

The seeds of influence

Warriors of Change

**A Community-led development for youth
work**



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Our Story

"Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age-old foundations; You will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings." – Isaiah 58:12



'WOC are the Seeds of Influence'

Warriors of Change (WOC) is a local young adult leadership group based in Randwick Park, Manurewa. WOC is an original long-term holistic programme done by locals for locals but catalysed by Dave and Denise Tims who have a history of youth worker development. In 2011, the Tims moved into Randwick Park and began networking with existing youth-minded people like Janice Thompson and John Fale who were running a paid youth programme at the time.

The youth programme then was run by paid professional youth workers at the local school and so it was an opportunity for people who Dave had pin-pointed as having leadership potential to see youth work in action. The potential leaders then formed WOC when the funded programme was cut and they met every Monday night for leadership training so that there was something for the youth to engage in. WOC became a very different type of model to actual paid youth work as it grew out of the passion of young adults to help other youth and Dave and Denise built on that passion by training them.

Thus, the 'seed' was Dave and Denise who saw potential in the local youth and they built on this by sowing positive influence through youth leadership development. The Tims' were influential in matching people's dreams and skills to opportunity, for example, taking the passion young leaders had for their own youth and implanting ideas such creating youth spaces for the young people to hang out at.

WOC develops its leaders in their spiritual, moral, educational, vocational, inter-relationships and economic aspects of life. WOC members serve in Randwick for at least 3 years, journeying alongside the youth in the community. From the beginning, they have helped to provide a safe and fun environment for the youth, focussed on building their own and others' character and self-esteem and connected and shared the Good News of Jesus through leadership. The vision is one of transformation in the lives of all those connected with WOC where 'Gods Kingdom on Earth comes as it is in Heaven' as well as creating a community which projects the principle of 'love the lord your God with all your heart and soul and love your neighbour as you love yourself.' Such visions have filtered

through to other youth who themselves have undertaken leadership opportunities as they believe in making Randwick a positive place to belong.

So WOC don't just live in Randwick, they are a part of the greater neighbour-led approach aiming at affecting positive change in the community by getting alongside locals.

In 2012, WOC began to put into practice their visions of Gods Kingdom, by using important learnings from their Monday night leadership trainings to create the Soufpac youth club. There are now three youth clubs for local children- Soufpac, Up2 and TNG- and as many as 50 local children attending these three clubs. The clubs engage young people in activities such as sharing meals together, playing sports and activities, going on trips and camps and sharing stories of the bible or life once a week.

"The WOC model has worked because there's a vision, a mission. There is also a passion for the community and a passion to empower those in Randwick Park, especially the youth. WOC have also had relationships with the local board. They've considered the bigger picture and not having a poverty mind but thinking of ways to better the community" -John Fale, 2017

WOC leaders believe in creating positive and safe spaces for the local children to exist. WOC believes that by creating a community of care for youth, they are enabling youth to develop their character, identity and leadership qualities and feel a sense of belonging to the community. It is often feeling a sense of belonging to these youth clubs that continues to attract the local youth. By encouraging young people to take ownership of their lives and to reclaim Randwick as their dream hood, they will feel empowered to pursue their own dreams.

But building Gods Kingdom in Randwick come with its challenges and WOC's annual graduations that celebrate the lives of its members provide leaders with the opportunity to share their experiences. Each graduate in the first 3 years presents a speech about their key learnings in front of their family and the community. Take for example, in 2012, Kataraina Tims recalled in her speech that "...not everything goes smoothly. With Soufpac, some nights are crazy where kids don't listen and they are running wild and you just feel like its hectic...but these can be the best of times as it challenges us and reveals what

the team needs to work on. So it has been good in developing me as a better leader”.

Further, WOC is a diverse group, with young adults coming from all walks of life. Take for example, the story of Ben Tamarua. Ben was the inaugural intake in 2011 and had a desire to work with kids but didn't know how to undertake that. Dave was vital in implanting the idea of 'youth work' which got Ben on board to the first WOC member. Prior to partaking in WOC, Ben had experienced a hard life in the hood and was hooked onto drugs and alcohol. But since joining WOC, his life had transformed positively. He started up the Soufpac kids club for primary schoolers after noticing that quite a few boys were hanging out at the Tims' garage. Ben also helped to start Up2 in 2015 and through all this experience Ben grew a desire to pursue his studies in Education in order to understand more about working with young people.

"WOC was and still is a place where I feel safe from all the negativity thrown towards me at home. I felt like what I was missing at home, I could find it with the Tims [Dave and Denise]. I joined WOC in 2011 to get away from my problems at home, but with the help of Dave who taught me how to cope with what I was going through, I soon learnt how to cope with things. He gave me the chance to start up a youth group called Soufpac, from then I felt the passion and love for kids start to grow. This made me realise that there are other people out there like us that show care and love. We also made sure that people felt included". - Ben Tamarua, 2017

Another example of WOC instilling hope in young adults' is through the story of Jordyn Harris and his mother Ted. Jordyn and his family were living down 'Trimdon St' in 2011 when he was connected with WOC. The first few years in Randwick were tough for Ted as a single-mum to Jordyn and Legend but seeing her eldest son become a leader to create a better Randwick environment by minimising the prevalence of drug and alcohol use and 'gang stuff' was a blessing. Ted first bumped into Dave when "he was doing the bread run". She was invited to join a Monday night WOC bible study where she met all the 'young ones'. Her youngest son Legend joined the Soufpac kids club too and she "went as a Soufpac mum [to serve] supper for the kids, and the naughty ones would sit by [her]". Ted no longer needed to worry about her sons' whereabouts. For Ted, it was humbling to see Jordyn graduate WOC in 2015, go on to pursue a Level 3 youth work certificate at Alfriston College and even get a job there.

