



## The Natural Phenomena

### The Natural Phenomena Conference, 21st – 23rd November 2014 Presenter Bios & Workshop details

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#### Keynote Speakers

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##### **Richard Louv, USA**

Author of "Last Child in the Woods" and "The Nature Principle". [www.richardlouv.com](http://www.richardlouv.com)

Louv is in great demand as a speaker around the world, with his compelling arguments that alienation from nature is a factor in many western world epidemics – obesity and associated health problems, mental ill health, attention deficit disorder and high anxiety levels – and risks a loss of creativity borne of free, unstructured play outside. Despite our ready access to the natural environment, New Zealand is ahead of western world trends in some of the adverse effects associated with new technologies and changed lifestyles.

Louv is also the founding chairman of the Children & Nature Network at [www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org), an organization helping build the movement to connect today's children and future generations to the natural world. Louv coined the term Nature-Deficit Disorder™ which has become the defining phrase of this important issue.

"The future will belong to the nature-smart—those individuals, families, businesses, and political leaders who develop a deeper understanding of the transformative power of the natural world and who balance the virtual with the real. The more high-tech we become, the more nature we need." ~ Richard Louv

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##### **Dr Rangimarie Turuki Rose Pere, Waikaremoana, NZ**

Returning for a second year is the beautiful Dr Rangimarie Turuki Rose Pere. She will come with her wisdom, enthusiasm and wit, and no doubt some powerful words and messages for us to return home with to share with our families and tamariki. Dr Rangimarie Turuki Rose Pere has been strongly influenced by teachings that go back over 12,000 years. Her book *Te Wheke - A Celebration Of Infinite Wisdom*, is an introduction to these teachings. Rose has been on lecture tours of Te Wheke throughout Europe, including Germany, Austria and Italy. She has represented Aotearoa New Zealand internationally as an educationalist; written a monograph called AKO: Concepts and Learning in The Māori Tradition; held a Visiting Teacher Fellowship at the University of Waikato, Hamilton New Zealand in 1982; taught from preschool to tertiary; and researched ancient teachings in the Americas, the Mediterranean, the Middle East, Great Britain, East Asia and the South Pacific.

Rose is a holder of the New Zealand 1990 Commemoration Medal and was honoured as a Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire 1996. She attained a Doctorate of Literature at Victoria University Wellington, New Zealand 1996. Rose has her own consultancy called Ao Ako which focuses on global learning. She is also a Director of the Four Winds Foundation - an international body that works with indigenous and non-indigenous people.

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##### **Adam Bienenstock, Natural Playgrounds, Canada**

Founder and Principal Designer of Natural Playgrounds, Canada, "Connecting children to nature when and where they play"

Adam hails from Ontario, Canada. He is an award winning natural playground designer and consultant who specializes in creating natural playscapes. His portfolio ranges from early childhood centres to world heritage sites. Adam provides advice and inspiration on design, construction, risk management and policy regulations in a world where our natural play areas are disappearing, shrinking in size and being eroded by synthetic materials.

A prolific writer and speaker on the importance of the child/nature connection in our built environment, Adam has delivered keynote speeches and workshops across Northern America and around the world. He serves as a board director at the Child and Nature Alliance ([www.childnature.ca](http://www.childnature.ca)), where he founded Nature Play Day ([www.natureplayday.ca](http://www.natureplayday.ca)), is a regular collaborator with Richard Louv's US based Children and Nature Network ([www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org)), sits on the Ministers Round Table for Parks Canada, and teaches as part of the CPSA (Certified Playground Safety Academy).

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##### **David Spraggs, Gisborne, NZ**

David's passion is in provoking teachers to do more, and be more, when it comes to our children. Doing more sometimes means "doing less". He is very focussed on sustainable practices and has had a number of opportunities to play in the woods in Europe.

He grew up with a father who believed that you teach your children skills and allow them the opportunity to utilise them. This comes through in his teaching.

David is married with four children and has been a teacher in ECE for the last 32 years. David founded his company "Early Childhood Science Experiences and Consultancy" over 20 years ago after seeing a need in ECE in New Zealand surrounding high quality professional development and sourcing equipment that could be used in ECE for science education.



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### Inspirational Speaker

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**Steve Gurney, Christchurch, NZ**

Steve Gurney is an adventurer, inventor and motivation expert. Amongst world-wide racing success, he won the Coast to Coast a record 9 times, has an engineering degree, and was awarded the MNZM for services to endurance sport. He has now turned professional motivational speaker and trainer and has written 2 books, Lucky Legs and Eating Dirt. They contain stories and yarns of his racing and adventures, but are inter-twined with research and strategies on success, resilience and mental excellence.

*From edited extracts of **Eating Dirt:***

Steve reckons Kiwi kids are increasingly bubble-wrapped in an over-regulated society. In his new book (Eating Dirt) Gurney argues that children need to learn about risk-taking and our super-cautious approach is dumbing down .....

New Zealand used to be a fantastic country to grow up in as an outdoors kid. Nature, the wilderness, the hills and the beaches are so easily accessible. Consequently, Kiwi kids have typically grown up confident and at ease in the wilderness because we've spent so much of our childhood playing in and exploring the nooks and crannies of Godzone.

