



To whom it may concern

The Kindness Institute

It is with absolute pleasure that I write in support of The Kindness Institute. When I met Kristina Cavit late last year, I was so impressed with the programmes The Kindness Institute were offering for secondary school students, and I felt sure our students would benefit from the knowledge and skills they would learn. It has been wonderful working with Kristina to bring this to fruition at Auckland Girls' Grammar School.

During May, instructors taught the Mindfulness, Yoga and Stress Reduction Intensive Programme to four Year 11 classes. Each class participated in 8 sessions and feedback from the students has been nothing short of mind-blowing. The students loved the programme. I have included a selection of the feedback as I think it speaks for itself.

Some comments from the students:

"I've especially enjoyed learning about the communication skills, because I find it difficult to express my feelings. I've learnt to be more kind to myself and that has really helped me because usually when I have a lot of assignments due I doubt myself and tell myself I can't do it".

"Personally I found this class very self-relieving and I feel as though teenagers today need this type of class in school because it can often be very hard to express yourself, but in this class I feel it's the most helpful thing for teenagers going through some hard stuff or just needing some type of escape".

"This programme has been really good. During school when I'm really stressed to be calm and relaxed and destressed, this programme has taught me breathing skills. At first I thought this was really weird but being in this class has really taught me how to act towards others and appreciate more, helped me be more mindful and communicate more mindfully".

"It has really helped me to sleep better and handle my daily stress and anxiety. I think it's reduced my depression and it helped me be able to focus more. I've taught my parents the breathing technique. It's really helped them because they're stressed all the time. I would love to do this again. It's a wonderful experience; it's cool to have a safe space for a while".

"This class has helped me with a lot of anger and sadness that I kept locked up. It's taught me that it's ok to be sad. It's ok to cry. It's ok not to be ok. It's helped me a lot with my forgiving ability. I was able to forgive all the wrong that's happened to me. All the wrong that people caused me. The yoga and breathing techniques released a lot of stress and unhappiness".

"The Kindness Institute programme has helped me keep that state of calm throughout the day. I really enjoyed the breathing exercises and doing the yoga. This programme has taught me how to be mindful and how to focus more on myself. I really really enjoyed the resting pose more than anything. I'm thankful for you teaching us these skills. Thank you".

"I taught one of the ladies at church the breathing technique as she was really stressed. I told her that when she's stressed she should focus on her breathing and close her eyes as she inhales belly goes out and exhale belly goes in. She was really fascinated and impressed".

Teachers also all found the programme beneficial both personally and for the students. All teachers commented that the programme positively impacted students stress levels.

Comments from two teachers:

"The students are more settled and focused. They have greater respect for each other. They say they are more relaxed and less anxious. I have had time to get to know them better as they have opened up about themselves".

"It's been wonderful for students to exercise stillness and meditative practice. I have enjoyed sharing this with them and it has encouraged me to continue to do meditation and yoga".

It has been very powerful to see the ripple effect as the students were becoming teachers themselves and spreading mindfulness, yoga, stress management and honest communication as part of their daily lives.

As a school we are delighted with the positive impact the programme has had on our students and we plan to continue to offer this with other classes. We are also organising for Kristina to work with our teachers to ensure that they can reinforce the skills with the students in all curriculum areas.

Two of our Year 11 students participated in ATAWHAI, which is an out of school programme offered through The Kindness Institute. The students have both benefitted greatly from the week long intensive programme during the last holidays where the focus was on building emotional intelligence, resilience and leadership capabilities. These two young women absolutely loved this opportunity and their confidence, self-efficacy, compassion, communication and leadership potential have developed as a result of this experience. They now meet as young leaders with The Kindness Institute in Atawhai workshops every month to develop these skills and become empowered to teach others in their community.

I am happy to speak to you or meet with you personally if you would like to discuss anything I have written in this reference, in more detail.

I cannot speak highly enough about the wonderful instructors at The Kindness Institute and the rapport and trust they developed with our students.

Yours sincerely



Maree Flannery
Deputy Principal
Auckland Girls' Grammar School

7 June 2017