



Epic!

MINISTRIES
ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Epic

Epic Karakia

Father God,

We ask for your provision and protection today.

Bring us together with love, joy and respect,

May we leave a positive impression through our words and actions.

Give us courage to face the challenges that come our way,

And the grace to support those around us.

In the name of Jesus Christ

Amen

VISION:

To see a generation of young people empowered to reach their maximum potential, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually so they can be contributors to a healthy community.

Co-Leaders Report

2025 has been a year strongly focused on the professional and leadership development of both our Epic staff and our volunteer teams. Penny, Jireh and Rita have all been completing full-time youth work courses through Praxis, combining their study with the hands-on work of running Epic mentoring groups and regular youth programs. Ari was blessed with a scholarship and started her year with a challenging, life-altering Outward Bound experience - which she thoroughly enjoyed.

With the focus on leadership development this year, we created leadership retreats (staying in the amazing log house at Still Waters) for our youth leaders who volunteer in our programs. These have been a fantastic way to build confidence, strengthen friendships and upskill our young leaders. These leaders are dedicated and continue to step up to deliver fun, engaging programs, camps and events for the next generation of eager participants.

A big reflection from this year has been a real refresh of leadership right across the board - supporting each other through study, across programs, and being there for one another through life and family ups and downs. We are all excited to kick off next year celebrating Ari and Zac's wedding... honestly, how gorgeous is she going to be as a bride?!

As most of you now know, Epic is no longer holding the MYD contract, which previously provided a large chunk of our funding. When Carla, our contract manager, visited us in May after we got the surprising and disappointing news, she apologised many times, explaining that the procurement team were tightly restricted by new Government key-outcome requirements. In the meantime, we've been incredibly grateful to receive additional support from ECCT, who place a strong emphasis on rangatahi development. Their contribution will cover the majority of both intern roles for 2026, which is a huge help.

Even through change, we continue to look forward with hope. Epic has been part of this community for over 20 years, and our vision remains the same: to see a generation of young people empowered to reach their maximum potential - physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually - so they can be contributors to a healthy community.

And the truth is, our greatest resource is our people. Our Epic youth workers are at the heart of everything you're about to read in this report. Without well-trained, passionate youth workers, none of this incredible mahi would be possible. Our volunteer leaders also give countless hours to support programs, camps and events, and their generosity continues to shape the lives of young people.

We also couldn't do any of this without the wider community - our funders who believe in this work, and the incredible supporters who do the small-but-not-small things: washing tea towels, sewing sleeping bag liners, baking goodies for youth to share. Every one of these contributions matters. This is truly a community approach to supporting our young people, and we're so grateful.

We continue to receive regular calls asking Epic to support community and school events, taking IVAN and a crew of energetic youth to bring that extra bit of fun and value. Our Youth Council contract also sees us attending events like the CHB Show, the Christmas Market and Duck Day. These are all great opportunities to be visible in the community, connect with young people where they're at, and also catch up with parents and teachers.

We often hear how lucky CHB is to have Epic - and we're very aware that everything we get to do with and for young people only happens because of the immense trust placed in us, and the support we receive from our generous cheerleaders.

Have a fabulous break over Christmas - rest up, recharge, and we'll be back, ready for action in Term 1, 2026!



praxis

Rita and Jireh have completed the first year of their Diploma in Youth Work, through Praxis, alongside our agency manager, Penny, who has completed the Diploma of Youth Work this year.

As first-year students, our experience learning about youth development has been really positive and rewarding. The course has given us a deeper understanding of what it means to work with young people and how to support their growth and well-being in meaningful ways.

We're part of a regional group within Praxis that meets over regular video calls with other students from around New Zealand. We are part of a smaller class of 11 students and 2 tutors within this group, which has been great for more focused learning and discussion. Across New Zealand, there are over 50 first-year students in total, giving us the chance to connect, share ideas, and learn from a wide range of experiences in different youth work settings. Through our studies, we've learned about the Code of Ethics, how to create networks within our community, how to manage youth behavior, and how to develop and support young people to achieve their goals and many more things that have helped strengthen our practice.

At the end of each term, all Praxis students gather in person at different locations around the country in places like Porirua, Auckland, Whanganui, and Christchurch.



These trips not only offer connection and hands-on learning but also focus on practical experiences, giving us the chance to apply what we've learned in real-life youth work settings. They're always a highlight, full of learning, encouragement, and opportunities to strengthen our sense of whānau within the course.



Looking back, we can see just how much we've grown since the start of the year. At first, we were still finding our confidence and learning to understand our roles as youth workers. Over time, we've developed stronger communication skills, a deeper understanding of youth development principles, and more confidence in leading and supporting young people. We've also become more reflective and intentional in our practice, and it's been really rewarding to see how much our learning has shaped not only our work but also our personal growth. Along the way, we've made a lot of new friends from across New Zealand, which has made the journey even more meaningful and enjoyable. It's been such a rewarding year of learning, growth, and connection, and we're proud of how far we've come.





My Outward Bound Discovery Course Experience

Kia ora, my name is Ari and this year I completed the 8 Day Discovery course at Outward Bound. This experience has been a dream of mine since I was 18. At the time, I don't think I would've gotten much out of it, but now at 24, I was gifted the opportunity through a scholarship, and it couldn't have come at a better time. I'm more connected to myself than ever before and more willing to step outside my comfort zone.

From the start, Outward Bound challenged me to trust myself and embrace the unknown. One phrase that stayed with us throughout the course was "Mā te wā", a beautiful te reo Māori saying meaning "in the future" or "I'll see you again." Not knowing what was coming next allowed me to let go of control. I'm usually in instructor mode, always needing to know what's happening. But this course flipped that for me. I was the participant and I had to surrender. Learning to trust the process was uncomfortable at first, but incredibly freeing.

That mindset shift has followed me home. I've noticed I overthink less. I worry less about the unknown. I trust life more. And that alone is life-changing.

The first day was one of the toughest. I'd never been on a ferry before, and navigating the trip there nearly triggered a panic attack. Then I met 12 strangers, handed in my phone and valuables, ran 2km, jumped into the sea to tread water, and helped navigate a cutter, all on day one. That night, we slept on the boat. It was wild, but unforgettable.

One of the most personally powerful parts of the course was solo. I spent two nights and two days alone in the bush, under a fly, with just basic food, a diary, and a sleeping bag. I've never experienced stillness like that. Normally I keep myself busy. I used to pride myself on it.

But in that solitude, I reconnected with myself, reflected on everything I'd been carrying, and allowed myself to feel pride in what I'd achieved. It was a true mind, body, soul breakthrough.

Something I was especially nervous about was connecting with others. I often find it hard to open up or make new friends. But I challenged myself to connect with just one person, and I left with 12 new friends who feel like whānau. Our group of 13 is still in touch and we've even planned some hikes together around Aotearoa.

Outward Bound helped me prove to myself that I can do hard things and not only that, I can do them well. I've often been my own biggest critic, but this course flipped that switch. Every time a challenge came up, I'd say "Why not?" That became our course mantra. Whether it was co-steering a cutter, abseiling down rock faces, or jumping from a 9 metre cliff into the ocean, I'd squeeze my fingernail (a trick they taught us, because fear is often no bigger than a fingernail) and remind myself, "You're nothing. I've got this."

Since coming back, I've kept journaling and making my days intentional. I spend more time outdoors, go for regular runs, and say yes to hikes. I've also been sharing my experience and encouraging others to give Outward Bound a go. It's too good not to pass on.

Outward Bound has truly changed my life. It reminded me who I am and showed me who I can be. I'll carry these lessons and this sense of self with me forever.





Leadership

This year, our core focus has been developing leadership initiative and confidence within our rangatahi. We have been intentionally using the 3 Do's Model — I do, you watch. I do, you help. You do, I watch. You do, I help. This approach has supported our leaders to gradually step into responsibility, while also



encouraging staff to be purposeful and consistent in how we guide them.

Throughout the year, we have held two Leaders Retreats, both hosted at Still Waters (formerly Camp David). This space holds a special place in our story — a site where we spent many camps in years gone by. Seeing it brought back to life for a new generation of young people and emerging leaders to enjoy has been incredibly significant for our Epic whānau.



At our most recent retreat, a key challenge required each person to be lifted across an obstacle — a practical reminder that leadership is not about going ahead alone, but ensuring the whole team succeeds through communication, trust, and care for one another.

We also brought home new traditions that reinforce reflection and encouragement. Before each meal, one leader is nominated to share words of wisdom from The Challenge of Words (Outward Bound), helping build confidence in speaking to the group. At the end of retreat, every leader is assigned two people to write about — noting what they admire and offering a positive challenge for future growth. This has become a highlight, as we see leaders taking time to reflect deeply and uplift each other not only as leaders, but as friends and valued members of our Epic whānau.



To close the year, we will celebrate our leaders with a special End-of-Year Leaders Trip to Whakaipo Bay in Acacia Bay, Taupō for two nights — a well-earned opportunity to reflect, connect, and recognise all they've achieved together.



REFLECTIONS FROM...

Hamish Ganley

Lift Leader

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

Having a nap afterschool, playing with our little dog,
Spending time with my family and poison pole

What opportunities have you had to lead or help others this year?

LIFT Leader

What has been your favourite memory from being a leader this year

Spending time with people who I didn't think I would, eg Yr 10 and 11s.

What are some leadership skills or strengths you feel you have developed through Epic?

Building relationships, Introducing myself, Doing Jumping Jacks

Is there something you've learned about caring for others and giving back?

having the same personality with everyone no matter how they are being treating or what people have told me.

Who has encouraged or supported you this year, and how did that make a difference?

