

"THIS IS OUR STORY"

EVALUATION OF THE RANUI 135 YOUTH AGENCY

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RANUI 135

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Firstly, the researchers would like to acknowledge all those who gave their time to participate in an interview and share their experience expertise with us.

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Lastly, we would like to extend a huge thank you to the young people, volunteers and staff of Ranui 135 for participating in and assisting with this evaluation.

Disclaimer

This research was funded by the Henderson-Massey Local Board All findings and conclusions are those of the authors and are not to be attributed to the Henderson-Massey Local Board or Ranui 135.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

West Auckland-based youth agency Ranui 135 was established in 2002 as a response to statistics which showed local youth in a particularly negative light. The four founders, Rob Luisi, Emelita 'Zee' Luisi, Osaiasi 'Ozzy' Kupu, and Jarm Joseph created 135 to provide the guidance and opportunities they thought Ranui youth needed to realise their latent potential.

Fifteen years on, Ranui 135 continues to go from strength to strength. Now a locally-led charitable trust, the agency employs six part and full-time staff and coordinates several services and activities, including mentoring, leadership camps, weekly sports activities, career planning, employment pathways and a new social media project which upskills young people in event planning and management.

Several core practice principles underlie the work of Ranui 135. Youth are at the centre, and the focus is on the skills and potential each young person brings. The holistic focus addresses every aspect of the young person's life, be it school, family, or individual needs. And all this is done through an empathy lens, with a lot of passion and interest in the young people of Ranui and the Ranui community.



[Photo: Edith Amituanai]

Key insights

Interviews and surveys with nearly 50 young people involved with Ranui 135 suggest that the organisation is impacting positively on these key areas:

Safety

- The connections built through Ranui 135 create a safer community for youth.
- Boundaries and structure that focus on the 'big' values of respect, reciprocity and relationships nurture feelings of belonging and safety and allow young people to self-actualise.
- Seven out of 10 survey respondents "totally" agree that they feel safer in Ranui, particularly public spaces, since participating in Ranui 135.

Enabling citizenship and contribution

- 135 gives youth ownership over the Ranui narrative.
- 135s sustainability is derived from the quality of reciprocity, generosity and contribution.
- Youth often come from a world view of challenges (drugs, crime etc) and at 135 experience a view of possibilities and potential.

- Most young people (84%) "totally" agree that participation in Ranui 135 makes them want to 'give back' or contribute to the Ranui community.

Belonging

- Ranui 135 does not give up on kids
- Pro-active welcoming and friendships lead to an authentic sense of belonging.
- Six out of 10 survey respondents "totally" agree they are more tolerant towards people who are different to them since participating in Ranui 135

Confidence

- Young people who come to Ranui 135 develop a wide range of personal qualities and life-skills that enable them to move forward confidently into adulthood.
- Giving individuals space to nurture their own uniqueness empowers and drives confidence.
- Unconfident kids have a space where they feel comfortable and which allows them to build their capability
- Eight out of 10 survey respondents "totally" agree they have discovered new skills or talents since participating in Ranui 135

Unleashing potential

- Youth at 135 believe in their potential and act to reach their goals
- 135 provides the conditions (soft skills, plus confidence and nurturing) to help young people see possibilities plus employment support, structure and practical help to help young people realise their potential
- Seven out of 10 survey respondents "totally" agree they feel more confident and positive about their future since participating in Ranui 135

Connection

- Ranui 135 helps extend and create positive connections in this community and beyond.
- 135 values and connects with both Ranui youth and their families
- More than half of survey respondents agree they have more positive connections in the Ranui community since participating in Ranui 135

Leadership

- Ranui 135 creates youth leaders by enabling youth leadership.
- Half of survey respondents "totally" agree they see themselves as a leader or a potential leader since participating in Ranui 135.

INTRODUCTION

"We need to reclaim our identity as a community. Other people are telling our story and it doesn't belong to us."

Zee Luisi, Ranui 135 co-founder

Ranui statistics are often reported unfavourably. We are told, for example, that far greater numbers of children and young people in the Ranui area aged 6-19 years are at higher risk of poor outcomes than their peers across Auckland; almost one in four to be exact. The dominant story about these children and young people is that they are more likely than their peers to leave school with no qualifications, to spend time on benefits, and to receive a prison or community sentence (NZ Treasury, NZ Statistics, 2016).

What we don't often hear are the other Ranui stories. These stories are about young people looking out for each other, striving for and achieving goals, discovering hidden skills and talents, and finding hidden leadership potential. These stories are about belonging, connectedness, safety, confidence, leadership, enabling citizenship and unleashing latent potential. These are the stories of Ranui 135, a West Auckland-based youth agency established in 2002 which has developed, mentored, and connected with hundreds of Ranui youth over the past 14 years.

Ranui 135 started as a direct challenge to the negative statistics that are so often used to tell the story about Ranui. Four locals, Rob and Emelita 'Zee' Luisi, Osaiasi 'Ozzy' Kupu and Jarm Joseph were determined not to let these statistics define the lives of Ranui youth. Their professional and personal life experiences told them there were many mediating factors to poor outcomes. They knew that children and young people who have a sense of belonging and connection to the people and places where they live, who feel safe, who can picture a positive future and who feel a sense of agency over their lives have a far greater likelihood of living happy, fulfilling lives. So in 2002 they started connecting with young people where they were at, and have continued ever since.

Fourteen years on Ranui 135 has grown into a Charitable Trust which employs three people and connects with hundreds of young people each year. Their stories are worth listening to.

WHAT IS IN THE NAME?

Ranui 135 is the name of the local bus route to Downtown Auckland. The young people who began the Ranui 135 youth initiative identified the bus as something that they all had in common.



"The leaders gave us the opportunity to name the group. They got us to think about how we are connected to each other and what one thing brings us together. We all thought about the 135 bus. We all catch it to school and we all catch it home. We catch it outside Ranui and we catch the same bus back in."

ABOUT THE EVALUATION

An evaluation of Ranui 135 was conducted between October and December 2016. The evaluation is in two parts. Part One is designed to understand impact and inform priorities for future action for the Ranui 135 project. Part Two is a measurement framework that allows Ranui 135 to collect outcomes data in a systematic and ongoing way. This report covers the findings from Part One of the project.

