB Community Trust's Māori and Pasifika Education Initiative.

The story of an ambitious and uncharted philanthropic journey in search of innovative proposals to address educational underachievement among Māori and Pacific community youth.



ASB Community Trust

Te Kaitiaki Pūtea o Tamaki o Tai Tokerau

supported by ASB



The Leadership Academy of A Company

Building Māori Leaders

Academy Storytellers and Frances Hancock

Stand on the marae; stand in the world

Introduction

In 2006, ASB Community Trust (The Trust) set out to find and fund innovative proposals to address the serious problem of educational underachievement among Māori and Pasifika youth. Through its Māori and Pasifika Education Initiative (MPEI), the Trust forged a rigorous and innovative grant making process that attracted over 300 expressions of interest from across the Auckland and Northland region. Shortlisted applicants were required to produce a business case proposal, give a presentation to MPEI selection committees and complete a comprehensive organisational review by external consultants. In 2009, He Puna Marama Trust became one of seven successful applicants to receive significant MPEI funding to implement its vision of a leadership academy for Māori boys.

Formally established in 2010, The Leadership Academy of A Company (the Academy) is now in the second year of student intakes and in September 2011 will commence its third selection round. Eighteen boys were accepted into the James Henare intake in 2010 and sixteen boys joined the Fred Baker intake in 2011.

We see the Academy as a marae for boys. Our vision is Tu Ki Te Marae; Tu Ki Te Ao - Stand on the marae; stand in the world. We encourage boys to see the Academy as a place to stand tall and be encouraged to do things they never imagined they could do.

The idea of a leadership academy has been alive for a long time. Our kaupapa draws strength and direction from its links to the 28th Māori Battalion, in particular their legacy of honour, courage, resourcefulness, hard work, pride and commitment. Following in the footsteps of the 28th Māori Battalion, the Academy instills a military ethos that emphasises a sense of purpose, discipline, routine, personal responsibility, leadership training and strong, supportive relationships.

Boys live in from Sunday to Friday and return home on the weekend. Activities are split across our two sites: Whangarei and Parua Bay. The day begins with reveille and karakia at 6.00 am and ends with last post and karakia at 9.00pm for juniors and 10.00pm for seniors. It's action packed in between, with every hour planned and accounted for, including attending school. Academy boys undertake physical training, parent-directed activities, te reo and tikanga Māori and, depending on their interests, also participate in sports, music or boxing. The boys get tired, which is part of the challenge! There are no roses in the trenches; it's all hard work.

As staff, we're always 'in the doing' with the boys. The boys are here for a long time and what we have to teach them cannot be learnt overnight. It's a slow burn process of learning. We've learnt to be patient and, in the process, have become more strategic in our outlook and in our interventions.

The Academy works closely with whanau and schools. We've found that when there is a strong working relationship with whanau and schools, everyone benefits especially the boys. When the boys feel that the people who matter most in their lives are behind them 100 percent and want them to succeed, they're encouraged to rise to the challenge. Wrapped in a korowai or cloak of unconditional support, the boys come to know that it's up to them to accept responsibility by making the most of the opportunities put before them.

In this resource, we present stories told by three students to provide a glimpse of what it's like to attend the Academy. We also offer stories told by two parents to convey whanau perspectives. While it's still early days, these stories shine a light on what is important to the Academy and especially what this place can offer to boys who come here and the benefits for their whanau.

ASB Community Trust commissioned Frances Hancock to document the stories and lessons of MPEI. Frances is a community development specialist and a graduate of Harvard and Massey universities.

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'It's all about leadership and caring for each other'

Toni-Joseph Tautari offers a student's perspective

I'm related to James Henare and I wanted to find out more about him and the Māori Battalion. My aunty told me about the Academy. I entered in the first year and have now been at the Academy for 18 months. I'm the oldest boy here and I'm in Year 13 at school. I'm a sergeant in the James Henare intake and helped to prepare the Fred Baker intake. I look out for the younger boys to make sure they're doing okay. That's how it works at the Academy; we all care about each other.

Each new intake is named after a respected member of the Māori Battalion and has a regiment number. Currently there are three platoons, each with a student acting as a corporal and another as a lance corporal. The corporals check that jobs are carried out properly and report to the sergeants and staff sergeants. To earn promotion you must help out and follow the code of conduct; be willing to take on responsibilities, tell the truth and earn respect for the role. To become a sergeant I did a week long junior non commissioned officer course. The Cadres taught us things like how to run a parade, how to do speeches in front of a crowd and how to present to the new cadets. It was really about how to conduct yourself as a leader. The Academy is all about leadership; it's about being the best you can be.