Jireh, He has shown me they way of being a little cool guy who is well respected

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

EPIC has given me a place to be myself which I have been able to build or strengthen relationships

Final words...

Remember the 3 B's, Be Kind, Be Nice and Boost Morale



Maia Watene

Leadership

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

i love music, kapa haka, sports

What opportunities have you had to lead or help others this year?

Gateway- primary schools, easter camp, New Wine, Festival for the Future.

What has been your favourite memory from being a leader this year

meeting new youth and my growth in different aspects of life, and getting respected

What are some leadership skills or strengths you feel you have developed through Epic?

adaptability, communication, strong in my mind set, and just knowing what to say

Is there something you've learned about caring for others and giving back?

it feels great to know you helped

Who has encouraged or supported you this year, and how did that make a difference?

Epic, Penny, Ari, pushing me to the best i can be

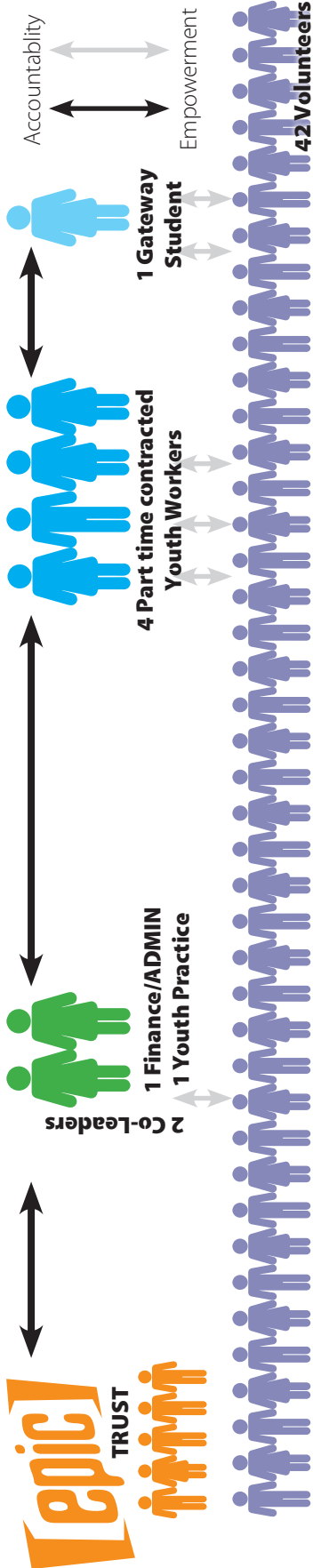
What difference has Epic made for you personally?

they have changed the way i view life and that people care what my actions may cause

Final words...

this place will always be special to me





REGULAR CORE INITIATIVES:



LIFT - 18 fortnightly
AMP'D - 19 fortnightly

LEADERSHIP

EVENTS

Events: (x2 Vans, Volunteers, 20+ youth)

- Beach Trip
- Kayak Trip
- High School Neon DISCO
- Primary Cowboy/Cowgirl DISCO
- Disc Golf
- Ice Cream Olympics

Camps (overnight experiences + travel)

- Easter Camp 4 days
- Rise Up - 3 days
- Autumn Leaders Retreat - 2 days
- Spring Leaders Retreat - 3 days
- Leaders Camp - 3 days
- Mauri Ora Sleepover - 2 days
- Sunrise Hut Tramp

CONNECT

Connect (x1 Van, Volunteers, 10 youth)

- Dj's Farm x4
- Leaders Late night hangouts
- Movie Nights
- LIFT Hang out
- Daffodil Trip
- Mauri Ora Sleepover
- Seniors River Swims

Connect Community (Youthworkers, Volunteers, Community partners)

- Can Drive
- CHBC Athletics
- Kids Rock Camp
- Onga 7's
- CHB Matariki Celebration
- Rippa Rugby
- The Carnival
- PEK Kayak Trip
- Otane/Pukehou Cross Country
- Interschool Cross Country
- Ki-o-rahi Tournaments
- AYM Easter Camp Top Town

MENTORING

Mentoring Adventures

In School Courses

- Terrace - Your Story
- Otane - Your Story
- CHBC Travellers
- Explore

After School Programs

All of these contain trips as well

- Netball
- Volleyball
- Mauri Ora
- The Boys
- Journey
- Glow
- Nau te kete

CAMPS

- Leap Flemington Camp (4 days)
- Leap Taupo Camp (5 days)

Te Puawaitanga o nga Taiohi: Inspire Youth Council

TEAM DRIVEN

- Breakfast Club
- Pink Shirt Day
- Youth Week per term
- Slip & Slide Day

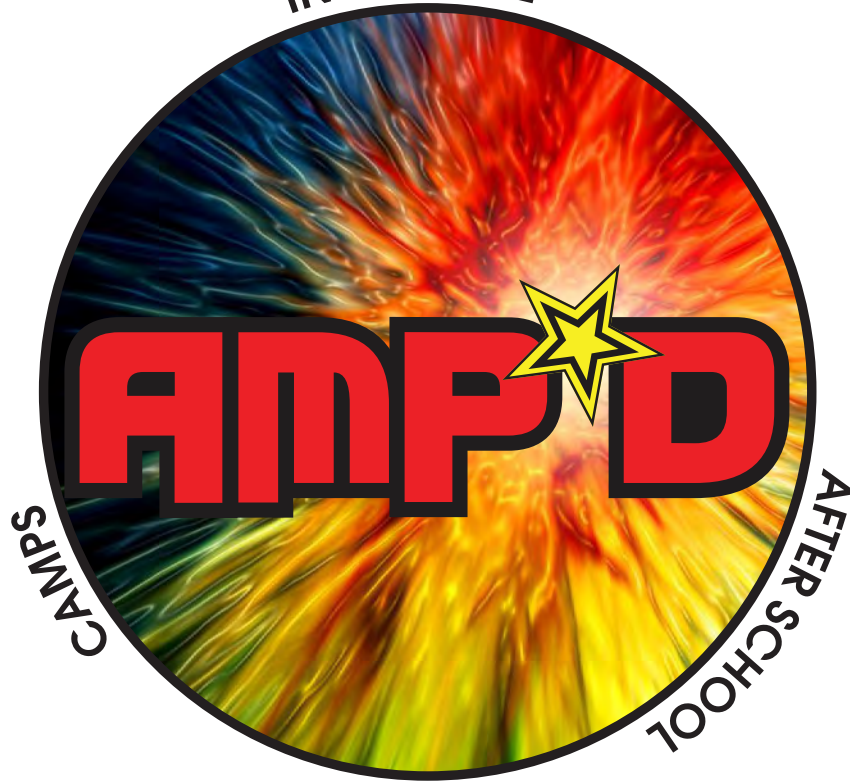
WE'VE HAD A PRESENCE AT:

- Onga 7s
- Hatuma Half Marathon
- Christmas Market
- A&P Show
- Rippa Rugby
- CHB Matariki Celebration
- Duck Day

INTERMEDIATE

[epic]

IN SCHOOL



Who For: Youth years 6-8

Where: Epic Ministries Hall, ST Andrews St.

Time: Friday 6 - 8pm (fortnightly)

@epicministries_



INTERMEDIATE 2025



AMPD is an intermediate youth group held after school every second Friday, welcoming youth from local primary schools across Central Hawke's Bay. This year, AMPD has continued to grow with strong attendance and plenty of new faces joining us for our fun-filled nights at Epic. Our activities have included everything from indoor games and sports nights to creative

and themed events like Newspaper Night and the always popular (and messy) Ice Cream Olympics. We also hosted two discos, a Neon Disco in Term 2 and a 70s-themed Disco in Term 3 both of which were a huge hit and brought an awesome atmosphere of fun, music, and dancing.

Each event has brought lots of laughter, teamwork, and energy, with positive feedback from both the youth and their parents. AMPD continues to strengthen its reputation as a safe, exciting, and inclusive space for young people in our community.

Our leadership team, made up mostly of students from Central Hawke's Bay College, has once again been a huge part of our success. They have helped plan, set up, and run activities, bringing great ideas, enthusiasm, and encouragement to every event. By the end of this year, we had over 15 youth leaders and Epic staff working together to make each night engaging and

fun. Their support has been key in creating a welcoming environment where everyone feels valued and included.

Throughout 2025, AMPD has focused on building strong relationships, teamwork, and confidence among our youth through exciting and interactive activities. From fast-paced sports games that get everyone involved in creative challenges that encourage problem-solving and collaboration, every session has helped strengthen our community.

Our experience leading AMPD this year has been full of learning, growth, and plenty of fun along the way. We've faced challenges that have helped us develop our leadership and teamwork skills, from planning and coordinating events to managing the energy of a large group of young people. Through it all, we've learned how to adapt, communicate better, and create spaces where everyone feels included and engaged. Despite the busy moments, the joy and laughter shared with the youth and our team have made it all worthwhile. It's been incredibly rewarding to see AMPD continue to grow and to witness the positive impact it has on both the young people and the leaders involved.

As we wrap up another awesome year, we're proud of how much AMPD has grown and the positive impact it continues to have on young people. While we say goodbye to our Year 8s heading off to high school, we're excited to welcome the new Year 6s ready to join the fun. 2025 has been a year full of energy, laughter, and connection, and we can't wait to see what new memories and adventures 2026 will bring!



REFLECTIONS FROM...

Caleb Simiona

AMP'D Leader

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

I really enjoy physical activities like sporting and the gym. I also have a passion for indoor activities such as video games, board games and eating!

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

AmpD consistently brings a lot of energetic vibes and chaos during activities and events. I notice AmpD is also very welcoming to newcomers and has the ability to build lasting relationships.

