



Te Arawa Whānau Ora

*Kotahi te whare he maha ngā kuaha
A house with many doors*

December 2021 HAKIHEA

PĀNUUI



Kurupā Paiaka overview

Tēnā koutou katoa ngā poutūmārō
o te ao hauora.

Strength of character isn't always about how much you can handle before you break, it's also about how much you can handle after you've broken. And sometimes its only then you can develop maximum growth exponentially. ^{MasterFlex.}

It is truly an honour to lead such a great organisation although the responsibility is huge. Most definitely a great place to work. I have witnessed on multiple occasions since my tenure at Te Arawa Whānau Ora exponential growth and development. On the other hand, I have

IN THIS ISSUE

Kurupā Paiaka overview cont...

2

E rere atu tāku manu - The Messenger

2

Answering the Call

5

Kurupā Paiaka overview cont...

experienced reluctance to change and accept transformational opportunities internally and externally. Considering we are living in such uncertain times, our ability to shift and mould to circumstances is more important than ever before – kīa mau ki te mau a Māui.

Our obligation as Te Arawa Whānau Ora is to Whānau, Hapū, Iwi, and Marae (WHIM) in Te Arawa first and foremost. However, our cultural mantra has always been to manaaki everyone in our role that needs support. This intent must endure and inform current and all future relationships and work. So, if this is the case, I too must lead change and be an agent of change, not an agent to drain.

We experienced our first major cases of COVID-19 over the past few weeks which was closely followed by more cases. Regardless of the circumstances it's a stark reminder to love one another and your whānau as we do not know what's really going to happen next. I implore one and all to protect your whānau with all the tools and strategies available to you. I know for some out there this has been a very difficult time and has challenged us as individuals, whānau and as a country.

Te Arawa Whānau Ora is a part of the COVID-19 Iwi response supporting the Te Arawa COVID Hub. I would like to acknowledge the Te Arawa Lakes Trust led by Karen Vercoe for their tireless efforts and the way you hold the space for our Iwi to protect our Whakapapa, "oranga is our birth right".

We are very proud to be associated with and work alongside all of our Te Arawa Whānau Ora partners and all their efforts great and small. With partners like Korowai Aroha and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Pīkiao who are leading the clinical response locally, we thank you for all that you do.

For a moment (albeit brief) please note that our society is growing into an "anxiety state", which means we are constantly in fear of something in the future. We are constantly in the 'what if' mode. I would like to remind everyone that Te Arawa Whānau Ora will be here to support those in need. The way forward is with empathy, compassion and manaakitanga and the importance of your mental wellbeing and all forms of wellbeing are critical to get through these times, doing things you love with the ones you love, despite the societal pressures is paramount.

At this time, I'd like to acknowledge Aunty June Grant who in this pānui, discusses her journey with breast cancer and the many many whānau she has helped along the way. Ngā mihi nui ki a koe Aunty June, you do so much for our community. Read on to hear more on this and the story of Paere Hunuhunu who whaea helped along the way.

Vaccinations are only one way to support and protect your whānau from COVID-19 transmission so if you haven't gotten vaccinated yet and need support to become more informed let us know and we will try our



best to demystify the rhetoric. Here is a key resource if you wanted to know more: <https://covid19.govt.nz/covid-19-vaccines>

Our offices are closed to off the street public contact, however we are still contactable by phone and email and will respond to your needs where we can.

Whānau First - Oranga is our birth right!

Ngā manaakitanga

Paora Te Hurihanganui – Kurupā Paiaka / CEO

Te Arawa Drive-through Clinic

Every Sunday 10am - 4pm
Every Monday 12pm - 6pm
Every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday 3pm - 8pm
until 16 December

33 Clayton Road - No appointment needed, just drive in!



E rere atu tāku manu - The Messenger

**He manu e kai ana i te miro, nōnā te ngahere.
He manu e kai ana i te mātauranga, nōnā te ao.**

**A bird that feasts on miro berries, the forest is it's domain.
A bird that feasts on knowledge, the world is it's oyster.**

Raised and entrenched in knowledge passed on by her old people, June Grant's pūrākau speaks not only of her cancer journey and her role as a paeārahi for Te Arawa Whānau Ora's Breast and Cervical Services, but how her tūpuna have watched over her to this very day as she lives, breathes and promotes health and wellness for all peoples of the world.

