



PRIMARY PROJECT BIG BUDDY MENTORING IMPACT REPORT

Term Two 2026



TERM TWO 2026

Big Buddy Mentoring

First Name	Connections - buddy mentoring
Jono	26 learners at Dairy Flat School
Liz	26 learners at Dairy Flat School 9 learners at Orewa Primary School 13 learners at Silverdale School 8 learners at Wainui School
Simon	14 learners at Ahutoetoe School 28 learners at Orewa Primary 20 learners at Silverdale School 12 learners at Wainui School

Term Two has been chock-a-block with our three Primary Project Big Buddy youth workers placed in five local primary schools. Their main focus is supporting learners through small group mentoring. In addition they also interact with learners in their breaks, support staff with class activities, join in with school wide activities and education outside the classroom (EOTC).

As well as seeing learners grow in confidence and develop their self regulation and social skills, youth workers have particularly enjoyed opportunities to connect with the wider school community during break/lunch times and EOTC.

Feedback from the schools Senior Leadership Teams is that our youth workers are phenomenal, that kids, staff and parents love them, they appreciate that they are mature, flexible and adaptable, and always show up with a smile. They would like to clone them!

In Term Two 156 learners have benefitted from mentoring with one of our team.

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Ahutoetoe School

Highlights

It has been awesome to see the groups that I see grow in their team work skills. With a couple of the groups, we spend a portion of the time together playing football. A rule we introduced early in the term was that a team must do a certain number of passes (with everyone on the team touching the ball) before that team could score. This meant that the students went out of their way to make sure others on their team were included which created a great team culture of succeeding by succeeding together.



Student Story

One of the students I get the privilege of seeing each week, started the term with relatively low levels of resilience. However throughout the term I got to see him grow in both his confidence, resilience and ability to persevere when things aren't quite going his way. It was really cool to see him be able to recognise when things were frustrating or hard (when they weren't going his way) but still to be able to carry on and give things a go anyway. By the end of the term he was also able to negotiate his needs with others in the group and successfully reach a solution with them to have everyone's needs met within the session. I look forward to continuing to see him grow in his resilience and continue to bring it into his day to day life.



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Dairy Flat School

Highlights

When learners invite me to come sit with their friend groups during morning tea times and the connections and conversations that then flow when doing so.

Seeing learners collaborate together to find my missing octopus toy. They created 'missing' posters to display, brainstormed ideas together of where he might be and what he might have been up to, numerous search parties were created, one learner even gifted me a new octopus (which eventually turned out to belong to her sister, so was promptly returned to it's rightful owner). Thankfully a learner eventually found him in an area of the library, much to the celebratory delight of all the learners involved!

My highlights at DFS this term have mostly been the following student stories and the general development of deeper relationships with students and staff members. However, I also enjoyed the creative activity where students went around collecting different materials and creating games and contraptions.



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Dairy Flat School

Student Stories

The Yr6 learners I see have been enjoying the freedom to write whatever they like in their own personal diary books from Salt. These books are never opened by anyone other than themselves, unless they choose to share or give their permission to do so. A learner chose to share something personal with me from her diary, which she said was too hard for her to say out loud. Being able to express themselves in written form is an important tool to help process and share their thoughts, feelings and experiences.

A boy who is struggling a lot with his home life and with getting into trouble at school shared openly with me on several occasions about difficulties he is having. I take this development as positive, as it implies trust and enables me to be a safe adult who listens to him.

I have established more of a connection with a year 6 boy who struggles with anxiety. He seems to enjoy our sessions and has opened up more over time about his life. I hope to provide consistency, as he has had a lot of uncertainty in his home life.

I have been working with several boys, a couple in particular, to develop consideration for other students' desires (e.g. what sports/games we play), resilience (persisting when losing or feeling tired), and listening/empathy/patience (listening when other students are doing their check-in and not getting distracted).



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Orewa Primary

Highlights

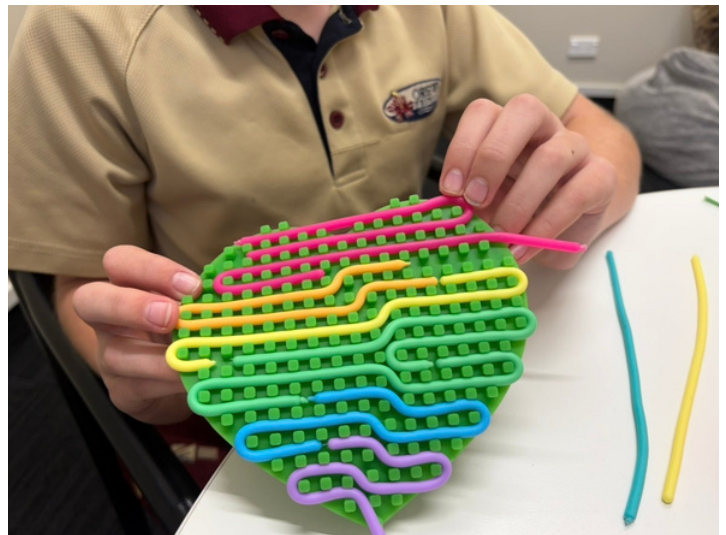
Spending the day with the Yr6 learners at their Camp out at Peter Snell Youth Village. It was a great day full of fun activities! I had the privilege of spending time with a variety of learners, whom I don't usually get to connect with, while supervising them making pikelets during their 'Hobo Stove Cooking' activity.