Ben and Jordyn's stories reflect the hope that WOC can instil in young people by matching their skills with leadership opportunities. Such stories are worth telling as they are successful! By sharing more of these success stories, we can come to believe in the goodness in Randwick. These are Randwicks' stories of hope that the media fails to tell as negativity makes better news. WOC strive to bring and celebrate the Good News in Randwick. WOC continues their legacy in Randwick Park because these catalysts of change continue to see the goodness and potential in their community and the opportunities that can come from fostering a neighbourhood where people 'do' community beyond their door steps.

WOC are truly living out the change that they wish to see in their hood.



Our Clubs

"Sometimes I take things for granted and forget who I am. But every time I look into a young person's eyes when helping out at the Soufpac youth group, it's such a beautiful and unique thing because I see a mirror reflecting a person I once knew- me, as a young child." – Meliana Ngata (ex-WOC member, 2012)



The Soufpac Club- developing our local children (Primary School)

Soufpac is the weekly-run club for 7 to 10 year olds. Soufpac began in 2012 as a boys club which ran in the Tims infamous garage by Ben Tamarua. Not long after the club began, young girls and female WOC leaders also wanted to be a part of the club and so Soufpac became a girls and boys club.

Some key features of these Soufpac children are their energetic and curious natures and willingness to engage in activities with each other. Every term, Soufpac engage in activities around specific themes. For example in one term, Soufpac's theme was 'Loving Our Backyard'. This involved weeding and planting their own vegetables at the Community House, going on a trail walk at the local Totara Track to learn about the importance of nature in Te Ao Māori, listening to Bible teachings about nature and creating crafts such as making their own 'grass man'. This theme was important as it taught children about the importance of values like care, respect, nurture and aroha through the use of the environment. By exemplifying these values through nature, the WOC leaders encouraged their children to show the same values in other areas of life such as in their family or at school. This theme was also important as some children had never planted their own vegetables before or cooked using vegetables from the garden. Some children have also had minimal exposure to places beyond Randwick hence a bush walk can become an exciting and new experience for some.

Other themes have included Identity, Fruits of the Spirit, New Experiences and Sports. The New Experiences term in particular was very important for many children as some had never done activities like going to the beach or ice-skating before. This is typical of areas of high poverty where many kids do not have the opportunity to experience places beyond their home. It is an important theme and experience to have with children as we tend to assume that children (in general) get

Last term (Term 1, 2017) our theme was New Experiences. Usually before a term begins, the WOC leaders and Lil WOCer's meet to plan what the term will look like. My most memorable part of the New Experiences term was when Soufpac went to Paradise Ice-skating. This was a new experience for many of them and seeing their faces light up with the determination to get up and keep skating when they didn't know how to, was humbling. It was a blessing to just have fun and laugh with them." - Lafoai Luaitalo, 2017

the same experiences or exposure to the same type of leisure activities. This is not so true of some children in Randwick. Further, these new experiences are important for personal development as exposing them to new ideas, learnings and places help children to learn and have a sense of location and belonging in relation to others and geography. This is why Soufpac is critical in creating a safe space where children's learning development occurs. But such new experiences are also true for some leaders who have had limited life experiences and are themselves experiencing new things.

Lastly, routine for the Soufpac leaders is to meet before a term begins to plan the term. It is practice that there is an outing or trip every 3 or so weeks so that the children can see how the particular theme plays out in external contexts. All leaders (whether WOC or Lil WOCer) are given an equal opportunity to run a club night so that they can put into practice their leadership trainings.

Most importantly, a child's favourite part of the club night is supper which they are given before being dropped home. This will usually include fruit, baking, sandwiches or food which the children themselves may have cooked during the Soufpac night.



TNG-The Next Generation (High School)

TNG is the weekly club for high school youth. In 2013, locals noticed a lot of tagging and drinking occurring at the skate park, some of which was done by high school kids. However the issue was that there was nothing existing at the time for youth to engage in. WOC responded to the problem by forming TNG in 2013 out of their desire to get 'anti-social' high school kids off the streets and engaged in positive social groups. Approachable but strong WOC leaders like Paihere Tims and Ben Tamarua were keen to develop these youth in more serious areas of life such as education, prospects of employment, spirituality and family and TNG has continued to grow since.

TNG is different to Soufpac and Up2 as the youth involved are older and more mobile thus have the ability to go on camps, trips and do a wider range of activities. TNG spend about half of their time in the community and the other half doing external activities and like Soufpac, they split their year into themes. For example, "last term was about culture and family where we looked at different nationalities by doing coin-making through to whakapapa learning for our Maori youth. We also had non-alcoholic kava and a range of other activities with the term ending on a Marae stay in Te Kauwhata. Some kids have never been on a marae before which was cool" says Paihere.

Further, Paihere states that "Camp out at the Waitakere Ranges was also memorable time because we had a spiritual night where the kids had to think back on their troubles (sins) and nail it to a cross- asking Jesus to renew their lives and forgive them for past troubles". This symbolic activity is one of many analogies from the Bible used at TNG.

"I like going to TNG because there are cool people, and I like hanging out with them."- London Naea, 2017

"Being a part of TNG meant giving my time to the kids for a better future and for a more understanding of opportunities available outside of Randwick in terms of life skills".