Each day we write in a personal diary to keep track of how we're doing and feeling. Our diary is read by the Chief Cadre and our mentor. They follow-up if there's a problem or we need to talk about something.

Like the Māori Battalion, the Academy runs on routine and discipline. There are daily barrack inspections and if your bed isn't made properly or things are not put away, you're given 'extras' such as doing all the dishes by yourself or you might get 20 push-ups or have to remake your bed.

When I first came here it was hard to wake up so early and the first few inspections were very challenging. I learnt a lot in a short space of time; a lot of little things that make a difference because they show others what kind of

person you are. For example, I learnt that when setting the table you're supposed to put the blades of the knives facing inward so they don't cut anyone, whereas before I would often face them outwards because I didn't know any other way. It's good to do things right; it shows others that you care and have respect. I was given 'extras' a few times and had to catch up with the others. Looking back, I thought it would be much harder to adjust to Academy life than it was, but I soon got used to the routine.

When I entered the Academy I was a bit overweight and unfit. I was put on an exercise programme and I learnt about healthy eating and portion sizes. I worked hard to achieve the expected fitness level. I had to run 2.4 kilometres under 13 minutes and do a bunch of exercises including 25 press-ups, abdominal bridges and explosive jumps. I got 'remedials' when I didn't make the grade because if you fail one test, you fail them all and have to repeat each one. It was tough, but I got there. I felt so proud when I achieved my goal. I went from 108 kilos to 92 kilos over a few months and I've kept the weight off. We're constantly challenged to achieve our goals.

At the Academy you learn to focus on what's important, and especially what it means to be Māori. We learn about matauranga Māori and tikanga Māori, and how to conduct ourselves on a marae. We practice our reo every day and have inter-platoon competitions to show our skills in mihi, haka and waiata. When learning the reo and tikanga is part of your everyday activities, you learn more quickly; it's easier to retain the knowledge because you're constantly putting it into practice.

In the future I want to work with planes; I love being around planes. I'm not sure what I'll do yet, but I'm looking at options and I'm confident I'll achieve my dream.

"At the Academy you learn to focus on what's important, and especially what it means to be Māori."

'Pushing yourself enables you to rise to the challenge'

Hirini Henare offers a student's perspective

My grandfather went to an Academy meeting and was encouraged to send me along. I have heaps of connections with the Māori Battalion, so I was excited to come here. I applied for the James Henare intake when I was 12 years old but was told I'd have to wait until I was thirteen. I was finally accepted into the Fred Baker intake in 2011. I couldn't wait to come!

I took part in the selection course during school holidays. We had to sit asTtle tests and do fitness training. I thought it would be pretty easy but it was very hard. Fitness training was the hardest for me, especially running. To pass the required fitness level test, we had to run 2.4 kilometres under 13 minutes. Some were fit and some weren't. We got up early every morning and went for a run. I'd never done that before; I was used to sleeping in!

Our coach is a New Zealand Commonwealth Games competitor in boxing and has earned the New Zealand Golden Gloves title, which is a very high achievement. He really pushed me to pass the fitness test; he was tough but firm and fair. There was a bit of pressure to be like everyone else and it worked!

Pushing yourself enables you to rise to the challenge. It took me five months to achieve my goal and the coach never gave up on me. When I passed the fitness level I felt so good about myself; it was my biggest achievement so far and the coach was really proud.

I go to Tikipunga High School and the biggest challenge for me now is studying. Before I came here, I'd spend my time at home watching television but at the Academy, we don't get to watch television. Instead, we do our homework every night at the same time with everyone else.

The Academy offers quality leadership; I thought it could help me to make something useful out of myself. The Cadres know how to work. They teach you how to do practical things that will help you and your family, like fishing. They teach you discipline, like getting your homework done so you don't get in trouble.

The Academy is all about routine. The routine is a good thing, but it took me about a month to get used to it. I've never missed a day at the Academy and

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I've earned 100 percent for attendance. I made a commitment to the routine and the discipline. I try hard to live the Academy's Code of Conduct.

In the future I want to be like the soldiers of the Māori Battalion. They were very brave men. Hopefully I'll end up in university. I want to join the military and have a career in the army.

'The Academy enables me to be myself in the best possible way'

Camron Muriwai offers a student's perspective

I was at Pompallier College when I heard about the Academy and was curious about what I would find there.