This is her pūrākau, a story of strength, resilience and courage through the eyes of Te Arawa's very own mana wāhine and prized



Whaea June Grant

beauty, June Grant, nō Te Arawa, Tūwharetoa, Tūhourangi and Ngāti Wāhiao.

A doting mother, grandmother, aunty, a friend to many, a wāhine toa in the business world and renowned artist, nothing could ever equip June for the inevitable fate that crossed her path 20 years ago. The beauty of this story is that she is still here to share her story and advocate for others who are currently or may follow in her footsteps.

"When I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2002, it was like my world come apart and I

I didn't know that I was going to survive it". These are the words of June Grant (Whaea June) who embraces any opportunity to share her survival story with the world to help other people, who much like her, felt as though her world had come to an end.

At a time where she was at the pinnacle of her career as an artist, Whaea June soon realised that the life she had excitedly prepared and worked hard for, was about to come to an abrupt halt.

E rere atu tāku manu - The Messenger cont...

While overseas in New York for an exhibition, Whaea June discovered a lump on her left breast, it was at that moment she knew something wasn't quite right and was only the beginning of her journey with breast cancer.

"It should have been the happiest time of my life", she said.

It was always a dream of Whaea June's to travel the world doing what she loved – Creating art. She describes New York city, her experiences of the amazing views of her intrepid journey. Recalling the high-rises, the skyscrapers and all the wonders of the world. The way in which she describes the feeling of being there, as simply magnificent.

But the colourful picturesque life Whaea June envisioned for herself and her whānau became blackened by the grey undertones of her fate. It was as through her painter's palette that became a mix of dark colours representing the emotions from deep within.

The overseas trip that she eagerly awaited changed within seconds after finding the lumps on her breast.

Diagnosed and unaware of the journey ahead, Whaea June's path crossed with others who, like her, faced a long journey ahead with cancer.

"At the time I was diagnosed two good friends of mine were also diagnosed. One of them was Hirini Melbourne, who was one of our greatest musicians. He was just so kind and lovely and ngāwari and it was unbelievable. And a cousin of mine, Marata Te Waka, she was a bit of a healer. We would have a group of women that would meet and we'd talk about all sorts of things, some things were taught to us by tohunga."

As time progressed, Whaea June knew she needed to make some decisions around treatment and how this would affect the life she once knew. 'I went to Waikato for my radiation treatment, I'd already had chemo and I needed to have radiation treatment. And I was so terrified of going there', she said.

Anxious and unsure of what her journey would look like, Whaea June approached a woman who worked at the lodge and said 'I'm supposed to be here for a couple of months, but I think I'll go and stay with my daughter. The woman replied and said that's fine but you have a room down the hallway, and so I went to my room, closed the door, and had the best night's sleep that I've ever had since I'd been



▼ Eugene and June

diagnosed. I decided to stay, and had great treatment and the food was delicious. The people I met were amazing'.

'I became very humbled by other people's journeys, because here I was thinking I was dying with breast cancer and I still didn't know how you get rid of it.'

June adds.



▼ Mana wāhine – June Grant

Throughout her time spent undergoing treatment at the Cancer Lodge now known as the Lions Cancer Lodge, she recalls the amazing people who were faced with an array of different cancer types and thought to herself, 'it was great watching other people survive something that was survivable'.

"Breast cancer is not a death sentence, but it is scary."

"There were people that could not speak because they had oesophageal cancer or stomach cancer and they all looked normal. They were all like me."

Still hesitant and filled with uncertainty, Whaea spent two months in her room painting, drawing on her creative strengths to help guide her wairua away from the daunting clinical facility and feeling of mauiuitanga that surrounded her.

