



Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust

Literacy Tuition for Rural/isolated Adults & Teenagers



Spring Newsletter Edition 2024

Kia ora, and welcome to the 2024 Spring edition of the Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust (RYALT) newsletter!

We're excited to share the latest happenings at RYALT.

It's been a vibrant and bustling year for our team and volunteers at RYALT. We're delighted to warmly welcome our new volunteers into the RYALT whānau and extend our sincere gratitude to the new organisations partnering with us. We also want to take a moment to honour our dedicated volunteers, who continue to support us week after week—your contributions are invaluable, and we deeply appreciate all that you do.

At RYALT, we are always working to refine our processes to make volunteering easier and more rewarding. Below is a snapshot of some key initiatives we've been developing over the past year:

- **Hosting our first Port Waikato Book Fair on King's Birthday** – raising \$1,288.40
- **The Student Writing Booklet** – A collection showcasing the remarkable work of some of our students
- **The launch of our online membership forms**
- **Volunteer Coffee Meetups** – Our inaugural meetups in Hamilton, Auckland, Whangārei, and Christchurch (Sept!)
- **Expanding our Community Ambassador programme** – Increasing our presence nationwide to raise awareness of our services
- **The launch of our brand-new website** (coming very soon!)
- **New promotional videos** – Designed to help potential students learn more about RYALT and what we can offer
- **Regular Student Liaison Calls** – Providing students with an opportunity to offer honest feedback on their experiences

Student Success Stories

“We're grateful to regularly hear success stories and receive valuable feedback from our students, their coaches, and parents. In this edition, we're excited to share some more of these inspiring stories with you:”

Just have to share with you about a great session with M.

She told me yesterday she had been researching Matariki and she wanted to share what she had learned with me today. She was able to draw comparisons between Maori culture and Chinese beliefs. It was very interesting.

The when I was adding a bit of context for her, I mentioned Maori gods as being Kaitiaki and she jumped in and said “Kaitiaki – I know about that – we have Kaitiaki in our care centre – they are in charge of setting up programmes for our residents.”

(M works in a Retirement Village).

Now she's decided she wants to learn more about Ranginui and Papatuaanuku, so she is going to do some research on them for our next session.

I had a fabulously positive morning with D. He is lots more confident and today I had your words “well he is turning up every time.....” ringing in my ears, when he arrived smiling with a bag of oranges from their tree. One of the most important gifts I've ever received!! Positivity and progress is in abundance!

I'm really enjoying working with R.

Last week she chose a book on astronomy as she wanted to know more about the stars. However, she didn't know what the equator was, northern or southern hemisphere, etc. So we transgressed quite a lot. I hope it's ok to include geography in our sessions! There's so much she's missed out on by not going to school, but she's so keen to learn now. I also gave her info on some adult education classes starting next month. She's keen on the basket weaving course – something she wouldn't have considered six months ago.

From our Student Liaison calls:

A. would recommend this service 100% to others, especially for anyone with a struggling teen or adult that wants to return to the workforce and needs to learn the basics to get by.

He reads and underlines what he doesn't understand, she helps him to understand. He is very happy with his progress. He can ask her if there is something he needs and she is happy to accommodate him. He was sent a book from RYALT about Burt Monroe and his coach is trying to get a copy, so she can read it together with him. He is excited about this.

A. confirmed the whole programme is amazing, and didn't know the RYALT service was even available until she found cards on the desk at work. A. confirmed she does not "have enough good words to say" when it comes to the service.

J. likes how his coach has provided variety in his literacy lessons and doesn't get bored of it. Reading is becoming more improved each time. J. thinks his coach is a very good coach and she understands him. He also did a first aid course and H helped him with that. She knows his weak points and helps him very well.

Quotes from National Volunteer Week

What message would you like to share with future volunteers and students?

It takes patience and understanding to help students on their journey, but I really respect their bravery in accepting the challenge of improving their reading

Brenda Critchfield
Literacy Coach RYALT

NOW
Te Wiki Tūao ā-Motu
National Volunteer Week
June 16- 22 2024

Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust

Introducing our Little Library!