**Let kids** go back to being kids... Get rid of the unwieldy burden of control. Nature already has a system that automatically works.





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Friday 21st November 4.00 – 5.30pm  
Workshop Slot 1

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**Anna Scott-Davidson, Whangarei, NZ,** [ECE Teacher, Artist]

Workshop title: **"Clay - Nature's Educator"**

Participants will work together to explore the realms of clay. Clay our living earth offers us as explorer's opportunities to share our unique worlds with ourselves and others. The earth is a precious commodity which we can treasure and gift to those around us by the way we acknowledge it within our day-to-day lives and the world at our door. This workshop aims to give a broad understanding of differing ways of using clay as medium to construct, tell our living stories, investigate our communities and look to the science of living nature. Aimed as an arena to develop educational planning and personal empowerment through discussion, debate and hands on experience.

**Personal Bios:** I am educator, an energizer and a learner. I hold a Dip AA, and B.Ed. I am passionate about the use of clay both as a personal pleasure and learning opportunity within my educational practice. The creative arts inspire me. Form (organic) and construction are areas of focus within my work. As a ceramic artist I am also known as TeWai. TeWai (the water) for me means a moment in time when movement and flow meld together to create. I have worked in a wide arena of Early Childhood Education with guest teaching appearances within the Primary and Secondary sector. I am passionate about the acknowledgement and involvement of Nature within all education institutions, and look to sharing the gift of learning and knowledge with all. [Tewai-evolutionart.com](http://Tewai-evolutionart.com)

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**David Spraggs, Gisborne NZ,** [ECE Teacher, Consultant]

Workshop title: **"Making the Raw Materials"**

This workshop will be a hands on experience where participants will be able to create a range of basic materials that children could and should be making themselves in centres, but which instead typically get "purchased" by the adult for them to consume.

**Personal Bios** – David's passion is in provoking teachers to do more, and be more, when it comes to our children. Doing more sometimes means "doing less". He is very focussed on sustainable practices and has had a number of opportunities to play in the woods in Europe.

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**Tania Budd & Margaret Leathart, Brisbane, Australia [Artist, Art Therapist]**

Workshop title: **"Waka & Water: We are the Image Makers."**

As educators, artists and storytellers, all agents of change, it is imperative we keep creating positive IMAGERY of a world our children will feel inspired to paddle towards.

In this nature based art therapy workshop we make our own small Waka by sculpting, staining, natural bleaching, & stitching materials.

Our waka (as metaphor for self) gives form to our new imagery so it can be shared, witnessed and valued by others. Best of all, we transcend ourselves by becoming part of the greater whole – within the Nature Education Flotilla.

In the cradle of an Art Therapy encounter, as in nature, space is held with no judgement & unconditional positive regard where wonder & hope thrive.

IMAGERY is born from imagination – it's unleashed when its sails are at full mast catching the wind of phenomena & possibility, propelling our wakas into new horizons.

Art making enhances the ability of Mother Earth to teach. As we mimic the marks she draws with her natural forces, perhaps we can learn to better accept the richness & authentic natural marks that flow from our own intuitive hand.

**Personal Bios:** "I believe we each hold the capacity to heal and enhance our lives through the creative process involved in making art". Tania Budd, 2014

Since childhood the act of creativity, spirit and essence in which I make art has been my healing companion. Life experience has given me an understanding and strong belief in how the human spirit holds its own capacity to access wisdom, make meaning and manifest its own paths to well being.

This has traversed full circle as I now share this knowing with others through my practice as an artist / art therapist. My work supports children living with illness & their families - offering art mediums & processes as a powerful non-verbal means to communicate, make meaning & express their experience, when no words can otherwise be found.

I also facilitate art therapeutic workshops outdoors in landscapes such as Ularu and Stradbroke Island. Art made with intent along with thinking, feeling and relating with earths wisdom in mind helps us to explore and express ourselves authentically. It re-connects us to nature and to each other through the sharing of our art.

I was born in New Zealand where I sought connection in nature during my formative years. I currently live in Australia. It means so much to me to return & co-create on home ground and honour beautiful Aotearoa.

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**Robina McCurdy, Takaka, NZ,** [Teacher / Educator, **Institute of Earthcare Education Aotearoa,**]

Workshop title: **"Creating Abundant Food Gardens and Nature Havens with Children"**

With minimal garden knowledge and resources teachers (& parents) can guide their children to successfully co-design and plant up their own special food gardens.

We begin with a short documentary of pre-schools around NZ, which have exceptional outdoor nurture-learn-play spaces and gorgeous productive food gardens. Teachers share how these gardens are central to their curriculum and children's development. Following this appetite stimulator, we learn, through demonstration and doing, how to roll-out a five session activity at pre-school level, starting from bare ground to establish a well-planned garden – with, rather



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than for, your children, at every step. Tools include: storytelling, glove puppetry, singing, guided observation, large colourful symbols, short games, picture card matching, making fertile soil, planting. These steps are written up as a simple take away resource.