"When I was healing and I was at the Cancer Lodge, in the afternoons I would go for a walk

around Hamilton lake. And there's mostly houses around the hospital side, but as you get around the back, there's patches of grass and a pathway where you can walk, and I would walk around and these fantails would come and they'd be on the grass, I'd be thinking, What are you doing on the grass? There's no trees here and they would accompany me all the way around the lake. Then they would go and while I was freaking out, I knew that they're there, my tūpuna world is actually letting me know that things are alright. So they're around me all the time and I love them.

Following her treatment and 10 years later, Whaea June accompanied Dr Elaine Curtis to the United States to present at an indigenous groups conference about Native Americans with cancer.

"The amazing thing was that at that time, in 2004 I met up with Wetini Mitai-Ngatai (Wet) and his wife Rachel who sadly passed away from breast cancer. Having found out that I too had breast cancer I said to Wet, I don't know what to do, is there a Tohunga that can help? He said actually, yes, we're doing all of those things. We're doing rongoa and other things", she said.

You see Māori and indigenous people have a common belief system, having this understanding helped shape the presentation Whaea June wanted to share with the indigenous people of the United States. With this whakaaro in mind and an idea of how her presentation would take shape, so she asked a local cameraman to shoot her story.

"We set up at a base out of Fairy Springs Road. I was here and the camera was behind me. I was talking and my good friends Tui and Wetini were in front of me, so they sat down, we all got settled and as we started to talk, there were just all sorts of birds coming past and behind us. It was freaky, I've never known so many birds to be together. Wets and Tui started talking, they told their story."

E rere atu tāku manu - The Messenger cont...

A week after filming, Whaea June called in anticipation as she couldn't wait to see the final edit of her story and the cameraman said, 'It's never happened to me before, but I tried to edit the video and there was no sound'.

"All you could hear was murmuring... It completely obliterated the story. We had no story. You couldn't even hear them, you could see them but you couldn't hear their words. So whatever that was, whatever it was that stopped that story from being told stopped there", explains Whaea June.

With no story to tell, Whaea June refurbished her pūrākau about life growing up and those that mattered most to her. She presented an assortment of paintings which spoke of stories about her journey with cancer, the people who are important to her including her children, her mokopuna, iwi, hapū, whānau and even her father's military service number when he served in the war.

"I thought if he could survive a second world war with people shooting at him, I can survive cancer."

And that's the journey. It's like, realizing there are some things you can change, and there are some that you just can't. So you need to find joy in your life and hope and peace and all of those things. June Grant.

Today you can find Whaea June advocating and representing as a pāeārahi for Te Arawa Whānau Ora's Breast and Cervical Services.

Early detection provides the best chance of effective treatments. Whaea June Grant is testament to this kōrero. Having regular mammograms can lower the risk of dying from breast cancer which is why we are so honoured to have her expertise in this field.

If you are aged 49 - 65 our free mammogram and cervical services may be of interest to you or someone you know.

For more information and ways to get in touch contact details can be found here:

tearawahanauora.org.nz

Introducing Te Arawa Whānau Ora's Breast and Cervical Service's pāeārahi, Whaea June Grant nō Te Arawa, Tūwharetoa, Tūhourangi and Ngāti Wāhiao.



Whaea June Grant - Te Arawa tūpuna Whakaotirangi

The artwork shown with Whaea June Grant is that of Whakaotirangi, and is housed in the Te Arawa Whānau Ora Boardroom.

She is renowned throughout Te Arawa, Aotearoa and abroad for achieving many great things, such as her advocacy and stance on protecting te ira wāhine and her mahi as a Ringa Toi - Artist. She is a woman of many talents, her artwork depicts stories of old using her paintbrush as the medium with which allows her to share her pūrākau.

The image above is of Te Arawa tūpuna Whakaotirangi.

"When the waka was coming from Raiatea, the tohunga Ngātoroirangi called up a whirlpool called Te Korokoro ā te Parata and the whole waka was shifting and heaving and everything was tipping out. Whakaotirangi grabbed the kūmara and saved it and held it to her breast. So it was she, that bought the kūmara tubers to Aotearoa.

So her story is more than she just saved the kūmara, she saved generations of people because of that preservation of the idea that she could hold onto things."

