

Te Awa Times

Newspaper of Karori West Normal School

Celebrating Matariki

By Noah Rex and Catarina Aduso

Students and staff at our kura marked Matariki with a range of meaningful and festive activities that honoured the Māori New Year.

A community-wide Matariki celebration last Wednesday brought together students, whānau, and the wider community for an evening of connection, remembrance, and culture.

Highlights included a star walk, where participants searched the school grounds for representations of the nine Matariki stars, student art exhibitions, and a shared soup station provided by the technology team..

Performances from both junior and senior kapa haka groups captivated the audience, and a dedicated space

allowed attendees to pay tribute to loved ones who had passed.

Leading up to the event, teachers worked alongside students to create Matariki-themed artwork, all of which was displayed on the night.

Teacher Isabella Wicks (Ako 21) shared her thoughts on the importance of the celebration: “I believe Matariki is an important part of New Zealand culture and should be embraced as our New Year.

“It made more sense for the year to begin around the start of spring, rather than in the middle of winter like in many Western countries.

“I appreciated how Matariki encouraged reflection on the past year.”



Stars in their eyes: Matariki at KWNS.

Photo: Danielle Doyle.

Your reporters

Welcome to a new team of reporters for Te Awa Times, the newspaper of Karori West Normal School. Well, mostly new because Abby Kilpatrick, Hazel Wisker, Elena Murphy, Jessica Graham and Samu Cagnetta are back for 2025.

They are joined by Year 7/8 students Minu Sutherland, Lily-Raema Aikman, Amanda Shang, Meg Pryor, Catarina Aduso, Peyton Joe, Maia Martin-Elwell, Celestine Ocampo, Noah Rex, Lachlan Ranger, Cullen Connor, and Archie Calder with guidance from Liz and Jim Tully.

Te Awa Times evokes the stream that passes through the school and the flow of information to our readers.

The underlying aim is to enhance the writing and editing skills of students through news writing, which emphasises accuracy, clarity and conciseness.

Liz and Jim say, “We’re enjoying working with our new team, chosen by the teachers from more than 30 applicants.”

Te Awa Times reporters are the New Zealand correspondents for Newsy Pooloozi, a news and current affairs podcast for children around the world. Here are our first two podcasts for 2025 by Abby Kilpatrick and Hazel Wisker. Thanks to Alistair Chisholm for recording them. They can be found on www.newsypooloozi.com

Octopus hitches ride with mako shark

Abby Kilpatrick reports from New Zealand, where marine scientists were shocked to see an octopus riding on a shark. Over to you Abby.

You've heard of stowaways - people who hide aboard a ship in the hope of getting free passage. But what about an octopus hitching a ride with a mako shark? Well, that's the amazing sight a team of researchers saw off the coast of New Zealand.

The Auckland University researchers in New Zealand's Hauraki Gulf, spotted an odd duo of a 3-metre mako shark with a Māori octopus clinging to its back. This ride-or-die duo have been tagged "sharktopus". A video of the spectacle went viral.

This scene is legendary because mako sharks live close to the surface while Māori octopi live along the sea bed. The odd pair were cruising along the surface at about 10kph. Researchers are still not sure how this even happened. But what a sight!

Not to mention, the shark carrying the pesky octopus has an exceptional speed record. The mako shark's crescent-shaped tail, helps make it the fastest shark in the open seas.

While they can't sustain a fast pace, powerful bursts of speed help them catch their prey with top speeds of up to 74 kph or 46 miles per hour - although, mako sharks usually coast at a leisurely 50kph (31 mph).

The shark wasn't doing all the work, though our octopus passenger had to

work hard to maintain its hold on the shark.

"It was working really hard to keep all its tentacles tucked in, it was keeping itself contained," said Rochelle Constantine Professor of Marine Ecology and Conservation at the University of Auckland.

A Māori octopus is among the largest and most hostile octopus species. It lives in New Zealand and Australian seas eating crustaceans and fish.

