

## Community Partnership 2014-15

# Pasefika Walkathons

Getting Pacific families active through walking was the aim of this initiative coordinated by Wellington Region Pasefika Services (WRPS). Walking is a great low impact and low cost activity that families can do together.



Wellington Regional Pasefika Services supports three Pacific Island Presbyterian Churches in the Wellington areas of Porirua, Petone and Newtown to deliver social services, education and health initiatives. The churches were already running exercise classes but they wanted to help parishioners who did not regularly exercise, to get active.

The focus of the walking project was Pacific parents who had children enrolled in Aoga Amata early childhood programmes. However, the wider church community was encouraged to get involved.

### Community focussed events

To encourage interest in walking as exercise, three walkathon events were organised. Each church designed their event according to the needs of the local communities.

In Porirua a Round the Lagoon event was organised by Porirua PIC Church for Saturday 18 April. This involved walking 14 laps around Aotea Lagoon which equates to 10 kms. Families and friends could register to do the event as individuals or as a relay team. To help keep the walkers motivated a DJ was organised to play music. Fruit and water were on hand to sustain energy levels. Over 100 people of all ages took part in the walkathon and had a lot of fun along the way.

In Newtown, families from Pacific Islanders Presbyterian Church walked around the local streets in a 'Walk of Faith' as well as participating in indoor dance activities. The Mayor of Wellington Celia Wade-Brown showed her support by joining the walkers and TV One's Tagata Pasifika programme featured the initiative.





In Petone, St David's Multicultural Church also organised a walkathon with all ages taking part. The walkathon included walking along the local beach and doing stretches on the wharf.

### Challenges

A learning from the project was to consider the scheduling of other events and to promote the events earlier so that families could plan ahead. The timing of the events clashed with lot of other events in the community including Saturday sports.

Weather was another challenge. Two of the walkathons had good weather but one had light rain which deterred participation by the elderly and young children.

### Maintaining momentum

The walkathons were one-off events but their success has inspired local church communities to request regular walking programmes.

*"The walkathons have been very successful, and we have been able to maintain this with regular walking programmes. It has been very encouraging to see and observe that our communities are participating in and requesting that we organise more physical activities,"* says Rev Tauinaola Tofilau, Chairman of Interim Board of Wellington Region Pasefika Services (WRPS).

## Top tips

- » Make your activity fun and make it easy for all ages to participate.
- » Design events to suit local needs – one format doesn't fit all.
- » Plan ahead – consider what other events are taking place in your community and start your promotion early.
- » Have a back-up plan for bad weather.