Kupu of the quarter

- **Whakamana:** (verb) to give prestige to, validate
- **Whakanui:** (verb) to celebrate, honour
- **Whakawhetai:** (verb) to give thanks, be grateful
- **Whakamiha:** (verb) to admire, appreciate, esteem

Whangarei Coffee and Chat with Kaye-26th July

In the relaxing ambiance of Mokoba Café, nestled in the heart of the Whangarei Town Basin, I met with three literacy coaches for a coffee and chat. Sunlight filtered through the clouds, casting a warm glow over our table as we sipped our drinks and shared stories of our work and life experiences.

These three dedicated volunteers, each bringing a unique approach and background, found common ground in their passion for helping others learn. The conversation flowed effortlessly, filled with laughter, insights, and mutual support.

One coach shared her recent experience working with a student at the local library. "It's been a journey," she began, smiling as she reflected on the ups and downs. "The student struggled initially, but we're starting to make real progress. It's all about building that relationship, you know? Once trust and respect are established, everything else follows."

The others nodded in agreement, recognizing the truth in her words. We talked about how crucial it is to develop a strong rapport with students. Without it, even the most well-planned lessons can fall flat. "Learning doesn't happen overnight," one coach noted. "It's a process, and we have to be patient. It's about consistently showing up and letting students know we believe in them."

Our discussion soon turned to the RYALT wiki, a valuable resource. We shared tips on how best to use the materials and brainstormed ways to create more engaging learning experiences. The consensus was clear: resources like the RYALT wiki, StepsWeb are essential, but their impact is greatest when paired with understanding the student's needs and goals.

As we continued chatting, one coach emphasized the importance of patience and communication. "Every student is different," she said. "What works for one might not work for another, so we have to be flexible. Life happens, sometimes students can't make it to a session, or they're dealing with something outside of our sessions. We need to adapt to those situations."

We all agreed that flexibility is key when supporting students in Literacy.

Understanding that students have lives beyond our sessions allows them to approach each interaction with empathy and adaptability. "It's not just about teaching," one coach concluded. "It's about supporting students in all aspects of their lives, recognizing their challenges, and being there to guide them through it all."

As our coffee cups emptied and the conversation wound down, I left Mokoba Café feeling re-energised and ready to take on the challenges of the week ahead. Our meeting was a powerful reminder of the strength in community volunteers, the importance of patience, and the necessity of flexibility in the journey of literacy. Through our shared experiences, we found strength and inspiration, knowing that we are not alone in our mission to make a difference in the lives of our students.

Port Waikato BookFair-Kings Birthday Weekend

A Successful Inaugural Port Waikato Book Fair

We are delighted to share that the inaugural Port Waikato Book Fair, held on the Sunday of King's Birthday Weekend, was a resounding success! Thanks to the incredible support from our community, we raised an impressive \$1,288.40. This event not only brought our community together but also celebrated the importance of literacy and the joy of reading.

Despite the overcast weather, the sausage sizzle was a crowd favourite, adding warmth and deliciousness to the day. The indoor setting of the Port Waikato Community Hub proved to be the perfect venue, providing a cozy and inviting atmosphere for the fair.

The Book Fair saw an excellent turnout, with many attendees browsing, buying, and swapping books. It was wonderful to see so many book lovers of all ages come together to share their passion for reading. The children's activities were especially popular, with face painting and bookmark making stations that kept the kids entertained and engaged.

Given the success of this year's event, we are excited to announce that the Port Waikato Book Fair will become an annual tradition, taking place every King's Birthday Weekend.

We look forward to building on this year's achievements and creating even more memorable experiences for our community.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to our wonderful volunteers, whose time and energy helped the day run smoothly. Your dedication and enthusiasm were key to the success of the event.

We can't wait to see you all again next year!



A volunteer Literacy Coach's journey

Inspiring learners to explore the written world while providing unwavering support is a driving force for one of our incredible Literacy Coach volunteers, Linda Pinto. Linda's story highlights how the combination of expertise and passion can propel our organisation forward.