"Blobby" a surprise hit with New Zealanders

The world's **ugliest** fish has just been voted the fish of the year in New Zealand. Take it away **Hazel Wisker** in Wellington.

Thanks guys. So yeah, New Zealand's fish of the year for 2025 is, drum roll please... the blobfish. Voted ugliest fish in 2013, the blobfish looks, well, like a blob. They're primarily greyish and whitish pink. They have big, black eyes and loose, flabby skin.

Unlike other fish, they don't have scales or a full skeleton-- only a few bones and muscles--hence the blob-type look. And here's a fun fact about the blobfish: They actually look like normal fish underwater. Crazy, right?

They rely on water pressure to keep their shape, and then they turn more pink and blobby when they are pulled out of the water.

And, because they are lazy, they eat crustaceans and anemones or whatever happens to flow into their mouths!

With its top mantle length at 300 mm and a total length of about one metre their total body weight can be up to 10 kg. They have extremely strong and lengthy arms.

Says Rochelle: "We have all kinds of neat stuff out in the Hauraki Gulf. You never know what you're going to see."

This is Abby Kilpatrick reporting for Newsy Pooloozi in Wellington.



Scientists say it's hard to study these fish because they live in what's called the "midnight zone", a deep ocean layer where the sun cannot penetrate, in the Indian, Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

For now, there are only about 420 blobfish in the whole world. But we're proudly protecting all the bobbies out there with conservation efforts here in New Zealand and in Australia.

This is Hazel Wisker, reporting from Wellington, New Zealand, for Newsy Pooloozi.

We've all seen our caretaker Barry Holt working around the school grounds. But, as Lachlan Ranger discovered, you can also find him on Spotify, one of the largest providers of music streaming services.

Around the school you may have seen Barry the caretaker but did you know you can also find Barry the musician on Spotify?

Sharing his passion with the world, Barry records classical guitar music and releases it under his own label. He has a strong interest in music composed for films and has listeners from around the world.

The Music NZ website says: "Barry is a Te Whanganui-a-Tara based musician and composer. A multi-instrumentalist with a broad interest in music. Not constricted to a particular style, his work covers several genres and is perhaps best described as eclectic.

"Originally from Liverpool, he first began his musical journey playing in various Irish, cabaret and original bands. Developing his own style as a singer/songwriter with well constructed songs with a strong acoustic British folk element.

"Later, his interest turned to classical guitar and has two albums to date. With interest in music for film and soundscape / spoken word music production, his latest offering is a studio album written as a homage to some of the film genres and composers that have inspired him in the past."

Not only has Barry released several albums but also has completed a Bachelor's degree in music at Otago University.

Barry has performed in multiple countries including the UK, Australia and New Zealand. We have even



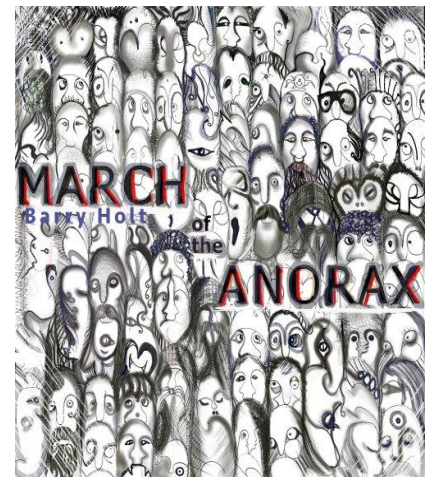
Strings attached: Barry Holt in performance.

been lucky enough to have had Barry perform at our school events such as the picnic.

Just like being a solo artist, caretaking lets you work independently on whatever needs to be done, he says.

Karori West is not the first educational institution Barry has worked at. Before coming to KWNS he worked at Victoria University as a groundsman.

So now whenever you hear Barry whistling a tune, think, could this be his next masterpiece.