Out of all the clubs, TNG leaders have a stronger relationship with the parents of their youth due to the small numbers and because the youth communicate more with their parents about their involvement and growth in the programme. Parents are also encouraged to get involved in their teenagers' commitment to

TNG whether it be attending WOC graduations where some youth become Lil WOCer's or WOC members or helping out with fundraisers. Thus leaders have formed good connections with not just the youth but with their families.

Paihere Tims, an original member of WOC shares the following stories about the youth he has journeyed alongside.

Felix

"Felix wasn't consistently with TNG. He was jumping from different youth clubs to see what he preferred as a youth (he was still at high school). He felt like he wasn't connected well in TNG but as he got to know the other youth clubs he realised that the leaders couldn't connect one-on-one with him as the clubs were too big. So then he fully committed to TNG until he finished high school. He has been consistent since and has grown to become one of the leaders in TNG. Quite a few of the kids look up to him. He moved on to work at the local skate park [2016-2017] where he connected with more youth. He now has full-time employment. He has come a long way."

Joshua Williams

"Josh always attended on Friday night TNG. He began as a year 9. He was really keen on learning more about his spirituality and he grew into the club and got to know the leaders and became a part of TNG. Even though he has moved to Papakura he still commits to TNG, coming on camps and constantly asking questions about God. He wants to know more and more about him [God]. In 2016 his father passed away and TNG went to support him. We had a prayer night with him at his house. I still see a lot of potential in him and look forward to his future and what he has to bring".



Up2- the age of transition (Intermediate)

Up2- as its name suggests as the age of experimentation and transition- slang for 'what are you up to'- is the weekly club for 10 to 13 year olds.

Up2 grew out of the Soufpac club in 2015. WOC leaders found that many of their youth were either too young for TNG or too old for Soufpac and so behavioural issues formed between the different children. Tonisha Rohe and Ben Tamarua teamed to start up Up2 in 2015. In the early stages of Up2, the leaders realised that many youth were at the stage of entering high school, a significant period where youth can become disorientated and disengaged if there is a lack of support to help them transition from Intermediate. Therefore, *Identity* became a key focus in the club.

Up2 are a colourful bunch and like Soufpac and TNG, some youth turn up once, twice, monthly or never again but investing time in those who do come, whether it's one child or 20, still makes a huge impact. Up2 began as a small group but has grown over the years. The leaders recall building close relationships with the young people that turned up and were excited about the prospect of Up2 growing and for them to utilise that space to connect with other young people in the community who will also be entering high school.



Our Principles

"Values give us a sense of purpose. On a leadership level, when our values are aligned on a daily basis, we have more energy and feel more fulfilled because we are leading from what's important to us. When we don't align with our values, we feel less real, less authentic and become demotivated which reflects in our leadership". - Dave Tims (founder of WOC)



WOC, helping to repair Broken Walls

There is no second-guessing that there *needs* to be a youth development programme in a community characterised by high poverty, unemployment and a high percentage of youth. But the unique thing about the youth development approach in Randwick is that WOC are administered by locals (Tims) who have a passion in developing young people and also involve local youth who understand the characteristics of their community.

Randwick Park is a small but diverse South Auckland community of 6000 people. Of this number, 31% are youth under the age of 15 which evidently reflects the need for youth clubs and activities for young people to engage in. The majority of the neighbourhood is social housing and rental homes where highly deprived families live within- the families of WOC youth. In 2008 the local liquor shop owner was shot and the community have since stood against the drug use, gangs and violence in the neighbourhood with the hope of creating Randwick as a place full of positive dreams.

Thus, creating a place filled with positive dreams means 'doing' life beyond the home. This involves engaging with neighbours and youth on an everyday basis. When WOC leaders walk through the local park or make a quick trip to the dairy or drive away, it is highly likely they'll be noticed and shouted at with a 'Hi' by neighbours or their youth. A simple 'Hi' or a hug by a child or a smile from a parent is significant in many ways. Firstly, it recognises the value of that relationship with the WOC leader. Secondly, it shows the interconnectedness of the work that WOC do in Randwick, where their work is not limited to the night they spend with their young people but extends to everyday interactions. Thus, doing WOC is an intentional way of living as it's committing themselves to not just 2 nights a week but even more when they allow the children to hang out with them, watch them play sports, attend their school and cultural events or play with them at the park.

"There is a need for WOC- we need more WOC. Young people must be empowered to lead, they are our future, it sounds like a cliché quote but when I look at the Manurewa Youth Council and see the calibre of our young people I feel safe for our future. I see WOC as a necessary part of our community" –
Angela Dalton, Manurewa Local Board Chair, 2017

Warriors of Change have been a significant piece to the bigger story of creating hopes and dreams in Randwick. WOC have identified the need for young people to have positive role models and comfortable spaces to exist in. As evident in the previous explanations of the three clubs, there was a strong desire firstly for young adult leaders to be developed and trained so that secondly, they can be positive leaders for their local youth who needed pro-social spaces and activities to engage in. Hence the three different youth clubs tries to cater to various youth and experiences.

WOC volunteer their time and resources to be a part of the magical story unfolding in Randwick. They are working to better themselves which may involve embracing their Christian faith, developing leadership skills learnt through WOC trainings, creating their own academic and employment goals and using this to influence the positive changes they wish to see in their hood.

In 2013, WOC were shown pictures of the old local Skate Park and were asked to share what they represented. WOC said that the Skate Park represented violence, tagging, ugliness, alcohol, drugs, lack of safety and fear- or in other words, poverty. WOC were then asked what it would look like if Jesus came to bring the 'Good News to the Poor', to the community of Randwick Park. These leaders saw the Good News to mean- safe and beautiful streets, good education, decent housing, access to good health, employment, stronger family units, places to belong and participate in, food for hungry children, leadership, connection with God and the healing of families.

