Rural Youth & Adult Literacy Trust

Literacy Tuition for Rural/Isolated Adults & Teenagers



Second Newsletter for 2026

Tēnā koutou katoa,

Welcome to our **second Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust newsletter of 2026**, and a warm ngā mihi to all the new supporters who have joined our RYALT community since our last update.

The past few months have been particularly encouraging. Winter is traditionally a quieter time for student enquiries, but this year we've seen a real increase in people reaching out for literacy support. **June was one of our biggest months, with 16 new student enquiries!**

Every one of these enquiries represents someone taking what can be a very big step. Asking for help with their reading and writing, and giving us the opportunity to connect them with the help they need. The Trust can only provide this because of the generosity of our supporters.
Behind the scenes, Linzi, our Student and Volunteer Coordinator, has well and truly established herself as a key member of our team. She's been introducing new initiatives and continuing to improve the experience for both our learners and volunteer Literacy Coaches.

We've also been busy building relationships, raising awareness and strengthening RYALT's connections across Aotearoa.

Some of our 2026 highlights so far:

- Attending the **Adult Community Education (ACE) Conference in Auckland**, with our ticket generously sponsored by ACE Aotearoa,
- Holding a successful stall at the **Franklin School Careers Expo in Pukekohe**,
- Being selected for the **third year in a row** to take part in Z Energy's **Good in the Hood** campaign,
- Attending the **Community Networks Aotearoa Conference in Wellington**, with our ticket generously sponsored by CNA,
- Celebrating our incredible volunteers during **National Volunteer Week**,
- Continuing to build **new community partnerships and connections across Aotearoa.**

In this edition, we celebrate some of the people at the heart of RYALT from our volunteer whānau connecting in **Hamilton and Christchurch**, to our learners finding their voices through this year's Student Writing Booklet, Ko tōku reo, ko tōku ohooho | Finding My Voice.

You'll also meet **Mei**, read a wonderful piece of writing from **Glenn**, and discover some simple ways you can support our learners and the future of RYALT.

As always, **thank you to our volunteers, funders, donors, community partners and supporters.** Whether you give your time, expertise, funding, or resources, or simply help spread the word, you are helping us reach more learners across Aotearoa.
We hope you enjoy this edition and the opportunity to celebrate the people, stories and connections that make RYALT what it is. 💜

Bringing our volunteer whānau together



Hamilton volunteer meetup at Violets Cafe

July was a wonderful month for bringing our volunteers together, with coffee meetups held in both **Christchurch and Hamilton**.

As a remote organisation, our volunteers are spread across Aotearoa and carry out much of their mahi from home. While this flexibility allows us to support learners wherever they live, it also means our volunteers don't always get the chance to meet each other face-to-face. Our coffee meetups are a chance to change that, to put faces to names, share experiences, make new connections and, of course, enjoy a few laughs over coffee

Our **Waikato meetup in Hamilton** had our best turnout yet, with eight volunteers from different parts of RYALT joining us. It was fantastic to have Literacy Coaches, Tech Support, Contact Centre and Social Media volunteers all around the same table.

A huge thank you to **Rashpul and the team at Violets Coffee in Frankton** for once again welcoming us and generously sponsoring our hot drinks. Support like this means a great deal to a small charity like ours and helps us create these valuable opportunities for our volunteers.

Meanwhile, in **Christchurch**, another wonderful group came together, including Literacy Coaches, Community Ambassadors and other RYALT volunteers. Thank you to **Table at Monks Coffee & Eatery** for providing such a welcoming venue and a lovely space for everyone to connect.

The next Christchurch volunteer meetup will be be hosted by Turanga Library in Christchurch and will include a behind the scenes library tour in October. We're really looking forward to this special experience for our volunteers!