Method

This research used a multi-method approach. The research methods are inclusive, strengths-based and strongly informed by the principles of youth and community development.

The methods included:

Document review

The review of documents included annual reports, funding applications, website and other documents as determined by the project team.

Interviews

Eighteen key informant interviews were conducted with young people, youth leaders, families whose children had participated in Ranui 135, community stakeholders and two of the four Ranui 135 founders.

Survey

A survey was designed and posted to the Ranui 135 facebook site, and administered at key Ranui 135 activities. Survey respondents were asked a series of questions (on a 5-point Likert scale) based on the key insights generated by the interviews. A total of 32 young people participated in the survey.

Evidence Scan

An evidence scan for this project examined published and unpublished primary and secondary research from New Zealand and other English-speaking countries related to the principles of youth development as evidenced by the key insights from the project.

Theory of change workshop

This was used to assist a shared understanding about what the organisation believes it does, uncover assumptions, and identify what outcomes need to be measured.

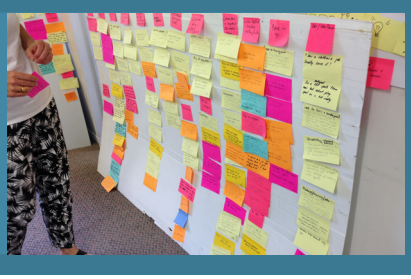
Data analysis

This two-day workshop, facilitated by Leone Murphy from Thinkplace, used interviews with young people to generate key insights about the project. This was designed in such a way that the Ranui co-founders could participate in the discovery process, so that any learnings and insights could be immediately absorbed into the fabric of the organisation, rather than becoming part of a separate process that sits outside of the organisation.

Participant data for this process was anonymised.

DATA ANALYSIS





> "When it came to education, employment, crime, we were at the top of all the wrong things"
>
> [Rob Luisi]

RANUI 135

Ranui 135 is a community-led initiative based in Ranui that has been supporting young people since 2002.

In 2001, following a presentation that showed Ranui youth topping the West Auckland statistics on poor education, high crime involvement, and unemployment, four passionate Ranui people got together to prove "Ranui youth are not represented by these statistics".

Rob and Zee Luisi, Osaiasi 'Ozzy' Kupu, and Jarm Joseph were four Ranui locals with the dream to make a positive contribution to the Ranui community. They wanted to challenge these statistics and change people's perceptions of Ranui youth because they knew these kids personally and believed they deserved better outcomes. They knew that Ranui youth had potential, but needed guidance and opportunities to nurture and realise this potential. Fuelling this motivation for change was their identification with Ranui – Ranui was more than the place they lived, Ranui was a part of their identity.

The four of them got together and discussed ways in which they could change the negative perceptions. They wanted an identity that they could be proud of. As a result of those meetings, they decided to engage with the experts themselves, Ranui youth, to ask them what they want to see in the community, and how things should be done.

This gave birth to the first Leadership Camp, an initiative that has continued since. At this camp, the young people present were empowered to speak their hearts and their minds about what they would like to see in the community for youth. At the same time, they made new, positive connections with other Ranui youth. Given the success of this camp and the impact it left on the participants, a range of follow-up activities and events ensued. Fourteen years later, Ranui 135 is still operating, and growing in the number of young people engaged and the programmes it offers.

CORE PRINCIPLES OF PRACTICE

Ranui 135 is a grass-roots initiative – youth are at the centre of the programme informing its operation, alongside the professional guidance of its leaders. It is a strengths-based approach – they focus on the skills and potential each young person brings, rather than on the things they did wrong. It is holistic – it addresses every aspect of the young person's life, whether it be school, family, or their individual personalities. And Ranui 135 do all this through an empathy lens, with a lot of passion and interest in the young people of Ranui and the Ranui community as a whole.

The foundation of the Ranui 135 approach lies in positive youth development, which can be described as a consistent, strengths-based approach which seeks to build and develop resiliency in the lives of young people through positive intervention (Bruce, 2008; Farruggia, et al. 2010; Winthrop, 2009). Activities and programmes undertaken within a positive youth development framework focus on the strengths and assets of young people and their families/whānau and communities (Murphey, 2000).

The approach taken by Ranui 135 is consistent with the six core principles of the Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa, namely:

1. Youth development is shaped by the 'big picture';
2. Youth development is about young people being connected;
3. Youth development is based on emphasising individual strengths;
4. Youth development happens through quality relationships;
5. Youth development is triggered when young people fully participate; and
6. Youth development needs good information.

(Ministry of Youth Development, 2002)

135 CORE PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

RESPONSIVE
GRASSROOTS
FLEXIBLE
EMPATHIC
HOLISTIC
Strengths-based
Capacity building
YOUTH DEVELOPMENT
SUSTAINABILITY FOCUSSED

VISION

Young people aspiring towards and achieving goals, participating and contributing positively to their families and communities

MISSION

To provide opportunities which assist young people to grow with confidence, so that they strive towards and pursue positive life outcomes.

AIM

Support and encourage positive outcomes for youth, their families, and communities