A retired administrator and housewife with a degree in English Literature, Linda has demonstrated a lifelong commitment to tutoring. Her early tutoring career began in her mother's living room, giving Linda hands-on experience and laying the foundation for her ability to connect with and effectively communicate with students. This initial experience was followed by years of tutoring youth in literacy and numeracy.

Linda's journey as a volunteer with RYALT began over two and a half years ago when she joined as a Phone Superstar, raising awareness about our organisation and the opportunities we offer. After six months, Linda recognised her true-calling as a tutor, leading her to train as a Literacy Coach - a role that aligns perfectly with her experience and lifelong passion. She now coaches four students, guiding them along their learning journey.

Before each session, Linda meticulously prepares her lessons using online resources and strategies from the Ministry of Education website and the RYALT wiki library. Her coaching sessions, which typically last around 30 minutes, are conducted online via Zoom. She utilises a variety of tools and resources, that not only engage her students, but also challenges them at the right level. Linda takes full advantage of Zoom's features to foster an interactive and dynamic learning environment.

One of Linda's most memorable moments as a Literacy Coach was witnessing a student make a breakthrough in an area they had previously struggled with. She also treasures the creativity her students show when using illustrations to present their reading reflections. Linda highlights that one of the biggest lessons she has learned from her students is humility.

What keeps Linda motivated as a Literacy Coach is the personal connection she forms with her students. She relishes the opportunity to explore new stories and learning pathways with them, while enjoying the process of mutual growth. She is continually inspired by her students' passion and dedication as they work towards their reading goals.

For those considering volunteering as a Literacy Coach, RYALT offers a comprehensive Bootcamp Literacy Training Programme. This equips volunteers with the skills and insight needed to step confidently into the coaching role and make a meaningful contribution to learners.

RYALT is incredibly grateful for the dedication, passion, and hard work of volunteers like Linda, who make such a positive impact on our learner's lives.



Linda Pinto-Remote Literacy Coach

Urgent Call for Support: Help Us Continue Our Vital Literacy Services

The Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust (RYALT) urgently needs your support to keep providing free reading and writing coaching to youth and adults with low literacy levels, especially in rural and isolated areas. With the current economic challenges, our funding has been significantly reduced, so much so that our manager is forgoing her salary to ensure other staff and essential operating costs are covered.

Good literacy is essential for everyone as it empowers individuals to communicate effectively, access education, and improve job opportunities. It fosters critical thinking, helps people navigate daily tasks like reading instructions or managing finances, and encourages informed decision-making. For communities, literacy promotes social and economic development, reducing inequality and increasing participation in society.

More than ever, we rely on the generous support of our community through volunteering, donations, and fundraising.

RYALT is also actively seeking sponsorships to reduce our reliance on grants. Your contribution, no matter how small, can make a significant difference in helping us continue this critical work.

Please consider supporting us today. Together, we can change lives through literacy.

Here are some ways you can show your support for **Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust (RYALT)**:

- **Become a Friend of RYALT** and make a weekly donation of \$5 per week to help towards sponsoring a Student. Make a one-time donation. Even small donations can make a big difference in helping the trust continue to provide its much-needed services around New Zealand.

<https://www.adultliteracy.ac.nz/become-a-friend/>

- **Sponsorship:** Do you own a business or know someone who does? By becoming a sponsor, you can make a direct impact on our students' lives. Whether it's sponsoring vouchers for our monthly student prize draw or supporting our literacy programs, your involvement can help us continue this vital work.

If you or someone you know might be interested in partnering with us, please get in touch for more information about our sponsorship packages.

- **Donate** those old devices for our students to use for their lessons and practice. Perhaps you know of a business or organisation that update their computers every few years that might be able to donate those devices to the trust for our students.

- **Spread the Word:** Help raise awareness of the trust and our mission by sharing information about our services and activities on social media, through word of mouth, or by helping to distribute flyers and other promotional materials. Become an official Community Ambassador for your local community-chat to Lillian about how!

By showing your support for the Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust, you can help make a difference in the lives of those who struggle with low literacy levels, and help them to achieve their full potential.

Face-to-face
LITERACY COACH NEEDED

No teaching experience? No problem!
We provide comprehensive training.
Make a Difference. Be a Literacy Coach!

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