



1 September 2015

## To Whom It May Concern

Mt Roskill Grammar is a large multi-cultural school with 2400 students and over 70 different cultures. In 1994, it was the first Secondary school in New Zealand to establish a Peer Mediation Service in partnership with the Peace Foundation. This comprehensive service now has over 240 trained Peer Mediators, with over 80 of them being advanced Mediators.

The role of the Peer Mediator is to support students to resolve conflict in a constructive way. They are Ambassadors of Social Justice, promoting the important qualities for kindness, fairness and respect for all. They stand up against bullying behaviour and support students to get help when needed.

Research shows that the best way to tackle bullying in schools is to support students themselves to take the lead in this area. This student owned and student driven programme has shown to be effective in reducing bullying behaviour within the school.

Every year the Peace Foundation provides the LtPM (Leadership through Peer Mediation) training at Mt Roskill Grammar for a 100 new student Mediators (over 200 students apply ) and provides advanced training for a further 50 Mediators.

The benefits of this LtPM training are multi-layered for MRGS. It is a major anti-violence programme that teaches young people positive conflict resolution skills as well as providing opportunities for feeling a sense of belonging and connection to one another. It is resilience-building as well as confidence-building for all students involved. It helps the school to be a safer place from harassment and bullying, and also reduces student stand downs and suspensions.

Anecdotal evidence has shown that the life-long skills students learn through this training flow on to the Mt Roskill community to families and their future education and work places. I believe that this programme is a major intervention in achieving greater peace, well-being and safety for the youth in our Puketapapa community.

The Mediators are also active in the school and wider Mt Roskill community during International Peace week arranging many inspirational activities, including a peace march through the Mt Roskill area and having an anti- violence stall day where many organizations come to Mt Roskill Grammar spreading the message

that violence is not ok. All these activities bring the Mt Roskill community together in the name of peaceful and healthy relationships.

If we are to stand as a community and country against violence, we have to start with our young people and if we think about the adolescent's developing brain, this is the perfect time to be teaching these skills.

The following are some examples of Mediator student voices:

“Being a mediator makes me feel like I am part of a huge family”.

"I have grown into a much more thoughtful person and can now relate and cope with everyday situations better. I believe I look out for the students more and can use my skills to help others. I can resolve my conflicts in a much more mature way. This process has helped me gain skills that I can use in the future and has given me skills to create better relationships with bosses, teachers, etc".

“I feel like a real contributing member of my community and that I can make a difference”.

“It has boosted my confidence about myself and has given me comfort that there are students who are willing to stop bullying. It has made me closer with my friends and now we can resolve our own problems without it getting out of hand”.

“I love getting together with people who are as passionate for peace as I am, and events such as peace week are so great to get involved in”.

“It has helped me become a humble and loved person. Being strong and fighting for what you really desire in the future. It made me really get involved because I love helping others and keeping the peace. I will always remember being a Mediator and the skills I’ve learned that will help me deal with other problems”.

“It has helped me to be more calmer and steady. It has made me talk better, rather than arguing. It has helped me look after the junior generation of our school”.

“Being a Mediator made me realise what is going on in the world and to be aware and stand up for others”.

“It has made me realise I can speak up”.

I have started to become more confident about myself. I have less disagreements and have become more responsible”.

“I feel more understanding and positive towards a lot of different things and feel I’ve got more open minded”.

"It has strengthened my sense of belonging to the school and I am now more committed to everything I undertake. It has motivated me to strive for excellence and have a positive attitude."

"I feel that MRGS would not be the safe school it is today if it wasn't for the mediations offered at our school".

"I am a changed person. I'm wiser and more confident. I'm contributing more to the school now so I definitely feel like I belong more".

"Mediation has helped me to stop mocking people and also to trust people and help to become a better person." (Year 9 student)".

"I have wanted to be a Mediator since Year 9 when a Year 13 mediator helped me to not be bullied".

"Now I'm a Mediator, I don't get into physical fights because I don't want to lose my badge. I take a deep breath, walk away and try and be a good role model".

I appreciate your careful consideration of the Peace Foundation's application.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for any further information you may need.

Yours sincerely



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