VALUES

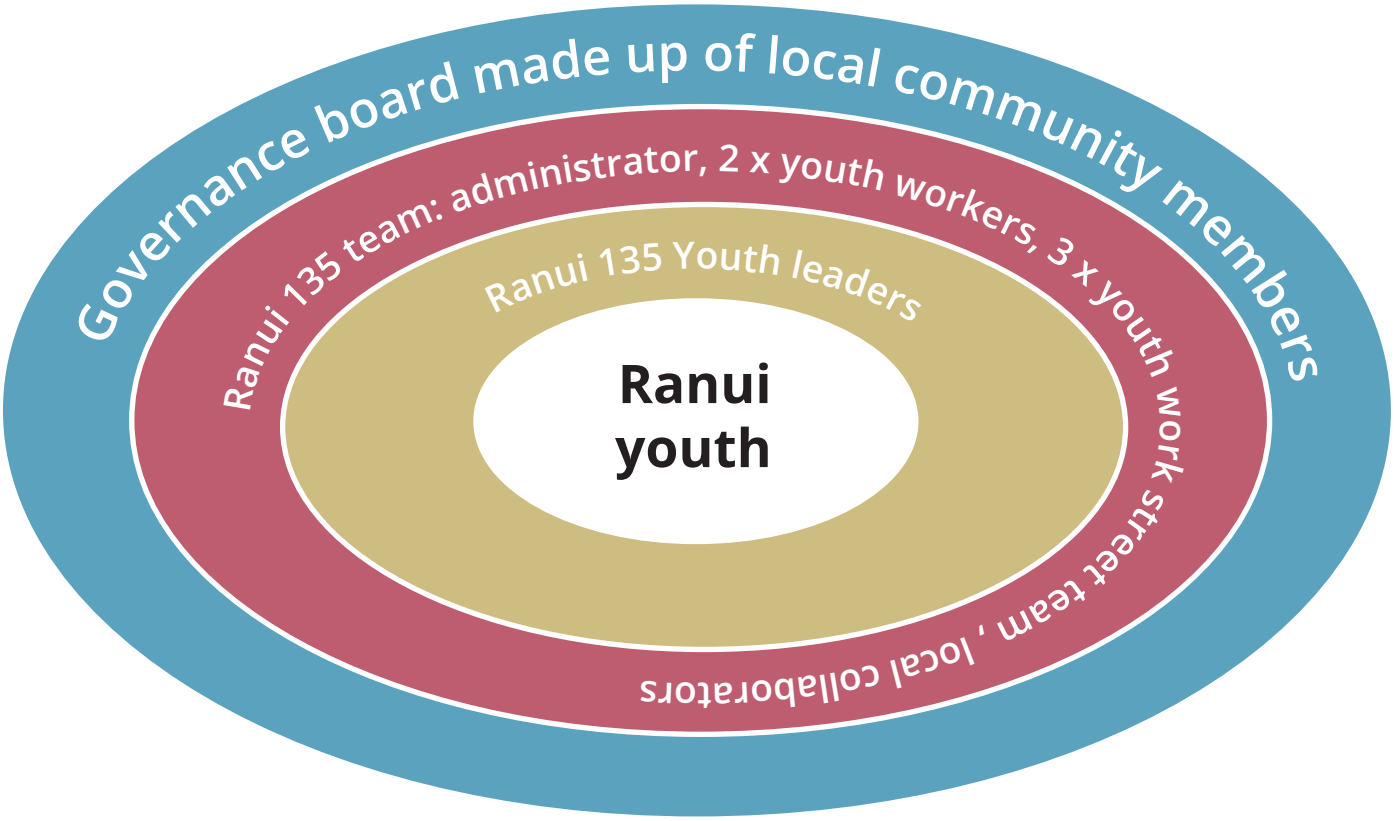
Love, Courage, Integrity, Respect.

RANUI 135 STRUCTURE

Ranui 135 is a locally-led, community driven charitable trust which places young people at the centre of its practice

The four young locals who started this initiative knew they were not going to be around forever. Ranui 135 builds capacity by nurturing leadership skills and are now mentoring young people into leadership roles. Through the evaluation, the researchers met many people who had "grown up" through 135; they attended a school drop in, then moved to evening sports drop ins, attended leadership camps and holiday programmes and are now staff and volunteers for the organisation.

> "To do this work you must deeply care about someone or something and that care must come from a perspective of yourself or from what you would gain in return. Our return is always that the lives that we touch are going to be better because of the work that we do. There is never a personal gain for us apart from the fact that the kids who are having a rough time will have better opportunities."
>
> [Zee Luisi, Founder]



RANUI 135 SERVICES

Youth Mentoring

Mates Way, a school-based mentoring programme for boys aged 9-13 focuses on the reciprocal learning concept of tuakana teina (older, younger) and building positive peer relationships and social support systems. An individual mentoring service is also available for young males aged 12-18

30 children each year are mentored individually or in groups

Youth Activities

Activities which connect and bring young people together are at the core of 135. Every **Wednesday, Thursday and Friday** male and female youth aged 13+ participate in local touch and tag modules. The **Move It** Youth Programme (In partnership with Sport Waitakere), gives Ranui youth aged 11-17 the opportunity to stay active over the school holidays, by participating in sports such as Touch Rugby, tag and football in a safe environment. Sports are not the only focus for activities. The '**Everyday People**' project aims to give young people a voice by harnessing social media as well as up skilling them in event planning and management, such as Youth Week activities. Up to four **sports camps** are held each year.

40 -70 young people turn up to tag/touch each week

XX young people attend the Move It programme every holidays

XX young people participate in the everyday people project

Youth Leadership and Connection

Ranui 135 run four **Leadership camps** every year with a leadership development focus. These are aimed at males and females aged 13+. On a weekly basis, facilitated youth spaces (**'135 Live Spaces'**) are open during the week offering opportunities for young people to connect with each other in a safe place. Ranui 135 also convene a **Youth Workers Network.**

40 young people a year participate in leadership camps

XX young people drop in to 135 youth spaces each week

Youth Employment

The **Ranui 135 Employment Pathway (REP)** offers help to 16-24 year olds with career planning and mentoring, CVs, driver licensing, building a digital profile for online applications, access to computers and internet, and connect young people with employer networks and job opportunities.

40 young people a year participate are assisted by REP....