What did I find? This place is like a whanau; the people here care about you and want the best for you. Everyone at the Academy is behind you 100 percent and support you in the areas you need supporting. It's all about being myself; the Academy enables me to be myself in the best possible way.

I've always wanted to join the Navy. I thought I would just sign up. I have a brother in the navy and that's how he did

it. But the Cadres told me I was officer material. They gave me the thought that I could do officer training. They encouraged me to stay in school and earn my NCEA credits. They also printed off the entry requirements and gave them to me to read.

I had never considered an idea like that before. I thought about it and decided I'd like to do the training. I've moved to Tikipunga High School and will stay on until the end of Year 13. Now my whole focus is on becoming an officer in the New Zealand Navy.

"This place is like a whanau; the people here care about you and want the best for you."

'It excites my heart to imagine what the future might be for our son'

Lara Clarke offers a parent's perspective

My son has been at the Academy for over 18 months and is in the James Henare class. He's 14 years old and in Year 10 at Tikipunga High School. We first heard about the Academy through my son's intermediate school. A letter was sent home, inviting whanau to attend a gathering, and my dad, sister and I went along to learn more about it.

As we listened, we learnt that the Academy is seeking to identify Māori boys with potential and encourage them to achieve their goals. The Academy supports Māori boys to become better people and promotes them into leadership roles. We realised the Academy could offer things to our boys that we couldn't provide. We applied, and my son and my nephew were accepted.

From day one I said to my son, "The minute you don't like it, tell me. I will come and get you, and bring you home." But from the moment he walked through the door of the Academy, he never looked back. He loves the Academy and attends even when he's sick; he doesn't want to miss anything.

The Cadre are awesome; they love the boys and the boys feel loved. There's freedom to speak and the boys know they're safe to voice their opinions. Feeling good about themselves motivates them to achieve. The boys choose their own mentor - someone they connect with - and each day they write in their personal diaries. If they're having an off day with another member of staff, they can get it off their chest. If there's a problem at school or at the Academy, the Cadre act quickly and do their best to nip it in the bud. The school works closely with the Academy; they know the boys and look out for them.

My son enjoys living with the other boys and likes the boundaries. It's all about safety and no surprises; he knows what he's doing each day. The organisation and the discipline lets the boys know where they stand; what's acceptable and what's not. They know if they cross the line there will be consequences. If they

overstep the mark, they'll be given 'extras' and in most cases only need to be set straight once.

The relationship is very much about whanau working with the Academy. My son used to kick a rugby ball and do maurakau inside the house. When a Cadre heard this, he told my son to straighten up: "No more inside; respect your Mum," and he does. My son listens to what they have to say. They've earned his respect because they treat him respectfully. My son knows where he stands with the Cadre; he knows they're there for him.

The Academy programme is holistic; the wellbeing of each boy is cared for physically, socially, academically, culturally, even spiritually. My son's favourite subject is physical education; he plays rugby, volleyball and uses the gym equipment. He wants to be a physical education teacher. The Cadres provide the guidance my son needs to succeed in the subjects required to achieve his goal and he receives extra support in the subjects he's not so good at. Our older son has an apprenticeship in turf management and I now know that I don't have to worry about my other son. The Academy will give him the support he needs to achieve his goals.

I notice many differences in my son since he enrolled in the Academy. He's more respectful towards other people and considers them first. Now when he wants to do something, instead of being impulsive he will consider the options and respond in a mature manner. He listens to his parents and is guided by our comments. He accepts the reasons we give for not having the latest things, the brands and the labels.

The Academy is like a brotherhood and my son has developed good close friendships with four boys in his year. I believe he's establishing friends for life and if he hadn't gone to the Academy he wouldn't have developed these strong bonds and solid friendships. I've also noticed that my son is developing

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different interests and finding things in common with the other boys.

Educationally my son's doing so much better, noticeably so, and I feel so proud of his efforts. Before, trying to get him to read a book was a real struggle but now he's reading books because he realises it will help him to achieve his goals. He was weak in maths but now he's motivated to learn. On a recent trip to Taupo I noticed he was testing his skills in mental arithmetic by calculating in his head the distances between towns. We had a conversation about different ways to calculate numbers. "How do you add numbers, Mum?" he asked.