Lily-Raema Aikman and Maia Martin-Elwell report on the impact of the reduced parking on Karori Road.

In 2024, The Wellington Council introduced cycle lanes stretching from Karori West Normal School along Karori Road and all the way to the Botanic Garden on Glenmore Street.

While the Karori Road cycle lane makes for a safer environment for cyclists, parking has become an issue for the Karori Park Cafe and Saturday morning sport.

Hout Kong, co-owner of Karori Park Cafe, supports the development of cycle lanes, but also thinks a more strategic approach is needed. "Cycle lanes should be implemented where they are genuinely needed," he says.

"The impact on local businesses must be carefully considered. A balanced approach that prioritises both cyclist safety and the needs of businesses is essential."

Reduced parking availability on weekdays had negatively impacted business. Commuters using the area as a park-and-ride for city buses had decreased parking for both park users and families with young children, resulting in a decline in business.

Karori Park Cafe isn't the only negatively impacted field, though.

Every Saturday, sporting teams from across Wellington flock to our local park and the cycle lanes has made it harder for players and supporters to park and gives less parking space for Karori residents.

Waterside Karori Association Football Club executive chair Hugh Kettle thinks removing car parks has increased the parking problem and is causing greater traffic congestion.

"Karori Park is always busy on Saturday mornings, with cricket in the summer, football in the winter and lots of other park users at all times." (The club has 100 teams and about 1000 players aged 3 to 80.)

"Personally, I am not against cycle lanes – our club members have all sorts of different pro or anti cycleway opinions. [But] we as a club have made submissions to the (Wellington City) council against the removal of the car parks in the Karori Park area.

"Our view is that the cycleway is not needed in this particular area. We think that the removal of the car parks has done



The cycle lane on Karori Road has significantly affected parking close to the park.

more harm than good. Unfortunately, it does not look like the council will change this."

Though we've covered the more negative side of things, the cycle lanes have a positive impact too, on cyclists and kids that have started biking instead of driving. Simon Waterfield, a regular cyclist who bikes to and from work, believes that the roads are safer now the cycle lanes are in place.

"I feel safe on the roads now, but I felt safe before the cycle lanes were built as well," he says.

"Before the cycle lanes, I generally cycled around the back streets as there wasn't much space for me on the main road.

"Now I cycle on both. I'm happy to use them but I don't think they were really needed, though I could see how Karori [West] Normal parents would be happier if their kids were cycling in the lanes and not on the road."

The cycle lanes can be seen both positively and negatively depending on who you ask. On one hand, it encourages eco-friendly travel for kids and adults. But on the other hand, it can negatively impact business and parking. Are the cycle lanes good or bad? That's for you to decide!

Let's go clubbing

Stitching a treat

By Jessica Graham

Have you ever wanted to be a knitter? Make amazing creations while learning a new talent? Well, it's good news for you because the Knitting Club has opened this year!

That's right! The club is run by Dee Hawken, acting team leader, fabrics, on Friday lunchtimes and is open to students in Years 5-8.

Members enjoy knitting because it is a good opportunity to learn a new hobby and they think it will be a good life-long skill.



Sophie with her yellow neck warmer

Right now, they are working on making little squares of wool from two different types of stitches, and then connecting them to make scarves, blankets and more!

Dee got the idea for knitting club because of her new granddaughter; she wanted to make her a baby blanket, some cardigans, pants, and booties and through doing this rediscovered her love for knitting. From that, she thought it would be a good idea to teach kids how to knit from an early age.

This term, cunning knitters have been experimenting with two basic types of patterns to create beautiful creations, some have already finished neck warmers and knitted squares.

Anyone in Year 5 and up can join. So, whether you are experienced or just want to give something new a go, bring a friend and become a knitting master.

Staying focussed required at new club

By Abby Kilpatrick

An exciting new photography club has emerged in KWNS, teaching plenty of awesome skills, for all ages.

