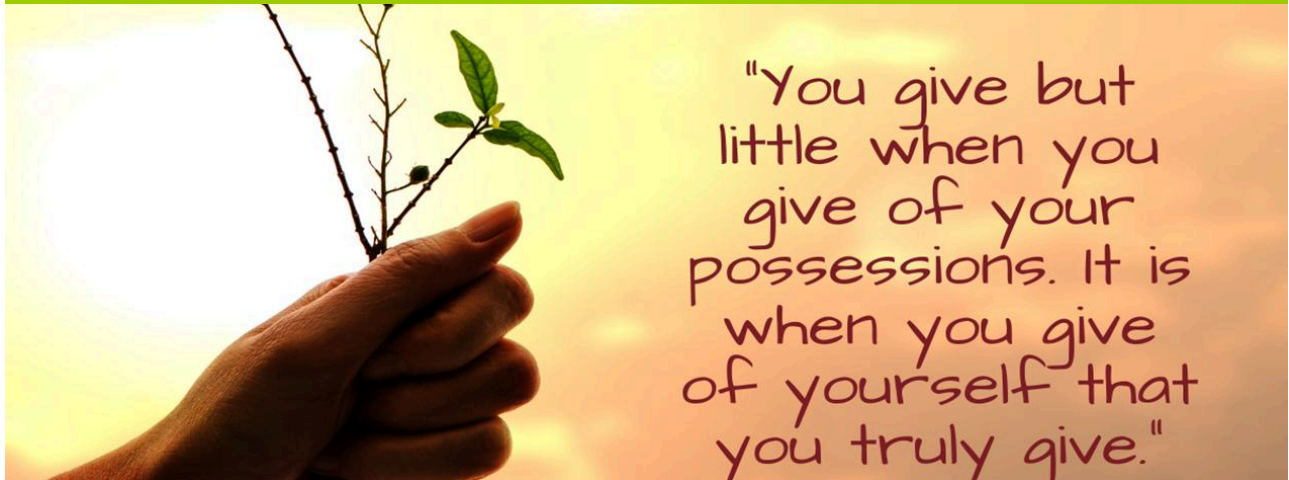




Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust

Literacy Tuition for Rural/isolated Adults & Teenagers



End-of-Year Update 2025

Kia ora, Talofa lava, Malo e lelei, and welcome to the 2025 Summer End-of-Year edition of the Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust (RYALT) newsletter.

As we reach the end of 2025, it's a wonderful moment to reflect on what has been another incredible year for RYALT. Navigating office life with three different ADHD brains and four enthusiastic office doggies has certainly been an experience—but it's working beautifully! Our "hive" is buzzing with ideas, creativity, and energy every day.

We also want to take this time to honour our amazing volunteers—those who join us every week, those who step in when needed, and those working quietly behind the scenes. Whether you've given 5 hours, 50 hours, or 500 hours, your contribution has made a real and lasting difference to our students, to each other, and to the organisation. We are truly grateful for every bit of your mahi. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Office Closure:

Our office will close on Friday 12 December 2025 and reopen on Monday 12 January 2026. The team will be taking a well-earned break to rest and recharge.

As we celebrate the festive season, we wish you a very Merry Kiwi Christmas and a Happy New Year. May your summer be filled with joy, rest, sunshine, and special moments with your whānau and friends.

**Ngā mihi o te Kirihimete me te Tau Hou,
The RYALT Team – Jo, Linzi & Lillian**

International Volunteer Day 2025: Celebrating the People Who Power RYALT

Every year on 5 December, Aotearoa joins the world in celebrating International Volunteer Day—a day dedicated to honouring the passion, generosity, and impact of volunteers everywhere. For us at RYALT, it's a special moment to acknowledge the extraordinary people who keep our mission alive.

Our Volunteers Make All the Difference

Everything we do—every learner supported, every success story, every step forward—starts with you. Whether you're coaching a learner 1:1, representing us as an ambassador, supporting our contact centre, or working quietly behind the scenes, your mahi opens doors for those who have spent years feeling left out or left behind. Because of you, rural teens and adults gain the confidence to read independently, write letters to whānau, fill out forms without fear, and tackle driver licensing tests that once seemed impossible. These achievements are life-changing.