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

AmpD is a great environment and offers enjoyable activities such as sport nights and photo challenges in the community. I would also acknowledge the friendly leaders who make the nights safe and fun!

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

One memory that stands out was when we had a photo challenge for AmpD. The competitiveness and challenge going around town was both fun and exciting. Our team managed to do really well and during it we were able to connect with the youth a lot more.

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

I have definitely grown in confidence since being a leader at Epic. I have managed to connect well with the youth and challenge myself to speak in front of everyone while also helping set up activities making sure everything's prepared for each night.

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

I have managed to build lasting relationships with other leaders and grown a lot in my confidence which helps with meeting new people. Epic has offered me many opportunities to grow and i am grateful for each memory made since being here.

Final words...

Thankyou Epic!



Aroha Kaire James

AMP'D

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

I am 13 years old. I am a year 8 at Terrace school, I will be starting highschool at Central Hawke's Bay College next year. In my spare time I enjoy playing mini ball

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

I enjoy being at Epic because it makes me happy because it's so fun

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

"You should come to Epic because you will make new friends and the leaders are fun And I'll be there"

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

Being at girls group with Rita and she gave us diaries and I just love filling it out in my free time

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

I have made new friends while being at Epic

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

Being with Epic has made me more confident when i'm with bigger groups

Final words...

I love the leaders at Epic because they bring a fun time





The Hauora Programme is an in-school intermediate youth programme that focuses on supporting young people's wellbeing. It is based on the four areas of Hauora: taha tinana (physical), taha hinengaro (mental and emotional), taha whānau (social), and taha wairua (spiritual). The programme was run by intermediate youth workers, Jireh and Rita, throughout 2025, starting at Terrace Primary and finishing the year at Otane Primary.

With both schools, we began by introducing ourselves and explaining what the program was about so students could feel comfortable and get to know each other. We then focused on whakapapa, helping students explore where

are connected to, building a sense of identity and belonging. After that, we moved into emotions and feelings, encouraging students to understand how emotions affect their wellbeing and relationships, and how they can manage them in positive ways.

Each session was interactive and engaging, including activities such as team challenges, creative projects, and group discussions. Students from both schools responded well, showing confidence, teamwork, and growth in self-awareness.

All the activities and discussions throughout the term are built to create a story card or story block. This final project gave students the chance to express their learning creatively through drawing, sketching, or painting. Each student's creation represents their journey, showing their past, where they come from, their interests, and how they feel. This activity helped tie everything together and gave students a sense of pride and ownership over their stories.

Moving forward, we hope to keep developing Hauora and bring it to more schools to continue supporting young people in understanding themselves and their overall wellbeing.



they come from and who they



REFLECTIONS FROM...

Shilo Raheke

Hauora

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

in my spare time I play sports like Ki O Rahi, Rugby, Rippa, Netball, Held, Touch. And I love meeting new people

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

It's pretty fun and cool, I get to learn new things about myself. And being around cool people

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

I'd say it's really EPIC and that the people there are super cool to talk to

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

Just learning new things about Rita and Jireh

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

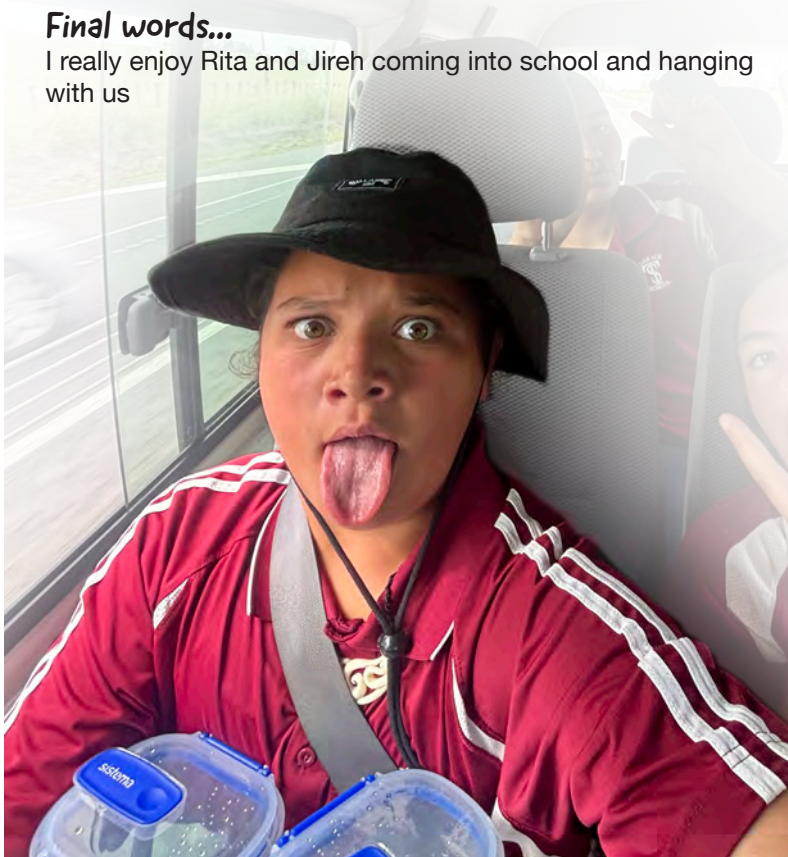
I learnt more about myself with the booklet that we filled out at Hauora and I was able to understand more things about my self

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

Just understanding my own identity.

Final words...

I really enjoy Rita and Jireh coming into school and hanging with us



Leigha Fletcher-Snow

Mauri Ora

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

I like to play sports and go to youth group

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

I feel excited and just know it's gonna be a fun night

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

I would say it is really fun and I enjoy it a lot

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

For Mauri Ora it would be when we went up Sunrise hut because we had no devices and everyone was connecting and making friends

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

I have become a better role model/leader for the young kids and I am now happy with myself

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

I feel way more connected with Jesus and a lot of my friends, Epic has made me who I am today I wouldn't trade my Epic friends for the world

Final words...

I love Epic cause it's epic



GLOW

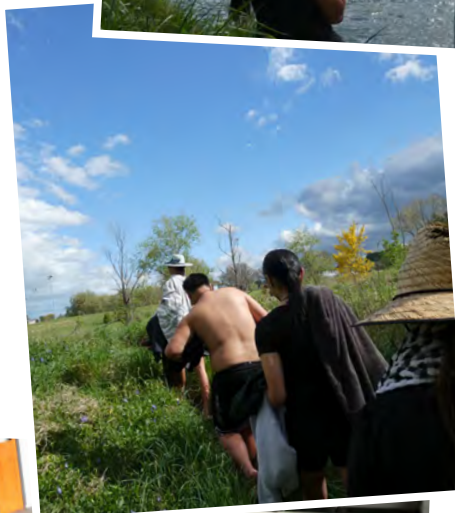
Glow is an after-school girls group which ranges from girls in years 5-8, supported by two High School leaders in training. We meet fortnightly on Wednesdays after school from 3:30 - 4:30. Glow focuses on the development of leadership and teamwork between both the young people and leaders within the group.

We created a group contract in the form of a banner. Our group contracted consistent values that we would as a group uphold and follow during each session. Then each girl in the group signed the banner to signify their place and commitment in Glow. Encouraging the girls to support and care for each other, creating stronger connections between the young people and the young leaders in Glow.

Within Glow, I aim to focus on the understanding of belonging and incorporate it into each session, helping the girls see that they are valued for who they are and that their contributions make a real difference to our group's culture.

Highlights from the Year

One of the standout moments this year was our Matariki celebration, where we learned about the significance of Matariki and shared kai together, introducing the group to Māori values of whanaungatanga and manaakitanga. Another highlight was the introduction of Gigi's diary - the girls worked together each session filling out the book and creating



conversation with each new topic from the book. This built a sense of trust and whakawhanaungatanga that stuck with us throughout the term.

A memorable session for many was our creative banner-making and group value setting at the start of the year, where each girl's handprint became a lasting symbol of belonging and commitment to Glow. We also had sessions focused on developing leadership skills, where our high school leaders-in-training led games and activities, gaining confidence and new ways of relating to the younger girls. Seeing them step into these roles and watching the younger girls look up to them was a huge success and reinforced the power of tuakana-teina

Throughout the year, I intentionally created moments for reflection, whether it was sharing "a win" from the past week, or finishing each session with a gratitude circle. These practices helped the group to see the value in each other, strengthening their confidence to speak up and support one another. The most rewarding part has been watching girls who started off quiet and reserved become more open and willing to try new things, showing the deepening sense of trust and belonging in our group.

Looking Ahead

As Glow continues, I hope to extend opportunities for the girls to lead, take responsibility, and shape our group culture together, guided by the values we set at the start. The sense of belonging, connection, and shared leadership we've developed so far will be the foundation for future sessions and the ongoing growth of all our members.





THE BOYS

The Boys' Group Program started as an intermediate-aged group but was later changed to a high-school after-school program. It focuses on sports, teamwork, and fun activities, providing a positive space for young men to connect with peers and build friendships. The program has continued to be an engaging opportunity every Thursday, bringing together students who enjoy being active and social in a supportive environment.



The boys loved the mix of structured games and free play, keeping sessions lively and engaging.

The Boys' Group continues to provide a supportive and encouraging space where young men can grow in

Each session started with afternoon tea, which often included pizza, fish and chips, and fizzy drinks. This helped students relax after school, build connections, and set a positive tone before activities. One of the highlights this year was a visit to the basketball court, where quite a few boys hung out, enjoyed some runs together, and shared fish and chips. It was simple, yet it created a really fun and memorable afternoon for everyone.

character, develop life skills, and strengthen friendships. The programme reflects our organization's core values Respect, Encouragement, Participation, Growth, and Aroha which were evident in the boys' positive attitudes and willingness to try new activities.

