

Pacific communities working to improve their health



Pacific people are a priority population for Waikato District Health Board

The rates of obesity for Pacific people in New Zealand are alarmingly high, and with a significant proportion living in the Waikato, the DHB is committed to improving their health status.

Waikato is one of seven DHBs that receives additional funding for community action around the prevention of obesity for Pacific people. Through its Healthy Eating, Healthy Action (HEHA) programme, the DHB provided more than \$70,000 of funding in 2009 for projects that aim to increase physical activity, healthy eating and improve the health of Pacific people in their community. Janet Harvey, HEHA programme director, oversees the allocation of funding. She believes the community projects make a valuable contribution.

“Community-led projects achieve great success because they are tailored to meet their community’s specific needs. The funding provides a special hand-up and supports the communities to get things that they might not have otherwise. Things like gardening and cooking equipment cost money that the community may not have,” Mrs Harvey said.

Be a voice for your Pacific community

Help us to help them

Waikato DHB’s Pacific Advisory Group needs new members. The group advises the DHB on how to improve Pacific health, they are valuable communicators and assist the DHB to engage, consult and facilitate discussion on health issues.

If you are a leader within your community and want to help make a difference, send your expression of interest to:

Andrea Sutton, Waikato DHB – Ph 07 834 3635
or email andrea.sutton@waikatodhb.health.nz

www.waikatodhb.govt.nz/HEHA



In your community

K’aute Pasifika, Pasifka Family and Youth Trust and Waikato Pacific Community House are three local organisations striving to improve the health status of their communities.

K’aute Pasifika

This local organisation provides health and wellbeing services to Pacific people in Hamilton. Experienced nurses and support workers provide a range of health services to people within their family homes, at church clinics and walk-in centres. This includes routine health checks, immunisations, smoking cessation/nicotine replacement therapy, cervical smears, breast screening, and support for breastfeeding and healthy lifestyles. K’aute Pasifika also organises a weekly elderly and disability care group to learn arts and crafts, exercise classes and cooking lessons.

Pacific church leaders to identify way forward for Waikato

A fono for Pacific church leaders next month will see the churches join forces for a new Waikato health initiative. Research shows that 84 per cent of Pacific people identify with a church or religious organisation. Many Pacific families are strong participants in church and community activities, making church communities an ideal vehicle for health education and promotion programmes that influence and change behaviour. Hamilton and Tokoroa have approximately 40 Pacific churches with congregations ranging from 25 to 200 people. At next month’s fono, organised by K’aute Pasifika, church leaders will identify and agree on a way forward for a church-based health programme for Waikato. A similar programme was successfully developed and implemented in South Auckland last year.

Pasifka Family and Youth Trust

Bula 5.30 is Pasifika Family and Youth Trust’s programme aimed at promoting healthy living with a tropical Pacific taste. Bula is the Fijian word for “Life” and “5.30” means five servings of fruit and vegetables plus 30 minutes of physical activity for each day.

The programme incorporates four initiatives:

- 1. Family based awareness** improves family awareness around healthy lifestyles and the prevention/management of chronic diseases e.g. diabetes and heart disease.
- 2. Snack attack** supports children’s understanding of nutrition and how it affects their health. The initiative helps them understand what are good snacks, what is bad and why.
- 3. Family gardens** extends gardening knowledge into Pacific homes. This includes preparing the site, fertilising soil, planting seeds and providing tips on nurturing the garden.
- 4. Cooking classes** provide families with the skills and knowledge for providing health food on a budget. This includes practical cooking classes and identifying healthy alternatives.

Waikato Pacific Community House

Growing together garden project

A community garden established at the Rangimarie Te Horanganui Marae aims to reconnect the community with healthier living through growing affordable and organic vegetables. Since opening in September, the Melville garden has raised community awareness of growing and cooking with fresh fruit and vegetables. Over summer the garden was thriving with a range of vegetables and fruit trees – all available for the community to take home and cook healthy meals with.

Walking and exercising together as a community

The community house leads regular walking and exercise programmes that aim to make walking a normal part of Pacific peoples’ lives. The programmes cater for different levels of capability and integrate different ethnic cultural music and rhythm movements. Sport Waikato provides professional support and exercise programmes.