"There's a need for a group like WOC in any community. The need for young people to have role models and those who care and believe in them achieving bigger dreams. Sometimes people need others to help them recognise what they're good at. Randwick Park is lucky to have WOC who care about the community and who love the community. There's lots of potential in our kids, and having people to encourage them- that's when exciting things happen! We see potential in our kids and we are a support for our kids."-
Tonisha Rohe, 2017

The development of the new Skate Park in 2014 meant a safe place for their youth to hang out at, and WOC were very much a part of this development that has brought the community together. At any given time, there are numerous activities happening at the local park. This is a symbolic contrast to what the Skate Park and Local Park used to be- a place where the community did not want to participate in.

"WOC was needed for the community. After the shooting at the local liquor shop in 2008, the community came together and started to talk about what they needed. Soon after [in 2011] Dave came in and brought us ideas. A lady at the time who was the President of the RP Residents Association approached Dave to talk more about starting something for the young people and so after a while he recruited young adults to help him with his vision of a 10 year plan." – Ben Tamarua, 2017

The operation of the three youth clubs is also about demonstrating positivity. As the community becomes more aware of young people's involvement in it and therefore the need for the clubs and on the impact WOC is making in the lives of their youth, they too will be inspired to be a part of the greater model of neighbourhood-led development.



Our values- Generosity and Commitment

WOC have two main values- commitment and generosity. Commitment and generosity are an important undertaking as values are like roots of a tree. They help to keep WOC leaders grounded in their vision for youth development.

Commitment in WOC is about becoming the best leader that they wish to see in the hood. It also encompasses a commitment to God, to each other and to the young people they interact with. Committing to WOC includes leadership training every Monday night and one other weekly night running a Youth Club where they implement their leadership training. There are also numerous local events that WOC participate and volunteer in. Thus, WOC leaders are very committed to journeying and developing their local youth. How many 17-25 year olds do you see voluntarily giving up two nights a week for others?

But being committed also “means being present not just physically but emotionally and spiritually... It’s a long-term journey with the kids”, states Tonisha Rohe.

The second value, generosity means being generous with time and resources. WOC members are presumed as having a lot of kindness and aroha, enough of which can benefit themselves and their youth. As said by ex-member Barrie Pine:

“It involves a lot of time- sacrificing and setting time aside to spend on WOC things. For me, working for free, towards something that you love is a heart-warming sacrifice. Being in WOC has also encouraged me to share my money by donating to TNG to help out the youth kids. Giving up Monday nights for WOC and Friday nights plus planning meetings weekly is also something we commit to, I agree that you have to balance work and life and WOC commitments and church stuff. It’s also about participating- showing up in community events for example running the local church service (Harvest Baptist Church) or showing up at one of the youth’s prize giving’s or providing them transport when they are stuck and it happens to be that I’m available or just showing up to Polyfest to support them.”

But behind these two values of commitment and generosity is a core belief that WOC are all made in the image of God- no matter whether they wear a gang

patch or a business suit, each and every person has something good to contribute to the community. This is the belief that they also try to instil in the young people they journey with.

As you will find by the end of this booklet, WOC leaders have massive hearts for their youth and each other. They celebrate together and make time to bond and even support each other when times are hard.



Leadership

Every Monday night, WOC leaders meet to undertake leadership training which can take the form of bible studying, sharing stories with each other, learning and acting out leadership skills, exploring areas of life such as work, study or money or praying for their youth and the community.

All of this takes place in the Tims lounge, a space in which the young adults in Randwick have become familiar with. Once a year, WOC also go away on a camp to bond and to learn more about leadership. Leadership is an important principle in WOC.

“Leadership means taking charge and leading by example. Leadership is a matter of bringing people together and creating an environment where everyone is enjoying them self and learning something about you and the team. It’s almost like teaching. Being the face or head of the body where the parts follow what the mind thinks. The mind and the eyes create the vision for the body to follow” says Paihere.

But Dave and Denise have also been a great example of leadership for WOC leaders. When Janice Thompson was asked about her thoughts on the underlying success of WOC, she expressed that it was “the leadership through Dave and Denise. They are great role models in building positive relationships with the people in the community, and living in the area and actively participating is key”.

John Fale also expressed a similar view- “Dave and Denise do a lot in the community...they have great networks with others in the community.”

So, not only do you need engaging and passionate young adults wanting to lead their youth but they also need great leaders to ‘lead’ and to show them how leadership can be done.



Relationships

Nobody knows its community better than locals and nobody knows the youth better than those who journey alongside them. This is why WOC are important in helping to develop the youth, as they live in Randwick and genuinely want to build relationships with their neighbours and their young people. As put by Janice Thompson, "WOC are useful as they were working [personal employment] and mentoring even outside of the youth nights. You can't buy that in the programme. Kids feel valued in the relationships".

Creating positive and meaningful relationships are important in WOC, but not only in relationships with their youth but with each other and within their own families.

House visits which involve meeting all of the youths' parents are also important for building relationships in the community. As indicated by Heather Dallaston, "I was interested in how I could build relationships with the parents. This is intentional. When new kids came we did house visits to build trust with the parents and encouraged them to be involved".

Kane Brown offers a different view on 'relationships'-

"I have built positive relationships by being involved in all 3 clubs. It has made me feel more mature and I know these relationships are worth it. For example, I didn't really know Franco at the start of year 9 at Alfriston but when I started getting more involved in the youth groups I started to get to know him a bit better. I'm glad that we met cos we are really close now. Franco and I are both leaders at Soufpac and youth kids at TNG".