At the club they take photos with ipads outside, creating cool pieces of art. You're welcome to bring a camera into Akomanga 18, but no phones.

Teacher Jenny Lowe created this club because she loves photography and it's a great way for students to notice details, be creative, and express themselves.

"It helps them see things from different perspectives and builds their confidence in trying something new."

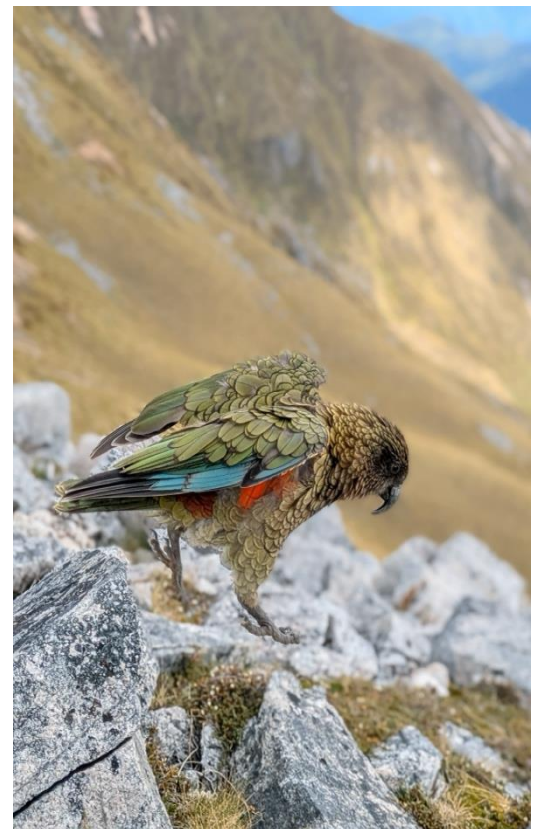
I enjoy photography myself because it helps me slow down, look more closely at the world and capture interesting moments that I want to remember

The club is full of surprises! Each week they have a new topic or challenge of photography that they focus on, like one week they explored action shots.

Reed says, "We could take pictures of anything we want to. Also, if we're out of ideas we would do the challenge that Jenny, the leader, gave us."

For Novuyo, "I enjoy taking photos with people that I know and it's a way to express myself."

Collin: "I like taking pictures of animals and recording them and I like taking pictures of my friends."



Jenny Lowe photographed this kea on the Kepler Track in January.

KWNS had two teams in the annual Lit Quiz, a literacy-based competition involving 52 schools, finishing 4th and 12th. Quizzers Elena Murphy and Archie Calder report.

Seven students from Te Whanau Kauri and one from Matai participated in the Lit Quiz, an annual literature-themed quiz for students in years 5-8.

Students from different schools around the world compete to answer questions about books, poetry, nursery rhymes and plays. The winning teams from each regional competition compete in a national final, and then the national champions compete in a global final.

KWNS students participated in a round of practice questions, and those with the best scores formed two teams of four - our first entries for a number of years.

The Wellington regional competition was held at Wellesley College. Team A (12th) comprised Meg Pryor, Noah Rex, Samu Cagnetta (captain) and Paheli Desilva. Team B, who were 4th, had Elena Murphy (captain), Lily-Raema Aikman, Celestine Ocampo and Archie Calder.

Teams had to answer 100 questions divided into 10 categories which included dragons, horses, hair, festivals, dreams, and even vegetables!

Teacher Sarah Tucker, who organised and trained the teams, said reading was important because "it opens up other worlds for us. It teaches us to use language and be great writers, it gives us insight into people, events and experiences we haven't thought about before.

"Karori West were fantastic, as one team was fourth, and that's the best Karori West has ever done. We didn't have a lot of time to prepare, but we had an enthusiastic group of readers and they each brought different knowledge to contribute.

