

## 5. FAIRHAVEN PRE-SCHOOL FAMILY WORKER

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Corporate Plan Output: Community Activities	

The purpose of this report is to seek funds from the Board to support the work of the Family/Whanau Worker attached to the Fairhaven Pre-school.

### BACKGROUND

Early this year the Fairhaven Pre-school applied for funding from the Community Development Scheme for the salary costs of its Family/Whanau Worker. Because of the high demand on funds of that scheme, the committee was unable to allocate sufficient funds towards this project. The application was referred to the Community Board's extra allocation of funds provided to support the work of local community workers.

A Board committee met on 16 August 2000 to look at options for the allocation of the additional \$40,000 project funding. This application was deferred with the Community Development Adviser being asked to meet with representatives of the Pre-school and report back.

### PRE-SCHOOL

Fairhaven Pre-school is situated in Harewood Road in the middle of an area described as decile 9-10 in the Index of Deprivation for Small Areas in New Zealand (University of Otago/Victoria University). Decile 1 is least deprived, 10 is most deprived).

The pre-school operates from 8.30 am to 2.30 pm daily. The hours are deliberately set so as to encourage patronage by non-working parents. Many of the 50 plus "families" that the pre-school caters for are single-parent, transient, local, young and beneficiaries, although the incidence of transience is reducing. Fees are also deliberately set low because of the low surplus income of participants.

During the 12 months ended June 2000 the pre-school cared for 80 children, with approximately 1/3 being Maori. 62 families used the centre during the year.

### EVALUATION

The pre-school has been reviewed by the Education Review Office (ERO) on a number of occasions, most recently in July 2000. Some points to note from that review include:

*"The centre provides a good standard of personal care and education."*

*"Useful assessment records for individual children are being developed."*

*"Children are able to take responsibility for their own learning and well-being."*

*"Behaviour is well managed."*

*“The staff members demonstrate a strong commitment to te reo and ti kanga Maori.”*

*“The supervisor and staff have improved a number of the health and safety procedures since the previous review...”*

*“The licensee and the supervisor have improved the management framework since the previous review report...”*

*“The licensee, the supervisor and staff implement effective internal review practices.”*

*“The centre has well documented and implemented personnel policies and procedures.”*

*“Parents are well supported in their parenting role by the Methodist Mission.”*

The ERO report also indicated some areas for improvement, including:

*“...need to incorporate the children’s interests, abilities and needs into the programme planning.”*

*“...need to improve the presentation of the learning environment.”*

*“The recording of teaching strategies on the programme plan may help other staff to better utilise....teaching skills to help children develop strategies for active exploration, thinking and reasoning.”*

*“...some hazards to the safety of children were identified”.*

*“More formal reporting practices now need to be adopted to strengthen the lines of communication and accountability between the board, the licensee and the supervisor.”*

*“Some administrative practices need to be improved.”*

Since this report was sent to the pre-school, all of the areas identified above have been addressed by the licensee and/or supervisor.

The review by the ERO indicates that the Fairhaven Pre-school is in good (management) hands and that the “commitment of the staff and the ongoing support of the advisory support service should ensure the quality of the service is maintained and continues to improve.”

#### **THE WHANAU/FAMILY WORKER**

The Pre-school employs a Whanau/Family Worker for 15 hours per week to work with the families/parents/caregivers of children attending the centre. The aims of this position are to strengthen families, to advocate for children’s rights and to build the capacity of families within their local communities.

The Family Worker meets with families regularly as well as facilitating various educational and empowering opportunities, including budgeting, parenting skills and providing short-term counselling, advocacy when dealing with other agencies and helping parents in their decision making to best meet the needs of children and their families. Fully 1/3 of the families with children at the centre choose to utilise the services of the family worker.

Although the Family Worker is not a required pre-school staff member the ERO report did comment on this position. The report noted that with respect to the Family Worker “parents interviewed during the review indicated that they are listened to and their aspirations for their child are valued.”

#### **BUDGET**

The costs of the Family Worker include a salary of \$11,310 and \$850 for administration and overhead costs. The budget for the July 2000 to June 2001 for the pre-school shows a deficit of \$32,158. The Fairhaven Pre-school are seeking \$12,160 towards the costs of their Family Worker.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Fairhaven Pre-school is operating effectively and improving areas of need in an area of high deprivation. The Whanau/Family Worker is supplying a much needed service in the Papanui Community, working with networks of other children/family workers in the area.

The Pre-school and its Whanau/Family Worker are operating in a manner consistent with the Council’s Childrens Policy. The work of the Family Worker also contributes to the outcomes of the Council’s Social Well-being Policy especially with regard to enabling “all people, no matter what age, race, gender, social and economic position or abilities, (having) opportunities to contribute to society and (developing) their potential.”

The work of the Whanau/Family Worker also contribute to the Board’s draft Strategic Plan, especially the objective of “(fostering) a strong sense of community.”

There is currently a balance of \$23, 280 in the Discretionary Fund.

**Recommendation:** That an allocation of \$5,000 from Community Services Fund be allocated to the Fairhaven Pre-school towards the costs of the Whanau/Family Worker.

**For discussion.**