Therefore, WOC's relationships with the community can take many forms. The point is that WOC is a part of creating a collective culture where everyone can feel like they belong and be involved, in order that people don't just do life in their homes but with each other, outside of their doorstep.

Volunteering out of aroha

WOC leaders simply 'do' leadership as a way of life hence volunteering their time and resources become an authentic expression of aroha as they genuinely want to be positive role models for their youth. WOC are not paid to do the work they do, and we can't put money value on the relationships and meaningful experiences they have done with their locals. Therefore, volunteering is tied to the concept of aroha. As stated by Tonisha, "when you're not paid, you don't come in with a hidden agenda. It's more genuine and it comes from the heart. We are driven by our love for our kids and our community and you have to love it otherwise you do more harm than good."

Showing genuine aroha for the youth by giving them the necessary time and space to grow also enables us to move away from the labels we associate with young people. WOC actually get to know the youth beyond the 'generalised labels' of young people. Every young person has a story to tell and sometimes they just want to be heard. They need to know that they are being heard purely because the leaders want to hear them and not because of some other driver like money.

"It's an appreciative inquiry approach where each person is of worth and value rather than being seen as a problem" says Janice Thompson.



Time

For many young people, life can change within a week, a month or a year. There are many young people who were involved in the clubs that have moved away from Randwick. This is why time is a critical principle in the work that WOC do as an hour can be of high value to a young person who attends once but never to be seen again. It's about sowing the seeds of positive influence during the time available with the youth. This can be as simple as playing with them at the local park, inviting them over for dinner or a sleepover, or simply asking how their day was.

"As they grow older, especially the primary aged Soufpac kids, they'll always remember the positive leaders they met. It's this positive instillation of values that influence young people for life" says Janice Thompson.

Obviously their choice to not turn up every week affects the level of engagement and influence WOC can have however success for WOC is about sowing in those seeds of love, positivity, motivation, care and respect in the relationship they form with a young person. It is the love, feeling of worth and value they give that one child that makes their effort and time meaningful.

A great example of this is the untold story of Franco Apera which you can read under "untold stories".



Being Seen

"I have never met such passionate, driven, big-hearted people." Meliana Ngata (2012)

WOC are visible in many community events such as the annual Christmas events and local fundraisers, hanging at the Skate Park with youth or doing house-visits to meet the families of their youth.

'Being seen' by the community at large helps to reinforce not only the interconnectedness of WOC's work but also their passion and commitment to the volunteer work they do for young people. It is important for the community to not only hear about WOC and what they do but to also see them in action. It is seeing that makes people believe that they are the catalysts of change in the hood.

WOC know their youth because they have taken the time to journey with them. The trust and respect they've earned from their young people have enabled them to instil hope and positive changes to the lives of youth and sometimes, this change can come from simply offering them a ride home, praising an achievement or visiting their youth at home. Therefore, 'being seen' is a part of 'doing life' and living in Randwick with each other beyond our homes- it is how neighbourhoods should function.



Creating Opportunities

The unique thing about WOC is that it creates opportunities for its leaders to pursue further leadership experiences, it helps them to build strong friendships and whanau networks and also encourages its leaders to pursue career and educational goals. All WOC members are mentored throughout their 3+ years to pursue opportunities whether its in their family, vocational, spiritual or educational areas of life. Many WOC members have gone on to pursue their dreams using the skills they gained from WOC, but they have also maintained their close connections to Randwick Park.

"WOC made me grow not only as a person but as a person of the community. It gave me people skills, knowing how to understand people and how to become a better father. It opened doors that I thought could not be opened...well I never thought I would be a part of the Manurewa youth council." – Christopher Ngatai, 2017



Milestones

"We are the "Warriors of Change", and what we do is help to change and transform other peoples' lives through the love and grace of God, purely because we love to." – Meliana Ngata (2012)



'Youth Stand up Against New Drug Store' 2013

A significant event WOC instigated was a protest in May 2013 against the opening of a new psychoactive substances drug store on Great South Road Manurewa. With the support of Local MP Louisa Wall and local leaders, WOC peacefully protested outside the 'High Zone' drug store, proposing that it be closed down immediately. The result was just that.

WOC member Tonisha Rohe shared that "as a young person, Manurewa already has a bad reputation with regards to alcohol, drugs and violence. Allowing this store to sell legal highs promotes more drug usage". Similar sentiments were shared by fellow member Susan Fotunga who expressed that "there is a primary school two minutes away. What are we teaching our children, that drugs and alcohol are OK? It's not OK and we need to put an end to this!"

"WOC do and are making positive changes. They speak up, they act and their members are proud of who they are and celebrate living in Randwick Park. They are finishing their educational dreams and aspirations and are being the change they wish to see in the world. That's inspirational and transformational". -Louisa Wall, Labour Party MP, 2017

The event was reported nationally and WOC's substantial leadership and commitment was complimented by Louisa Wall as being "loud, proud and sustained. They kept up their opposition and helped to educate and mobilize the community until the shop was closed."

This protest reflects some important learnings of WOC's involvement in the community. Firstly, they strongly opposed the opening of the drug store as WOC's vision was to create a place where positivity, dreams and good things flourish. The drug store was to do the complete opposite and would have made the issues of drug use worse at the hands of those keen to make money by feeding off people's addiction. WOC did not like this at all, and they rallied their youth and local leaders to make a stand. Secondly, this is leadership in action. WOC are using their leadership trainings to fight against the negativity in the community. Lastly, WOC are 'being seen' by the community in action. This goes to prove that young people, from Randwick, are capable of creating change and influencing 'policy' at a local level.