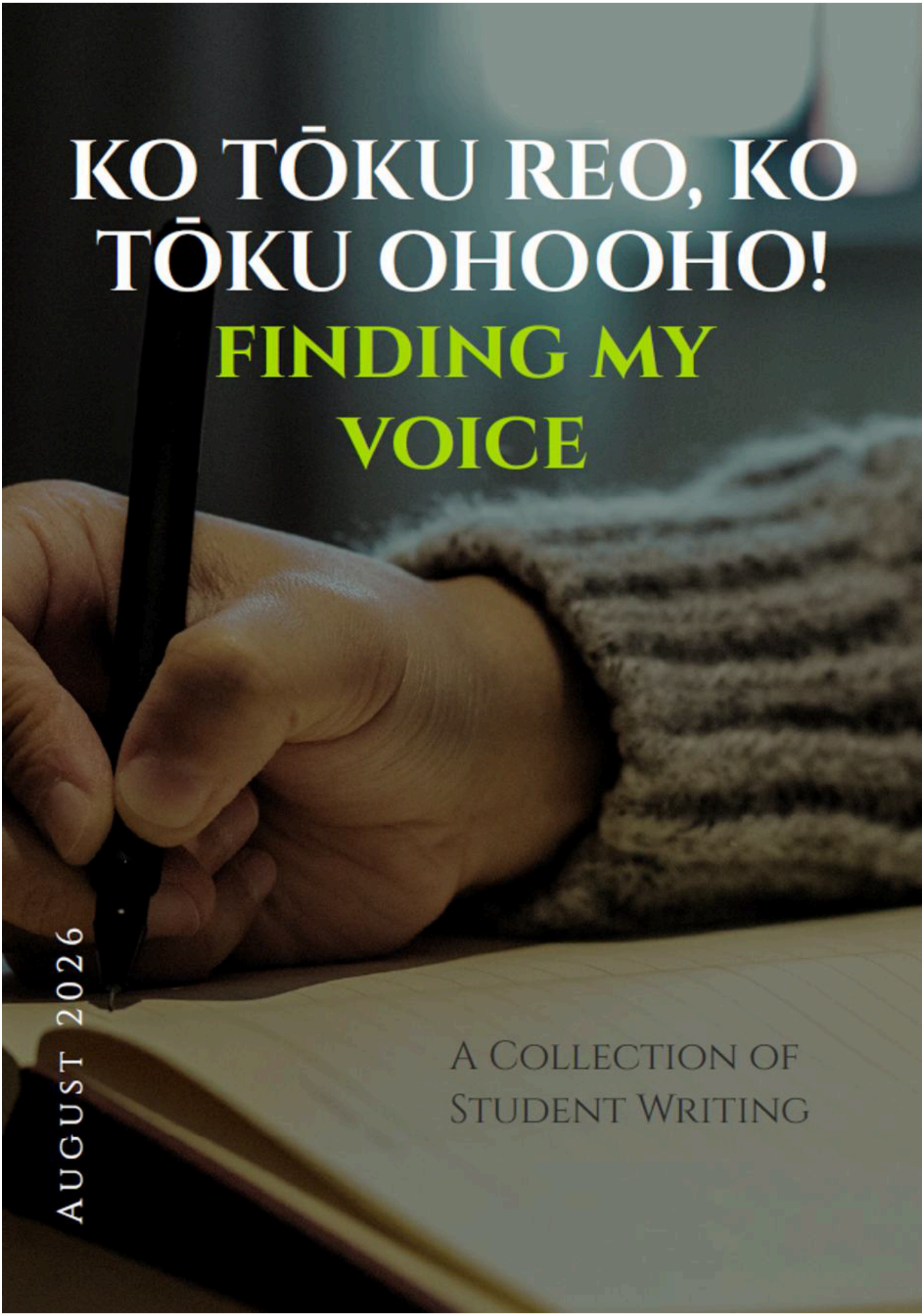
A special thank you also goes to our Event Manager, **Saniia**, for organising both July meetups and helping make these gatherings possible.

These gatherings may be simple, but they play an important part in helping our volunteers feel connected to each other and to the wider RYALT whānau. We're hoping to hold **even more volunteer coffee meetups around Aotearoa this year.**

If you're a local café, business or organisation that would be interested in **hosting or sponsoring a future volunteer meetup**, we'd love to hear from you. It's a lovely way to support the volunteers who give their time and skills to help learners across Aotearoa.



