

*Āku nui, āku rahi, āku tamarahi ki te rangi, nei rā te mihi kau atu ki a koutou katoa.
Ko wai au?*

*He uri au o Granny Waenanga rāua ko Granny Mānuka. Nā rāua i whāngai tōku nanny Kona Thompson (nee Lawson-Hikawai). I tipu ake au i te taha o tōku nanny Kona. Ko Taka Thompson tōnā hoa rangatira, nō Ngāti Hine me Te Rarawa ia.
Ko Coralee Thompson tōku ingoa.*

Tēnā koutou e te whānau,

I was born and raised here in Ahuriri and had a strong connection with our marae growing up. As an adult I have participated in Marae and Hapū hui and Wānanga over the years. My yearning to learn our Reo rangatira saw me pursue a *Bachelor of Arts in Māori* which led me to work at our kōhanga on Tangoio Marae, Te Kōhanga Reo o Punanga Te Wao. This experience not only reinforced my passion of working for our whānau but also gave me an opportunity to learn more about our Taiao through the various initiatives our Kōhanga participated in.

I then worked as a Kaiāwhina within the Tamariki Ora team at Te Taiwhenua o Heretaunga for four years. I was a part of an award winning team who were recognised for addressing the disparities in child healthcare. There I developed my knowledge, skills and networks in health. I have also worked for the Hawke's Bay District Health Board for the Community Oral Health Service. Working as a Kaiāwhina has been an enriching journey and has strengthened my drive to advocate for our whānau and to improve their health outcomes.

I am proud to have developed and delivered an Oranga Niho programme to improve the oral health of our tamariki under five years of age. The programme is a collaboration with Te Kōhanga Reo, Pasifika and early childhood centres, based in low socio economic areas. This programme was a first in Hawkes Bay and New Zealand, and is now being replicated throughout other regions.

In the past year I have completed my *Post Graduate Certificate in Māori and Indigenous Leadership* and am currently working towards my *Masters* in this kaupapa.

I believe my knowledge and experience working at the grass roots alongside our whānau has given me invaluable insight to understanding the needs of our whānau. I am committed to ensuring whānau are included in the process of decision making and this is reflected in my work history. I am creative and innovative in my thinking and I am an advocate for change. I am a person of integrity with a strong work ethic and I have spent a lot of time advocating for our whānau in an environment where I have been the minority.

I believe I have a point of difference to offer our whānau and hapū. I come from a strong background in health as well as having strong networks within our community. I pride myself in serving our whānau which I am honoured to do.

*Kua tawhiti kē tō haerenga mai, kia kore e haere tonu
He nui rawa ō mahi, kia kore e mahi tonu*