The group enjoyed a variety of sports and games throughout the year. Basketball remained a favorite, but we also played lawn bowls, squash, and pool, which encouraged teamwork, friendly competition, and physical activity.

Overall, the Boys' Group Program has created a fun, welcoming, and meaningful space. From sports and games to shared meals and hanging out together, the group has built lasting memories and strong connections. We look forward to continuing the program next year with even more exciting activities and opportunities for growth.



REFLECTIONS FROM...

Shayden Fletcher-Snow

The Boys

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

I really enjoy sports such as basketball, volleyball, football, ki o rahi, ect... I also play a little piano and started learning guitar.

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

I feel really safe and comfortable to express myself. The vibe is always fun and exciting with the activities we do and i really like the food given to us each session.

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

If i were to encourage a friend to come to Epic, i would say how it is very welcoming and friendly to all, especially to new comers. Also that Epic is very encouraging in developing goals like gaining confidence and self management which helped me towards developing my skills as a leader.

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

Us as a group getting food and especially ice cream on hot days was really simple but so much fun, along with that also came with good chats to each other that helped with improving our relationships and connections.

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

I have really been able to develop my confidence in leading groups while being a part of Epic. I have also grown in facilitating activities through other Epic groups such as AmpD, The Boys and Lift.

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

Epic has given me the opportunity to create new lasting connections and offered guidance in areas i don't learn in school. I've made progress in my confidence with talking in front of a big group of people and really enjoy the relationship i have with Epic as a leader and youth.

What opportunities have you had to lead or help others this year?

I've had many options to speak my mind in front of people and feel comfortable about it. with Lift, AMPD, boys group and more

What has been your favourite memory from being a leader this year

when we all just calm down eat food and chat to each other, bonding with each other

What are some leadership skills or strengths you feel you have developed through Epic?

much better public speaking and confidence when talking but also speaking good words not all in a bunch so they make sense.

Who has encouraged or supported you this year, and how did that make a difference?

Jireh,

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

a huge impact offering so many great opportunities to become a better person

Final words...

I really liked the food :)



REFLECTIONS FROM...

Lucy Craig

Leap

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

My favourite sport is Netball and I enjoy basketball. I also really like creative writing and reading and group sports activities.

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

When I am with my Epic group I feel very supported and included, we all participate in the activities in our fullest and pick each other up. The leaders are awesome as well.

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

I would probably say, that it is such a cool place where youth can be themselves and be accepted. It's also such an awesome way to make new friends and hang out and play sports, etc.

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

When I went on Leap camp in Taupo this year, we played a game called kings ball that one of the leaders, Hezekiah made up. Basically the objective of the game was to get the ball back to the 'king', by whatever means! I had never played rugby before and kings ball was really all about tackling, so when I made my first tackle and got cheered on by Hezekiah and Caleb, I felt really happy.

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

I have grown by making new friends and participating in different activities that I never thought I would.

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

I feel more connected to the people and schools around, the leaders have also helped. It is awesome that I will be able to see some friendly faces next year at college.

Final words...

EPIC IS AWESOME!!!!!!!!!!!!



Cooper Jackson

Leap

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

Biking, fishing

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

Chill, fun

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

You should go, it's heaps of fun

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

Having fun at Adrenaline Forest

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

Opened up, more confidence

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

Made more friends, more social





LEAP



Leap Mentoring Camps 2025

This year we ran two Leap Mentoring Camps — one in Wellington during the July holidays and one in Taupō in the September/October break. Each camp reflected the heart of what Leap is all about: Relate, Challenge, and Equip. These mentoring camps create space for young people to build resilience, grow in confidence, and discover more about who they are — physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually.

Leap is designed for our Year 7–8 youth, providing a mix of adventure, teamwork, and reflection. It's more than just a holiday program — it's a mentoring experience that connects young people with positive role models and opportunities to stretch themselves in safe, encouraging environments. Everything we do is about enhancing mana, fostering belonging, and helping youth realise their potential.

Our Wellington camp gave youth a taste of city life — something



quite different from our usual Waipuk surroundings! We stayed at a marae, explored the city, and packed the week with team challenges, competitions, and laughter. There was a photo hunt around the mall, a pizza-making competition, ten-pin bowling, and a full day of challenges that ended in a lolly auction filled with treats (and a few surprises, like an onion!). We caught the train into the city, explored Te Papa with a fact-finding mission, and tackled escape rooms — which tested everyone's patience but also showed how well the teams could work together under pressure. Every group made it out before the timer, celebrating not just the win but the

teamwork it took to get there. We wrapped up with go kart racing and plenty of laughter to finish the trip on a high.

Taupō camp brought a different kind of energy — a mix of challenge and connection in the outdoors. We spent a stunning day at



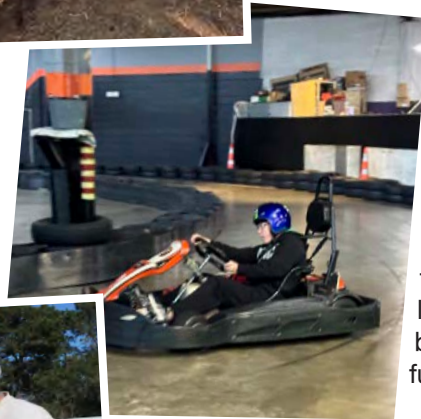


Spa Park playing frisbee golf (the group insisted on doing all 18 holes!), enjoying a picnic, and swimming in the warm waters of Ōtūmuheke Stream. The next day we pushed limits at Adrenalin Forest in Rotorua, where young people faced fears, cheered each other on, and climbed higher than they thought possible. We finished the day racing down the Luge and sharing stories around the biggest picnic table we'd ever seen. Our final day was spent kayaking, paddleboarding, and bombing at Acacia Bay before finishing with a beach BBQ and a soak at De Bretts.

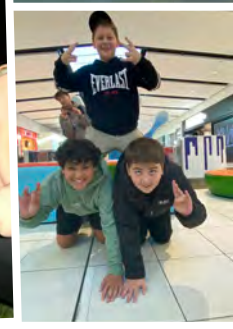


comfort — a place where young people can relax, connect, and just be themselves. The relationships built here run deep. You see youth who might be shy at first stepping into leadership roles, cheering each other on, and discovering their strengths. You see confidence growing through laughter, teamwork, and those quiet moments of reflection after a big day.

What makes Leap so special isn't just the activities — it's the atmosphere. Whakaipo Bay has that unique mix of adventure and



Leap continues to be one of the most powerful expressions of our Epic vision — empowering young people to reach their potential through belonging, courage, and connection. It's a week of joy, growth, and discovery — a space where youth can challenge themselves, find their place in community, and take one more leap toward becoming their full, true selves.



Epic Coaching

This year at Epic we stepped in to coach several CHBC sports teams after the school approached us for support when they were short on parent coaches. Because we already have a strong partnership with CHBC, coaching felt like a natural extension of that relationship and of our vision to empower young people physically, socially, emotionally, and spiritually. Using the van to reduce costs and get more youth participating aligned with this purpose, and both practices and game days gave us meaningful opportunities to encourage confidence, create challenge, and connect with parents and whānau. Being consistently present on the sidelines showed our young people that we are genuinely there for them—something many of us know firsthand matters deeply.

Volleyball Highschool

- Coaching Central Hawke's Bay College's Senior A Boys Volleyball team this year was an awesome experience. The boys brought great energy and commitment to every training session, and it was amazing to see their skills and teamwork improve throughout the season. They built a strong bond, supported each other, and created a really positive team culture.

One of the highlights was making it to the finals and finishing second in our division a huge achievement that showed how much effort and dedication the team put in. Even though we didn't take first place, I'm really proud of how far the boys came and the way they represented themselves and the school. It was a fun, rewarding season and a great team to be part of.

Netball

This year, Ari and I took on coaching the junior netball team, while Penny led the senior team. Together, we aimed to create a positive and encouraging environment where all players could develop their skills, confidence, and teamwork. Coaching alongside Ari was a great experience, as we supported each other in guiding the juniors through both training and games.

One of the main challenges we faced was managing different skill levels and confidence within the junior team, which required us to tailor our coaching approach to meet each player's needs. Balancing this while keeping practices engaging and inclusive took ongoing effort, but it helped the girls develop at their own pace.

While we were focused on scoring each game with our phones, which meant we couldn't take many photos, the progress and positive spirit of the teams were evident in every session and game.

Penny's work with the senior team complemented our efforts well, and it was inspiring to see both teams develop and gain enthusiasm for the game throughout the season. Overall, mentoring these teams has been a rewarding journey of learning and growth—for the players and for us as coaches alike.



REFLECTIONS FROM...

Ella Limbrick

Netball

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

I play netball

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

I had a great team and everyone supported each other and helped each other.

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

very supportive and uplifting!

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

when Ari and Rita helped us improve our skills.

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

more kind and social with others.