Our 'local home-made' bus shelters

One day, Dave Tims took a van-load of local Dad's to Botany. They drove around the streets and were asked to identify how it was different to the streets of Randwick Park. The Dad's pointed out that there were more bus shelters on any given street than in Randwick as a whole. So how did WOC and their locals respond?

WOC were living out their motto of being the change they wish to see in their hood by helping other locals to build their own bus shelter on Shifnal Drive. This again was a protest against the lack of bus shelters in Randwick Park. The team rallied together and built this bus shelter in one day to instigate Auckland Council action.



Papakura Stream planting

WOC members were also involved in a 2 day planting of native trees worth \$20K at the local Papakura Stream. Many community members rallied together to get the job done and a few years on, these native trees have spread their roots and made the Papakura Stream look beautiful.



Living in the slums of Manila 2014

In 2014, WOC had the opportunity to travel to the Philippines to experience life living in the slums of Manila, Quezon City Philcoa for 16 days. This spiritual retreat proved to be valuable where WOC were humbled by the experience and very much felt the 'holy spirit' present in the slums. The people were poor and the level of poverty was unimaginable, but 'squatters' were happy and lived day-by-day celebrating each other and what they had.

There was a lot of fundraising for the trip 2 years prior to departure. One key fundraiser was the Slum Slam Sports- a sports tournament where about 10 different teams came out to support WOC by participating in the tournament a few times a year. WOC had organised an MC to run the tournament as well as spot-prizes for those who placed first, second and third. These tournaments were full of energy and included lots of laughter- all for a good cause!

Another fundraising opportunity was the *Randwick Park Hopes and Dreams Survey*. This involved helping to conduct surveys in Randwick Park to find out about people's hopes and dreams for themselves and their whānau. WOC played an active role in these surveys by door-knocking on many Randwick homes to complete the surveys. Whilst this type of fundraising was a huge commitment, it was also a valuable opportunity to meet more neighbours and to sit, chat and gain an insight into the lives of their locals.

So, the 2 year fundraising was worth it!



Below are some stories from WOC members who attended the trip.

Kataraina Tims

Written: March 2014

"A few weeks ago, I and 14 other young adults, including my family, flew over to Manila in the Philippines. This trip was intended to expose us to the Filipino culture and people but more importantly, to the slum life. In order to make this an unforgettable experience, each of us were separated and stayed with individual host families for two weeks.

In my host family, my dad Kuya Willy worked as a construction worker, a job that I learnt paid very little despite its hard work. It paid even less than their minimum wage which is 450 pesos for 8 hours of work, approximately \$17NZ. My host mum, Mumma Belen, stayed at home and did all the house errands. She, like my host dad spoke very little English so it was hard to make conversation. I had two sisters, Jolina 15 years, and Ate Jocelyn, 28 years. Jolina went to high school so she spoke okay English. Ate Jocelyn - the oldest sister, worked for a shipping company which also has a branch in NZ, so she was quite fluent in English. My two sisters took me around everywhere and we all became really close over the two weeks. It was really hard to say good bye to them.

Our house in the slum was probably about the same size as my kitchen [in NZ]. It had two main rooms that were separated with a sheet and a little door. One side was where the kitchen was - a tiny little gas stove and a round table and then a little bed made up of bamboo sticks where my host parents would sleep. The other room was where I slept - on a little single bamboo bed that they had kindly put a foam mattress on, and my sisters also slept in the same room. Our bathroom - called the CR (comfort room) was in a little cubicle-like room by the kitchen. We had small toilet bowl - thankfully not a hole in the ground [like the others] - and then buckets of water to flush the toilet and to wash ourselves with. There was no toilet paper. The door was made of wooden slats, nailed together. The ceiling and walls - like all the other slum houses - were made from scraps of wood and old tin and concrete, all nailed and tied together. The houses were crammed side by side, sharing the same thin walls.

A big thing I noticed in the slums was that the poor are blessed in a way that I have not seen in NZ. Despite being 'poor' - having no money, living in a slum house, eating little, being open to lots of sicknesses, surviving day by day - many people contain this sense of happiness, peace and joy that seems never-ending. There is struggle and pain, but running parallel with this is also inner beauty. The poor seem so rich in life - people, relationships, and character - whereas the wealthy, us, are rich in money and materials, but poor in relationships and neighbourhood. So are the poor in the slums actually 'poor'? I mean yes, they are struggling and hurting immensely. But why do they have this sense of richness that we don't see very much of at home? Is it because they live similar to how Jesus expects us to live, which is simply and collectively? Or is it because their poverty has forced many to rely on the things which are stable in their lives, like God and relationships, things that last for eternity? Or is it because they are in a sense hopeless, so God has blessed them? I don't know.

But one thing I do know is that I have a lot to learn from these people. The trip has been so much more than just an exposure. It has changed who I am and the way I see things, and I hope that that will never change."

Tonisha Rohe

Written in 2014

"Hey Tonisha,

How are ya going? What are you doing with your life now? Are you where you wanted to see yourself six months ago? Or even 3 months ago?

I want to tell you a story about a young girl who loved the glamorous life, who loved God but loved money almost just as much. She didn't realize but when she saw and understood that there are more important things in life her perspective changed. You see, the things she was exposed to are not things she would see in her everyday life and probably if not for this trip, never would have. This girl is you....