"So, if you love to read, and can answer questions like: 'Which teacher in Harry Potter can turn herself into a cat?' or



Lily-Raema, Archie, Noah, Elena and Meg enjoyed Lit Quiz.

'What name is given to identical sounds often found at the beginning of words?' you could possibly be a contender for the 2026 competition or the KWNS one later in the year. Go for it, it's tons of fun!" said Sarah.

A quiz for our participants.

How much did you train?

I went to all of the meetings I could go to and I think I put lots of effort into all of it so I would say I did quite a lot of training for this. Me and my mum (shout out to my mum) did lots of the practice questions at my house -**Noah Rex**

How did you feel being captain?

So being team leader wasn't really huge when we were actually doing the quiz. It made me feel nice, though. I don't usually feel like a leader outside of school and it made me feel good that in school, occasionally, I can have that opportunity -**Samu Cagnetta**

Did you enjoy Lit Quiz?

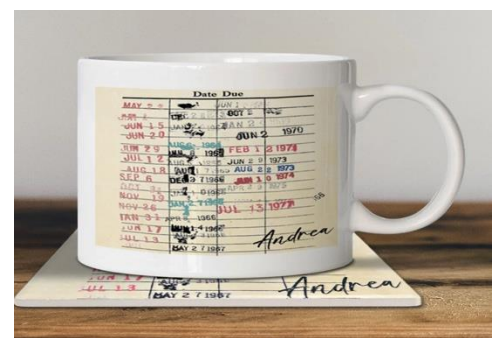
Yes, because it was a good experience for me to know more about books that I haven't read. It was also a good way to bond with my friends - **Meg Pryor**

Do you have a favourite book that inspired you on your reading journey?

Yes. It's the book "Cookie" by Jacqueline Wilson. It's about a girl who has been bullied at school and has family issues, especially with her dad. I liked the part when she ran away because it was very exciting - **Paheli Desilva**

How do you think your team went in the Lit Quiz?

I feel really proud about our fourth place. I think we could probably have chosen our double points round on something we knew more about than dragons and maybe we would have come out on the top. We earned some of the spot prizes thanks to Elena and I'm really glad I even got into the Lit Quiz which I was seriously doubting. Overall, I have no regrets -**Lily-Raema Aikman**



Whanau Kahikatea's term 2 inquiry focussed on simple machines. Meg Pryor and Abby Kilpatrick report.

Kahikatea (Years 3/4) had an exciting inquiry this term. They studied machines, specifically simple machines like wheels and axles, levers, pulleys and ramps.

Team leader Ximena Aitken explained why it's important to learn this: "We use simple machines in everything that we use and we want them to understand how they work."

Kahikatea learned lots over the term. The students were taught about four different simple machines.

Afterwards, they learned how to design a toy using machines. "Our focus was on building simple machine toys," says Ximena.

When we talked to students, they said they enjoyed making the simple machines, and the rotations.



Kahikatea students with their machine toys. Photo:

Mud, glorious mud for the guys and gals of KWNS

By Minu Sutherland

This term our school participated in the Junior Tough Guy/Gal challenge, a 3km event for Years 5 to 8 held nationwide.

It took place at Camp Wainui, Wainuiomata in May. I was one of the 61 students that participated on the day and everyone enjoyed it! The terrain was intense: mud, creeks, and more...

There were obstacles such as tyres you had to crawl through, wooden frames to climb over. Participants taped their shoes so that they wouldn't come off. We also wore colourful clothes to represent our school. By the end of the course kids would come past the finish line drenched and shivering. Thankfully, we could have a hot shower before we headed back to school.

Lachlan (Year 8) was someone from our school, who was quite competitive about the challenge. "It was super fun. Also, it was cool to just chill with friends and have snacks. I enjoyed the mud run. I would 100% encourage others to take part."

Deputy principal Danielle Doyle says, "We were very impressed with the behaviour and will hopefully do it again."