### Personal Bios:

Robina is a NZ trained primary school teacher with a focus on environmental education. For the past 35 years she has been engaged globally in community development, organic growing and education for nature connection and permaculture landuse design. After developing a community-based native plants revegetation scheme within Otago Peninsula schools, she worked for several years in South Africa, pioneering 'SEED', a cross-curricula programme (now nation-wide) creating food gardens and nature havens in impoverished schools (visit: [www.seed.org.za](http://www.seed.org.za)).

Robina has developed a range participatory processes for collective decision-making and action. Within role as co-ordinator of Victory Community Health Gardens in Nelson, she wrote 'Grow It!', an illustrated Home Garden teaching series. Out of her work with 'Project Lyttelton' (Christchurch), establishing food gardens and seed banks in schools and kindergartens, she has developed a childrens garden design guide, for teachers.

Over the past two years Robina has been directing a local food documentary series, transforming the stories of hundreds of inspiring initiatives into five user-friendly documentaries. 'Growing Schools' features many early childhood centres with abundant children's food gardens within purpose-designed nature-rich environments, and shows how teachers are working with this as a core component of their programmes.

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**Yaelle Grinberg, Melbourne, Australia**, [Parent educator, LLCR Parenting Specialist]

Workshop title: **"Educating with Love, Law, Consistency and Reason"**

The purpose of this workshop is to support educators in helping themselves. Teaching adults how to observe the child and deeply think about what the child needs to be given to reach maximum potential. The prepared adult will learn to anticipate the child's developmental needs through understanding Natural Laws of Development. Join Yaelle as she explores the child's development through knowledge and open discussion. This session is relevant to all individuals working with children aged between 0-9 years.

**Personal Bios:** In Yaelle's 10 years of teaching she found that much of her impressionable time was spent speaking with the parents outside the classroom; and so decided to go on and major in Psychology and Counselling; in order to master her communication skills, and deepen her knowledge about family dynamics and brain development. With her combined knowledge, Yaelle brought the three disciplines together and created a parenting style which is based on the principle of Natural Laws of Development - relevant and common to all children. This communication style is deep, and acknowledges the great implications parenting has on the way the individual relates to and shapes society and the world. The method focuses on maximizing the potentials of both the adult and the child.

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**Angela Kimber and Merren Goodison, Raglan, NZ** [ECE Teachers, **Matapihi Kindergarten**]

Workshop title: **"Uru Taiao – Entering into the realms of nature"**

We believe that when children are given ample opportunity to live and connect with nature, they are motivated to care for and develop respect for our natural world and all living things. We developed the Uru Taiao programme (meaning entering into the realms of nature), to support our belief that nature is as important to children as food and sleep, and through the exploration of nature children find freedom and genuine creativity. By giving children extended periods of time in the outdoor environment we are empowering them to take control of their own social and emotional competency. We have seen their vision of themselves as explorers and adventurers grow when they are faced with the daily challenges of Uru Taiao. By sharing our experiences we hope to inspire and encourage other teachers, parents and adults to enter into the realms of nature with children and celebrate our innate connection with the natural world.

**Personal Bios:** I (Angela) developed an interest in Early Childhood Education when my children were young and completed my teaching degree as a 'mature student'. I have been teaching for 17 years and 5 years ago achieved the dream of opening my own centre Matapihi Kindergarten in partnership with two friends. I love being outdoors, playing, gardening, caring for animals and simply enjoying the beauty of nature and Matapihi provides the perfect environment for me to share my interests with our tamariki.

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**Pennie Brownlee, Thames, NZ** [Education for the Head and the Heart, Accomplished author & early childhood educator]

Workshop title: **"The Great Escape"**

For hundreds of thousands of years the foundation-education for the human child meant becoming intimately involved within the functional ecosystem where she lived. We have evolved depending on and expecting the outdoor experience with every part of our Being. However, since the industrial revolution we have been enculturated to believe that learning happens in a classroom. As a result, nearly all children endure all of their 'education' indoors – for up to 18 years. This is completely abnormal, and it works against all of the intelligences that Nature has coded into each child. In this workshop we will plan The Great Escape, back to our natural home and 'classroom'.

**Personal Bios:** A Mother, Grandmother, artist, teacher, facilitator, photographer (among other things) who is in love with the Great Mystery of Life on this Earth, in this place we call home.





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**Saturday 22nd November 10.30am – 12.00pm**  
**Workshop Slot 2**

**Anna Gentry, Ngunguru, NZ**, [ECE facilitator, Environmental educator, NaturePlay NZ]

Workshop title: **"21st Century Children – Understanding the order in the 'dis' order. What has Earth Mother got to say about it!"**

Nothing is ever as it seems. Mother Nature always has a plan. Everything in nature exists in relationship to another including our children.

Children are faced in this age with projections, naming and typing associated with Spectrum Disorders. Is this a current way of trying to understand a natural phenomena which is occurring?

Te Wheke asks us to remember and celebrate our Mana. To honour children's Mana is to honour their absolute uniqueness in its fullest expression. The ancient people new to turn to nature to learn and to the atua in the heavens to understand, that which is not understood.

