

Reefton Area School

Takatū-ana te ako ā-mate-noa. Engage in life long learning.

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To Whom It May Concern DARE Programme

I am writing in support of the DARE programme, DARE to be YOU.

Reefton Area School over a period of three years has had students taking part in the DARE programme. This programme is designed for implementation with adolescent students, some of who have been considered at risk of loss from educational pathways.

We have been extremely impressed by the programme. The programme is well designed. The resources are excellent and well matched to meet the identified needs of adolescents. The real strength is that it allows well-trained personnel to work with students in a manner that allows an understanding of students' worlds and takes notice of student voice. Students are able to relate and discuss significant issues in their life in a confidential and respectful manner.

The programme can be life changing. Two students in particular stand out as having direct benefits from participation in the programme. Kelly-Ann was a very disgruntled student. Prior to her participation in the programme she felt isolated from her peers, her attendance was poor and she engaged in unsafe behaviours both within and out of the school setting. She was determined to leave school early and remove herself from educational pathways. The programme brought about a turn-around. Not only did she effectively work with her peers, she set herself goals to complete NCEA Level 1 and willingly took part in transition programmes to enable her to work towards her chosen vocation. Kelly-Ann is now working fulltime in Nelson and attending polytech part-time to further develop her skills. Her success can be directly attributed to her involvement with DARE to be YOU.

Axel is currently a Year 12 student at our school. He is a student leader who is much respected by his peers and the adults in the school. Two years ago as a Year 10 student he was failing horribly. He was very unsure of his abilities and had poor self-esteem. He behaviour fluctuated between teaching staff. He was very severe on staff

members whom he didn't establish a relationship with. Axel was also involved in unsafe behaviour outside of the school. He took part in a DARE to be YOU programme that included just Year 10 male students. Through the programme he was able to identify the personal strengths that he had and what the possible consequences were from his behaviours. His turn around has been remarkable. He has achieved Level 1 NCEA and is almost there with Level 2. He is a student that will mentor much younger students in the school. He is a very positive influence in the playground setting as he resolves students' issues. His success hasn't stopped there. In 2007 he has been selected for the New Zealand Area Schools' Rugby team. This has included a week of intensive training at the New Zealand Rugby Academy in Palmerston North. He is a young man with outstanding qualities. The DARE to be YOU programme has allowed him to develop a better understanding of himself. As a result he is a much more focused individual with high personal aspirations.

We cannot speak more highly of the programme. DARE to be YOU is making students more aware of their own personal qualities, strengths and responsibilities. It is making a difference for young West Coasters.

Yours sincerely

Wayne Wright
Principal