50% of whom secure employment

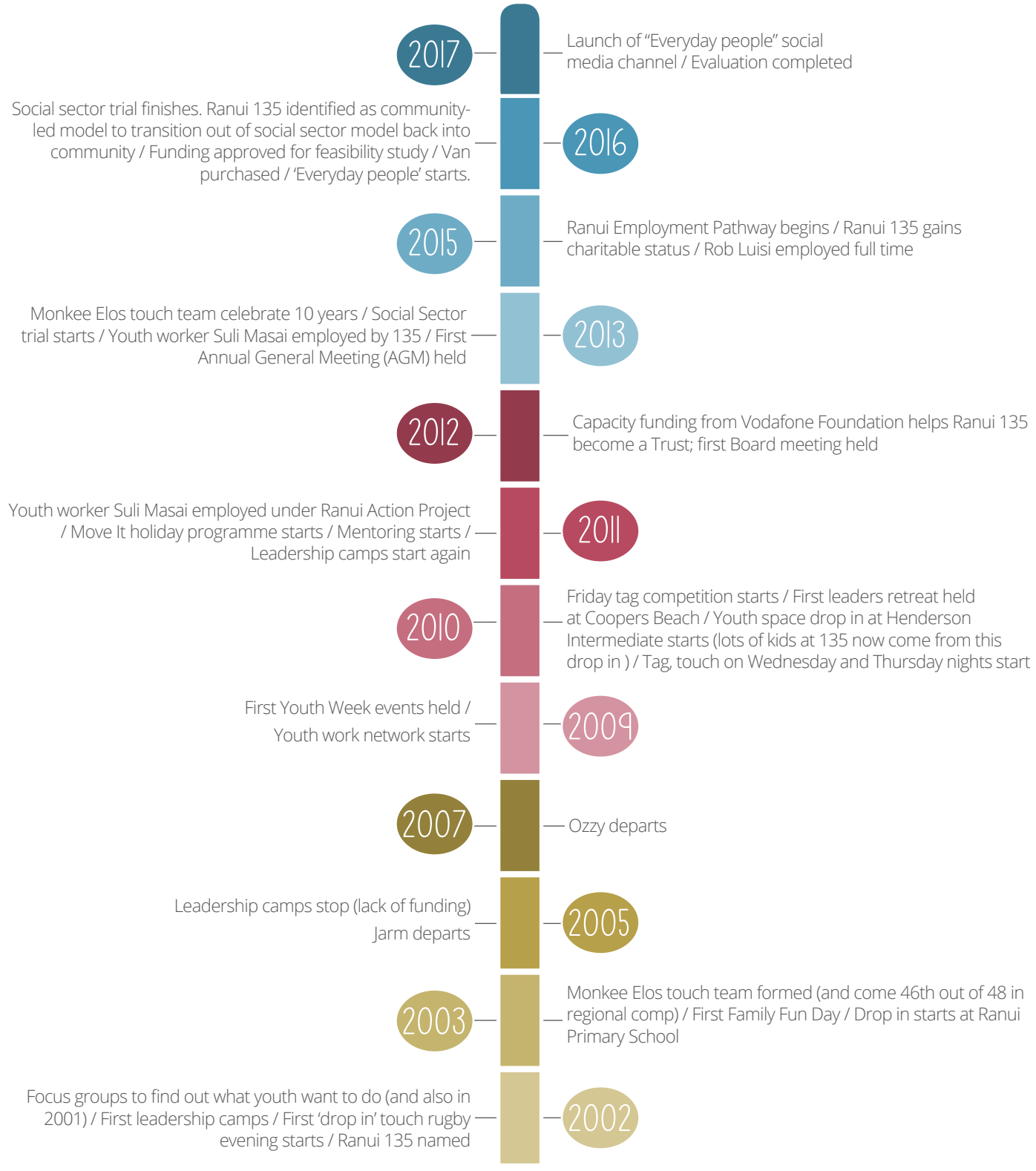
West Auckland Street Youth Work

As part of the **Street Youth Work West Auckland** network led by Zeal, Ranui 135 have three youth workers engaging with youth on the street in and around the neighbourhood.

50 young people can be seen by the street youth workers each shift

TIME LINE

THE EVOLUTION OF RANUI 135



RANUI SNAPSHOT

AGE

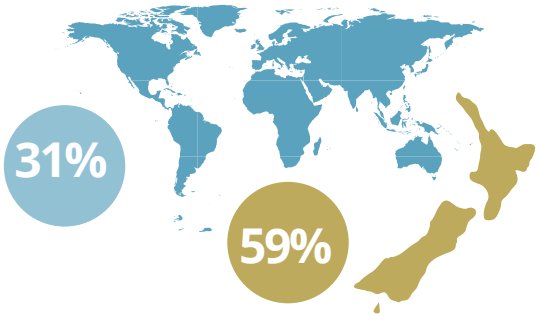
Ranui is a young population. Nearly two-thirds of the population are aged 39 and under.



0-19 (34%) | 20-39 (28%) | 40 and over (38%)

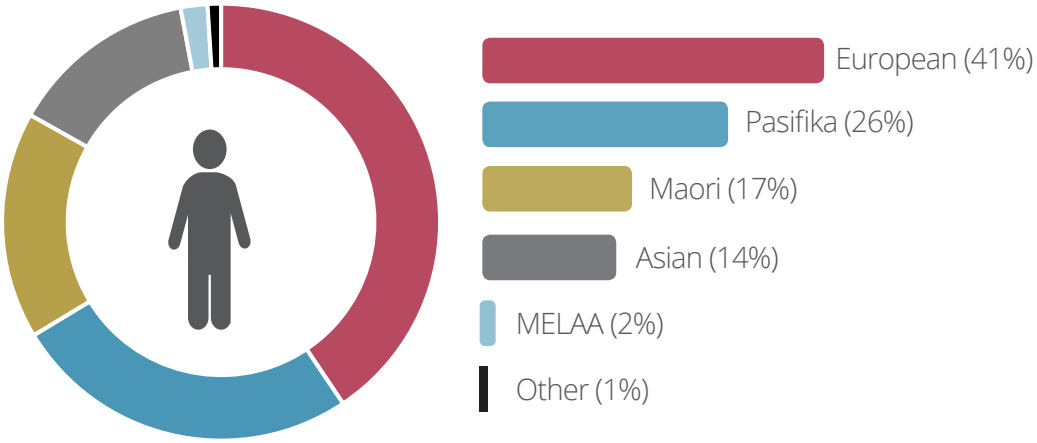
PLACE OF ORIGIN

Nearly one-third of the Ranui population were born overseas.



ETHNICITY

Ranui has nearly four times the average population of Pasifika people than New Zealand, and double the population of MELAA (Middle Eastern, Latin American, African).





Population

12,000 people live in Ranui. That's enough to fill Auckland's Vector Arena.

Education

Nearly three-quarters of people in Ranui aged 15 and over have a qualification.