What has Nature got to say about this spectrum of children, and what has nature provided for them to live their lives expressing their absolute uniqueness in its fullest power? Explore what the 'Mother' of all these children has to say. Discover her secrets, let her help us understand more about this natural phenomena and the taonga she provides for them at this time in the unfolding mystery of life on earth.

**Personal Bios:** Anna is co-founder of NaturePlay NZ. An organisation dedicated to assist all the children and the earth to grow in a heart centred relationship in these precarious times. A teacher, mother, healer, her role is to assist the total wellbeing of the children, mother earth and all her inhabitants and to remember we can and will live as one again.

**Pania Baxter, Whangarei, NZ** [ECE Teacher]

Workshop title: **"Harakeke – create and explore"**

Come along and relax under the magnificent trees as you create a valuable resource to share. Create the planned item or explore and experience the harakeke as you create a taonga of your own creation. Harakeke – He taonga kahurangi, he taonga ataahua, he taonga o Papatuanuku.

**Personal Bios** – I am a mother, wife, teacher, learner and participator. I grew up in a small Maori community where I first developed my love of nature and tikanga maori. Children are our greatest taonga and nature is our greatest teacher, therefore using harakeke and other natural materials in our daily practice is vital.

**Lucinda Murch, Auckland, NZ** [Auckland Kindergarten Association]

Workshop title: **"Play dates with Nature"**

While many early childhood settings in New Zealand have become part of a current phenomenon to optimise nature play experiences for young children, and we all have our special nature play stories to share; critical research allows me to tell more than just a story...

Through a researcher's lens, observing children's regular play dates with nature in three New Zealand early childhood settings; I can share what authentic nature play looks like and share my analysis of recurrent themes and qualities when playing in and with nature, in a New Zealand context.

**Personal Bios:** I am a Masters of Education student in the School of Critical Studies in Education, at the University of Auckland. My educational background is in Early Childhood Education having worked for the Auckland Kindergarten Association following my teacher training in 1994, and then opening my own Early Childhood Centre in 1997. I was founder, owner, licensee and teacher at Farm Friends Early Childhood Centre for 16 years, between 1997 and 2012. I have now returned to relieving work with the Auckland Kindergarten Association as I continue on my research journey.

My research focus is linked to the idea that outdoor play is an important feature of education and care for young children in New Zealand, and optimally that of an outdoor environment where children can engage in a natural playscape with natural materials and naturally occurring play activities in a deep and meaningful manner.

I live on a beautiful nature block myself, surrounded by the family, animals and natural environment that I love. My passion for the natural world stems from time spent playing in nature as a child – freely roaming the local park and woodlands with my siblings and other children in the neighbourhood.

**Dee Pignéguay, Auckland, NZ**, [Author of Feed Me Right and Passionate Organic Gardener]

Workshop title: **"Understanding Nature's Technology through Patterns"**

Biomimicry is a particular way of viewing and valuing nature and treats nature as the database of solutions that already work.

How to use Nature's Patterns to open the children's eyes to Biomimicry in nature by understanding the patterns of the living world. Learning science is looking at/observing phenomena to see how nature makes things.

Understanding the patterns of the living world to see the variety of functions that plants, animals and ecosystems perform. Identify how nature repeats her patterns in may different forms and see the connections between maths, science, art and the garden.

We use Biomimicry thinking to change the conversation as we discover, recognise, observe and think creatively about processes and systems in nature. Systems thinking is about making connections. Take a nature walk. Notice details, patterns, functions and nature's systems.

**Personal Bios:** Dee is an ex-teacher, writer, author, gardening consultant, public speaker and organic gardener. Her environmental education and professional development workshops help teachers to find fun and creative ways to use nature's classroom.

Her well-researched books—especially Grow Me Well, Growing Gardeners, Gardening For Planet Earth, Nature's Techno Tricks, and the Grow Me Well Workbook provide inspiration and information for teachers.

Dee is passionate about Biomimetics the science helping find sustainable ways to meet our needs by mimicking natural systems. She believes that biomimetics can teach us how nature creates conditions beneficial to life providing a road map to sustainability.



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### **Adam Bienenstock, Natural Playgrounds, Canada**

Workshop title: **"Getting Past the Grownups"**

This workshop 'getting past the grown-ups' focuses on connecting children to nature where and when they play. It will cover what a natural playground is, why it is important, the most relevant data and research, and some of the best examples of natural playgrounds from around the world.

What stops us from creating environments that provide settings that challenge and promote optimal child development while connecting to nature? Learn what to challenge and how to push back to make it work for everyone. We will touch on Risk management, Community build models, Design and build protocols, Construction and Maintenance specifications.

**Personal Bios:** Founder and Principal Designer of Natural Playgrounds, Canada, "Connecting children to nature when and where they play". Adam hails from Ontario, Canada. He is an award winning natural playground designer and consultant who specializes in creating natural playscapes. His portfolio ranges from early childhood centres to world heritage sites. Adam provides advice and inspiration on design, construction, risk management and policy regulations in a world where our natural play areas are disappearing, shrinking in size and being eroded by synthetic materials.