The Voices of Learners

"I'm very, very happy... After being told at school for years that I'm dumb, that I won't amount to anything, to find somebody who can help me—it's uplifting. It makes me motivated." – RYALT learner


"Definitely. Our service has been so helpful... It's so good that it is free and that it's done from home. Going in person is embarrassing where I live, so this is wonderful." – Literacy student


A Huge Thank You

Your commitment ensures that no rural teen or adult faces literacy challenges alone. You truly are the beating heart of RYALT.

International Volunteer Day 2025 Theme: *Every Contribution Matters*

If you know someone who would make a great volunteer, encourage them to contact us:

 0800 891 339

 admin@adulthoodliteracy.ac.nz

 www.adulthoodliteracy.ac.nz

Volunteer Spotlight: Mara Guo – Growing Confidence, One Conversation at a Time

Mara Guo joined the Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust after graduating with a Master's degree in Finance in May 2025. With experience across corporate finance and hospitality leadership, she was drawn to RYALT's mission to support rural youth and adults with literacy. "The mission really spoke to me," Mara says. She began by interviewing potential literacy coaches and quickly knew she had found a place where she could make a practical and compassionate difference.

Those early days were both new and encouraging. "Everything felt incredibly supportive," she recalls. After completing her first interview and receiving kind feedback, she felt trusted and inspired to keep going — a feeling she now works to give others in her role as Interview Expert Mentor.

Mara stepped into mentoring to support both Lillian and new volunteers, drawing on her training and leadership background. Today, her favourite part of volunteering is watching people grow. "It's incredibly rewarding to see someone go from nervous to confident," she says. One moment that stayed with her was helping a volunteer who doubted if they were "good enough." After training together, that volunteer went on to enjoy their very first real call — a reminder of how powerful encouragement can be.

Through volunteering, Mara has strengthened her communication, empathy, and active listening skills, while gaining a deeper understanding of how all the roles at RYALT work together behind the scenes.

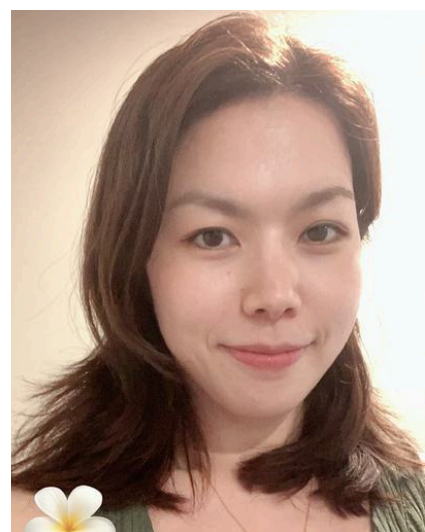
She also loves the variety of volunteer opportunities available. "Each role is meaningful and contributes to the bigger mission," she says.

Outside of RYALT, Mara is a lifelong learner — studying Te Reo Māori, completing further accounting and finance certifications, learning to swim, and exploring new restaurants and local events.

Her message to anyone thinking about volunteering is simple:

"Every contribution counts. Whether your role is big or small, your support can change someone's life in ways you might not even realise. If you're interested in any of our roles, please apply—we can't wait to make a real difference together."

From her first interview to now mentoring others with calm confidence and kindness, Mara Guo's journey is a beautiful example of how volunteering not only changes lives—it builds leaders, strengthens communities, and grows people from the inside out.



Christchurch Team Brings Literacy to the Community!

Written by Mei Chang

For the first time, RYALT Christchurch took part in a local community event, and what a day it was! On Saturday 1 November, the Shirley Boys' High School PTA hosted their 2nd annual Car Boot Sale at Avonside Girls' High School, and our Christchurch team was there to promote literacy services.

Led by Community Ambassador Mei Chang, with Margaret Chang and Justine Fallon, the team connected with the Christchurch East community and shared how RYALT helps teens and adults improve their reading and writing skills.

