

Harbour Sport - SportSPasifik Project



SportSPasifik is an exciting project targeting the North Shore Pacific Island community. The goal is to support and address specific barriers this community faces in engaging in sport and recreation and living physically active lives.

Back in 2012 the project began from the idea of providing a support system for the North Shore Pacific community through the vehicle of sport and recreation. The aim was to provide opportunities for the Pacific community to be physically active, improve their health and to enhance social cohesion and a stronger more vibrant community.

The SportSPasifik project involves a number of healthy lifestyles programmes delivered in the Kaipatiki region where most of the North Shore's Pacific population resides (47%).¹

The programmes are modelled to suit the Pacific community and cater to their needs - multi-dimensional and culturally relevant. Over the years positive relationships have been formed with various North Shore Pacific groups that has added to the success of the project.

Over the past year, due to its ongoing success SportSPasifik has expanded significantly and now reaches each life stage from under-fives through to older adults.

The key programmes offered include:

- ⦿ **NiuMovement:** A 20 week programme delivered in Northcote for Pacific children (1-12 year olds) and their families. The programme provides weekly physical activity and exercise sessions for the whole family, nutrition education and many other opportunities that keep participants active as a family unit.
- ⦿ **PolySports:** (6-12 year olds) A sport and recreation programme for Pacific children including fun games and activities with healthy eating messages.
- ⦿ **Equipped:** (Pacific girls aged 12-18 years) Aims to improve sports skills, fitness, confidence and self-esteem through sports and fitness, nutrition sessions and mentoring.
- ⦿ **Choose Change Pacific:** (18 years plus) A 24 week programme for pre-diabetic and type 2 diabetics which aims to enable participants to gain greater control of overall health, lose weight and reduce diabetic symptoms.
- ⦿ **SportSPasifik Exercise Class:** An opportunity for adults and their children to get active, there is no age limit. This helps to eliminate the barrier of not having anyone to look after their children at home.
- ⦿ **SportSPasifik Active Seniors Exercise Class:** Aims to improve the mobility of seniors and give them the opportunity to improve their health and wellbeing.

There have been many successes, but here is a small selection:

- ⦿ Parents (90%) and children (100%) have increased their physical activity levels and started doing more activity together as a family.
- ⦿ Many patients (75%) had reductions in waist measurements and HBA1C results improved.
- ⦿ One family in particular faced a life changing experience - Mum lost 12kgs, their food budget decreased dramatically, they have reduced portion sizes, are active most days and cook healthier meals together as a family.

The bonus in delivering our programmes is the experience and success our community gets out of them. Making a change to just one person, is hope that it will eventually influence other people in their community. As a Pacific Islander, I know our families are our backbone and number one supporters, so establishing programmes involving family and community are so important.



Families from the NiuMovement programme after another day of fun games and activity

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Reference:

1. Statistics New Zealand. 2013 Census QuickStats about a place. Retrieved from: <http://www.stats.govt.nz/Census/2013-census/profile-and-summary-reports/quickstats-about-a-place.aspx>