A prolific writer and speaker on the importance of the child/nature connection in our built environment, Adam has delivered keynote speeches and workshops across Northern America and around the world. He serves as a board director at the Child and Nature Alliance ([www.childnature.ca](http://www.childnature.ca)), where he founded Nature Play Day ([www.natureplayday.ca](http://www.natureplayday.ca)), is a regular collaborator with Richard Louv's US based Children and Nature Network ([www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org)), sits on the Ministers Round Table for Parks Canada, and teaches as part of the CPSA (Certified Playground Safety Academy).

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### **Steve Gurney, Christchurch NZ, [Adventurer, Inventor, Author and Motivation Expert]**

Workshop title: **"Building rapport – skills for all parts of life " "**

You'll be able to recall times when you feel an easy connection with a person you've met. When you felt like you both had quite a lot in common, and communication flowed easily. That is because there was above average rapport between you. Whether we're aware of it or not, we as humans naturally use rapport, but to varying degrees of effectiveness. We naturally seek to feel a bond of rapport. This workshop is about understanding the various modes of rapport and being able to actively use rapport, on purpose, to get the results we want in an ethical and powerful way. Feedback from previous workshops shows this is a fun and enlightening workshop with a lot of laughs and "ahh haas!"

In the education industry, this will help with maintaining attention spans for your students, for getting your messages across more easily and with greater retention, creating harmony and good relationships between you and the children/students, and for you to feel more effective as a teacher/educator.

**Personal Bios:** Steve Gurney is an adventurer, inventor and motivation expert. Amongst world-wide racing success, he won the Coast to Coast a record 9 times, has an engineering degree, and was awarded the MNZM for services to endurance sport. He has now turned professional motivational speaker and trainer and has written 2 books, Lucky Legs and Eating Dirt. They contain stories and yarns of his racing and adventures, but are inter-twined with research and strategies on success, resilience and mental excellence.

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**Saturday 22nd November 2.30pm – 4.00pm**  
**Workshop Slot 3**

**Arvay Armstrong-Read, Whangarei, NZ**, [Educator, facilitator, Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa]  
Workshop title: **“Kaitiakitanga - Igniting ones understanding of guardianship”**

Humanity is the conscious mind of Mother Earth and this plays a vital part in the regulation of her life support systems; what is our role to enhance and sustain these systems. Kaitiakitanga is the traditional Maori guardianship process that ensures sustainability to be maintained in our environment. This practical and interactive workshop will provide understandings of the role of kaitiakitanga and discuss our roles as teachers and kaiako to provoke acts of kaitiakitanga within our services and centres. A range of creative methods and tools will be drawn upon to provide insights as to acts of kaitiakitanga and how these can provide provocations for tamariki in maintaining kaitiakitanga.

**Personal Bios:** Ko Tuhipa te Maunga, Ko Terewawatea te Awa, Ko Ngatiteara me Ngatikopaki te hapu, Ko Ngatihine me Ngapuhi nga lwi. Ko toku ingoa Ko Arvay Armstrong-Read. Mauri te, Mauri ora.

My name is Arvay Armstrong-Read and I live in Whangarei. I have worked within the early childhood sector for the past twenty years as a mother, teacher and an educator. My humble beginnings come from lived experiences of growing up in an environment where Maori culture and identity were a part of my existence and everyday life. We lived what it meant to be kaitiaki and guardians.

Nau mai , haere mai

Whāia te mātauranga hei oranga mō koutou. - Seek after learning for the sake of your wellbeing.

**Genevieve Simperingham, Ngunguru, NZ**, [Peaceful Parenting Institute]  
Workshop title: **“Children light up our world – but how can we keep their light shining?”**

The old approach of “children should just do what they’re told and not answer back” has never worked and never will. In this old model, children are given two choices; submit or rebel. But the world doesn’t need more people who submit or rebel. We need ethical, creative thinkers and problem solvers who truly care for themselves, others and the earth.

We want to foster in our children; integrity, compassion, self-discipline, big picture thinking and resourceful problem solving skills. In this workshop you’ll learn about how our communication with children can open them up or shut them down, empower or disempower, hurt or heal, invite their participation or their rebellion. Gain more effective communication skills and ways of being with children that greatly helps them stay connected and in positive relationship with themselves, others, the earth; leading to a more harmonious atmosphere for all.

**Personal Bios:** Genevieve is the co-founder of the Peaceful Parent Institute and is a Certified Aware Parenting instructor, having trained with Dr. Aletha Solter PhD, psychologist and author of four ground-breaking parenting books. Genevieve is one of 65 instructors worldwide and the only one in New Zealand. She is also a Heart to Heart Parenting Facilitator, trained by Robin Grille to teach his parenting programs. Robin Grille, psychologist and psychotherapist is based in Sydney and is the author of ‘Parenting for a Peaceful World’ and ‘Heart to Heart Parenting’. The Peaceful Parent Institute offers courses and coaching for teachers, parents and all those interested in practicing respectful ways of relating to babies, children and teens. Genevieve shares her in-depth study of many renowned experts in the fields of early childhood development and neuroscience, as well as her experience with clients and groups over 19 years and as a parent working with this model for 16 years.