Despite a cloudy start and light drizzle, the event turned sunny and welcoming. Around 200 local residents browsed 40 stalls—but RYALT really stood out! With bright lime decorations, our stall caught the eye of nearly 30 visitors. Social workers, teachers, students, parents, and retirees all stopped by to learn more. Some were curious about our literacy services, others about becoming volunteer coaches, and many even scanned the QR code to sign up or get more information from our RYALT website.

This first-time experience was a huge success for the Christchurch team. It was inspiring to see the community's interest in literacy and volunteering, and we're excited to take part in more local events in the future!



Mei, Justine & Margaret

Cheque Presentation from Z Good in the Hood – Supporting Literacy in Our Community

On 24 September 2025, the Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust was thrilled to attend a cheque presentation at Hospice The Gardens as part of the Z Good in the Hood campaign. Thanks to the incredible support from Z Energy Bombay and everyone who voted during the campaign, we received \$786!

This generous donation will fund 157 half-hour literacy coaching sessions for teens and adults struggling with reading and writing. Beyond the funding, the campaign has helped raise awareness of RYALT in our community, and we were delighted to have students reach out to us for support because of coming across us at Z Bombay.

We are truly grateful to be part of the Z Good in the Hood whānau and thank everyone who contributed to helping make literacy more accessible to those who need it most.



Lillian (2nd from the right) receiving our cheque for the Z Good in the Hood presentation

Literacy Day Quiz Night – Hamilton Fundraiser a Success!

On 10 September, RYALT celebrated Literacy Day with a lively Quiz Night Fundraiser at The Cook in Hamilton. With a great turnout, generous prize sponsors, and enthusiastic volunteers, the night was filled with fun, community spirit, and support for literacy.

Thanks to quiz participants and raffles, we raised \$234 for literacy support, along with \$428 worth of donated prizes. A huge thank you to our prize sponsors: SkyCity Hamilton, Good George Brewery, Volare Bakery, and Sugar Bowl Café.

We're incredibly grateful to all the businesses who supported the night and helped make it such a success.

A Huge Thank You to Our Volunteers

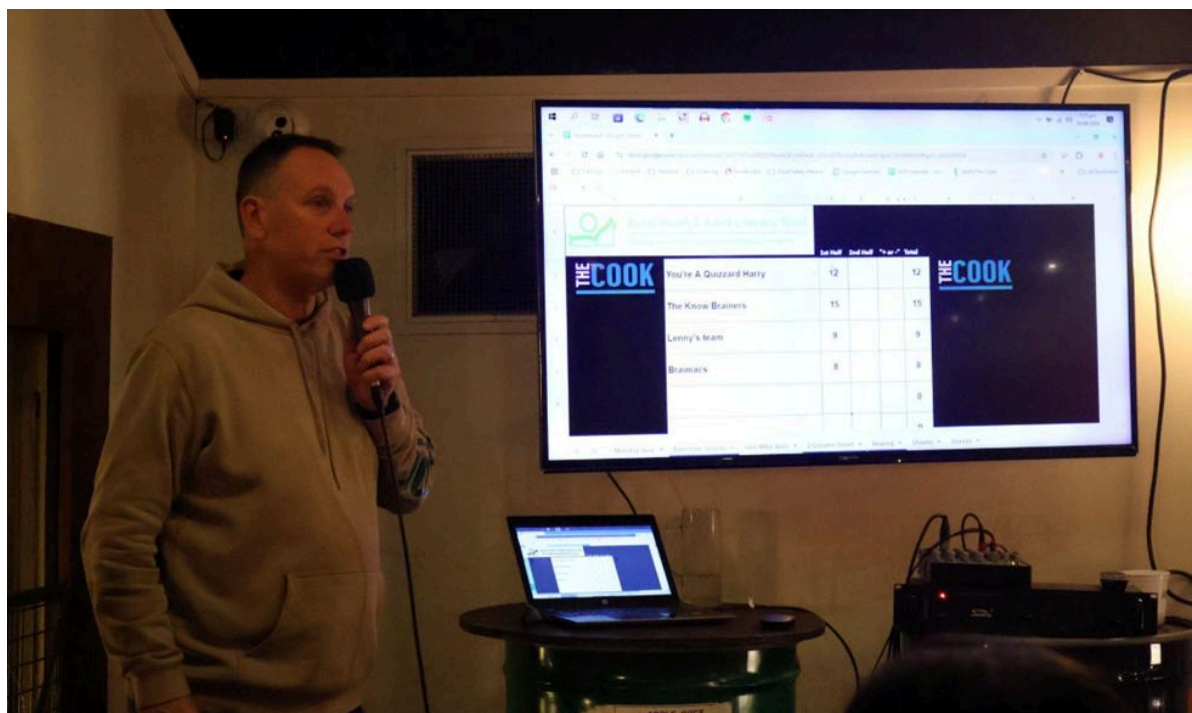
We couldn't have done it without **Tomoko Catlin**, **Kaya Lal**, and **Sherita Sharma**, whose mahi—organising details, collecting prizes, taking photos, and supporting the event—was invaluable.