Secondary School (34%)


No qualification (28%)


Overseas qualification (9%)


Post-school certificate (9%)


Bachelors Degree (9%)

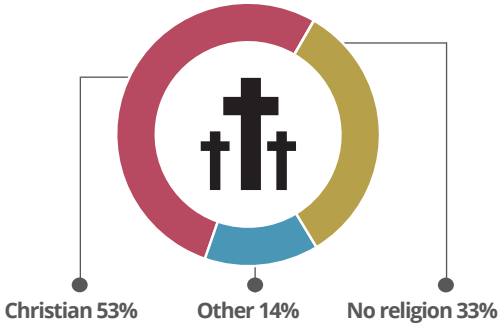

Post-school diploma (7%)


Postgraduate/Honours/Masters Degree (3%)


Doctorate degree (1%)

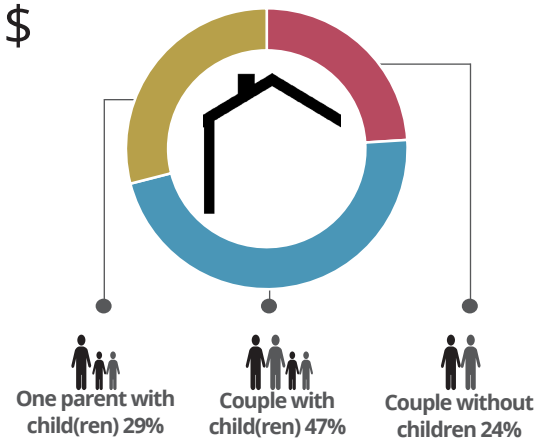
Religion

Two-thirds of the Ranui community have religious beliefs



Households

Nearly one-third of Ranui families are one-parent households




Nine out of 10 Ranui households have at least one vehicle

Income


11% of households earn **$20,000** or less


9% of households earn **$20,000 - $30,000**


18% of households earn **$30,000 - $50,000**


14% of households earn **$50,000 - $70,000**


17% of households earn **$70,000 - $100,000**


14% of households earn **$100,000 or more**

The median household income in Ranui is **$55,650**



KEY INSIGHTS

SAFETY

1

The connections built through Ranui 135 create a safer community for youth.

We heard from several young people who said that the connections they had built through 135 helped them feel safe when in the community. Some of the youth talked about using these connections as a form of positive peer pressure to support and positively influence others to make good life choices. The connections also motivated some youth to keep an eye on others (outside of Ranui 135 events and activities) to make sure they were safe. Young people who formed trusted connections with others from different ethnic groups (particularly Pasifika groups) told us this was important to their feelings of safety, particularly in public spaces.

2

Boundaries and structure that focus on the 'big' values of respect, reciprocity and relationships nurture feelings of belonging and safety and allow young people to self-actualise.

135 has firm boundaries and clear behavioural expectations around how young people interact and treat each other. The youth leaders offer constant and consistent role modelling of positive relationships and behaviour, and young people who cross these boundaries are spoken to about their behaviour. This not only allows other participants to feel safe, it also creates a set of behavioural expectations that allows participants to 'stay on track'.

These values appeal to both young people and their parents, who see it as a safe environment for their children.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

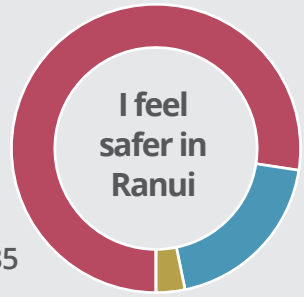
Youth must feel they are physically and psychologically safe to engage with youth development programmes (Eccles and Gootman, 2002 cited in Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2015). Building young people's connections to their own identity, culture, and community can create a safe environment for them to learn and grow (Wheeler, 2006). Working with adult mentors as equal partners also creates safe environment for young people and enables learning and leading (Wheeler, 2006).

Connection is a key part of creating safer communities. When people have positive relationships with their neighbours; they look out for each other; they are involved in strong community organisations and are connected to the wider community/city/environment.

SURVEY

100%

of survey respondents agree they feel safer in Ranui, particularly in public spaces since participating in Ranui 135



[77% 'totally true'; 20% 'quite true'; 3% 'a little bit true' n=31]

> "Everybody is connected. You know once somebody else comes in from another community and tries to start something, everybody is like nah or everybody is backing each other up and that's where the safety comes in."
>
> [young person interview]



'Picnic at Starling Park' [Photo: Edith Amituanai]

ENABLING CITIZENSHIP AND CONTRIBUTION

1

135 gives youth ownership over the Ranui narrative

Every young person we talked with objected to the dominant narrative of Ranui as a suburb that struggles with violence, gangs, crime and other anti-social behaviour. The Ranui they are part of is one where they feel safe, welcomed and wanted. Some proudly told us how young people from other suburbs come to 135 gatherings and events. They are especially proud of the new library, cafe and shops. Some young people used the term 'Ranui 4 life', and want a future where they can live and work in Ranui and continue to contribute to the community.

2

135's sustainability is derived from the quality of reciprocity, generosity and contribution

Ranui's social capital is strengthened by participation in 135. Many of the young people we spoke to told us that their involvement with Ranui 135 had inspired them to 'give back' to their community, whether it be continuing to work with youth through 135 or another role (i.e. teacher, police office, youth worker) or contributing to the community in other ways (e.g. art, music).

3

Youth often come from a world view of challenges (drugs, crime etc) and at 135 experience a view of possibilities and potential.

Ranui 135 provides structure and boundaries with enough space for teens to do 'normal' teen stuff. Several young people told us about challenges in their lives; ranging from alcohol and drug abuse; family violence; anti-social behaviour such as stealing or general aggression towards others. For some, this stemmed from boredom, others had few boundaries, and yet others reacted against strict boundaries placed on them by family members. Participation in Ranui 135 not only gave these young people something to do, it opened positive opportunities and helped them see their future as one with possibility and purpose.