**David Spraggs, Gisborne NZ**, [ECE Teacher, Consultant]  
Workshop title: **“Making the Raw Materials ”**

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**Personal Bios** – David’s passion is in provoking teachers to do more, and be more, when it comes to our children. Doing more sometimes means “doing less”. He is very focussed on sustainable practices and has had a number of opportunities to play in the woods in Europe.

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**Pennie Brownlee, Thames, NZ** [Education for the Head and the Heart, Accomplished author & early childhood educator]  
Workshop title: **“The Great Escape”**

For hundreds of thousands of years the foundation-education for the human child meant becoming intimately involved within the functional ecosystem where she lived. We have evolved depending on and expecting the outdoor experience with every part of our Being. However, since the industrial revolution we have been enculturated to believe that learning happens in a classroom. As a result, nearly all children endure all of their ‘education’ indoors – for up to 18 years. This is completely abnormal, and it works against all of the intelligences that Nature has coded into each child. In this workshop we will plan The Great Escape, back to our natural home and ‘classroom’.



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**Jimi Dale, Auckland, NZ,** [Drum & dance master teacher]

Workshop title: **“Natural sounds – Finding ways to help children to express themselves through music, dance & song”**

This workshop offers a hands on experience using instruments (drums & percussion) and body to create music and explore ways of using rhythm, movement and sound to listen and connect with each other. We will explore ways of helping children (adults also) to find ways to express their own creative abilities, weaving all the different disciplines together.

We will use drum rhythms, dance movements, songs and imagination as a way of discovering storytelling.

**Personal Bios** –Jimi Dale has been teaching African Drum and Dance around NZ since 1995. He teaches and performs on all levels, including adults and children. He regularly travels and performs with visiting overseas artists, musicians and dancers. In recent years Jimi has delved more deeply into the origins of music in the African culture, how that relates to their everyday life, the connection with the ancestral heritage and its use in healing ceremonies.

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**Birgit Baaber, Motueka, NZ,** [Educator, facilitator, Ako-A-Rongo Trust]

Workshop title: **“Holistic learning and neuroscience – holding a space for natural learning”**

How can we support learning experiences that give young people a real chance to develop an integral authentic personality? How can we create learning environments which allow for holistic approaches that enable the learner to both explore their own personality and develop skills to build sustainable stable living communities?

Most mainstream educational systems focus on analytical and cognitive learning and teaching methods. Sharing of content is mainly reduced to tangible facts and intellectual knowledge. However, new educational trends together with the latest findings of neuroscience, psychology and behavioural research, show various ways towards a more balanced learning environment. In her presentation Birgit Baaber will give you an overview on current educational trends and scientific findings as well as presenting examples of holistic and natural ways of learning and teaching.

**Personal Bios:** Birgit has been involved in education for the last 26 years. Being part of a research group of the Ministry of Education in Germany for alternative learning concepts she explored different ways of creating learning environments that nurture both the motivation and the joy in learning. When working with teachers, parents and students she uses a wide variety of tools she acquired throughout the years as well as her experiences in shamanism and interspecies communication. Birgit has written and edited several books and articles on alternative education, produced two feature films for TV on the topic (Kinder des 21. Jahrtausend/Children of the New Millenium, Vertrauen ins Lernen/Schools of Trust) and the Growing Schools documentary featuring natural lernenscapes in schools and ECE centres around Aotearoa/New Zealand (launch: June 2014). Since 2008, she travels extensively through Europe holding lectures and teacher trainings in shamanic visualization and other techniques to support what she calls “natural learning”. She is also director and co-founder of the Ako-a-rongo Trust promoting holistic learning approaches and peace education (holisticlearning.weebly.com).





## The Natural Phenomena

Sunday 22nd November 10.30am – 12.00pm

### Workshop Slot 4

**Anna Gentry, Ngunguru, NZ**, [ECE facilitator, Environmental educator, NaturePlay NZ]

Workshop title: **"Dreaming a new dream for the earth begins with - Respect!"**

There's a song that goes... "It's not what you've got, its how you use it."

In a world that seems only to want for more and more 'stuff', lets remember its how you use what you have got and how you relate to it that grows wisdom. Our wise ancient people have understood the word 'relationship', to be the word of power. Life on earth is built upon a foundation of right relationships, the first being a relationship of Respect with all living things. Whanaungatanga one of Te Whekes legs of Infinite Wisdom assists us to remember this relationship.

Lets take an 'Earth walk' together through the wildwoods. Spend time to actively reassess where your relationship is with the earth and all your relatives? What relationships are you modelling to the children around you?

Together we will seek to deepen our understanding and importance of the role of nature as our teacher of Respect.

**Personal Bios:** Anna is co-founder of NaturePlay NZ. An organisation dedicated to assist all the children and the earth to grow in a heart centred relationship in these precarious times. A teacher, mother, healer, her role is to assist the total wellbeing of the children, mother earth and all her inhabitants and to remember we can and will live as one again.

