

## Public Health Association Media release

1 September 2011

### Christchurch trust wins major Māori Public Health award

Christchurch's Te Puawaitanga ki Otautahi Trust is this year's winner of the Public Health Association's Tu Rangatira Mo Te Ora award.

The award recognises outstanding achievement in Māori public health, and this year set out to recognise a person, group or organisation, iwi/hapu, or marae who has shown leadership in supporting the hauora of the people of Canterbury following the 2010-2011 earthquakes.

"We have all been affected by the Canterbury earthquakes in some way, and when it comes to public health the earthquakes are one of the most significant challenges we have faced this century," Public Health Association spokesperson Peter Thomas said today.

"Our experiences with our extended whānau and marae living mean that Māori health providers are innately equipped to deal with civil emergencies like these earthquakes.

"We were impressed with the range of services that Te Puawaitanga ki Otautahi has delivered during this emergency, and the ongoing support the Trust offers whānau in Christchurch.

"On behalf of the NZ Public Health Association I would like to congratulate Te Puawaitanga ki Otautahi for their outstanding efforts."

The Kaiwhakahaere of Te Puawaitanga ki Otautahi Trust Suzi Clarke says the organisation is very excited about the award and the public recognition of their work.

Te Puawaitanga ki Otautahi Trust emerged as an organisation out of the Otautahi Branch of the Māori Women's Welfare League (MWWL) in 2004. The Trust is a kaupapa Māori provider who employs over 30 staff and offers a range of community-based Whānau Ora support services including:

- Tamariki Ora/Well-Child services;
- Outreach Immunisation;
- Parents As First Teachers;
- Rapuora Mobile DSM Nursing service;
- Canterbury Breastfeeding Advocacy, Support Groups and Mama 2 Mama peer training;
- A range of nutrition and physical activity classes;
- Support and development for a Māori community garden.

"Six months on from the Christchurch quake and only now are we able to stand back and reflect on the impact the quake has had on our communities," Suzi said.

"After the first earthquake we realised many Māori whānau, who are under resourced or on limited incomes, were not in a position to prepare for an emergency. So we set about working with whānau to develop an emergency plan. The plan identified where whanau will gather when an emergency strikes and what type of supplies they needed to have in storage."

In partnership with the Māori Women's Welfare League (MWWL) the Trust developed an Emergency Survival Kit, which is distributed to vulnerable kaumatua and whanau.

"Initially a number of whānau took fright and fled the city and we spent significant time locating them to ensure their safety. However many have now returned and need our support more than ever.

"Whānau who remained in Christchurch were able to put on a brave face at first. However we found they became worn down from the ongoing significant after-shocks, loss of power, water and sewage. With support they have found the strength to continue.

"We received funding directly from Ngai Tahu and other iwi throughout Aotearoa to provide basic necessities like blankets, bedding, thermals and water cans.

"We have a large enrolled population of five thousand, and following the emergency we worked with approximately a thousand clients who required additional support as a direct result of the quakes."

Aroha Reriti-Crofts from MWWL said that Te Puawaitanga ki Otautahi moved very quickly into action following the earthquakes.

"Their first priority was to look after the whanau of the staff, then they were able to move out into the community.

"They have distributed donations from League (MWWL) branches around the country. When you go into whānau you reach many people. We have teams with boot loads of resources to distribute. We go to the homes of our whānau and if they are not there, we leave a note in their letter box.

"Te Puawaitanga ki Otautahi got out there and moved very quickly. When you build the whānau, you build the city."

Ends

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