What a privilege it's been again this term to continue connecting with specific school parents, during a monthly coffee group organised by Lisa Davies.

One of my highlights this term has been seeing how students use my "More Than Words" imagery cards to describe how they are doing and feeling. These cards have been such a helpful resource for my sessions with the students - a really helpful aid for them to explore what's going on for them.

Student Story

A Yr6 student was pleasantly surprised and encouraged to hear that she'd helped another learner from a different school, by allowing me to share her story and positive experience of an ingrown toenail operation she'd recently recovered from. The learner she'd helped was feeling incredibly anxious about having to have the same operation, and was visibly calmed and relieved when hearing someone the same age had already gone through the same thing, and that it had been a positive experience and outcome for her!



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Orewa Primary

Student Story

A learner I see so eagerly anticipates our time together, that if there are going to be any changes to the school schedule, she seeks out reassurance from staff/school management that it won't impact our time together. This not only shows her enthusiasm for our SALT sessions but it demonstrates her growing ability to seek help, communicate her worries/concerns, and future plan for a successful outcome!



Student Story

A story that comes to mind from this term is one that highlights the value of consistency as a youth worker and what it means for students when you turn up for them week after week.



During part of the term, this particular student had been struggling with motivation for school (due to a multitude of factors) however, he was taking great joy in the sport of basketball, so for each session we would work on basketball skills and do a “check in time” for the latter end of the session. At the end of the session he would ask, “You’ll be here next week, right?”, to which I answered “of course”, and he responded with a great smile, feeling reassured. It was so great to see the difference this reassurance made for this student.

By the end of the term this student was getting a lot better at pressing into his strengths at school and his overall joy and confidence in himself had definitely grown, which was so awesome to see.



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Silverdale School

Highlights

The joy I see in multiple learners, when I make myself visible and accessible during break times, engaging and connecting with them through outdoor games.

One of my highlights of the term is being invited by students to play sports with them at interval/lunch. The sports open up great opportunities to have conversations with them, for them to build resilience, build teamwork skills and grow in overall confidence.

It's really encouraging to receive positive feedback from teachers throughout the term as it's great to know that the growth the students are displaying in the sessions is also being shown in the classroom.



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Silverdale School

Student Stories

This term I was able to increase my morning session times, which has resulted in a learner now opening up on a deeper level with me about her difficulties at home and the struggles she experiences. Being a trusted sounding board for this learner has already lightened her mental load, as she told me “I’ve been carrying all of this inside me for such a long time”. I was able to help her gain some positive perspectives on some of the things she shared.

It’s difficult for working parents to get time off to attend school assemblies, so whenever I’m able to be there and cheer learners on, I do! It means so much to them, seeing how their faces light up when they know someone is there for them. It also provides valuable opportunities for me to speak validation and encouragement into learners afterwards, whenever they’ve performed or achieved something during them.

A couple of learners that I have been seeing for the last couple of years have really made significant steps in their growth, this year in particular. These two learners are both very strong willed individuals who have gone from always wanting their own way, regardless of how the other person felt, to now being able to negotiate their needs, make compromises, and even putting their own wants aside so that the other can have their needs met.

Another learner I have been working with has been going through some hard and uncertain stuff this term. On numerous occasions this student was able to open up (towards the end of the sessions) about these difficulties, so that they could have someone to talk to and process these things. It is a real privilege to be a safe adult for this learner to process things with so that they don’t have to carry this heavy mental load on their own and to be able to see the fruit of trust being built over time.



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Wainui School

Highlights

Spending the day with Yr 5 and 6 campers at YMCA Lodge in Shakespeare Park. The activities our group enjoyed were Archery, Orienteering, Kayaking and Bush cooking!

Meeting the new Life Education Educator Sam, and participating in one of her sessions on 'How to be a good digital citizen'. It was great to meet Harold the giraffe again and see how the resources I'd created during my time in this role, were still being put to excellent use!

One of the highlights for me this term was seeing the yr8s test out their 'space landing parachutes', by dropping them off the balcony and seeing if the egg inside would survive. It was really fascinating to see them demonstrate their innovative, creative thinking and put it to the test.



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Wainui School

Student Story

I was able to help a learner at camp, who was struggling with asthma symptoms after a particularly physical activity. She started to panic and cry as soon as her asthma symptoms began. I was able to quickly retrieve her medication, sit with her, comfort and calm her with some relaxing techniques, while administering her inhaler through a spacer.

Student Story

A learner who is experiencing friendship issues, said it was helpful for her to have the space and time during our Salt session to be able to talk things through with the particular friends present. She also chose to openly share how she and all her siblings, have FASD (Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder) and tearily explained that it affects her emotions. Being able to share this kind of personal information is not just insightful but also demonstrates the level of trust she has in our group.

Student Story

One learner requested time to talk with me about something personal that she didn't feel comfortable doing so with the new school counsellor yet, because he's a male. Knowing this, I'll now be able to offer to attend a counselling session with her next term, in order to help her facilitate a connection with him to access that extra support and service.

Student Story

On one of the weeks during the term, one of my students really opened up during our "check in time", describing how he was feeling really frustrated about a situation between him and his sister. This led to a conversation of what to do with this frustration and how he can communicate this to his mum and sister. I was stoked to see his awareness of his emotions and willingness to share them. It really highlighted the value of having these weekly "check in times", and how simply by giving students the opportunity to share, they are able to grow in their emotional awareness and communication.