Victor (Year 8) emerges from the river near the end. Photo: Danielle Doyle

Deputy Principal Danielle Doyle, talks to Samu Cagnetta about her role as Sports Co-ordinator.

Samu: What is the role of the sports co-ordinator?

Danielle: Well, there are three different parts to the sports co-ordinator job that I do. The first one is all of the sports teams. For example, we have 10 netball teams currently, seven basketball teams, and six badminton teams that are running after school.

Samu: And what's the second part?

Danielle: The second thing I do is all the Western zones. There are two every term, and I also organise other competitions like the Junior Tough Guy & Tough Girl tournament. The other part of the job is the school events like cross-country, which was brilliant, and athletics coming up in Term 4.

Samu: Got it. And the third part?

Danielle: The third thing is that we are currently talking to the sports leaders. We're going into the PE sheds—both of them, the student one and the teachers' one - and we're going to count all of the gear, check if it's working, and then order a whole lot of new sports gear.

Samu: That sounds good. And could you tell me about the gear? Like, what new gear will we have and what students will be allowed to take out from the PE shed?

Danielle: Once we have checked all the sports gear, we are going to collect some student and teacher voice about what we should order. There will be some new equipment for the PE shed at lunch times and then some new equipment for teachers to use when they are teaching. We also need to consider



Danielle Doyle

how we are going to organise the new gear. For example, using wheelie bins to store the basketballs etc.

Samu: Okay, perfect. Is there anything else happening sports-wise?

Danielle: Yes, some western zone events will be happening this term. Last term, we had cricket and football. This term, we've got cross-country and mini-ball.

Samu: Which is like basketball, right?

Danielle: Yes. And in term three, we might have handball, but I'm just confirming that. We also have Western zone netball and Western zone floorball.

So, lots will be happening in term 3. And in term 4, we've got the Year 3 sports competition and Western zone athletics.

Samu: Great. And about the teams—how many teams do we have for each year group, like Years 3 and 4, 5 and 6?

Danielle: For netball, we currently have one team for each year level: one Year 3 team, one Year 4, one Year 5, and we actually have two Year 6 teams, plus three Year 7 and 8 teams because those are combined.

Samu: Okay, and basketball?

Danielle: For basketball, we've got two Year 3 and 4 teams, two Year 5 and 6 teams, and three Year 7 and 8 teams.

Samu: And badminton?

Danielle: Badminton is only for Years 5 to 8. We have three Year 5 and 6 teams, and three Years 7 and 8 teams.

Samu: Perfect. Thank you so much for your time, Danielle. I really appreciate it.

Danielle: No problem. Happy to help!



Hugo and Lachlan vie for the lead in the Boys Year 8 Western Zone cross-country. Lachlan was 3rd and Hugo 4th.

Sporting news

In-house basketball competition

By Amanda Shang and Peyton Joe

The house basketball competition is between the four houses - Angi, Ahi, Oneone and Wai - for Years 7 and 8. There is usually a game on Thursdays in the school hall at 12.45pm right after lunch.

Principal Simon Flockton, who is running the competition, chose basketball because it is played inside and perfect for the winter weather.

There is no coaching just pure skill and talent. After four games, Ahi was leading with 2 points. So, what does the winning team get?

Well, the winning team gets to play a staff team. There isn't a big prize (house cup) because the basketball competition isn't a big tournament. It is just a fun competition between our year 7 and 8s for boys and girls where they get to have fun and enjoy sports together.

Here's what Kate (Ako 9) had to say: The reason I joined the competition is because I think basketball is a great sport to learn and play and to have fun."



Liam Keane fought strongly in the Year 5 boys Western Zone cross-country for a close 2nd.

KWNS fields seven basketball teams

Karori West has seven of the 25 teams in the popular primary schools basketball league for Years 3 to 8 at the Karori Recreation Centre on Fridays.