> "[Without Ranui 135] I would have been a drug addict ... [I] would have been doing that or alcohol, that would have just taken over my life. I don't know where I would have been."
>
> [young person interview]

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

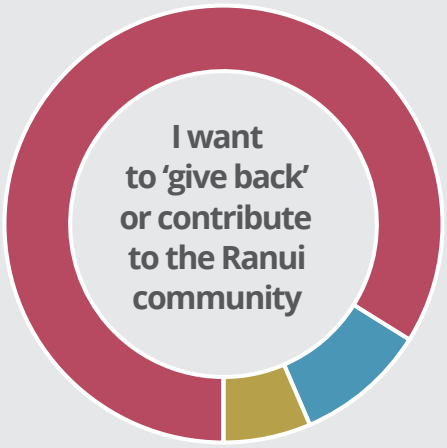
Enabling young people to be active citizens and to contribute is about engaging them in meaningful tasks which offer them the opportunity to be useful, to connect to different communities and cultures, and make a difference in their world (Blyth, 2006; Wheeler, 2006, Perkins and Noam, 2007). One of the keys to engaging young people is to recognise that their efforts have benefits that extend beyond the individual to the wider community (Murphey, 2000; Mahoney et al., 2004). Strengthening young people's connections gives them the opportunity and responsibility to contribute back to their community in ways which are healthy and contribute to their development (Blyth, 2006). Successful youth leadership programmes create developmental opportunities throughout the programme, which are sustained beyond the programme so that young people can continue to develop (Wheeler, 2006)

SURVEY

100%

of survey respondents agree they want to 'give back' or contribute to the Ranui community since participating in Ranui 135

[84% 'totally true'; 10% 'quite true'; 6% 'a little bit true' n=31]



> "Ranui gets looked down a lot from other areas ... but I stand strong about my understanding of Ranui that the positive things outweigh a lot of those bad points.
>
> [young person interview]

BELONGING

1

Ranui 135 does not give up on kids

Ranui 135's success with youth of all backgrounds is a result of 'seeing' everyone as inherently 'good'. We heard from several young people who told us how having someone who believed in them inspired them to change their behaviour and be the person that the youth leaders believed them to be. They said that youth leaders always act with respect and kindness. Whilst poor behaviour was always dealt with, it was the behaviour that was judged as poor, not the person.

2

Pro-active welcoming and friendships lead to an authentic sense of belonging.

Ranui 135 is an environment where young people always felt welcome and wanted, no matter what. Some talked about feeling "like family". The diverse mix of young people who are welcomed to Ranui 135 (different ages, cultures, backgrounds and experiences) creates a sense of equality, tolerance and acceptance. Most of the young people told us about making new friends and having a wide friendship network because of their participation in Ranui 135.



Maria

Maria came to New Zealand when she was 11 with her parents and 3 siblings for a better education. The family was very traditional and the children were not really allowed to do activities outside of church, school and home, however Maria and her siblings could join Ranui 135 because their dad had heard good things about them. Maria was not interested in sports but she was looking for somewhere she could relax and just be a kid. She had so much on her mind and often sat on the side-lines and simply cheered others on. She liked that you could just turn up and get involved depending on how you felt on the day.

Maria got into trouble at school, which she thinks stemmed from violence at home. Zee supported her to address the school's concerns, address the family violence and deal with her alcohol use. For Maria, the biggest impact from being involved in Ranui 135 was when she needed to ask for help "without her [Zee] I think I would be dead or an alcoholic".

Now in her early twenties, Maria is a youth leader with Ranui 135 who is working with kids who are vulnerable, looking for connection and craving a sense of belonging. She knows exactly how they feel, and enjoys seeing them grow and change, just as she did.

SURVEY

100%

of survey respondents agree they are more tolerant towards people who are different to them since participating in Ranui 135

[66% 'totally true'; 22% 'quite true'; 12% 'a little bit true' n=32]





[Photo: Edith Amituanai]

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

Belonging is important for teamwork, bonding and building positive peer relationships. Opportunities for belonging are created when programmes emphasise inclusion and create an environment of tolerance and appreciation of differences (Murphey, 2000; Mahoney et al., 2004). Belonging is fostered when young people's connections to their own identity, culture, and community are strengthened (Wheeler, 2006).

Programmes that recognise and embrace culture are effective for young people (Delgado, 2002). Within Aotearoa/New Zealand use of relevant cultural frameworks is important, particularly Māori and Pasifika frameworks (Farrugia, et al., 2010; Fouche et al., 2010). Young people themselves are best placed to describe their own cultural contexts, and activities and programmes should be flexible enough to allow the inclusion of different rules and expectations which are respectful to the different cultures of the young people involved (Perkins and Noam, 2007).

Sports which emphasise teamwork can help to foster belonging, particularly for young people who struggle to feel part of a wider community, or have been disadvantaged by adverse family situations (Taliaferro, Rienzo, Miller, Pigg & Dodd, 2008).

CONFIDENCE

1

Young people who come to Ranui 135 develop a wide range of personal qualities and life-skills that enable them to move forward confidently into adulthood.

Young people told us about the many skills they had learned because of their association with 135, such as public speaking, leadership, goal-setting and skills around suicide prevention and bullying. Others talked about developing personal qualities such as adaptability, patience, confidence and consistency which often developed from observing the youth leaders and the way they reacted to different situations. Ranui 135 has a positive impact on young people's mental wellbeing which is influencing their mindset and relationships. We heard from several young people how their participation in Ranui 135 changed their view of the world; they were positive, less anti-social, happier and more settled in their home environment.

2

Giving individuals space to nurture their own uniqueness empowers and drives confidence.

We heard from some young people who believed their association with Ranui 135 enabled them to identify and nurture their unique skills and talents. Some discovered their abilities with, and affinity for, sports; of which at least three had gone on to representative level, either playing for New Zealand teams or recruited to play in Australia. Others discovered they were good at leadership, youth work or mentoring and had chosen career paths to let them use these talents.

3

Unconfident kids have a space where they feel comfortable and which allows them to build their capability

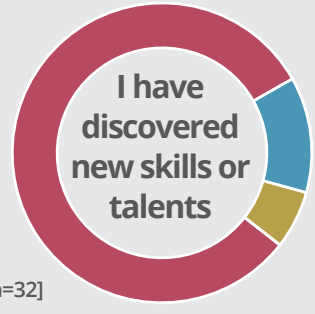
We heard from some young people who had grown in confidence since participating in 135. This was partly due to the welcoming and open atmosphere, which allowed them to feel comfortable and reduced their anxiety, and partly due to mastering new skills, particularly sport-related skills.

