



November 2018 Newsletter

Kia ora koutou,

It is timely for a catch up of events that have been happening since our last newsletter.

The 2019 Summit is to be held at Noah's Ark Early Learning Centre on the weekend of May 17-19 2018.

Our organising committee have been very proactive and have a well-balanced event planned for all those who attend. We have both David Spraggs and Toni Christie confirmed and will be announcing more speakers once they also confirm in the next month. Again this is a wonderful opportunity to connect with other men who are working within Early Childhood in Aotearoa as well as supportive females who want to help us make the early childhood profession more gender inclusive. Please keep watch on our group Facebook page and [website](#) as more details are released.

In June I attended the "Knights of the Kids Table" conference held in Winnipeg in which a number of presentations were made regarding gender and men in ECE. This was a good opportunity to meet with many men who teach in Manitoba and wider and funnily enough many of their journeys are very similar to those I have heard here. Our dear friend Ron Blatz who attended our summit in 2016 held at Karaka organised this day and we had presentations from Bryan Nelson who attended our summit in 2010 and Frances Carlson. The report of this event can be found on the EC-MENz website.

We have also had some very good traction with Te Rito Maioha (TRM) who have really come on board supporting the call for more men in ECE. When Stuart and I met with their chief executive Kathy wolf in 2016 we felt that they were very sincere about the issue of how to get more men into early childhood teaching. At that time we had representatives of TRM attend a presentation by David Lloyd on men in ECE in Wellington on this issue. They have invited us to write articles and have also written them as well.

During this year alone a significant amount of articles have been written and shared with their members including the following:

<https://www.ecnz.ac.nz/news/wild-rumpus-ecmenz-wellington>

<https://www.ecnz.ac.nz/news/another-male-ece-teacher-bucks-trend>

<https://www.ecnz.ac.nz/news/opinion-men-can-play-vital-role-early-childhood-education>

Also in mid year they distributed their teaching prospectus and it has made men visible with the message to any aspiring applicant that teaching in early childhood with Te Rito Maioha is a job that both men and women are encouraged to do – this is a huge step forward and something that we in EC-MENz have been asking for a long time. In the role of gender equity Te Rito Maioha is showing to all training institutions that this is what diversity looks like and their intentional marketing needs to both applauded and supported. The message is clear to men in their beginning years (often this is when they are most vulnerable) that this organisation will support them in their quest to be the best teacher they canand it all starts with that sense of belonging. Its important for our children and its really important for our men.

You can view this prospectus at the link below:

https://www.ecnz.ac.nz/sites/default/files/uploaded-content/field_f_content_file/2019_te_rito_maioha_prospectus.pdf

Emma Madison-Ross from Te Rito Maioha met with me in Dunedin to discuss how we can improve the recruitment of men in ECE (as well as other issues) and this led to a very frank discussion on the importance of centres taking responsibility (something the Ministry of Education has failed to do) to recruit men as well as women to ensure our centres reflect the community the serve. A very easy way to achieve this is using such a message as “we are seeking applications for the position of.... Teacher (or whatever) atand we seek applications from all genders as we support diversity in employment.” Such a message challenges the existing status quo and challenges all unconscious bias that our present system is expert at perpetuating.

The Wellington branch of EC-MENz held a very successful PD day for the Wellington Region in which 48 people attended – wow – thanks to Robin and Stu for their organisation and a report can be found on our website.

In the last month I have also had some discussions on the workforce strategy and are looking very much with interest on the progress of this Governmental led plan on the structure of the educational workforce in the future. There are many challenges in re-establishing teaching as a chosen career and certainly believe that there needs to be some action in addressing the incredible and ever increasing gender disparity in its workforce personnel. This is something that also our members need to be active in asking their organisations what they are doing to help increase gender diversity in ECE and making these sector representatives accountable for their actions or in most cases over this issue non – actions.

As an aside we are also very keen to hear the good stories from our workforce and please let us know of any initiatives that have happened to support getting more men into teaching. Good news needs to be shared.

Take care and please look at the information on our website (<https://www.ecmenz.org>) and Facebook as more information on the 2019 summit in Whanganui is released. We would love to see many of our guys at this event as it is the only event in New Zealand that is focused on encouraging more men into the sector....good employers would support this event as supporting our men is supporting diversity in the sectordiversity makes a difference and we need more diverse workplaces now.

Nga mihi nui

Russell Ballantyne

President