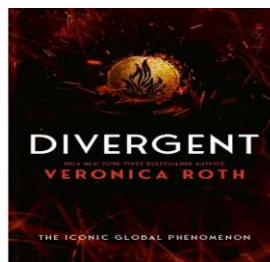
The KWNS Niwha are leading the Year 3/4 league with Whakawhiti 4th. In the Year 7/8 B division Titere sit 3rd, Uira 5th and Kuru 6th. In the Year 5/6 B division Manawa are 3rd and Awhirowhiro 4th.

Off to Wellington Regionals

Six boys were to compete at the Greater Wellington Regional cross-country championships at Harcourt Park, Upper Hutt, this week after finishing in the top 10 at the Wellington inter-zones.

They are Hugo Thirkell and Lachlan Ranger, Year 8; Kester Holmes, Year 7; Liam Keane, Year 5; Jackson Dunn and Jason Ballagh, Year 4.

Top 10 finishers will qualify for the Inter-Regional event in Christchurch in September.



Divergent By Virginia Roth

Reviewed by Caterina Aduso

If you liked The Hunger Games, this book is for you! In this intriguing dystopian novel, the first in a trilogy, the world is divided into factions that outline your beliefs, and therefore your entire future.

Born into Abnegation, the faction where baggy clothes and a selfless personality is mandatory, outgoing 16-year old Beatrice has to choose between betraying her family or betraying herself. This choice determines who she is but the truth is dangerous.

Personally, I found this gripping thriller an addictive novel with amazing detail and a cohesive plot. Overall, I loved reading this book and I gave it a 5/5 rating.

Learning modules addressing diverse skills

Developing physical foundations for classroom learning

By Minu Sutherland

Learning about how your brain and body work together has been a big focus for Te Whanau Nikau (Years 1 and 2) this term.

They have been participating in the Perceptual Motor Programme [PMP] to develop their balance, strength and coordination so that they can be more successful in their learning and play.

This programme develops the physical foundations for classroom learning - balance, coordination, intuition, eye tracking and gross motor skills that support the development of fine motor skills.

The children had two or three PMP sessions a week, using the equipment the school has invested in. If children spend time doing

the specific movements, they will find classroom demands easier.

PMP also helps children do things like develop a good pencil grip, sit comfortably on chairs and use each side of their body separately.

Nikau Team Leader Sophie Weren says, “We are still early in our roll-out of the programme but we are seeing children already more aware of their bodies and how they can use them.

“We want children to have fun and learn more about their body, and how their brain and body work together. We want children to develop their balance, strength and coordination so that they can be more successful in their learning and play.”



Spinning Jerry. Photo: Sophie Weren.

The children's verdict:

Indigo: “It is super fun and I want to keep doing it!”

Patrick: “I really like the strong person exercise. It's where you stand with a heavy ball and point with your other hand, then you throw it as far as you can!”

Preparing for natural disasters

By Lachlan Ranger

This term, Matai students (Years 5 and 6) have been learning how to be prepared when a natural disaster occurs.

Whanau leader Adam Hrstich says the main focus for Matai students is understanding how communities respond to natural disasters and the systems they have in place.

They have done five rotations, each with a focus on a different natural disaster: tsunamis,

landslides, wildfires, volcanoes and earthquakes. This enables the students to understand how different people from different places prepare for natural disasters.

Activities include making posters.

The Matai students have also been visited by a guest speaker from WREMO (Wellington Regional Emergency Management Office) so they can learn more about the hazards we face in Wellington and how we can prepare.

The students have enjoyed getting hands on to learn about the different natural disasters that can happen.

Ethan in Ako 5 said, “We've done cool things like using matches to see how quickly a wild fire can spread and using marshmallows, toothpicks and gelatin to see how buildings survive earthquakes.”

With climate change resulting in more frequent and intense weather events Matai kids will be ahead of the game and ready to respond to any disaster.