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

my coaches helped us in a lot of ways, socially and mentally

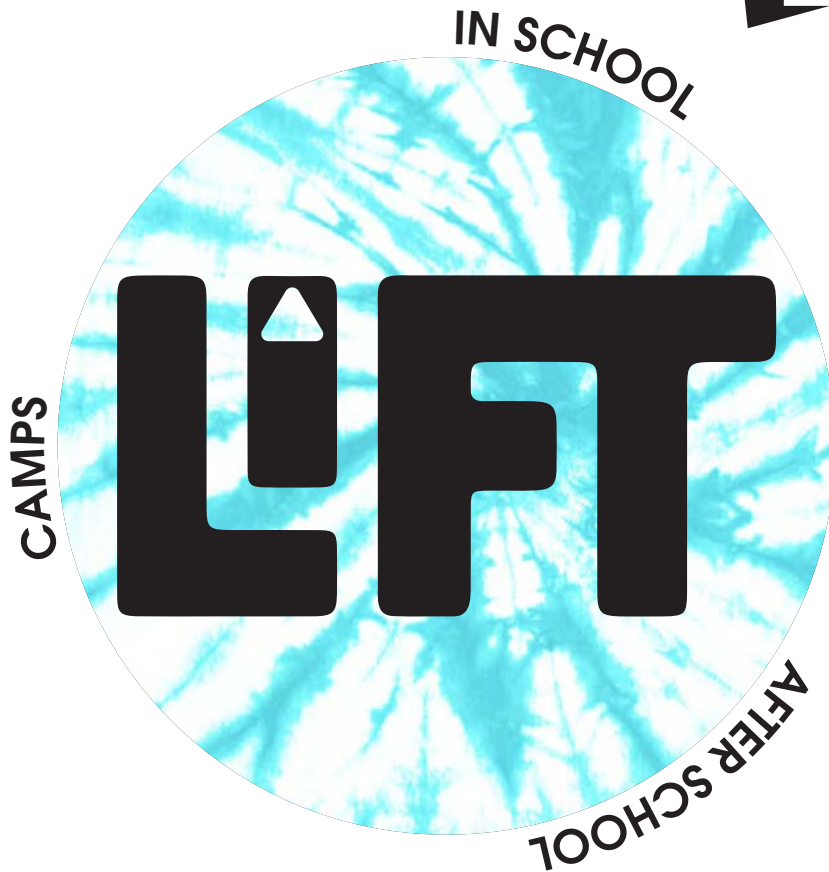
Final words...

Ari and Rita are the best!!!!



HIGH SCHOOL

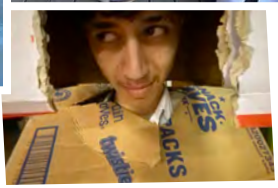
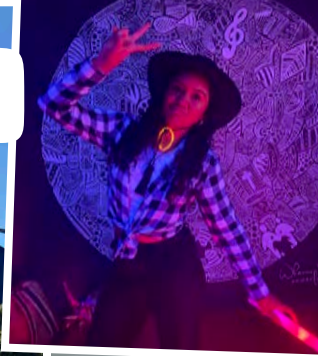
[epic]



Who For: Youth years 9-13
Where: Epic Ministries Hall, ST Andrews St.
Time: Friday 6-8pm (fortnightly)

HIGH SCHOOL 2025

LiFT



LiFT is Epic Ministries' afterschool mentoring program for high school students (Years 9–13), held every second Friday from 6–8pm. The program is designed to provide a safe and welcoming environment where young people can connect with one another, be supported by mentors, and explore faith in meaningful ways.

Each evening begins with a shared meal such as devilled sausages, mac and cheese, or burgers. Sharing kai is an intentional part of the night, helping young people feel at home, recharge after a long week, and build genuine relationships around the table. We feed 20-30 youth at each time and have connected with over 80 youth invited to LiFT over the year from all ages year 9-13

Our senior students (Years 12–13) take part as Leaders in Training (LITs). This leadership





Through LiFT, young people are experiencing belonging, developing leadership, and deepening their faith. The program continues to be a place where they are supported, inspired, and equipped to carry the values of Epic into every area of their lives.



pathway gives them opportunities to plan, host, and lead activities, while developing confidence, responsibility, and mentoring skills. Their contribution is central to LiFT's success and ensures youth are not only being supported, but also rising into leadership themselves.

To encourage a culture of recognition,

each LiFT night includes our Award Board. One young person is celebrated for living out Epic's values, receiving a small prize presented in a kete. A polaroid photo is then displayed on our board and revealed the following week. This routine has become a highlight for many of our youth, creating a sense of pride and showing them that their efforts and character are seen and valued—not only at LiFT, but in their schools, families, and communities.

This year also included special highlights, such as a seniors' beach trip to Kairakau. Our Year 12–13 students enjoyed a day of adventure together—walking to the waterfall, kayaking, swimming, and finishing with a shared BBQ. Experiences like these build stronger friendships, create memories, and give our senior students opportunities to bond outside the regular program.

Every night also includes a short Bible-based message and prayer, grounding our time in faith and encouraging young people to reflect on God's plan for their lives. Together, these elements create a rhythm of connection, celebration, and purpose.

Journey

The Chosen Bible Study

Journey has been something really special this year. What started as a small group of about seven young people has now grown to fill the lounge with 20–30 youth every Monday night. There's been no advertising or promotion — just young people inviting their friends, sharing faith, and creating an environment where everyone feels welcome.

We've been watching The Chosen series together and exploring who Jesus was, how he lived, and how he treated others. As we've gone deeper into his story, the group has started asking meaningful questions — not just about who Jesus is, but about who they are because of him. Each week has brought honest conversations, laughter, and moments of reflection that have encouraged faith to grow in a really natural way.

It's been inspiring to see the youth engage so openly, showing curiosity, care, and courage to explore something bigger than themselves. Through Journey, we've seen them not only learn about Jesus but also begin to live out his example — encouraging, inspiring, and enabling each other to grow into the people they're created to be.



REFLECTIONS FROM...

Juniper Moore

Journey

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

I like road cycling, running and sleeping

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

The vibe is cool and accepting

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

I would tell them that Epic does lots of different fun activities and you meet new people

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

When we went to Easter Camp and did heaps of fun games such as volleyball, met a lot of cool people and did lots of singing

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

I have become more confident

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

I have made new friends

Final words...

Epic is awesome!

Terehia Te whaiti

Mauri Ora Leader

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

Sleeping, music, being with friends

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

My group is pretty chill most times whenever I'm there I'm able to laugh and have fun even though Annel and Leigha's joke are mostly brainrot.

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

I would say Epic is a space where we can grow to learn about others and more of ourselves with the people we love while having fun doing it. Also a good place if you're looking to be a youth worker in the future.

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

One of my many memories being with my group would be when we did our hike up Sunrise hut, because at the start most of us were complaining about how long it was taking and how bad our legs were sore, but we all made it to the top eventually and had noodles.

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

My personality from when I was a year 9 till now finishing year 11 has grown by me being very shy and not coming to Epic unless I knew my close friends were coming, but now I've learned to grow new friendships and not have to rely on my old ones to keep me from coming to Epic by myself.

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

A big difference for me would be being more social and growing closer to God than I was before, with the help of Penny and being in Journey, surrounding myself with the people with similar goals.





MAURI ORA

Mauri Ora is a mentoring group for Year 9–10 girls, supported by two of our Leaders in Training (Year 11 and Year 13). The group meets fortnightly on Wednesdays after school from 3:30–5:00pm, creating a safe and consistent space for young women to connect, grow, and belong.

When the group first formed, the girls co-created a treaty of values to guide the way they would support and respect one another. To acknowledge their commitment, each member drew themselves on a ping pong ball—signifying their place within Mauri Ora. Every session begins with intention, as one girl selects a reading from our Words of Wisdom book to spark reflection and set the tone for our time together. I got this book “The challenge of words” from outward bound this year when I attended the 8 day discovery course.

An important aspect of Mauri Ora is that activities are co-created with the young people. Together, we ask: What are you interested in? How can we make that happen? This has led to a wide variety of experiences—from a picnic at Taniwha Daffodils (a first time visit for most of the girls) to learning practical life skills like how to jump-start a car, change a tyre, and manage basic vehicle safety. These moments not only build confidence but also equip the girls with tools they can carry into everyday life.

The group has also been active in serving the wider community, often stepping up



as our “go-to” team for flyer drop-offs for events like Matariki and the Can Drive. They also played a big part in preparing for Easter Camp by creating and trialling games, ensuring everything was ready before camp began. These contributions give the girls a sense of ownership and show them that their efforts make a real difference.

Some of the year’s biggest highlights have been the opportunities to grow together through adventure. A sleepover at Di’s Farm gave space to strengthen friendships with plenty of laughter, late-night games of sardines and spotlight, and even dessert for breakfast. Many of the girls already had a connection to Di through Travellers, making it a familiar and welcoming place to create new memories.

Another milestone was their overnight hike to Sunrise Hut—a challenging first for most of the group. With the generous support of St Andrews and the community providing hiking packs, thermals, sleeping bags, and rain jackets, the girls were able to take on this adventure safely and successfully. What seemed impossible at first became a shared achievement, teaching perseverance, teamwork, and gratitude for the support of others.

Over the year, Mauri Ora has become a tight-knit group, built on trust, fun, and shared experiences. At the same time, the girls love inviting others along to events, extending the sense of belonging beyond themselves. Whether they are serving the community, learning practical skills, or adventuring together, Mauri Ora continues to empower young women to lead, grow in confidence, and carry the values of Epic into their everyday lives.



Travellers



A highlight of each term is the celebration day at Di's Farm, where both groups combine to share in a day of fun and reflection. Activities such as the creek walk give students the chance to build trust, try new things, and celebrate the progress they've made throughout the term. For many, the farm has become a safe and special place associated with belonging, growth, and positive memories.

Travellers is a weekly mentoring program for Year 9 students, run every Thursday during periods 3 and 4. Each term, we facilitate two groups of around 10 students, meaning that over the course of the year we are able to mentor more than 60 young people through this program. Travellers is co-led by Di Murphy and Ari Henson, who guide students through intentional conversations and activities that encourage growth, reflection, and resilience.