July Christchurch volunteer meetup at Table at Monks Coffee & Eatery


KO TŌKU REO, KO TŌKU OHOOHO!
FINDING MY VOICE
A Collection of Student Writing
August 2026

2026 Student Writing Booklet

"Every word tells a story, and every story shows courage." 🌿

Each September, we celebrate the **Festival of Adult Learning**, a special opportunity to recognise the power of lifelong learning and celebrate the achievements, determination and courage of adult learners across Aotearoa.

To mark the occasion, we are delighted to share our **2026 Student Writing Booklet – Ko tōku reo, ko tōku ohooho | Finding My Voice.**

This year's theme is particularly meaningful. For many of our learners, finding their voice through writing has taken courage, persistence and many hours of learning alongside their Literacy Coach. Seeing their own words published in a book can be an incredibly proud moment and a powerful reminder of just how far they have come.

The booklet brings together writing from our learners in their own words and in their own voices. Each contribution is different, but together they celebrate the experiences, ideas, humour, creativity and stories of the people at the heart of RYALT.

Thanks to the generous support of **ACE Aotearoa**, we have been able to print the booklet and send a copy to **every learner who contributed.**

We would also like to acknowledge the wonderful volunteers who help bring our Student Writing Booklet to life each year, particularly our Editor, Amanda Livingston, for the many hours she has dedicated to supporting and compiling our learners' writing over the years.

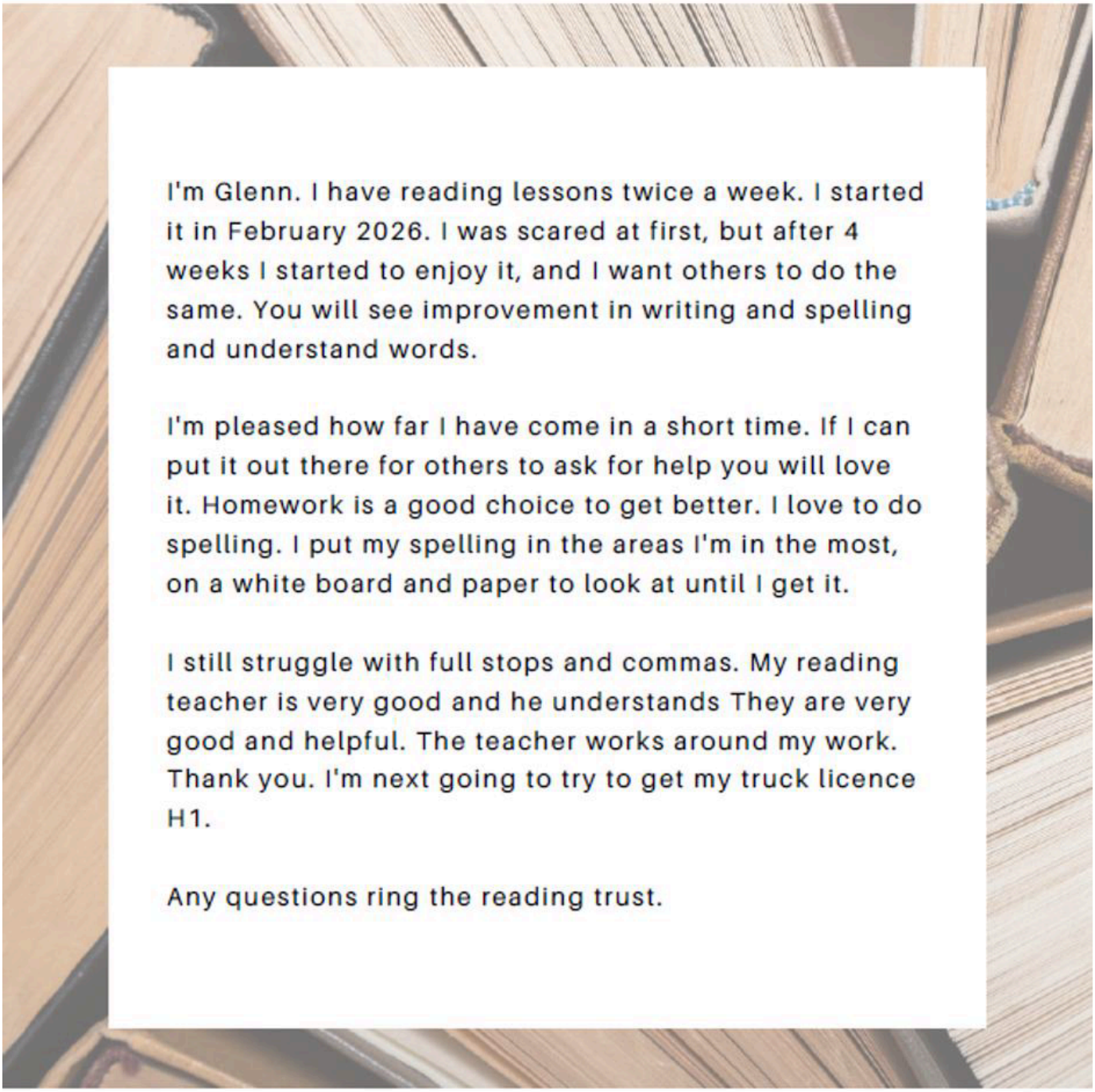
Read the 2026 Student Writing Booklet here:

https://adultliteracy.ac.nz/student-writing-2026/

To every learner who contributed this year, **thank you for trusting us with your words and sharing your voice.** We are enormously proud of you. . 🌿

READING LESSONS

by Glenn Candy



I'm Glenn. I have reading lessons twice a week. I started it in February 2026. I was scared at first, but after 4 weeks I started to enjoy it, and I want others to do the same. You will see improvement in writing and spelling and understand words.

I'm pleased how far I have come in a short time. If I can put it out there for others to ask for help you will love it. Homework is a good choice to get better. I love to do spelling. I put my spelling in the areas I'm in the most, on a white board and paper to look at until I get it.

I still struggle with full stops and commas. My reading teacher is very good and he understands They are very good and helpful. The teacher works around my work. Thank you. I'm next going to try to get my truck licence H1.

Any questions ring the reading trust.

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One of the pieces of Student Writing included in this years booklet

From volunteer to learner and a first New Zealand qualification

My First Qualification Learning Journey in New Zealand

I am Mei. I am a Community Ambassador in Christchurch and started volunteering with the Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust (RYALT) in 2023. As a Community Ambassador, I have shared information about RYALT throughout many parts of Christchurch and some of the surrounding areas.

In December 2024, I started studying towards the New Zealand Certificate in Business (First Line Management) – Level 4. It was an online course that I studied outside of my work hours.

As a Malaysian-born Chinese, Mandarin is my mother tongue, Malay is my second language and English is my third language. Most of my previous education and work experience was mainly in Mandarin.

I found some of the written course assessments difficult, particularly understanding exactly what the questions were asking of me and how to express my answers clearly in writing.

After two of my assessments did not reach the passing mark and I was asked to resubmit them, I lost confidence in continuing with the course.

I sought advice from Lillian, RYALT's Community Support Coordinator. Lillian encouraged me to keep going and suggested that I enrol as a learner with RYALT for literacy support.

In October 2025, I was matched with Chris, one of RYALT's volunteer Literacy Coaches, and we began working together through Google Meet.

Chris helped me strengthen the reading, writing and comprehension skills I needed for my study. He supported me to better understand the assessment questions, organise my thoughts and communicate my answers more clearly in my own words.

Through his coaching, commitment and patience, my understanding and confidence grew. I was able to continue with my studies and successfully pass the remaining assessments.

In May 2026, I completed the course and recently received my certificate. This is my first New Zealand qualification and an important milestone for me as I continue to move forward.

Thank you to the Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust for providing such an amazing service to the community and for having such a strong team of Literacy Coaches.

Thank you to Lillian for always supporting team members whenever they need help, and thank you to Chris for all the time, patience and dedication he gave to supporting me.

I really appreciate all the help I have received.

– Mei Chang



Mei with her certificate

Ways You Can Make a Difference 💜

🎁 Sponsor our monthly StepsWeb draw – just $30 a month

Each month, learners who use StepsWeb go into the draw to win a $30 prize! Thanks to the generous sponsorship of StepsWeb, RYALT is able to provide this online literacy programme to our learners free of charge.

The draw is a simple way for us to recognise the effort learners are putting into their learning and give them a little extra motivation to keep going.