Remember walking down that street, at first you didn't realize why you were bought here and why there was rubble all around you but remember, remember seeing that young boy in an old and dirty over-sized shirt so alone and no sight of his parents. Or even yelling "Good Morning" but the response "No, its a bad morning today". Remember seeing the police walk into the community battens ready to beat anybody still in their own home. Do you remember that? Or how about that girl that skated up next to you and said "I don't have a home" while pointing past you at the demolished community.

There's something I'm really hoping you didn't forget about that walk, it's an essential part. Amongst the despair and pain do you remember the smiles, the laughter, the children playing, the woman chatting, the men rebuilding, the whole community throwing you a smile and a "hello". Did you see the joy they had when they saw you? Please remember it's so important. Don't feel numb to it. My prayer is that you are constantly feeling and that your heart doesn't grow numb to what you saw that day right up until what you've seen today. Those people touched you, you couldn't help but hurt for them. That fire that grew inside you when you saw it, is that still there? Keep praying. Don't lose touch.

How about in your community? What did you hear? I remember the laughter, the banter. Amongst all the Chaos that's what I remember. Remember feeling so loved and appreciated? Remember being called beautiful more times than you could count? You know, God thinks this about you too. How about the church? Remember the heart they

had for God, how hungry they were for him and sought him whole-heartedly. How inspired you were by the younger generation... By Jayven?

Am I painting a clear picture? Poverty surrounded you, you were fully immersed. But just as strongly Joy surrounded you, do you not remember seeing it in their faces? In Kates face? How excited she was just to see you every morning. How they just took each day as it came. Be inspired.

I hope with all my heart you haven't forgotten. That place had a special place in your heart and I hope it still does. You learnt, you saw, you loved, you laughed, you hurt, you cried, you felt, you experienced. Carry it out.

"Love your neighbour as yourself" Mark 12:31".

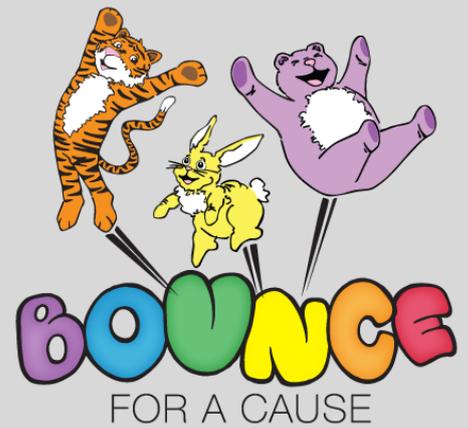
Vanessa Cameron-Karo

"Manila was eye-opening. You just learn to appreciate more and I'm super grateful for the life we have here. All you really need is the people you love. We stayed with host families in the slums and lived as they did daily. With my family I learnt that education is very important. Everyone puts into the family in some way whether it's attending school or going to work- to keep everyone fed."



Bounce for a Cause- Inflatable Bouncy Castle Hire Social Enterprise

Bounce for a Cause ('Bounce') is a local bouncy castle hire social enterprise led by WOC. Many youth in Randwick expressed in the "Hopes and Dreams" survey that they wanted a part-time job but a lot of youth were declined from getting work as they didn't have any previous work experience. So WOC's dilemma was- how can their youth gain work experience when no one is willing to hire them because they don't have any work experience?



Their solution was, Bounce- a fun, active and skilled type of work. Bounce gives youth in the neighbourhood the opportunity to gain work experience so that they can pursue brighter futures. This is the cause that they are bouncing for!

Not only are WOC giving their youth the necessary work experience, their Bounce profits also help to sustain Randwick Park by funding their youth clubs and leadership programmes. By reinvesting the profits into their hood, WOC keep striving to be the change that they want see in their neighbourhood. It takes a village to raise a child, and WOC truly want to create a great village that raises great children.

So when people hire from Bounce, this is the story they are choosing to be a part of. They will be bouncing for a Cause!



Randwick Park- Mitre 10 Community of the Year 2017

In early 2017, Randwick Park were nominated and short-listed for the Mitre 10 Community of the Year Award at the annual New Zealander of the Year Awards. Thirty well-respected and representative members of Randwick attended with two of their very own WOC members. All in all, Randwick Park stole the show as the biggest group to attend the awards and the biggest to take the stage when they were announced as the winners!

But the thirty community members who attended were not the only ones celebrating. They had family and friends throughout the whole country cheering them on from LIVE stream.

NEW ZEALANDER OF THE YEAR AWARDS
Honouring the Best of Us

2017

RANDWICK PARK

CONGRATULATIONS

MITRE 10

NZ COMMUNITY of the YEAR

To check out the highlights of the awards  **Randwick Park**



Untold Stories

"There are good and bad stories but they are a great source of education for us all. Unknowingly, we tell stories in our daily conversations but it's the stories that breathe new life into us, provoke new thoughts, inspire or challenge our own existence which remain with us. This is the power of stories." – Lafoai Luaitalo



Franco Apera

Franco is a young man who used to attend the Soufpac youth club as young child but is now a little WOC'er serving in Soufpac. His extraordinary story shows the positive impact WOC can create in young people's lives in Randwick.

"I have lived in Randwick my whole life and I've made a lot of friends going to youth groups like TNG and Soufpac.

I started Soufpac when I was 8 years old and it was a new life for me because I was around bad things around our community. No it is a new beginning- a new wise community.