The program is based around a life map, which helps students recognise that life is full of both highs and lows. Through storytelling and shared experiences, students form genuine connections and discover that they are not alone in the challenges they face.

Each week, participants are introduced to tools and strategies for wellbeing, such as using the **five senses— touch, smell, taste, hearing, and sight—**to help regulate emotions and manage stressful moments. These practical skills are designed to support young people beyond the group setting, giving them ways to pause, ground themselves, and move forward with confidence.



REFLECTIONS FROM...

Lexi Donnithorne

Travellers

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

I ride horses play hockey and rugby

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

I feel safe

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

I would say it is a good experience

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

We laugh all the time

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

I feel more confident

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

I made new friends and it brings out the best of me

Final words...

If you get the chance you take it

Meredith Moore

Journey

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

I enjoy road cycling and running and am basically keen for anything exercise

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

Epic is always very welcoming and I really like how every one is always so happy

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

I would say that it has a wide variety of things that it does and that it is always really fun

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

Hiking up to sunrise hut and watching a sunrise while it snowed

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

I have grown to make Jesus more part of my everyday life

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

I have met heaps of nice people

Final words...

Epic is awesome



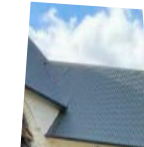
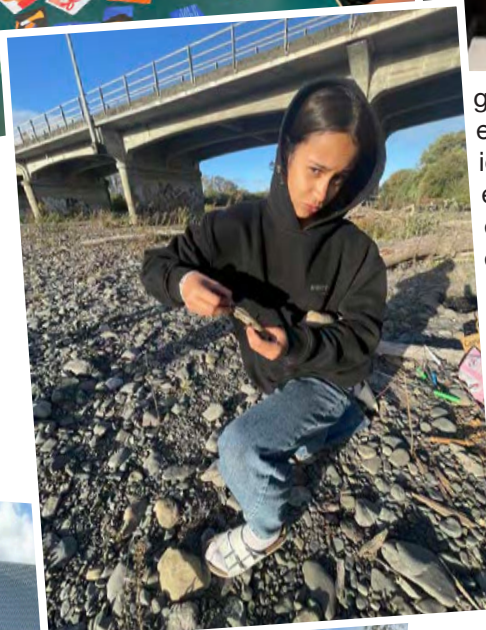
NĀU TE KETE



At the start of the year, we launched Nau Te Kete, a small group for eight Year 9–10 girls who had all been connected to Epic in different ways — through camps, schools, or other programs. For many, it was their first term at college — a big life transition. The goal was to create a safe, mana enhancing space where they could feel cared for, discover more about who they are, and build confidence and resilience as they navigated this new season of life.

The name Nau Te Kete comes from our Epic whakatauki: Nau te kete, naku te kete, ka ora ai tātou — “from your basket, from my basket, we will all thrive.” Each week, we explored what’s inside our kete — our strengths, values, dreams, and skills — and how we can contribute to one another’s kete. Through activities, reflection, and talanoa, the girls began to recognise what they each bring to the group and how sharing these gifts helps everyone grow.

Over the six weeks, we focused on key ideas such as whanaungatanga (connection), manaakitanga (care and



generosity), identity, resilience, and encouragement. We spent time identifying strengths, learning to express care, and reflecting after each activity. The girls played endless rounds of “Bumpity Bump Bump Bump,” decorated encouragement rocks, shared kai, and even made s’mores by the river. Beneath the fun was a deeper process — learning to trust, to share, and to see their own potential.

By the end, the transformation was clear. The girls spoke about feeling confident, listened to, and comfortable to be their full selves. One shared, “I felt like I could be myself around you guys and felt really happy and good.” Another said, “This group made me a little bit more confident in myself, and I loved how we all got along.” Others described feeling included, supported, and proud of what they’d added to their kete — confidence, courage, connection, and joy.

Nau Te Kete captured what Epic is all about — creating spaces that enhance mana and nurture potential through intentional relationships. It was a beautiful reminder that when young people are given the opportunity to belong, to reflect on their story, and to contribute to others, they discover not only who they are but also how powerful their presence can be.



REFLECTIONS FROM...

Faith Hopkins

Mauri Ora

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

Outdoors, arts and crafts activity

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

Welcoming kind friendly environment

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

well mannered space, cool fun etc.

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

Sunrise

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

Being social getting to know new people

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

Learning to be around people older than me

Final words...

You are amazing

Jonah Schaumkel

Volleyball

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

I enjoy sports such as Ki o rahi, volleyball, basketball and more! I enjoy working to have money to spend on food and clothing.

How would you describe the vibe or feeling when you are with your Epic group?

We were able to freely speak out about our thoughts towards the game and inclusively add ideas to develop our teamwork. I enjoyed the high energy the team brought as well as the encouragement towards each other, it really helped towards achieving team chemistry.

If you were telling a friend about Epic, what would you say?

"Its pretty epic at Epic" I would go on to say Epic is a mana enhancing, inclusive and fun environment for anyone and everyone. Epic is able to encourage values in a very fun and insightful way. I personally learned a lot about leadership and was given opportunities to create lasting connections from my experience with this group of amazing people.

Whats one memory that stands out with your group or leaders?

Our team managed to get into the finals for our division in volleyball, managing to achieve second place against teams in Hawkes Bay. We saw this as a massive achievement and a big improvement to how we were at the beginning of the season.

How have you grown or changed since being part of Epic?

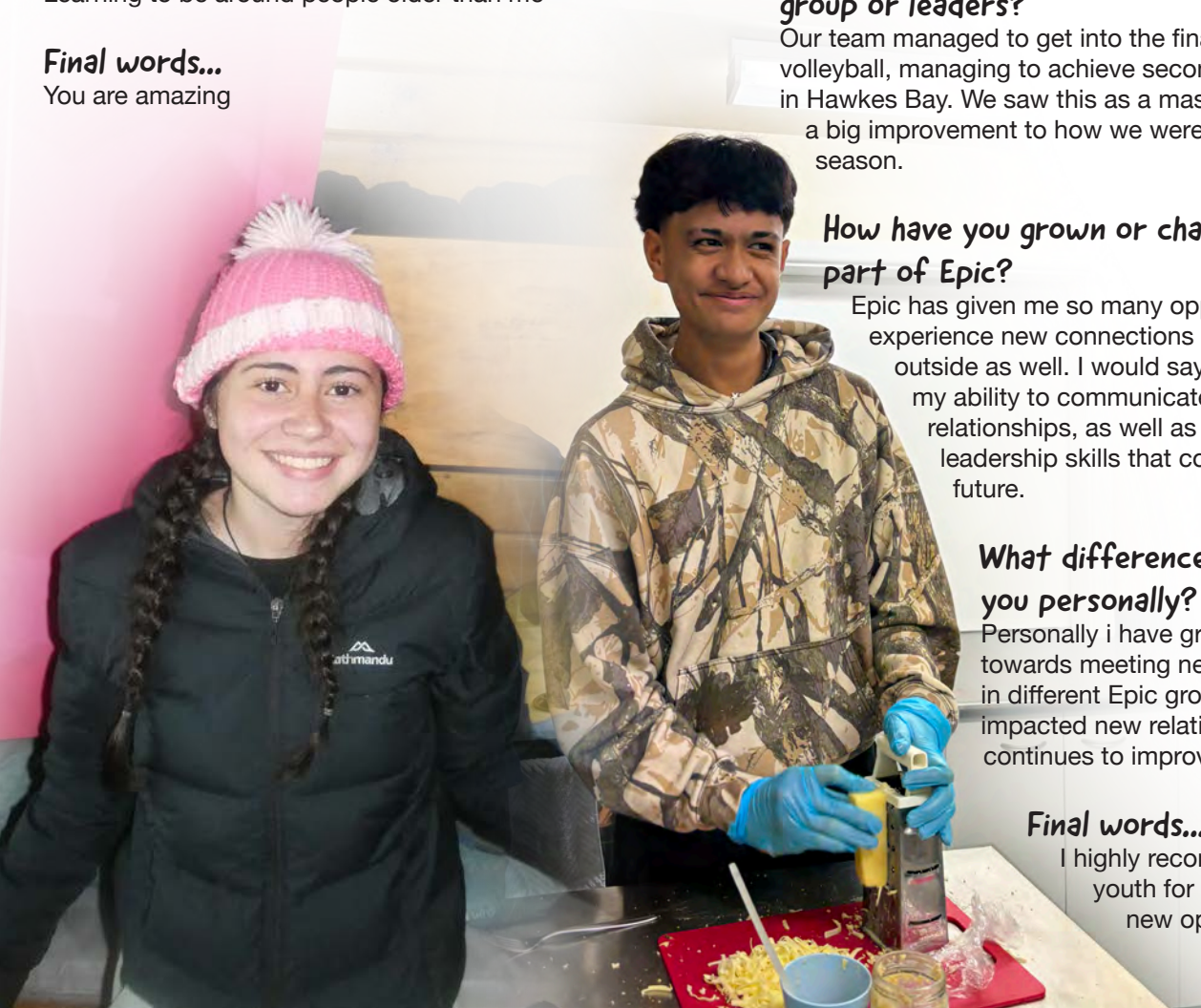
Epic has given me so many opportunities to experience new connections not just in Epic but outside as well. I would say i have grown in my ability to communicate and build lasting relationships, as well as building up my leadership skills that could help me in the future.

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

Personally i have grown in my confidence towards meeting new people and leading in different Epic groups. This has positively impacted new relationships and also continues to improve aspects of my life.

Final words...

