

# Media Release

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## **Kids get stuck in to healthy eating**

Home-made pizza and banana waka were on the menu at Hungahungatoroa Marae in Matapihi last week as around 60 mums, dads and kids gathered for a day of cooking, sports, hands-on learning and spot prizes.

The school holiday programme was given a welcome boost thanks to the efforts of local mum Aria Dickson.

“I heard that we could apply for funding from the Ministry of Health Feeding our Futures programme and it sounded like a great idea to improve what we were already doing,” says Aria. “The funding meant we were able to get a lot more good quality food and equipment so more people could get hands-on with the cooking.”

The highlight of the day for the kids was making banana waka of all different shapes and sizes using a range of fruit.

“The kids love being creative and getting stuck in,” said Aria. “When they’re having so much fun, they don’t realise they’re being healthy! Everyone ate all the fruit and yoghurt at the end and really enjoyed it.”

Aria enlisted the help of Stephen Cameron, the Healthy Eating Healthy Action (HEHA) community educator at the Bay of Plenty District Health Board.

“This didn’t cost us anything and was a great opportunity for the whanau to hear about why it’s so important to be healthy,” says Aria.

While the kids were outside playing sports, the parents learnt about how to make healthy choices for themselves and the whanau from Stephen. Mother and Grandmother Hina Dickson said she learnt a lot from Stephen.

“We hear all the time about eating five or more fruit and veggies a day but with the cost of everything, it’s too expensive,” says Hina. “Stephen showed us that it doesn’t always have to be big amounts, he gave us some great tips for getting the most out of food by adding small amounts of what’s really good for us.”

Stephen also talked to the group about good and bad fats. “Fat equals flavour but it’s easier than you think to replace bad fats with other healthy flavours such as garlic,” he told the group.

“It’s always hard to get the kids to eat fresh healthy food as they think it doesn’t taste as good. The bit about garlic was great. Garlic adds so much flavour but it can be expensive. Stephen said to buy dried garlic which is a lot cheaper and then soak a bit in water just before you want to use. That way it lasts for weeks. I’ve taken away lots of simple tips like that.”

Stephen travels all over the Bay of Plenty talking to lots of different groups about healthy eating and nutrition. He can be reached through the BOPDHB.

For more information on applying for funding from the Ministry of Health’s Feeding our Futures programme, visit [www.feedingourfutures.org.nz/community\\_partnerships](http://www.feedingourfutures.org.nz/community_partnerships). Healthy Eating Healthy Action (HEHA) is a Ministry of Health campaign to improve nutrition and increase our physical activity. It is a joint approach between the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, and Sport and Recreation New Zealand (SPARC). For further information about HEHA visit [www.bopdhb.govt.nz](http://www.bopdhb.govt.nz) and click on the HEHA logo, or contact Stephen Cameron directly on 07 579 8285.



*Healthy Kai Day at Hungahungatoroa Marae - the challenge was set for who could make the best banana waka.*

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