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WOTK Alumnae Kylie Heihei - My Leadership Journey

Theme:
Youth

 WOTK Alumnae Kylie Heihei - My Leadership Journey

Co-authored by Kylie Heihei

Kylie Heihei - My Leadership Journey

Embarking on my role as the Sports League Coordinator at Y North Shore Sports Leagues, I faced the early challenge of limited guidance. Responsibilities included overseeing the Y North Shore Sports Leagues, such as Women's Basketball, Indoor Football, and Junior Basketball. Conversations with girls' basketball teams revealed a hesitation to compete against boys, driven by concerns about the game's intensity. Examining our statistics—Basketball Programmes consisting of 85% males and 15% females—intensified my commitment to impactful changes for children, women, and young people in our community.

The journey through the early stages of my role brought both challenges and rewards. Delicate handling was key for intricacies like basketball draws and managing staff dynamics. Creating a draw, a significant challenge given my limited knowledge of basketball and football, became a learning curve. No prior experience with draws added complexity, but insights from current staff helped structure it. This was a steep curve, especially for a naturally reserved introvert stepping into a leadership position.

Despite incredible support from my team, lingering insecurities, and doubts about excelling in this role persisted. It was a journey marked by overcoming challenges, learning new skills, and pushing forward despite initial uncertainties.

Whanake o te Kōpara, led by Fran and Sarah, was more than a leadership programme – it transformed me. Recognising that everyone has a unique voice, waiting for amplification with support, was a crucial learning. The programme showed the power of having people around, including mentors and the 19 other inspiring women aged between 18-25, who encourage and stand by you.

In Whanake, I realised the significance of having a strong support network and being encouraged to highlight my strengths. The mentors and peers in the program were there every step of the way. This support, along with the encouragement to embrace my abilities, was more than just enlightening; it became the driving force that helped me overcome reservations and approach leadership with confidence. Establishing a safe space for people to express emotions and fostering a culture of empathy and resilience played a crucial role in this transformative journey.

Post-Whanake o te Kōpara, the impact went beyond personal growth. Fuelled by a passion for empowering women, youth, and children, I initiated the "Find Your Y" day event. Collaborating with AUT students for a strategic approach, the event aimed to break down stereotypes and encourage more girls, women, boys, and young people to participate actively.

National stats from 2022 showed a decline in participation for girls, women, boys, and young people in sports in Aotearoa. Our "Find Your Y" initiative at Y North Shore aimed to increase participation and create a more inclusive space for girls, women, boys, and young people in our community.

The event saw younger children, especially 5-8-year-olds, trying basketball and gymnastics. Initial marketing challenges taught valuable lessons for future events. Assessing the impact of "Find Your Y" revealed an encouraging increase in participation post-event. For me, witnessing all children come in and give it a go was the most rewarding.

Inspired by conversations with girls', women's, and children's basketball teams and our programme statistics, "Find Your Y" aimed to tackle the reluctance to compete against boys and address gender imbalance in our programmes. The event generated a positive response, particularly from younger children aged 5-8, who embraced basketball and gymnastics.

Despite initial marketing challenges stemming from underused internal systems, we gained valuable insights for future events. Following "Find Your Y," we observed a noteworthy increase in participation – a gratifying win.

The decision to leave my role was a mix of emotions. Saying goodbye to camaraderie and impactful work was challenging but fuelled by a burning desire for personal growth. This departure marked a turning point, unlocking doors to new and exciting experiences.


In my new role as the OSCAR Operations Supervisor overseeing Central and East Auckland, I've deepened my passionate journey of fostering inclusivity and empowerment for young people, especially young girls, in sports and active recreation within our Auckland after-school care programmes. Drawing on leadership skills from Whanake o te Kōpara, I actively challenge stereotypes within after-school care programmes.


I'm committed to breaking down gender-related stereotypes by encouraging both boys and girls, women, and young people, to explore a variety of activities without limitations. By promoting inclusivity and embracing diverse interests, my goal is to create an environment where every child feels empowered to participate, regardless of traditional expectations. This approach aims not only to foster a sense of belonging but also to contribute to dismantling broader societal stereotypes related to gender and sports participation.

As I step into this journey, lessons learned continue to shape and deepen my dedication to Recreation Programmes at Y North Shore. With renewed commitment, I aim to transform our programmes into spaces that celebrate our community's richness.

Check out Kylie's video here:



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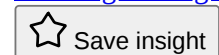
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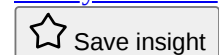
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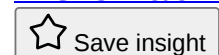


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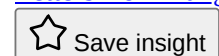


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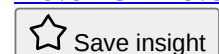
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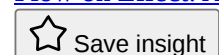
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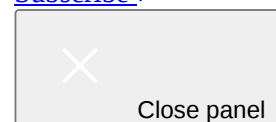
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