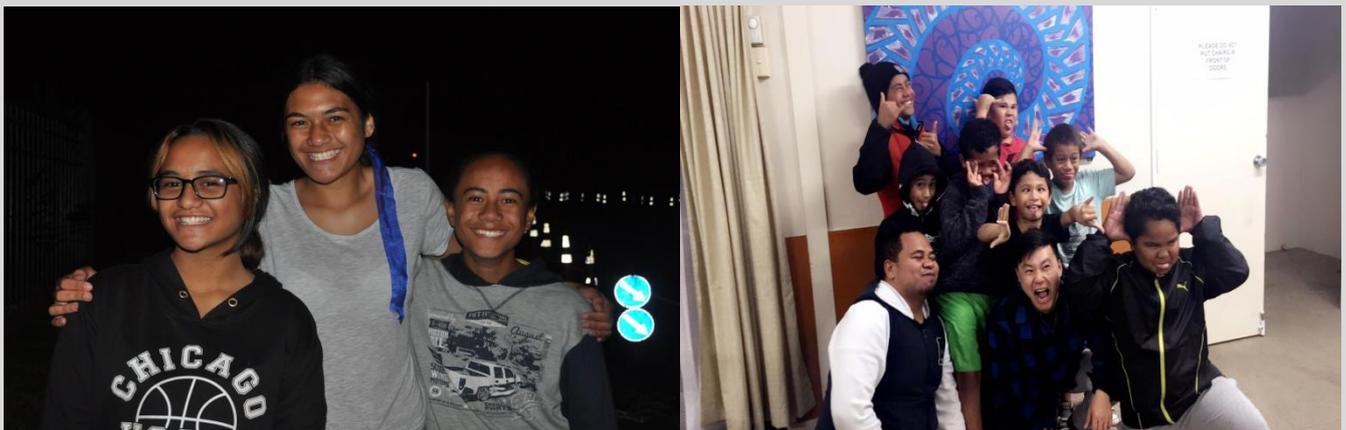
Attending Soufpac was a new experience for me because I wasn't the kind of person who collaborates with others very well mostly kids because I was like a very kind and shy little guy back in my childhood. Joining Soufpac changed me a lot. A memory I remember was doing the Ice cream challenge which was one of my best memories- it remained with me for a long time. I've made a lot of friends and I'm still friends with them now.

My leaders in Soufpac were amazing to be honest, like I still see them now around the community. The leaders helped to build my confidence because I wasn't a communicative person but knowing the leaders for a long time helped me heaps.

Today I am a Lil WOCer. Lil WOCer's are younger leaders who are being mentored by WOC leaders. I've learnt heaps being a Lil WOCer as well as a Soufpac leader. I've gotten to know more about my community and the people too.

Being a leader in Soufpac has been a challenge because I never would have thought I would be a leader for kids around Randwick and just knowing more about them and the other leaders too has made me feel confident in who I am. Even my little sister has been attending Soufpac.

As a young leader I hope to help other kids around our community and to encourage them to come to Soufpac and to be a leader one day as well." -2017



Vanessa Cameron-Karo

Vanessa is a young woman born and bred in Randwick Park. The eldest of 8, Vanessa who is of Samoan and Cook Island descent joined WOC in 2013. Here is her story.

"I have lived here for most of my life but I never really knew the community before joining WOC, only my close neighbours. When I joined WOC, the people in my community became more than just faces around the street.



At first, I just said yes to WOC to fill in time.

I began to help out at Soufpac, the youth group for 7-10 year olds. We held activities for the children every week and even lent an ear or a hug for when the children wanted to let off some steam or just talk. Being a part of Soufpac has widened my eyes about the community I call home. I now have a deeper connection to Randwick than just with my childhood memories. I now lead in the TNG (The Next Generation) youth club for high-schoolers. I'm helping to shape great memories for future generations.

Being asked to step up to TNG from Soufpac made me feel nervous but excited. I thought to myself- JUST DO IT! I have never regretted this decision to step up.

From the bigger picture, WOC has helped me to find myself and to know who I am. It has given me lots of confidence to be able to speak in front of people and helped to realise that my voice does matter. In terms of my work ethic it has helped me realise that every little thing I do adds up in the end. Like with work, I've taken up all opportunities available to upskill myself and WOC has helped me to learn that there's always more to do and learn.

WOC has even helped me with my family- to connect with them better. This is from learning to give the youth kids an hour of my time so I've challenged myself to also do the same for family.

I reckon WOC is a great thing to do especially when you're straight out of high school and don't know what to do- it helps you to find your way and its fun!"

Kane Brown

Kane Brown who is an aspiring leader in Up2, Soufpac and TNG shares his story on leadership.

"I attended UP2 when I was 11 years old. I attended because my sister brought me along with her one time. I find that first time better than I thought. Over the years I saw that the leaders were making a difference to the kids' lives and I wanted to be a part of that. And now I am.

When I first joined as a leader in Up2, it wasn't a great start because it was a new lot of kids and I had to get to know them more. And then over the past few months I've gotten to know them better.

My first night as a Lil WOC'er leader taking control of the night was really fun. My night was based around ANZAC day and just seeing the kids have fun made me happy. I also help out at the Soufpac club, but **it's no different** from Up2. I just like seeing the kids every week and getting to know them a bit more.

But I'm also a youth member in the TNG club. I started attending TNG in 2016 because my sister, again, had invited me.

I'm involved in all three clubs because one day, I want to be an actual WOC leader."



WOC Members (past and current)

Jordan

Meliani Ngata

Ben Tamarua

Paihere Tims

Kataraina Tims

Tonisha Rohe

Chris Ngatae

Lafoai Luaitalo

Vanessa Cameron-Karo

Atawhai Tims

Susan Fotunga

Felix Fotunga

Darren U

Annie Karanga

Heather Dallaston

Puhi Shepherd

Liz Fotunga