



**Media information: 7 July 2021**

## **Trust announces 2021 education grants – supporting diverse learning opportunities in the community.**

A diverse lineup of locally-based community organisations and education providers have received funding for education programmes from the Masterton Trust Lands Trust, boosting opportunities and access to life-long learning.

A total of \$101,726 has been granted by the Trust to help 13 organisations in the Masterton district. The money will support programmes that strengthen Pasifika cultural identity through performing arts, improve mental health resilience through creative outlets, and empower people with learning disabilities.

Chair of the Trust, Leanne Southey said she was pleased with the range of applications the Trust received.

“We were delighted with the diversity of applications received this year. As such, we’re pleased to be supporting a variety of organisations, several of which are first-time recipients of a community education grant. It means we’re able to contribute funding to a wider range of education programmes through broadening the mix of organisations we assist.”

“We are funding education programmes to address the digital divide for people with learning disabilities; arts programmes to help build mental health resilience; cultural programmes that strengthen cultural identity; science programmes with Te Ao Māori and Pasifika elements; and we’re supporting youth to attend outdoor education programmes like Outward Bound.”

A \$3,000 grant to support a photography workshop at King St Artworks was welcomed by the centre’s coordinator Ian Chapman. Despite King St’s 25 years in Masterton, Ian says the creative space had seen a significant increase in new artists affected by the pandemic through job losses, anxiety, stress and depression.

A photography workshop to educate people in another creative format that almost everyone has access to – through their phone – was King St’s concept. Alongside learning tips about manual camera phone settings, light, composition and editing, participants will also learn about ‘clearing space’ for the creative process, self compassion, and building resilience by recognising when things aren’t working and how to manage this. Ian likens it to being able to ‘reset’ simply by mindfully taking a photo.

Ian says, “I want to say a big thanks to the Trust for supporting this workshop. Building resilience through the creative process will be of huge benefit to our participants, now and in the future.”

Masterton Samoan Assembly of God received \$10,000 to fund its cultural performance education programme - ‘Siva with Vanz’. Siva means dance in Samoan and Vanz is short for Levonia – the group’s teacher.

Organiser Melnissa Faumui says she was “overwhelmed” by the Trust’s support. She said the money would help remove financial barriers to children being able to participate in the performance group. It would help pay for traditional costumes as well as music equipment, and assist with transport costs to enable the group to experience cultural performances outside the region.

So far, around 30 Pasifika children, aged 10-18 years are involved in ‘Siva with Vanz’. She says the community education grant will allow Samoan and Pasifika children to come together locally in a single group to expose Pacific children to their culture, their roots and strengthen their identity through dance, performance and speaking their language.

Melnissa’s ultimate vision is to host a ‘Polyfest’ event in the Wairarapa. “I’m so grateful to Masterton Trust Lands Trust for this grant. It means so much to have this kind of backing. If no one is willing to back you up, then no one will know what our Pacific children are capable of. I can’t wait to share their performances with the community,” says Melnissa.

For more information about MTLT grants, visit [www.mtl.org.nz/grants-information](http://www.mtl.org.nz/grants-information)

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**For more information contact Leanne Southey, MTLT Chairperson, phone 027 469 7161**

*Photo caption*

*Some of the ‘Siva with Vanz’ performers gather for a photo before a performance. Dance teacher Levonia is on the right, flanking the standing girls.*

