

Mana College Opens Channels

Mana College students and families are much closer together after the holding of a weekend wananga on February 19-21.

The organisers say the wananga was very successful not only in increasing awareness of polynesian culture but also in opening up the communication channels between parents, pupils and staff.

The emphasis in the weekend was on the polynesian culture in recognition of the large number of polynesian students at the college. Of a total roll of around one thousand pupils, a quarter are polynesian.

The idea for the wananga came from a Samoan teacher at the college, Vaa Poti, who had seen the idea successfully used at another school.

Support for the weekend came from the Porirua kokiri unit, the college parent support group and the Mana College Association.

A traditional greeting to visitors took place on the Friday. A series of broad themes initiated discussion over the weekend, with the emphasis on community input.

Among the guests were the MP for Kapiti, Margaret Shields, and Multi-cultural Resource Centre director, Alfred Hunkin.

For Mark Metekingi, the chairman of the management committee, highlights of the weekend included the staging of a traditional Samoan court of justice. Here, Mark said, the offended and offender were judged by the High Chiefs with the alleged guilty party's head covered over by a blanket.

"What was impressive was the dignity of the proceedings and also the fact that the judges had come prepared with stones in their robes if the alleged offender was proven guilty."

Mark also noted that in one of the discussions, the young people felt it necessary to bring something to parents' attention. That was that the young peo-

ple wanted to be shown the same respect as was asked of them.

Guidance counsellor, Wally Boyd admitted to some apprehension, shared with other parents, at the beginning of the wananga. He said they wondered what would come out of the weekend.

However these fears were unfounded with a really relaxed atmosphere at the close of the wananga because of the increased awareness on all sides.

A feature of the weekend was the quality and variety of food, with college students helping with the cooking.

And for the more active participants over the weekend there was organised recreation under the eye of Arthur Smallman, the president of the Mana College Association.

So what are the plans for the future. Well on the drawing board is a wananga for Mana College students organised by college students and after that a Polynesian Festival also to be held at the college.

Mana College students.



Alfred Hunkin, Multi-cultural Resource Centre director talking with Winnie Schmidt, Kokiri Unit member.



Mark Metekingi, chairman of the management committee talks with Auntie Taukiri Thompson who gave a great talk about her school-days in the far north.



(L to R) Fiapito, Sulia and Pauline, three student helpers.