I highly recommend Epic to all youth for a fun experience and new opportunities



Te Puawaitanga o Ngā Taiohi

YOUTH COUNCIL



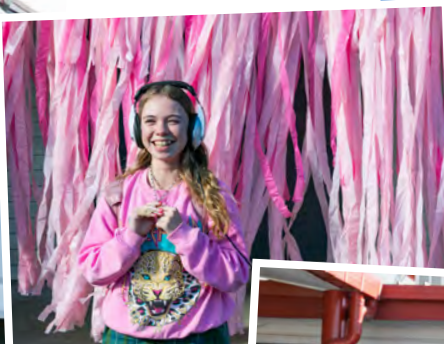
Te Puawaitanga o ngā Taiohi – The Blossoming of the Youth
1 July 2024 – 30 June 2025

The Inspire Youth Council is made up of 13 students from Central Hawke's Bay College, supported by Epic Ministries and guided by Senior Youth Worker, Ariana-Jean. Together, the council provides a platform for young people to strengthen youth voice, create opportunities, and grow as confident leaders who positively contribute to the Central Hawke's Bay community.

Over the past year, the Youth Council has been actively involved in a number of projects and events. Youth Week was a highlight, engaging hundreds of students through activities such as blind karaoke, team challenges, and school-wide events. Members gained valuable experience in communication, time management, and teamwork while planning and running these activities. Another key achievement was the creation of Te Mana Kōrero, the new school notice board.



This space was designed as a hub of encouragement and information, promoting upcoming events, celebrating "Youth of the Week," and sharing uplifting messages with students.





The Youth Council has also continued its regular engagement with Mayor Alex Walker and Deputy Mayor Kelly Annand. These meetings have inspired members to see the value of youth voice in decision-making and have reinforced that young people's perspectives are both valued and needed.

Project Binny was another initiative that grew from within the council, focusing on the need for more recycling bins in our community. Through collaboration with local council members, funding applications, and youth-led surveys, the project gave rangatahi the chance to learn about sustainability, leadership, and resilience when plans didn't always go as expected. The Leaders' Retreat provided another valuable opportunity for personal development, where team building and leadership workshops strengthened connection and confidence among council members.

Through these experiences, members have grown in confidence, with many overcoming their fear of public speaking and learning to step up as leaders. They have discovered the importance of patience and planning, the value of listening to others, and the impact they can make in their community.

Looking ahead, the Inspire Youth Council is committed to continuing to amplify youth voice, foster leadership, and create opportunities for young people to thrive. With the right support, the council believes that rangatahi will continue to inspire, influence, and lead positive change in our community.



REFLECTIONS FROM...

Hannah Webster

Youth Council

A bit about you, Hobbies etc

Despite being a terrible singer and have zero musical ability I love music so much! I always have it playing and it makes me so happy. Everything from waiata like E Minaka Ana to Kolohe Kai and even a bit of country! Other than music I really love to swim, dive and surf. I have always loved the ocean and marine life so I am always keen for a swim.

What opportunities have you had to lead or help others this year?

This year I was the head of the youth council which was an amazing opportunity. Not only did I do this but I also on occasion helped with Lift however due to work and other things I didn't get to do as much as I would have liked. While they were my 2 official leadership roles with Epic this year I often pop in when I am bored and help with random little side quests.

What has been your favourite memory from being a leader this year

I'm not sure if this entirely counts but a real highlight for me not just in the last Epic year but my entire Epic journey was definitely the leaders retreat in December last year. I built connections with new people and really pushed myself to try new things. I had so much fun!

What are some leadership skills or strengths you feel you have developed through Epic?

I think I have learned to be a better listener and become more empathetic when listening to where people come from and who they are. I also have learned that it's ok to have lots of energy around these people and also that's it's ok that sometimes I don't.

Is there something you've learned about caring for others and giving back?

Again I think it links back to empathy. I really really value listening to people's stories, cultures and experiences. I have learned to not just react to things but absorb what they are saying and take that with me.

Who has encouraged or supported you this year, and how did that make a difference?

Ari has always been a rock for me. She is so understanding of me being an introvert and how, while I can be really loud and outgoing, at the end of the day I do need alone time and calm. She is always asking me how I am, what I feel up to doing and if I am ok. Another person I have felt a lot of support from is Jackie. She really is really good at listening to me and how I am feeling. She is always there if I need a hug and her smile makes me feel safe.

What difference has Epic made for you personally?

EPIC has been a game changer for me. 10 years ago I would dread going to community events, and today I not only take part, but get to lead at them. While a lot of what I do with Epic is me giving up my time, the memories and connections I make are far more valuable.

Final words...

I cannot believe my EPIC journey is coming to an end. I am proud to be an Epic kid and even more proud of the way I have been able to see its effects on other people. #EPIC4life



A WORD FROM OUR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS



Each year we continue to be thankful for Epic and it's many connections in CHB. Countless lives continue to be shaped, strengthened and encouraged through the Epic staff, programs and events run with youth. The staff have such a great heart for youth to reach their God given potential. A

highlight for the St Andrews Community this year has been partnering with Epic to run 'The Carnival' at the end of October. Over 350 children took part as well as their friends and whanau with numerous parents sharing how much they appreciated the positive, fun, safe environment for families. We thank the vision cast many years ago to establish a youth trust in this community, that after small beginnings, has had such a pivotal impact into this community and beyond.

*Sally & Evan Huggett
On behalf of St Andrews*

I am writing to support one of Central Hawke's Bay College's enduring support groups, EPIC Ministries. EPIC have worked within the school for many years and are part of our community Partners group that support our students.

The College has been delighted that EPIC have continued to support the rangitahi of the College once again this year. Their presence over the year has been appreciated as they continue to provide support for our future leaders and encouragement for the inclusiveness for all our students. EPIC have joined us to celebrate a number of events over the year. Pink Shirt Day, Youth week and support for our Market Days have been a welcome injection of youth and enthusiasm to our break times.

EPIC have added a slice of aroha and hauora that has truly made a difference to student wellbeing. It has been a feature for us that we see many of our former students in leadership roles within EPIC and also how they include our current students and give them opportunities to shine.

Much of their work is designed to support our students on their future pathways and show what true commitment to others looks like. As community is one of our key school values, the ability to role model this is much appreciated. This is highlighted by EPIC's commitment to our Breakfast Club and the impact providing a good breakfast does for the students during our coldest months.

I would like to thank EPIC for their ongoing support for the youth of the CHB district and their continued efforts to guide and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone.

Without EPIC's help our work at college would be much more difficult and we really appreciate working in partnership with such a wonderful team.

Yours sincerely

*Lance Christiansen
Principal*



**CENTRAL
HAWKE'S BAY**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

The partnership between EPIC Ministries and the Youth Council is central to empowering young people in Central Hawke's Bay. EPIC provides mentorship and resources that enable the Youth Council to contribute meaningfully to local governance and community initiatives. This collaboration ensures youth voices are heard and integrated into decision-making, fostering a unique Tamatea/Central Hawke's Bay model of engagement that strengthens social, cultural, and economic well-being.

Through this relationship, Youth Council members gain confidence, leadership skills, and opportunities to influence community outcomes. Together, EPIC and the Youth Council exemplify how community organizations and local government can work hand-in-hand to create a future where young people actively shape the place they call home.

*Christine Renata
Community Development Lead
CHB District Council*



Ngā mihi nui ki EPIC Ministries for another year of incredible support to our kura. Your presence in our school makes a genuine difference.



This year we've again seen the impact of your mahi — from the engaging in-class sessions to shooting hoops on the court. The Carnival, continues to be a real highlight for our school community.

Thank you for the way you so naturally weave into our waka values of whanaungatanga and aroha. Your partnership reflects our belief that he waka eke noa — we are all in this together for the hauroa of our tamariki.

We deeply appreciate your ongoing commitment to Terrace School and look forward to continuing this special relationship.

*Mihi nui,
Matua Ānaru*

A WORD FROM OUR COLLABORATIVE PARTNERS



EPIC is a youth-focused organisation that works closely with schools and young people in Central Hawke's Bay. Its mission is to empower youth through positive engagement, leadership development, and community support. The partnership between Police and EPIC is a cornerstone for creating safer communities and fostering strong relationships between Police and young people.

Why This Relationship Matters

1. Strengthening Community Trust

Police involvement in EPIC initiatives helps build trust with young people and their families. It demonstrates that Police are committed to supporting youth development, not just enforcing laws. This trust encourages open communication and cooperation, which is essential for community safety.

2. Early Intervention and Prevention

By working alongside EPIC in schools and community programs, Police can identify challenges early and provide guidance before issues escalate into offending or harm. This proactive approach reduces the need for enforcement and promotes positive outcomes.

3. Positive Role Models

Police officers participating in EPIC activities become visible role models, demonstrating respect, responsibility, and care, qualities that inspire youth and counter negative stereotypes. This helps create a culture of mutual respect and understanding.

4. Collaborative Support for Schools

EPIC's close connection with schools means Police can engage in a proactive, educational way rather than a reactive one. Together, they create safe environments where students feel supported and valued.

5. Long-Term Community Impact

This partnership reduces youth offending, promotes resilience, and fosters a sense of belonging. It is an investment in the future of Central Hawke's Bay, ensuring safer neighbourhoods and stronger social cohesion.

Conclusion

The relationship between Police and EPIC is more than a partnership—it is a shared commitment to empowering youth, strengthening communities, and preventing harm before it occurs. Continued collaboration will ensure that young people in Central Hawke's Bay have the support and opportunities they need to thrive.

Constable Che Lind

A message from our new Epic Trust Chair

Kia ora, I'm Jono Craig, and I'm excited to step into the role of Chair for the Epic Ministries Trust as we move into the next chapter of youth development in Central Hawke's Bay. Thank you to our outgoing chair, Greg Frater, for your leadership, passion and advocacy for Epic over the last three years.