The Academy is opening doors and sharing different pathways to success. Here the boys have a chance to do different things and be exposed to good role models. They have opportunities to meet people and clarify options for their future. They've met Ruben Wiki and some of the Warriors. Kelvin Davis, a local member of parliament, took one boy to parliament. Cadres have taken the older boys on trips to Auckland University. As a parent I could never organise such visits; I wouldn't know how to make it happen. Realistically if the boys were living at home, they would never have access to such opportunities.

The boys are expected to participate in a wide variety of events such as the election debate for Te Tai Tokerau Māori Seat in 2011, the Inter-platoon Haka

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'At home we're learning too'

- From Pg5

Competition, the Anzac Day Parade, and the Laying of Crosses Ceremony in the Field of Remembrance for those who passed away during the last wars. The Academy organises entertainment nights, where the boys perform rap, haka, taiaha, korero and boxing. It's good to see the boys doing all these things; teenage boys don't usually perform in front of people. It excites my heart to imagine what the future might be for our son.

At the Academy, my son is learning how to eat properly and take care of his body. He's expected to do physical activities every day and eat a good diet. When he comes home for holidays the rules relax and he puts on weight. As soon as he returns to the Academy he knows he has to lose weight and increase his fitness. The challenge for our whanau is how to bring the Academy home. It's something we have work on at home; we're learning too.

When my son comes home he talks in te reo Māori because he can! I feel his pride as he develops fluency in his own language. Already he's learnt so much more than we know. He knows how to mihi and pepeha. On marae, our family is good in the kitchen; we're happy to serve as the ringawera, the kitchen workers. We're not as good at korero. I can see in the future our son will be able to speak for us on marae; he will be able to welcome people on and do the wero with his taiaha. He won't be held back, feeling too shy to step forward.

The Academy is keeping the memory of A Company alive, holding up their memory and everything they stood for: honour, bravery, respect, integrity, courage and pride. We're proud to be associated with the Māori Battalion. We have one uncle still alive who was in the Battalion; two others have died and one is buried overseas. For us, it's a great privilege to have the boys learn about and walk in the footsteps of these great leaders. The boys are constantly encouraged to live up to the name of the Māori Battalion in a positive way. It feels good, knowing our son is on the right track and being groomed to become one of the next generation of the Māori Battalion.

Looking back, I recall my dad's reluctance to send his mokopuna to the Academy. He was concerned the Academy would encourage our son to go with guns. His brother went to war and he didn't want to send off another boy. Now my father is very proud of his mokopuna; he sees the changes in my son and in my nephew. He sees our boys surrounded by brotherly figures who are willing to work with them and steer them onto a good course. He knows that if issues arise, then steps will be taken to resolve them.

As a mum, I want my son to be the best he can be and especially to be happy. I don't want to see my son struggling. I want him to choose a good career path and have the knowledge he needs to enter the field he wants to succeed in. As a Mum, if I know my son feels safe, I can relax; I feel happy when he's happy.

You can't make a teenager do something they don't want to do. My son relishes every challenge the Cadre put before him. The challenges don't stop; they keep coming. My son is grasping every opportunity and going for it. At the end of the day, it's all for the boys. The boys are achieving in so many ways and even the smallest things count for so much.

The struggle for me in this journey is not having my son at home during the week. It's been hard on mama! I remember in the early days I was one of those mums who call all the time to check on her son. Staff accepted me and responded kindly to all my questions. They reassured me that my son was doing okay. Over time I began to see this for myself and I gradually stopped calling so often. I saw how much my son loved the Academy and also the huge benefits for him and for us as a whanau. This year I've been able to step back. I realise other new mums need the attention of staff. I know in my heart that my son is well settled and enjoying himself.

The most important thing I have to say about the Academy is this: I am really happy that my son is enrolled here. On Mondays and Wednesdays, when I take him to rugby practice, we talk in the car. I love hearing about his daily routines and duties. His stories remind me that it's all for his own good. I'm convinced my son will one day walk away from the Academy with the things that really

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matter in life: self esteem, a brotherhood of life-long friends, a good high school education, a sense of purpose, clear goals for his future, the life skills to look after himself, the ability to make good decisions, the confidence and skill to speak for our family in te reo Māori, and the ability to conduct himself with knowledge and pride in his culture.

If someone wanted my advice, as a parent, on whether or not to send their son to the Academy I'd strongly encourage them to apply. I tell all my workmates about the Academy. Some hear the word 'academy' and think it's a borstal for naughty Māori boys; they shut off straight away not realising the opportunity passing them by. I hope the reputation of the Academy will continue to grow so that others will realise that the military side offers healthy discipline and routine, strong boundaries and clear direction, and opportunities that would not otherwise be available to our sons. The kaupapa of the Academy is an idea whose time has come. Already I see its healthy and holistic approach producing good young men on the way to becoming good citizens.

