



Te Mahi Kai

A Tairawhiti community needs assessment indicated a range of organisations working with predominantly Māori whānau were giving information on kai as part of their mahi. Many used their life skills and had limited or no nutrition training and were unaware of the variety of nutrition resources available. Most were interested in practical tikanga based nutrition training. Clear priorities included budget cooking and learning about tasty, affordable, healthy choices for whānau.

Te Mahi Kai, a practical 5 day course, is a “hands on” train the trainer programme designed for kaiawhina/community workers working in the health, social services and physical activity areas who have an interest in learning more about healthy eating and how to prepare healthy affordable meals for whānau.

Participants gain a basic understanding of key evidence based nutrition messages suitable for delivery in their workplace, to their whānau, roopu, sports group, or wider communities.

Participants from Community Trusts, Marae, Iwi Health Providers, Mental Health Services, Cancer Society, Te Kōhanga Reo, SuperGrans, Iwi Social Services, Sports Trusts and the DHB have completed the course.

The programme is delivered at the well-equipped and spacious Salvation Army premises.

The first day facilitated by Tui Takarangi, Health Promotion Advisor and Nicki Mathieson, Dietitian begins with a Mihi Whakatau and looks at how kai has changed over the last 180 years since colonisation.

As attendees discuss their whakapapa, and the whakapapa of whānau to the whenua, whanaungatanga is established.

The history of kai, traditional kai sources and cooking methods, foraging for food, influences on kai, and breastfeeding (the most important start) are all discussed. The day ends with an exercise identifying how kai has changed from colonisation through to today.

Most participants leave feeling buoyed up by the “**buzz of the day**”, supported by the links they have established with

other participants, amazed at how kai has changed over the last 180 years, and surprised that they haven’t learnt anything about food groups, portion sizes or how to cut the fat!! All that is to come in later sessions!!

The following four days cover basic healthy eating messages; salt/ fat/ sugar, adapting recipes, breakfast, lunchbox and snacking tips; budgeting advice, a supermarket label reading exercise and accessing resources available to support their mahi.

After lunch a physical activity component is included with an expert taking a session on traditional games, chair exercises etc.

Students prepare morning tea and lunch using recipes from their workbooks and healthier choice ingredients are supplied.

Following karakia the group eat together and discuss the nutritional content of the kai and how it tastes – differences in using low fat milk, adding more vegetables, beans, or whole grains. Participants take home surplus kai for their whānau to try.

Each week different ingredients are offered – a packet of brown rice, whole grain pasta, can of chickpeas, or pasta sauce so participants can make a dish for their whānau or to take to work.

A sense of humour and fun are essential, resulting in a great rapport and whanaungatanga developing within the groups.

The training concludes with a Hakari, where favourite healthy recipes are made, the tables set so managers and whānau can join to celebrate the learning’s and hear about the changes participants are making in their lives. 🍷

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Comments from participant’s evaluations

- Life changing
- The easy healthy food we made was cheap
- Awesome - life saver
- It won’t happen overnight, but it will happen
- Lots of knowledge, resources, ideas hope and friendships
- Making small changes in food doesn’t need to cost a lot to keep families healthy