My connection with Epic goes back quite a way. In the 90s, as a young person, I was part of Youth to the Max, a community youth group that was a precursor to the establishment of Epic. Since then, I've had the privilege of serving as a volunteer leader, working as a youth worker for seven years with our high school group, and contributing as a Trustee over the past two years.

This year we were pleased to welcome Josh Ross onto the Trust, joining Greg, Laurie, Jackie, and myself. Josh has served faithfully as a volunteer leader and support person at Epic for more than a decade. Looking ahead, in 2026 we hope to introduce a youth representative to the Trust—ensuring youth voice is present at the table and providing a young person with a valuable opportunity to learn about governance.

A key focus this year has been professional development for our staff and leadership training for our volunteers. I want to congratulate Penny on completing her Diploma in Youth Work, and Jireh and Rita on achieving their Certificate in

Youth Work (the first year of the Diploma). We are blessed to have such dedicated and skilled youth workers here in Central Hawke's Bay.

Reading through this report, it's encouraging to see the ongoing strength of our Epic Vision: *to see a generation of young people empowered to reach their maximum potential, physically, socially, emotionally and spiritually so they can be contributors to a healthy community.* Each year we farewell incredible young people as they finish secondary school and step into new seasons, and this year is no exception. We look forward to seeing the impact they will continue to have in the world.

I'm excited as we keep building on Epic's legacy—to invest in our young people, create spaces where they can be challenged and grow, foster belonging and safety, and provide opportunities for them to contribute and serve as they develop.

Thank you to all our young people, whānau, volunteers, and team who make Epic what it is. I give glory to God for His provision and grace that enables us all.



Treasurers Report 2025

Many years ago, I sat down with Bruce Maden, Tama’s dad, (a long term youth organization CEO) and asked him what he thought was the key to creating sustainable funding for a charitable organization. He laughed and told me it doesn’t exist.... it is a beast that you have to learn to move with and respond to rapidly! More recently, Aaron Doody was instrumental in setting up an Epic endowment fund with HB Foundation which has a very long term approach to provision; receiving donations and bequests, using investment proceeds to grow the fund and then eventually provide an income stream to support generations of CHB’s young people. Here is the link if you want to help grow this!

<https://hawkesbayfoundation.org.nz/campaigns/epic-ministries-fund/>

This 2025 financial year has been another one with challenges laid down for the Epic Trust to navigate. With mid-year news of an unexpected conclusion of significant MYD contract funding, we face the task of bridging the resulting shortfall to continue delivering the Mentoring programs and support that young people in our community value and rely on. As Trustees, we provide a working budget for the team so they can carry out their work without being stressed about how or even whether their wage or program is being funded! Our team can ensure that core activities continue uninterrupted, and behind the scenes we maintain strong financial management. (While belts may have tightened, we do still feed many hungry rangatahi who turn up early for programs!)

Donations and grants have played an increasingly important role in supporting Epic’s work, and there is a clear need for additional regular supporters to help sustain this momentum.

Every contribution, no matter the size, directly enables us to provide fun and transformative mentoring programs, youth group activities and leadership growth opportunities. We believe in this work being vital to the wellbeing of the young people we serve, and we trust that provision for its future is as healthy as its past.

As we look forward, a key priority for our team is to increase the number of people who are excited to support Epic and the work we do; enough for them to become regular supporters! It might be YOU who has attended Epic programs and you value the impact this had in your life, and now you are working, you can sponsor this opportunity for other young people. Perhaps your children have benefited from being a part of Epic, and now you would like to give back. You might be a Christian who values Epic’s local mission work and would like to specifically fund the faith based programs. Maybe you had the opportunity to work on the staff team and appreciate the value firsthand of Epic’s place in your own professional development. Or you might be a community member who knows exactly what “the Epic difference” looks like. PLEASE, CAN YOU HELP US?

We need to find an additional \$3000 a week; that might be 150 people sponsoring \$20 a week...

We are grateful for the ongoing generosity of our donors, the dedication of our staff and volunteer teams, and the faithfulness of our supporters. Thousands of young people have benefited from being part of Epic in one way or another over the last 22 years; will you say YES to help make Epic a lasting resource and taonga for thousands more? We really look forward to hearing from you!

Jackie Lowry, Treasurer

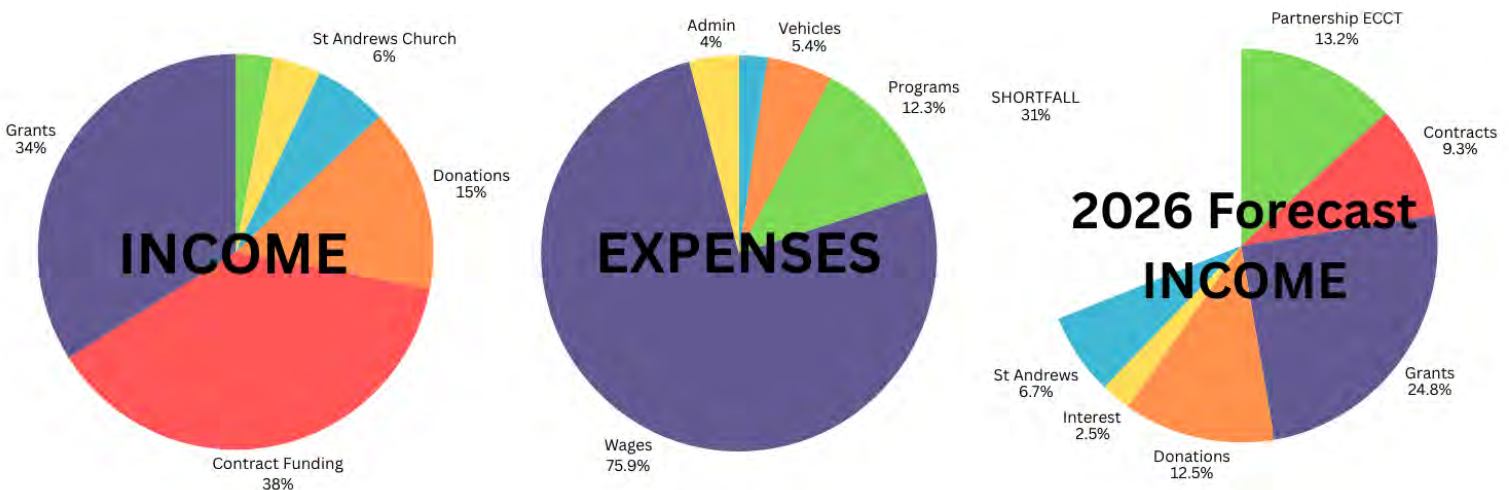


Donations can be made to: **Epic Ministries Trust**

Account Number: **02 0780 0006226 00**

Please email **Jackie.Epic@xtra.co.nz** to notify us of your donation.

Visit **www.epicministries.co.nz/supporters** for more info.



2025 EPIC TEAM



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Youth Practice
027-6534176

Jackie Lowry
Co-Leader
Administrator
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Ari Henson
Youth Worker
High School



Di Murphy
Youth Worker
High School



Jireh Schaumkel
Youth Worker
Intermediate



Rita Simiona
Intern
Intermediate

Chairperson Report following resignation (Oct 2025)

I am stepping down as Chairperson of Epic, Jono taking over the Chairperson role in October 2025. He is well-qualified and suited to the task, and I expect him to bring new energy and new initiatives to the overall leadership of Epic.

Tama Bucknell left as Epic Director at the end of 2020. Tama, along with Ian Pimm was instrumental in establishing Epic as a unique youth support entity. Aaron Doody took on an interim role as director in the beginning of 2021. Aaron was a breath of fresh air, bringing ideas and a new perspective, but the influence and contribution of Tama was pivotal in the establishment of Epic and its culture.

I took over as interim chair in June 2022 from Sally Biss after the sad loss of her husband John in 2022. Sally was great person to have as Board Chair – I particularly applaud her care for individuals within the Trust and within the Epic management. We are saddened by the loss of John, and remember John as a very special person.

Somewhere along the way I ceased to be “interim” Chair and became the Chairperson. Laurie has remained a constant over this period, ably keeping order in our records and processes. Penny and Jackie took on a joint leadership role in Epic after Aaron’s departure, and Penny joined the Trust in October 2022. I have enjoyed my intermittent sessions with Jackie working through policies.

The Covid epidemic impacted Epic quite significantly. Epic

was forced to put many of its normal programmes and activities on hold. The epidemic forced the whole country to confront significant differences in our individual perceptions of the trustworthiness of people in power. Epic and St. Andrews navigated these troubled waters. It was new for all of us, demanding a post-Covid period of reflection and rebuilding.

Another event that impacted Epic was cyclone Gabrielle. Epic was recognised as a trusted recipient of funds for distribution to the community. Jackie took on a whole new role seeking out needs and verifying them by visiting families, and disbursing funds. She also applied for and received further funding. The goodwill of the community towards Epic generated by Jackie’s commitment is an ongoing benefit.

One issue that I have been forced to address is Epic’s role as a partner with St. Andrews rather than an organ of St. Andrews, operating through a memorandum of understanding. The perspective that I have tried to clarify is that Epic is a mission organisation operating from a faith basis within the constraints of a secular society. I thank Penny particularly and Jackie too in her administrative role for continuing to lead the management of Epic staff with a focus on faith.

Thank you to all those past and present I have been privileged to work with.

Greg Frater



Epic Trustees: Greg Frater, Jono Craig (Chairman), Jackie Lowry, Laurie Gordon (Secretary), Josh Ross

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www.epicministries.co.nz