SURVEY

100%

of survey respondents agree they have discovered new skills or talents since participating in Ranui 135

[81% 'totally true'; 13% 'quite true'; 6% 'a little bit true' n=32]



> "It helped me with my confidence a lot, encouraged me to try what I can do, not be shy of that.
>
> [young person interview]

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

Developing confidence is an important part of positive wellbeing. Confidence may be fostered in young people by supporting their autonomy and valuing individual expression (Mahoney et al, 2004). Young people need a sense of positive self-definition in order to build confidence and enhance self-esteem (Murphey, 2000).

Activities which are collaborative, rather than competitive, and which are focussed on individual growth and improvement, rather than comparison with others, are more likely to foster motivation and increased levels of confidence (Perkins and Noam, 2007; Gill 2008). Youth programmes can build psychological and emotional independence by allowing young people as much control as possible in making decisions, and by providing opportunities to express their opinions (Murphey, 2000).

Participating in sports activities is one way of allowing young people the freedom to explore new skills and challenges, and provides opportunities for personal development and confidence-building (Mahoney et al., 2004). Participation in organised sports, especially team sports (DeBate, Gabriel, Zwald, Huberty & Zhang,2009), can effectively impact positive self-regard, confidence and increased levels of self-esteem, particularly among girls and/or shy children (Slater & Tiggermann, 2009; Findlay & Coplan, 2008).

Lani

Lani first joined Ranui 135 by attending Wednesday night sports with her 3 brothers. She was shy and had few real friends. Her older brother was responsible for them when their parents were at work. "Mum and Dad expected us to stay together, they weren't traditionally strict just protective. Staying together was how they thought we would stay safe." The siblings were looking for things to do with other young people. A family friend at the rugby club knew Rob and Zee from Ranui 135 so they were allowed go together.

At 13 years old, Lani was reluctant to think of herself as sporty even though she played competitive Netball through school. Netball was just what girls did out west. She mainly wanted to make friends when she went to Ranui 135. It took Lani a few years to realise her talent and just how much she enjoyed playing sports. Over time she began to feel more and more confident in her physical ability and her natural talent to read the field of play and know how to inject intensity into a game. Her unassuming temperament meant only those close to her at Ranui135 knew how this confidence was building. Lani was just one of the group but as opportunities presented themselves she was encouraged to take them and ultimately became a professional sports person representing New Zealand.

Lani believes that it was not the code of sport they played but the range of skills and self-confidence instilled from the Ranui 135 youth leaders and her peers that made the difference when she decided to follow her dream and go professional. "I have no idea if I would have even dared to pursue my dream if I haven't been involved in Ranui 135." She felt Ranui 135 valued her connection with her family and community and this has helped her deal with the pressure and opportunities of being a professional sports person. Lani wants other young people in Ranui to experience being happy and connected in their community and to build skills and confidence that they can take into adulthood.



UNLEASHING POTENTIAL

1

Youth at 135 believe in their potential and act to reach their goals

Most of the young people we talked to said 135 had a profound impact on their chosen life path. For some, Ranui allowed them to explore their leadership potential in a safe place, and they had taken on more leadership responsibilities, such as running for head girl at school or becoming a youth leader at their church. Others had chosen careers that enabled them to work with youth, such as joining the police force or becoming a teacher or youth worker. Others felt that 135 had simply helped to steer them away from 'stupid stuff', like alcohol, drugs, theft and other anti-social behaviour.

2

135 provides the conditions (soft skills, plus confidence and nurturing) to help young people see possibilities, plus employment support, structure, and practical help for young people to realise their potential

135 gives youth confidence to engage with the wider world, alongside practical help with CV's, interview skills, work experience, or acting as referees. We heard from several young people whose future pathways had been heavily influenced by the support and role modelling they were exposed to through 135. Some young people had jobs as a direct result of the employment pathway service, whilst others had gone on to tertiary study or training.



[Photo: Edith Amituanai]

> "They've helped me in terms of employment opportunities or experience. How to work with kids and youth. They planted a seed and it just kind of grew ... I've just graduated from Uni.
>
> [young person interview]

SURVEY

100%

of survey respondents agree they feel more confident and positive about their future since participating in Ranui 135



[69% 'totally true'; 19% 'quite true'; 13% 'a little bit true' n=32]

"[Without Ranui 135] I would be a different person. I thought things were out of reach and I didn't think actually - you can do this."

[young person interview: now represents New Zealand in their chosen sport]

CONNECTION

1

Ranui 135 helps extend and create positive connections in this community and beyond.

All of the young people we spoke to talked about the strong connection they felt to the Ranui 135 leaders. For most, they were more than leaders and role models; they were regarded as family.

The connections extend well beyond the leaders. Most of the young people told us how belonging to Ranui 135 had been a catalyst for creating relationships and connections with other Ranui youth.

2

135 values and connects with both Ranui youth and their families

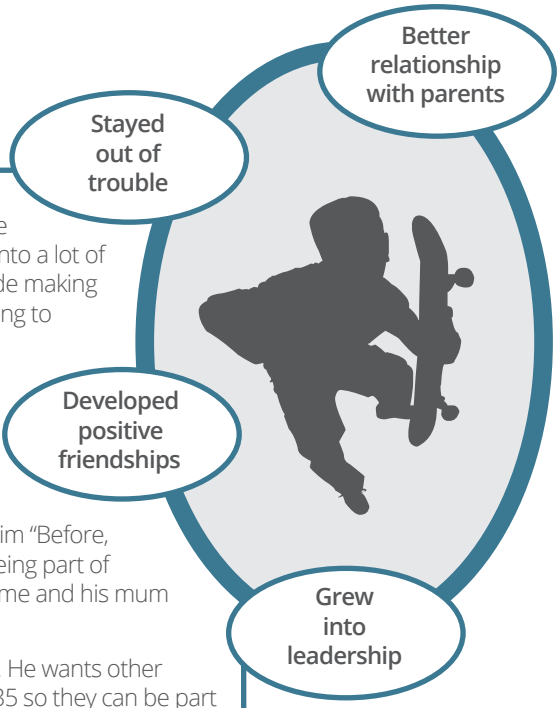
We heard from several people who participated as youth in the early days of Ranui 135 who are now returning with their children and families. Ranui 135 has a network of relationships that allows traditional parents and families to feel safe about their children's participation. Some female participants said they would ordinarily have not been allowed to participate, but could take part because their brothers were involved. Others could participate because of cultural values or because sports were a safe option.