"Women have always done that, to save things that are important for people."

And that's how we work in whakapapa, we have great wives that will give us great children that will give us a great iwi that will just continue. So all of those things are in context to what is appropriate for our people.

June adds.

The piece Whakaotirangi is one of four pieces created in this series which includes Hinemoa, Kearoa who is the wife of Ngātoroirangi and Hinemihi who was a warrior woman who said they said she had two kaitiaki which were taniwha.

Answering the Call

Kia Toi te Kupu - Honoring the word and the source of the word, let it be pure.

Kia Toi te Mana - Everyone has a right to be different and celebrate their absolute uniqueness.

Kia Toi te Whenua - Protection and perseverance of the land.

Kia Toi te Hauora - Honouring your health and the gift of life.

O tēna o tātou - of each and everyone of us.

A story of survival and faith through the eyes of Paere Hunuhunu who's journey with cancer teaches us that although there are no hereditary links within her whakapapa, no one is ever exempt.

"I don't have it (cancer) directly on my line. We have diabetes, not cancer - and especially not breast cancer."

Cancer survivor and mana wāhine, Paere Hunuhunu has always kept a relatively positive outlook on her life, even after finding she had developed breast cancer in 2017 at the age of 48 years old.

Following numerous phone calls and a persistent effort from Te Arawa Whānau Ora's Breast and Cervical Service's pāeārahi June Grant, Paere finally answered the call and decided to take a leap of faith and accept the offer of having a mammogram.

June had a caring way, I felt that she actually cared about me. You can see how she cares about women, so she booked me in and I went. Paere said.

What awaited her, was something she could have never imagined.

"I was of the belief that if I got breast cancer or anything, it was God's will and I was quite happy for him to say, this is what's going to happen to you."

Only two days after having her mammogram, Paere received a phone call from her doctor who insisted she went back to have another test.

"I got a phone call to say I had to go back, they thought there was something there."

As she grappled with the thought of her fate, Paere's independent nature and faith never let what happened next detour her journey.

"The phone rang and [the doctor said] I needed to go and see him urgently the following week. From the phone call I clicked straight away that there was something", she said.



June Grant and Paere Hunuhunu

Upon her follow up visit with her doctor, Paere decided prior to seeing him that she would do what was best for her and made decisions around what the outcome of her treatment would look like.

"I said to the doctor, before you even talk, I need you to hear me. I will allow you to do the operation and I will do radiation. But I will not do chemo. If you tell me that I have to have chemo I'm walking out here and doing nothing... Those that I've seen with chemo, they've suffered more than they've lived, I think."

"I don't want to suffer. If I've got to go, I've got to go. I don't want to be bedridden nor do I want anyone to have to worry about me."

As her life was unfolding in front of her and coming to terms with what the future looked like for her, Paere reached out to her whānau, her sister and her sons who were absolutely distraught finding out that their Mum, and sister had cancer.

She also believed that the only way forward would be to focus purely on the next part of her journey and said 'I just have to do whatever is right for me, no one else, but me'.

"The two boys were absolutely gutted, they just broke down and I'm looking at them going what are you crying for? I should be crying. But all they could see was people that had passed."

In April 2017, only a month after finding she had breast cancer, Paere underwent surgery and through sheer determination, not only

did she walk out of the hospital the next day feeling on top of the world, but she managed the changing of her dressings and aftercare leaving nursing staff speechless.

In June of that year, she started radiation treatment having had six treatments booked in, but only requiring three.

Four years on, Paere is her fun loving, bubbly and independent self, teaching others that if you believe in yourself and your higher purpose, you too can overcome anything.

"I tell people now, I believe [the process was successful] because I did what I wanted. Not what anyone else, not what the doctor said I should do and I didn't take anyone else's stress because it was about me", she concludes.

It can be hard talking about cancer, even with whānau and those you love most. We are here to walk this journey with you. Our Breast and Cervical Services are equipped with experienced pāeārahi, tools and support to help navigate even the choppiest sea.

If you or your whānau need support, guidance or information about how to book a mammogram or cervical smear please contact us here:

tearawhauora.org.nz