'The Academy is giving the boys the backbone they need to get through life'

Moea Armstrong offers a parent's perspective

My son entered the Academy in the 2011 Fred Baker intake. He's 14 years old and in Year 10 at Te Kura Kaupapa Māori o Te Rawhiti Roa, a Māori immersion school. He has a younger brother and older siblings. His father is a returned soldier and has many whakapapa links to the 28th Māori Battalion. He attended the opening ceremony of the Academy and we gradually got to know about it over time. I come from a pacifist background and was initially reluctant to engage in the possibility of applying for a place for my boy. I didn't think he'd fit in to an army-type routine but, as he was so keen for the experience and as this year has progressed, my thinking has changed.

I remember, during the application process, saying to the Chief Cadre, "I just want my son to put his shoulders back and stand up." Before he came to the Academy, he tended to avoid conversation and any sort of social engagement. Since coming to the Academy however, his stature has changed. Finding his way and developing friendships, he has begun to look up and outwards, with a straighter backbone. He's walking taller. The Academy is giving the boys the backbone they need to get through life.

The Cadres are important. We're older parents and a big attraction for us was enabling our son to develop relationships with younger men who have energy, enthusiasm, integrity, discipline and talents. As older parents, we knew we could only shape our boy so much as we both have such busy lives. At the same time, we knew the value of whanau but felt we might not be able to provide that strength in his life as we live apart. The Academy offered him another solid and close extended family.

Academy staff are very focused, committed and clear about the kaupapa and their role in it. I was impressed by what they each bring to their work; their strengths are real strengths. One Cadre is a talented musician. My boy is now playing the drums and the guitar but had he not been at the Academy, perhaps

he wouldn't have had the opportunity to learn. Also, he has been able to take up boxing, which he now loves, because another Cadre is a New Zealand Commonwealth boxing representative. My son tended to be quiet and shy, and the fitness training has boosted his self-confidence. With increased self esteem and confidence he's been able to develop socially and now feels part of a bigger family.

Going to the Academy has been a step up for my son; it offers a totally stimulating learning environment that's hard to put into words. It's a place where 'who they actually are' will come through and 'whatever their talents,' these will be spotted and developed. Cadre talk to the skills and talents of each boy and find so many ways to nurture their talents. The variety of skills here means any potential show of talent will be noticed. 'You have a great drummer in your whanau,' a Cadre said to me a while back. 'Who knew?' I replied.

What I appreciate is that spotting and developing the talent of each boy is a shared responsibility of the family and the Academy. It's not all up to us as parents. An African proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child" and the Academy is a village raising each child with their parents. In my view the Academy is the closest expression of a papakainga that we're going to see in 2011 and for some years beyond. We all know that's the proper way to raise children – with everyone in the village helping. In a papakainga you would have seen the talents of youth because you were constantly watching them play with one another. At the Academy, the Cadre are constantly watching, supporting and growing particular talents. They see the value of multiple talents being nurtured for the life of the community.

The Academy exposes the boys to a range of experiences and opportunities. My son participated in a presentation on the Peace Foundation 'Cool Schools' approach to conflict resolution. Now if he has an argument at home with his

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brother, I say: 'What's the Cool School approach in a situation like this? It's exciting to see him apply new skills to build a stronger relationship with his brother.'

Career trips and career services early in the term give the boys a clear sense of purpose and focus for their studies. The emphasis for the junior students is to prepare for the future and explore a wide range of options. For the seniors, the career trips and services are tailored to nail down their individual aspirations so that when they leave the Academy they are know where they're going and have earned sufficient qualifications needed to take their next step.

With all this attention and support, our son is doing really well in school. He wants to become an architect and is now clear about his goal. A benefit of being connected to the Academy is that we now have a better understanding of the difference between unit standards and achievement standards. As a consequence, it's easier for our son to track back from his career goal to what he's doing now and focus on the standards he needs to achieve. He was always good at art and is now doing technical drawing by correspondence. His future is clear; he knows what he has to do.

There's been no disappointment in this journey so far, apart from the fact I

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'I want other whanau to experience this'

- From Pg7

miss him when he's away from home! We're busy during the week and we know he's better off at the Academy; he's not wasting time watching television. There's no television or play station at the Academy. If my son was living at home, he'd be on play station seven days a week. I couldn't provide the discipline he receives at the Academy and I know it's a weakness to have to say that. The Academy reminds me that I still have challenges as a parent.