Joe

When Joe joined Ranui 135 he was looking for some new friends. Being the middle child of seven, Joe looked up to his brother and his friends. Joe had got into a lot of trouble and he was on his last chance with his dad. He was 14 and shy which made making new friends that much harder. His friend Matt from church suggested they go along to Ranui135 summer sports which ran Wednesday evenings through the summer.

Playing sports meant making new friends was less stressful for Joe because Ranui135 was less about being the best player and more about being a great team player. Ranui 135 staff noticed that Joe turned up regularly and was keen, before long he was leading activities and helping other kids to get involved. Over time he was given lots of opportunity to develop his leadership skills through the leadership camps and ongoing youth activities. Joe's dad noticed a big change in him "Before, Joe seemed easily lead astray. He was hard to read because he was so quiet but being part of Ranui 135 he is now confident to be himself and share his opinions including with me and his mum which is a good change."

Joe feels he has lifelong friends now; people genuinely interested in him doing well. He wants other young people to have opportunities to belong to a youth organisation like Ranui 135 so they can be part of something that is fun and stay out of trouble. He wants them to feel confident and that the world is their oyster.



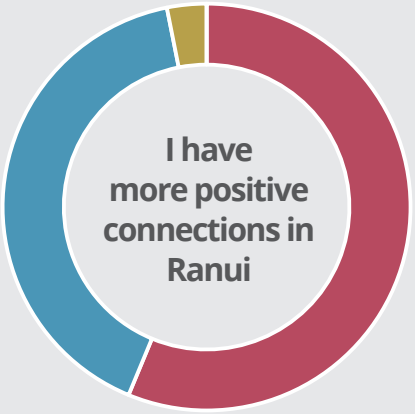
WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

Social support and connection is an important protective factor for young people (Farrugia et al, 2010). The relationships which form between adult mentors and the young people participating in youth development programmes can be very supportive for youth when the adult mentor is appropriate, available and predictable (Mahoney, Eccles, & Larson, 2004; Detzler, et al. 2007). A key feature of successful youth development projects is that programme coordinators are connected to and build relationships between the young people, their families and wider networks (Wheeler, 2006; Hirsch 2007; Davidson, Schwartz and Noam 2008). Young people benefit greatly from connecting to their peers, family/ whānau and other adults in their schools and communities in positive environments where they feel comfortable, valued and engaged (Murphey 2000; Fouche et al. 2010).

SURVEY

100%

of survey respondents agree they have more positive connections in the Ranui community since participating in Ranui 135



[56% 'totally true'; 41% 'quite true'; 3% 'a little bit true' n=32]

> "[I] got to build awesome relationships with people who were strangers and on the way we became friends with people that I would now consider family."
>
> [young person interview]



[Photo: Edith Amituanai]

LEADERSHIP

1

Ranui 135 creates youth leaders by enabling youth leadership. It's as simple as that.

The term "leader" is used with abandon at 135. Young people aged 13+ participate in a 'leadership camp', regardless of whether they are leaders, or view themselves as leaders. Older teens are encouraged and mentored to take on leadership roles at the activities. Thus, we heard from several young people who started to see themselves as a leader. They described how this motivated them to take leadership initiative (i.e. empowering and developing others) and consider their behaviour through the eyes of other participants.

We also heard, however, that some young people found it challenging to take their leadership skills back into their families, particularly if they were female or a younger sibling.

WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH SAY?

Effective youth leadership development involves creating environments where young people feel valued and part of a supportive group of people who know them well. Effective programmes provide meaningful opportunities for young people to show leadership in their home, school and community activities, and to make decisions (Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2015).

Youth leadership is developed through hands on participation, and by observing adult mentors. Adult mentors who care about the young people they are working with and who allow young people to observe them and how they behave, enables youth to develop leadership skills themselves (Kress, 2006).

> "I'd like to be a leader, be a role model. I want to set a good example, like show kids that doing bad stuff, drinking alcohol at a young age is not cool. Dunking your first basketball, that's cool, or sprinting 100 metres under 13 seconds, now that's cool, not getting wasted on the weekend because that doesn't get you anywhere."

[young person interview]

Dusty



When 15 year old Dusty moved to Ranui to live with his Aunty and Uncle, they recommended he go along to a 135 Wednesday Drop In. Dusty immediately liked the vibe and meeting new people and pretty soon became a regular.

The more Dusty turned up on Wednesday nights, the more responsibility he was given - from setting out activities to keeping an eye on the younger kids. "They started calling me a leader", he says. "So I thought I might as well be a leader." Dusty attended the leadership camps and now helps out with the little kids on the holiday programme. He takes his role as a leader and mentor seriously. "Because of the holiday programme I know most of the Ranui kids" he says, "and when they come to the park instead of just looking after myself, I have an eye out for the kids just to make sure they're safe. I feel like it's kind of my duty.".

Being seen as a leader is a great source of pride for Dusty. He was extremely motivated to display leadership so he could be given other opportunities. "I always wanted to be the captain because you've got to do what the captain says," he told us. "So every time I was with Zee and Rob, I'd always try and be a leader so they can choose me to be captain and finally I got captain this year and it was good."

Dusty is learning a lot by watching Zee and Rob, and is positive about his future. "It's definitely made me a better person, he says. "I feel like with them behind me I can achieve almost anything."

> "They've taught me a lot of leadership skills, like to be patient with people and to not rush things."
>
> [young person interview]

SURVEY

100%

of survey respondents agree they see themselves as a leader or a potential leader since participating in Ranui 135



[50% 'totally true'; 22% 'quite true'; 22% 'a little bit true'; 6% not true at all n=32]



[Photo: Edith Amituanai]