**Adam Bienenstock, Natural Playgrounds, Canada**

Workshop title: **"Quick and Dirty"**

This workshop, 'Quick and Dirty' will focus on renovating your playground without the need to spend thousands of dollars for a brand new one. The first part will concentrate on 12 ways to naturalize your playground. From choosing materials, to sourcing them for cheap, to how to configure them and speak to your inspector to make them compliant, we will make natural play a viable option for any playground. The second part will focus on open-ended activities and components that promote problem-solving, social collaboration, and attention. Learn how to take advantage of your vertical spaces and add water safely and environmentally. Participants will learn how to create outdoor spaces that connect children to nature while providing different opportunities to engage them outside. Group work and discussions will be included within the workshop to reinforce the concepts presented.

Playgrounds are living entities that need to be maintained. Participants will understand how to incorporate curriculum and maintenance goals to keep the playground alive and well.

**Personal Bios:** Founder and Principal Designer of Natural Playgrounds, Canada, "Connecting children to nature when and where they play". Adam hails from Ontario, Canada. He is an award winning natural playground designer and consultant who specializes in creating natural playscapes. His portfolio ranges from early childhood centres to world heritage sites. Adam provides advice and inspiration on design, construction, risk management and policy regulations in a world where our natural play areas are disappearing, shrinking in size and being eroded by synthetic materials.

A prolific writer and speaker on the importance of the child/nature connection in our built environment, Adam has delivered keynote speeches and workshops across Northern America and around the world. He serves as a board director at the Child and Nature Alliance ([www.childnature.ca](http://www.childnature.ca)), where he founded Nature Play Day ([www.natureplayday.ca](http://www.natureplayday.ca)), is a regular collaborator with Richard Louv's US based Children and Nature Network ([www.childrenandnature.org](http://www.childrenandnature.org)), sits on the Ministers Round Table for Parks Canada, and teaches as part of the CPSA (Certified Playground Safety Academy).

**Wiremu Sarich, Kaitaia, NZ**, [Educator]

Workshop title: **"Ako atu ako mai the reciprocal nature of learning/teaching from a Maori perspective."**

The workshop will begin with introductions and a brief history of Ako.

Wiremu will demonstrate and lead out a series of traditional Maori games designed to highlight the holistic perspective of traditional practices and how Maori relate to the natural world.

The workshop will include a resource building exercise using natural resources e.g. flax, manuka, karamu leaves.

The workshop is completely interactive and guaranteed to draw out the creative potential and collective experiences of all participants.

Ako has a virtually limitless potential as an educational tool for teachers and students alike.

**Personal Bios:** Wiremu Sarich is a Youth Educator working at Te Oranga for Te Runanga o Te Rarawa in Kaitaia.

Wiremu has been utilizing Nga Taonga Takaro (traditional Maori games/past times) to promote healthy activity in schools through out Muriwhenua from North Hokianga to Te Kao. For the past year Wiremu has been developing a new initiative which draws on the same principals and pedagogies inherent in Nga Taonga Takaro he calls "Ako"(to learn, to teach or instruct)

Ako is a group activity derived from the Maori concept of reciprocal learning (ako atu.. ako mai)

Ako activities/games are specifically designed toward the enhancement of the three core principals: 1 communication, 2 co-operation and 3 co-ordination.

Earlier this year, Wiremu presented "Ako" at the annual conference for Toi Tangata (health and nutrition conference) he was later invited to attend and participate at Te Whare Tapere in Hauraki.

**John Lawry, Auckland, NZ**, [Senior Teacher, Michael Park Steiner School]

Workshop title: **"Lighting the inner fire – An introduction to the Outdoor Classroom Learning initiative"**



Imagine an education system beyond the one of our current paradigm. This workshop brings the theory and practice of how to cultivate a learning curriculum out of doors. The Outdoor Classroom is a context and a methodology to develop practical wisdom using a holistic approach. It is founded on the Anthroposophical understanding of child development and how a human being is constituted.

It challenges conventional, post-modernist, behaviourist thinking, that learning is a highly contained and structured (indoor) event with predetermined outcomes which students are managed to achieve and where "success" is rated on such achievement.

Imagine a circle: a symbol of the unity of all life, form and formlessness all in one. At the base of this, on the ground of experience we have GARDENING. Above, in the human realm, TRADITIONAL CRAFTS, core skills embedded deep, as muscular memory. To the left, where crafts and gardening meet, we have COOKING; chants, songs and stories fit naturally here. To the right, BUSH CRAFT WILDERNESS CAMPS, where all the above skills find relevant and vital context.

**Personal Bios:** I am a fifth generation South Pacific Celt (Cornish, Scottish, Irish). My life experience working as an artist / craftsman. This is my 15th year at Michael Park Steiner School. The last 4 years have been full time OC. Prior to that I was a class teacher and H/S hard materials and Fine Art teacher

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**Eva Scherer, Auckland, NZ,** [Educator, Child Connection Trust]

Workshop title: **"Children Massaging Children as a Hauora lesson in NZ schools nationwide"**

In this workshop we will look at how the brain and nervous system is formed during the first years of life so that you will understand the phenomenon of Secure Attachment. I help you to understand that a positive self-image for your child is the best gift that adults can give a child for its life. You will see that it is an easy and joyful process.

