

Presentation for Intergenerational Hui 2020

Kia ora, I am Stacey, I've recently joined the OHRN committee and taken on the role as secretary, but have been working alongside the network since 2016 in my role as a kaiako at a local early childhood centre and more recently a kindy where I hope to model a similar project. I'll quickly run through my lived experience with the OHRN and then delve into the beefier framework of the network.

The OHRN for me was a huge support in my journey in adopting a local section of river for my early learning centre, I saw a need for this project to spark an ongoing relationship with our awa and wider community but was really at a loss as to how to go about this as it was uncharted territory and I had no one to model the project off.

So I cast the net into the local community and two lovely ladies from the network Helene And Karen, jumped at the chance to guide and support me responding with positive enthusiasm and were super well informed ally's in the inception stages, and thus my adventures with the OHRN began!

What personally drives me to volunteer my time and energy into being part of the OHRN is my passion for advocating for our tamariki. I believe it takes a village to raise a child and society has become increasingly more secular than the past so in my practice I really strive to bridge the gaps between our people and regenerate the community spirit. It is also really important to me to help children have a more biocentric perspective of life, rather than a homocentric view; this is for the better of our planet and all creatures upon it. A biocentric view sees humans, animals, plants, water and landforms as all part of the same eco system, resulting in no one species having the right to dominate or destroy the habitats of others. I feel the OHRN's foundational roots really intertwine with mine here, our why's really align.

I feel when someone can have the empathy to think how their actions can affect others and the environment, rather than just themselves directly, it can cause a domino effect of positive and pro-social choices, and creating generations to come who have thoughtful interactions with both each other and our planet. I feel nurturing those relationships with nature and natural spaces is crucial for human development.

At first I admit I found the network a really intimidating arena to step into, I didn't see anyone like me represented within it and I was faced with these wise, skilful, knowledgeable and experienced bunch of people. I faced a bit of imposter syndrome, feeling like yikes they are going to realise I have no clue what I'm doing and I'm winging it and laugh me out of the place. BUT in fact I found I was really supported and everyone is actually just kind of winging it and learning as they go and if we wait to be the "Experts" in our fields we can miss the crucial mahi needed now. The network really empowered me to see that my voice is valid and valued, adding a differing collection of perspectives and experiences.

The Ōpāwaho Heathcote River Network is a collaborative group that was formed in June 2015, (and became an Incorporated Society and a Charitable Trust in November 2017.) I saw this from the sidelines and have watched how wonderfully it has grown and evolved over time. There has definitely been increased visibility and recognition since.

We are a community group committed to working to restore the ecological health of the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River and its catchment.

Our purpose is to Facilitate a collaborative network which promotes and advocates for the regeneration of the whole of the Ōpāwaho Heathcote River.

In short our purpose is to be the voice for our river.

And We are doing this because we care deeply about the health and the mauri of the River; about connecting our community around the River; and, about advocating on behalf of the River.

Our main pillars of mahi are, Health & Mauri of the Awa, Advocacy, Connecting the Community, Partnerships & Relationships AND Administering the OHRN.

We have a collaborative approach which means we work with the agencies such as Christchurch City Council & Environment Canterbury on river issues, and the 'doers' - the community groups, schools and others that work along the river.

We are also involved in catchment-wide river advocacy and events such as the annual Mother of all Clean-ups, World Rivers Day, Estuary Fest and CCC Walking Festival River walks.

One of our successes is our growing number of community groups we have involved under the umbrella of the OHRN 31 and our involvement in Zone Committee sediment working group which Annabelle can speak to in more detail.

Some of our Challenges;

There needs to be a lot more communication between the invested agencies and community groups and a clear way to do so. In the hope that greater dialogue translates to all agencies knowing what's happening in these spaces we are caring for so they may work cohesively rather than adversely with one another.

We are struggling at the moment with deciding where we sit in the balance of being a voluntary organization, how much do we have the capacity to take on and do justice to, where do we put our main focus, do we have a responsibility or capacity to delve in to education the sector,we are finding we are being approached with lots of opportunities which speaks volumes to how we have grown as a network and how our mahi is valued and seen in the community,.... but this has us at a crossroads of what routes to take next, eliciting really meaningful and meaty discussions. The next piece of work is to further develop and define our Strategic Plan and Action Plan for the next 3-5years

Some of the issues which are impacting on the health and mauri of the river are things that can only be helped by a collaborative approach and focus of \$, compliance, education and behaviour change from both the agencies and the community. Two key issues for the OH are sediment from the Port Hills and construction sites in the catchment and contaminated stormwater from roads, residential properties and industrial sites entering the river.

There is a need to raise awareness and provide accessible education. So many people are wanting to take action in their communities but they don't always know how or where to start. This was something I myself felt and now want to strive to bridge the gaps within the network so we can successfully connect people with nature and the relevant information, people and mahi opportunities

Currently we are in the first steps to developing an authentic cultural narrative and this is a big undertaking which we're really excited about the potential in.

A challenge for us as a group is to be technological savvy and keep up to date with social media and how new tech works. Having a successful online presence.

In all honestly we have a largely aging committee and we want and need to gain a youth perspective that can also guide our work and be inclusive of the diverse range of voices in our community.

As a community group securing funding is always an issue and our work to develop our organisation, secure our strategic direction, communicate our story and empower the community all links into the success of this.

So come and join us in the challenge of creating change for the environment and the community. We would love to have your input and involvement!??