



## **“ON TOP WITH TE REO” AT MAKIKIHI SCHOOL**

July 2016

Makikihi is a small rural school with a big heart. Parents and members of the community are involved in activities such as gardening and cooking. The teaching team realised there was a gap in regards to staff and students’ understanding and comfort around Māori language (Te Reo) and culture (tikanga), so after discussion with Janet (their WAVE facilitator) they worked out a plan.

A key aspect of the plan was to prepare for a visit to their local marae – Waihao. This would be the first ever formal visit by the school. Preparations included researching, writing and practising their introductions (pepeha). The children would discuss their family background and identify key landscape features (e.g. mountain and river) that were important to them – this could be anywhere in the world. Another important aspect of the preparation was learning about and practising the pōwhiri (welcoming) process onto the marae. Suzy, WAVE’s Māori Health Promoter assisted classes with this as well as with structuring and pronunciation of their Mihi Mihi (greetings).

Finally the day arrived and Makikihi combined with Waituna Creek School for the day. WAVE and Marae staff were impressed at how comfortable the Makikihi students were with the process and felt that the effort the school had put into the learnings and practising played an important part in ensuring the students were prepared for their visit. Key highlights of the day included the impressive whaikōrero by Makikihi Principal John, whom Suzy had worked with in preparation for the day and the involvement of the wonderful staff from the Timaru museum who led an exploration of some of the heritage aspects of Waihao, plus the traditional Māori games (e.g. Ki-o-rahi) led by some of the CPH WAVE team.

Other key elements of the school plan included gardening, signage and food. Makikihi School is blessed to have the services of a community member Murray (an ex-Principal) who oversees a fantastic vegetable garden. This provided an opportunity for the school community to learn the Māori names for food, as well as some of the traditional Māori gardening activities. Janet has noted that a key visible outcome is the considerable Māori signage around the school and in the classrooms as well as the increased use of Māori words by students and staff.

Currently the students are practicing their Ki-o-rahi skills in preparation for the South Canterbury tournament in the future and their principal has attended Traditional Māori Games PD to learn more to pass onto his students.



*Students waiting patiently behind the  
whare for instructions prior to starting  
the Traditional Māori games segment of  
the day*



*Preparing for Traditional Māori Games*

