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Healthy Families Far North showcases good Kaikohe kai at the Ngāpuhi Festival 2018

Healthy Families Far North is set to take people on a sweet trip back into foodie nostalgia as the Ngāpuhi Festival 2018 takes a step into a bright, new forward direction this weekend.

Hosted by Te Rūnanga-Ā-Iwi o Ngāpuhi and the Whangārei District Council, the festival will for the first time be held at Whangārei's Toll Stadium on Saturday January 27. However, as it makes the move south, Healthy Families Far North will be honouring the biannual celebration's roots with a pop-up stall that continues the work being undertaken to address the accessibility of good kai for the people of Kaikohe.

Healthy Families Far North is an initiative that aims to improve the health of the people of Te Taitokerau in the areas where they live, learn, work and play. The team has been working with the Kaikohe community on the Kitchen Table Talk initiative – an ongoing exploration of local food systems and collaborative design of solutions to improve on the journey from garden to plate.

“For as long as humans have congregated for meals, the metaphorical ‘kitchen table’ has existed. The place in the home or community is where the whānau have connected, been nourished and formed the values that now guide our lives,” says Healthy Families Far North kaiwhakahaere Shirleyanne Brown.

For several months, the team has been gathering insights from focus groups, one-on-one interviews, prevention partners within the community and shared kai with local champions. Now, she says, the team is ready to move on some of the prototypes, or quickfire experimental solutions, that have been designed to attempt to disrupt some of the patterns within the food system that are causing chronic disease.

“This is where the pop up stall concept comes in. The people of Kaikohe have told us that they believe generational kai knowledge has been lost. The gathering, harvesting, preparation and sharing of good kai is being eroded to the extent that whānau time has dwindled and we have become increasingly reliant on convenience foods which are effectively making us sick,” she says.



Therefore, the Healthy Families Far North pop up stall at the Ngāpuhi Festival will be manned by two of Kaikohe's finest marae masters – Betty Wihongi and Horace Davis – who will be sharing home recipes and tasters, plus invaluable kai knowledge on how to maximise seasonal fruit and vegetables on the cheap.

“The pop-up stall is really a conversation starter to get people thinking about and engaging in dialogue about what constitutes good kai and how to use it. We are privileged to have these two very special wāhine with us on the Kitchen Table Talk journey and their humility and willingness to support the people of Te Taitokerau empower themselves through good kai is nothing short of a blessing,” Shirleyanne says.

Healthy Families Far North will be situated beside the Kaumātua and Kuia space on Level 3 of the stadium building for the festival duration.

“We are delighted to be partnering with Ngāpuhi in one of the best spots, enjoying a bird's eye view over the festivities with our priceless taonga, our kaumātua and kuia,” Shirleyanne says.

For more information, head to www.ngapuhifestival.com.

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