If it is not home and family, then somebody needs to provide a child with Secure Attachment. I will show you that the mainstream education system has everything to fulfil this job and is already successful in this process.

I will share success stories about children bringing positive touch from school back to home and family, which is a very uplifting experience. We will experience some of this process together.

**Personal Bios:** Eva Scherer is a professional body-worker and owner of several Sports Massage clinics located at YMCA's around Auckland [www.ymassages.co.nz](http://www.ymassages.co.nz) She is the CEO of Child Connection Trust registered charity with the aim to introduce positive touch and massage into mainstream education system as prevention for child abuse and family violence.

She has been awarded with the Community Award for Excellence, for the Children Massaging Children (CMC) program.

Eva Scherer is a pioneer and thought leader in the field of Right Brain Learning using touch and sensory stimulation processes as a factor for enhancing secure attachment and balancing virtual technology to reach holistic students development of children. Her user-friendly hands on programs helps children to relax, teaches them empathy and demonstrate how emotional wellbeing and positive self-perception enhance the quality of learning [www.childconnection.org.nz](http://www.childconnection.org.nz)

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**Steve Gurney, Christchurch NZ,** [Adventurer, Inventor, Author and Motivation Expert]

Workshop title: **"Building rapport – skills for all parts of life "**

You'll be able to recall times when you feel an easy connection with a person you've met. When you felt like you both had quite a lot in common, and communication flowed easily. That is because there was above average rapport between you. Whether we're aware of it or not, we as humans naturally use rapport, but to varying degrees of effectiveness. We naturally seek to feel a bond of rapport. This workshop is about understanding the various modes of rapport and being able to actively use rapport, on purpose, to get the results we want in an ethical and powerful way. Feedback from previous workshops shows this is a fun and enlightening workshop with a lot of laughs and "ahh haas!"

In the education industry, this will help with maintaining attention spans for your students, for getting your messages across more easily and with greater retention, creating harmony and good relationships between you and the children/students, and for you to feel more effective as a teacher/educator.

**Personal Bios:** Steve Gurney is an adventurer, inventor and motivation expert. Amongst world-wide racing success, he won the Coast to Coast a record 9 times, has an engineering degree, and was awarded the MNZM for services to endurance sport. He has now turned professional motivational speaker and trainer and has written 2 books, Lucky Legs and Eating Dirt. They contain stories and yarns of his racing and adventures, but are inter-twined with research and strategies on success, resilience and mental excellence.

*From edited extracts of **Eating Dirt:***

Steve reckons Kiwi kids are increasingly bubble-wrapped in an over-regulated society. In his new book (Eating Dirt) Gurney argues that children need to learn about risk-taking and our super-cautious approach is dumbing down .....

New Zealand used to be a fantastic country to grow up in as an outdoors kid. Nature, the wilderness, the hills and the beaches are so easily accessible. Consequently, Kiwi kids have typically grown up confident and at ease in the wilderness because we've spent so much of our childhood playing in and exploring the nooks and crannies of Godzone.

**Let kids go back to being kids...** Get rid of the unwieldy burden of control. Nature already has a system that automatically works.

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**Genevieve Simperingham, Ngunguru, NZ,** [Peaceful Parenting Institute]

Workshop title: **"Children light up our world – but how can we keep their light shining?"**

The old approach of "children should just do what they're told and not answer back" has never worked and never will. In this old model, children are given two choices; submit or rebel. But the world doesn't need more people who submit or rebel. We need ethical, creative thinkers and problem solvers who truly care for themselves, others and the earth.

We want to foster in our children; integrity, compassion, self-discipline, big picture thinking and resourceful problem solving skills. In this workshop you'll learn about how our communication with children can open them up or shut them down, empower or disempower, hurt or heal, invite their participation or their





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rebellion. Gain more effective communication skills and ways of being with children that greatly helps them stay connected and in positive relationship with themselves, others, the earth; leading to a more harmonious atmosphere for all.

**Personal Bios:** Genevieve is the co-founder of the Peaceful Parent Institute and is a Certified Aware Parenting instructor, having trained with Dr. Aletha Solter PhD, psychologist and author of four ground-breaking parenting books. Genevieve is one of 65 instructors worldwide and the only one in New Zealand. She is also a Heart to Heart Parenting Facilitator, trained by Robin Grille to teach his parenting programs. Robin Grille, psychologist and psychotherapist is based in Sydney and is the author of 'Parenting for a Peaceful World' and 'Heart to Heart Parenting'. The Peaceful Parent Institute offers courses and coaching for teachers, parents and all those interested in practicing respectful ways of relating to babies, children and teens. Genevieve shares her in-depth study of many renowned experts in the fields of early childhood development and neuroscience, as well as her experience with clients and groups over 19 years and as a parent working with this model for 16 years.