All aboard for board games

Pathways to fun and games

By Jessica Graham

Have you noticed the new pathway paintings around the school? Have you tried them out with your friends or played by yourself?

These new paintings are for everyone to enjoy! These are going to help make playtime more fun and creative. There are many different games you can explore with these pathways - giant snakes and ladders, human-sized darts, human chess and many more.

The paintings have made the boring concrete grounds a fun space for play at lunchtimes and morning tea breaks.

Principal Simon Flockton and the Board of Trustees wanted the paintings to add some 'zhuzh' around the hard-packed grass area outside the library.

Mr Flockton says they were added around the school in the term two holidays to provide a better playground space for KWNS and to add some more things for you to do at lunchtime.



New pathway paintings hit the bullseye

These have been widely popular outside the hall, Akomanga 20 and 21 and Akomanga 7 and 8.

Our chess masters third at Wellington regional competition

By Samu Cagnetta and Cullen Conner

Our senior chess team has qualified for the national finals of the primary schools' chess tournament.

The team comprising Khoi, Alex, Danish, and Samu are expected to compete via the online event on October 25. They were 3rd in the Wellington regional event.

Our junior team of Hung, Alex, Long, Nicholas, Alexis, Bryson, Patrick and Mocha finished in the top 25%.

The way this competition works is that you are matched with someone around your age. You both have 15 minutes to try to

achieve checkmate as shown by a clock.

We asked teacher in charge Adam Hrstich why he is passionate about chess.

"It is a sort of mathematical game, and so it requires a lot of thinking mathematically like probability and strategy. Also, the more you play chess, the better you become at spotting patterns and doing those types of things.

"I love playing chess. I play a lot in my spare time. I started playing when I was younger, around 10 years old, for about two years.

"Then I stopped, but I picked it up again during COVID, mainly because that's when a lot of people started playing online."

Khoi enjoys the competitive aspect. "I did three. The first time I was seven I came 2nd, The second time I came 6th when I was 11. Last year, I also did another one, in which I came 1st.

"You need to really think forwards about what's the best move they can do and then the best move that you should do to counter that," says Khoi.



KWNS chess masters Samu, Alex, Danish and Khoi.

The National Young Leaders Days are the largest and longest-running leadership event for primary and intermediate school students. Hazel Wisker reports.

Sixteen KWNS students attended the National Young Leaders Day at the St. James Theatre in Wellington.

Teacher Sophie Harrison said students from KWNS were chosen based on leadership applications at the start of the year.

“When we were looking to fill the roles of house leaders, sports leaders, and cultural and arts leaders, we had 32 students apply. Only 16 students were appointed.

“Because the level of applications (through application letters, the delivery of speeches and one-on-one interviews), (Deputy Principal) Danielle and I felt that all of the students should be recognised for their leadership and application, regardless of whether they were gifted a position.

“As a result, the 16 students who missed out on leadership roles were given the opportunity to attend the National Young Leaders' Day which the school heavily subsidised for them.”

Motivational speakers included Cam Calkoen, who has cerebral palsy and Elisa Harley (18) CEO of Enivo Pots, a venture dedicated to locally producing biodegradable plant pots from New Zealand forestry and primary industry waste.

This is what KWNS participants had to say:

Catarina Aduso: “I enjoyed Elisa’s speech the most because she was 18 and when she started her journey she was 11, which made it seem like an achievable goal.”

How did you find young leaders day?
“I found it a really fun, inspiring day that made me look at the world from a different perspective.”

Jessica Graham: “I enjoyed how it was interactive and made me very inspired.”

Who did you find most inspiring and why? “I found Cam the most inspiring because he didn’t let his disabilities stop him.”

Sophie told parents, “The National Young Leaders Day was filled with hype, inspiration and thoughtful takeaways.

“Many of the students are buzzing after hearing from speakers from all walks of life on how they manage stress, keep pursuing their passions and show leadership.”

Sophie Ligar’s take on the winter blues.....