Participating in the Academy has raised some big questions for our family, such as, 'Could we afford to send our younger boy?' He would love to go. I imagine he would thrive in this environment. I recognise my own self-interest but I also have altruistic concerns. There are limited places available and I want other whanau to experience what we've experienced by sending their son to the Academy. Its impact will have considerable positive effects on Māori communities in the North.

In Whangarei, for example, there's high unemployment, violence in some homes and on the streets, with many families living in poverty. These problems affect the ahua of the whole town. As a Pakeha mother of Māori children, I'm very aware that there's very little visibly 'Māori' about the look of this town, apart from a few pou in front of the library. How can my sons grow to value their culture, when it's not valued in the city in which they live?

When I come to the Academy I'm reminded of the too high price of citizenship paid by the Māori Battalion. Those men hoped that by representing their country bravely during the war and by fighting courageously alongside their Paheka brothers, their actions would help to change the discrimination they experienced at home. Those men went to war to prove they were equal. For them, going the extra mile on the battlefield was all about the future of their people back home. They died for the equality of Māori in our society, but their desire for basic human rights and the discrimination they experienced decades ago persists today.

In response to this ongoing hardship, we want our kids to succeed academically

so they can gain the full citizenship that comes with equal outcomes. This equality is still elusive and its absence is an indictment on our society. If I, as a Pakeha, can spot racism a mile off, our boys can spot racism and discrimination two miles off.

Today the Academy is taking up that battle by going against the grain of mainstream education. Instead of constantly lowering expectations for the educational outcomes of Māori boys and accepting poor results, the Academy is striving to raise expectations, challenging the boys to scale new heights. I would much rather have them here in the safe embrace of the Academy, knowing they're on their way to an exciting future, than out on Vine Street where they're at risk of getting into trouble.

At the Academy, my son has more of a chance. Here he is receiving what amounts to a subsidised boarding school level of education that provides wrap around care. The value of what we are getting is very high, both personally and for Te Tai Tokerau. We're so lucky; I'm convinced the Academy provides a springboard for these boys to do well. It offers the kind of educational opportunities usually available only to families on much higher incomes. Money counts. Through MPEI, ASB Community Trust has provided 'a cut through' for our boys. In many respects, this funding is more helpful and relevant than a Treaty settlement we may never see. This opportunity is right here, right now; it's real and it's gold.

The beauty of the Academy is that it's creating life-long relationships and providing opportunities our boys will be able to harness in the prime of their working lives. It's developing whanaungatanga connections that can enrich their teenage years and help sustain their adult life. I believe we will see the full impact of the Academy when the graduates are in their 30s, 40s and 50s. They will find themselves working together across their whanau, hapu and iwi and in their other working lives. They will know each other's character – who they are and how they are – and this will enable them to engage easily with one another and progress initiatives that will benefit their communities and all the people in the North. Te Tai Tokerau collectively will reap the harvest some time later that ASB Community Trust has started here.

In 2011, the Academy hosted the final debate for the Te Tai Tokerau electoral seat. A crowd gathered to hear all the candidates speak and the boys humbled these politicians. They sat in full uniform in two rows, listening intently to the political bantering. They behaved so well and conveyed, through their presence and focus, the intensity and promise of youth. At the end of the evening, they responded with a haka that all the other students there joined. It was a powerful display of things to come from some of the future leaders of Te Tai Tokerau – deeply rooted in the traditions of the 28th Māori Battalion, with the whanaungatanga and skills to win the peace.

Conclusion

Our approach at the Academy is to put the boys at the centre of everything we do and wrap systems of support around each one. Our programme is designed to enable the boys to achieve their dreams.

Our aim is for each boy to leave the Academy with the minimum qualification required to enroll at a university. To achieve this aim we seek to change mindsets and focus on measureable outcomes.

We want whanau and schools to understand our expectations so we can work together to achieve positive outcomes for the boys who come to the Academy. We want Academy boys to excel in whatever interests them. We raise their expectations to go on to higher education at a tertiary level, to enter training and, for those who are keen, to join the defence forces.

We expect Academy boys to go on to exercise leadership and contribute positively to whanau, hapu, iwi and society. Our commitment to the boys is this: "If you commit to the programme, we will get you through whatever it takes."