Help Us Grow Quiz Nights in 2026

We'd love to run more Literacy Day Quiz Nights in September 2026. If you know of any local pub quiz events that might be keen to partner with us, we'd love to hear from you.

These events help us celebrate International Literacy Day, raise awareness of our free service, strengthen community connections, and fund our vital work.

Thank you to everyone who joined us, supported, donated, or helped make the night a success!



Community Networks Aotearoa: Hui25

Earlier this month, I had the privilege of attending Hui25: Forward, Stronger, Community Networks Aotearoa's annual conference, alongside our Wellington Ambassador, Melissa Taylor.

This year was especially meaningful as CNA celebrated 50 years of strengthening the community sector.

The day began with an insightful panel on financial sustainability, followed by a powerful session on collaboration beyond the usual, encouraging organisations to think differently about partnerships, shared resources, and collective impact.

In the afternoon, we joined a hikoi to Parliament for a special anniversary celebration, with lunch in the Great Hall alongside community leaders from across Aotearoa.

Connecting with inspiring organisations from around the motu reminded us just how vital our shared mahi is. A heartfelt thank you to Community Networks Aotearoa for sponsoring our travel so RYALT could be part of this milestone celebration. We're honoured to walk alongside them as we continue building stronger, more connected communities.

Students Are Waiting—Can You Help?

We urgently need **face-to-face** literacy coaches in:

- Rotorua
- Te Puke
- Invercargill
- Thames

Some learners are waiting because they aren't confident using technology. If you can help—or know someone who can—we provide full training and ongoing support.

If you're unable to take on a student right now, do you know someone who might? We provide full training, and coaching face-to-face is an incredibly rewarding way to make a lasting impact.

We'd also love your ideas on how to reach potential volunteers in these areas beyond our usual channels (volunteer centres, Facebook, libraries, churches, and women's groups). If you are in those areas or know someone who is, perhaps you could help by contacting local community boards, workplace newsletters, sports clubs, or other community networks could help us connect with people who are passionate about supporting literacy.

[Become a Coach](#)

A heartfelt Thank You to Our 2025 Supporters

Your generosity helps rural teens and adults build confidence, skills, and brighter futures through free 1:1 literacy coaching.

We're so grateful for every funder, donor, volunteer, and Friend of RYALT who makes our work possible.

Our funders this year have been:

Lottery National Community

Glenice & John Gallagher Trust

Trust Waikato

Tindall Annual Fund Community Waikato

COGS

DV Bryant Trust

Sky City Auckland

ACE Aotearoa-Festival of Learning

Foundation North

Community Networks Association

Aotearoa Gaming Trust

Norah Howell Charitable Trust

Waikato Farmers Trust

Z Energy-Good in the Hood

Gallagher Charitable Trust

Sky City Hamilton Trust

If you'd like to become a friend of RYALT for only \$5 a week or donate an old laptop or chromebook for a learner in need, please click on the link below.

[Become a Friend of RYALT](#)

Thank You & Stay Connected

Follow and share our work:

- Facebook: facebook.com/RYALTrust
- X (Twitter): x.com/RuralLiteracyNZ
- Instagram: instagram.com/ruralliteracynz

Word of mouth matters. Telling just one person may lead someone to life-changing support.

Ngā mihi nui — you're changing lives.