We would love to find a **monthly sponsor for the $30 prize**. You could sponsor one month, several months, or support the draw on an ongoing basis.

For just **$30, you can help us celebrate a learner and encourage them to keep working towards their goals.**

🏆 Help us celebrate our learners' milestones

For some of our learners, reaching **25, 50 or 100 hours of learning** represents an enormous amount of commitment, perseverance and courage.

We would love to start recognising these significant milestones with a small reward to show our learners just how proud we are of what they have achieved.

Could you or your organisation help?

We would be grateful for donations of **gift vouchers, products, experiences or other small rewards** that we could give to learners when they reach these milestones.

It doesn't need to be something big. Sometimes simply knowing that someone has noticed and celebrated your hard work can provide the encouragement to keep going.

If you or your organisation would like to sponsor our StepsWeb draw or contribute towards our learner milestone rewards, we'd love to hear from you.

📧 **Contact us:** lillian@adultliteracy.ac.nz

Together, we can celebrate not only where our learners are going, but how far they have already come. 💜

Leave a lasting gift with EveryWill 💛

Writing a Will is one of those important things many of us know we should do, but it's can be easy to keep putting it off.

We're pleased to have partnered with EveryWill (by Gathered Here), giving our supporters access to a simple way to create their Will online for free in around 10 minutes, with the option to update it in the future at no cost.

Once you have taken care of the people who matter most to you, you may also choose to leave a gift to a cause that is close to your heart.

By including a gift to the Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust in your Will, you can create a lasting legacy for future learners. Whether large or small, your gift can help us continue providing free, one-to-one reading and writing support, giving people across Aotearoa the opportunity to strengthen their literacy skills, confidence and independence.

For someone who has struggled with reading and writing, gaining these skills can open doors for the rest of their life. A gift in your Will can help open those doors for generations to come.

There is no obligation to leave a gift to RYALT when using the free Will service. But if our kaupapa is close to your heart, we would be incredibly grateful if you considered including RYALT in your Will.

Create your free Will with EveryWill and learn more about leaving a lasting gift to RYALT:

https://wills.everywill.co.nz/c/rural-youth-and-adult-literacy-trust



Thank you for being part of our RYALT community 💜

Everything we achieve is made possible by the people who stand alongside us.

To our **learners, volunteers, funders, donors, community partners and supporters** — thank you for believing in our kaupapa and helping us make reading and writing support more accessible across Aotearoa.

Whether you volunteer your time, fund our mahi, connect us with your community, share our services with someone who may need support, or simply help spread the word — **you are part of the difference we make.**

Keep in touch

We'd love you to stay connected and follow what's happening at RYALT.
🌐 **Visit our website:** www.adultliteracy.ac.nz
📧 **Email us:** admin@adultliteracy.ac.nz
📞 **Call us:** 0800 891 339

Follow us on Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn for learner stories, volunteer updates, community events and the latest news from around RYALT.

Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/ruralliteracynz/
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/RYALTrust
Linked In: https://www.linkedin.com/company/ryalt/

Ngā mihi nui,

The Rural Youth and Adult Literacy Trust team 💜

Everything we achieve is made possible by the people who stand alongside us.

We are especially grateful to our funders and supporters:

- One Foundation
- Trust Waikato
- COGS – Community Organisation Grants Scheme
- Aotearoa Gaming Trust
- Gallagher Trust
- DV Bryant Trust
- Four Winds Foundation
- Norah Howell Charitable Trust
- The Lion Foundation
- Waikato Farmers Trust
- Glenice and John Gallagher Foundation
- Pub Charity
- Z Good in the Hood
- Foundation North
- SkyCity Hamilton Community Trust
- SkyCity Auckland Community Trust
- Stepsweb
- Community Networks Aotearoa
- ACE Aotearoa

A special thank you also goes to our wonderful Sponsor a Student donors, who each give $10 a week to help a learner receive free, one-to-one reading and writing support. Your regular generosity makes a real and lasting difference.

If you would like to become a Friend of RYALT and help us continue providing free literacy support, you can get started by visiting our donation page. Every contribution, no matter the size, helps.

To our learners, volunteers, funders, donors, community partners and supporters—thank you for believing in our kaupapa and helping us make reading and writing support more accessible across Aotearoa.