



## AUCKLAND, NEW ZEALAND

### BTE Success Stories

#### BRIDGE TO EMPLOYMENT

Launched in 1992, Bridge to Employment (BTE) is a Johnson & Johnson initiative that prepares youth for brighter futures. For more information about BTE, visit [www.bridge2employment.org](http://www.bridge2employment.org)

December 2019

## Why BTE?

There is significant disparity in New Zealand between the achievement of Māori and Pasifika students, who roughly fall 10 to 20 percentage points behind other ethnic groups in reading, writing and mathematics (Houghton, 2015). Despite much effort in recent years, these young people remain disadvantaged in terms of how the school system is preparing them for future success and wellbeing. The Bridge to Employment (BTE) Auckland partners saw BTE as a way to both encourage students to complete year 13 as well as to expand their idea of the opportunities available to them after high school.

BTE is designed to provide this exposure to students. Working together, Johnson & Johnson, secondary and postsecondary schools, and community organizations develop programs that feature academic enrichment, career readiness and exploration activities, and higher education preparation. They aim to increase the number of students enrolling in higher education and pursuing careers in STEM<sup>2</sup>D (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math, Manufacturing, and Design) or health care.

## BTE: A Catalyst for College & Career Aspirations

BTE Auckland invited all students in year 10 in 2016 at James Cook High to apply for the program. The only criterium was a minimum school attendance rate of 70%. Students were asked to submit a written application prior to acceptance into the program. In total, 48 students applied and were accepted. The program started in March 2017.

In order to improve students' *academic achievement*, BTE Auckland offered Wednesday Workshops which included academic enrichment in addition to career and higher education readiness and exploration. Students also took part in academic advising and coaching, covering topics such as exam preparation and school subject selection.

To encourage students to *consider pursuing higher education*, the program offered sessions with the Auckland University of Technology and a 3-day experience at AUT's Manukau campus to provide information about tertiary life and opportunities. Coaching and advising sessions explored scholarship application preparation and an afterschool "next steps" plan.

### SITE PROFILE

#### Location

Auckland, New Zealand

#### Grant Period

2017 - 2019

#### Sponsor

Johnson & Johnson (J&J)

#### Coordinator

Brothers in Arms (BIA)

#### Community Partners

Auckland University of  
Technology (AUT)

James Cook High School

#### Volunteers

25 volunteers

1,605 total hours

#### Directly Served

49 students

78% female

49% completion rate

## STUDENT OUTCOMES

**52%** of students graduated from the BTE program.

**52%** of BTE students completed year 13.

**13** BTE students won prestigious senior academic awards, including the cross-cultural award and the James Cook Award for Leadership.

**60%** of BTE graduates felt connected to and viewed a J&J employee as a positive role model

**54%** of BTE graduates enrolled in tertiary education

**37%** of BTE graduates aimed to pursue a career in STEM-related sector

**88%** felt BTE provided an advantage in applying for college and jobs

**Several** BTE students received scholarships to tertiary institutions, such as MIT and Otago University

To assist students in *exploring their education or career paths*, the program included J&J Exposure Days where students could see how academic subjects are used in different fields/positions. James Cook High School alumni and other community leaders served as guest speakers and shared their educational and career journeys. Career coaching sessions increased awareness of career pathways and facilitated creation of a career plan as well as strengthened practical skills such as resume writing.

Students participated in a Waka Day and overnight camp where they had the opportunity to experience traditional seafaring on a traditional Waka (double hull canoe) as well as gain cultural pride and belonging as Pacific Islanders

### Impact of BTE

Of the 46 students who started BTE in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 24 (52%) completed the program. Overall, BTE students performed better than their peers over time for GPA and in math. All BTE students identified BTE as very important to their school success. In addition, all BTE students who completed the program graduated on time.

The BTE partners explained that when talking to students about their favorite activities, the students often brought up events that focused on relationships (e.g. team-building exercises or the overnight camp). The BTE site coordinator said the camp helped to increase the BTE student group cohesion: “getting to a place where students were more comfortable with each other to express themselves.” The J&J lead underlined the importance of the camp, pointing out that it was also key for the relationship between the students and volunteers (navigators). He noted, “It was also about the students feeling comfortable with J&J...they really wanted to get to know the navigators more. It really worked to foster and create a safe space for people to begin to express, to share and hopefully to learn.” And because it was on the students’ “home ground,” it put the J&J navigators in a position where “they didn’t know things and were learning and engaging with the kids. But as a result, the relationships that came out were so much stronger.”

Students reported gaining skills such as time management and study skills. In addition, they pointed out that trips such as J&J company tours or visiting the Auckland University of Technology (AUT) reinforced the options available for their future. One BTE student said, “[BTE] gave me more options for the future and [showed] that we have heaps of opportunities.” Another student commented, “[Attending the J&J Open Day] opened my eyes to the possibility of

maybe becoming a nurse in the future.” Students also explained that the BTE program offered them support and encouragement.

The BTE partners agreed that the strong buy-in from J&J enabled navigators the flexibility to spend time on the program. At the same time, J&J underlined the importance of their commitment and set clear expectations up front for navigators which resulted in a good response.

## Sustainability

The BTE partners will review the program and decide on a future partnership by July 2020.

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- A BTE-Auckland, New Zealand  
student