TOITOI

STORY SEARCH

Write a story or poem inspired by 11-year-old Zuri Hazlehurst's incredible artwork published in Toitoi 18.

You may submit in English or te reo Māori.

Send it to submit@toitoi.nz and include your name, age, school and a parent or teacher's name and contact details.

Submissions are due on April 24, 2020.

We will publish the best story in Toitoi 20 with additional illustrations by Zuri.

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Pōhutukawa Playground

I was dreaming in my warm, cosy bed about building a playground for all the kids in Pōhutukawa Bay. The next morning I woke up and headed downstairs for breakfast.

"Māmā, Pāpā, last night I had this amazing idea!" I said.

"What is it, Punga?" asked Māmā.

"I dreamed about how Pōhutukawa Bay doesn't have a tree playground. So I thought it would be a good idea if we asked the council to make one in a tree near the beach for all the kids here," I explained. Māmā and Pāpā shared a look.

"That's a good idea. Have you thought of what it would look like and what rauemi to make it out of?" asked Pāpā.

"Uh, not yet, but after breakfast I will design it!" I said.

It took a whole day to plan. The next morning I jumped up and got out of my fuzzy bunny PJs and into my building clothes. I rushed downstairs to show my parents the plan.

"Māmā, Pāpā!" I squealed. "Here is my mahere of what the tree should look like!" I said.

Pāpā took the mahere and had a look. He nodded then passed it to Māmā. "Ka pai, Punga," she said as she passed it back to me.

"Now all we have to do is ask for permission to build it," I said, satisfied.

"Okay, Punga, I will book an appointment to see the council," Pāpā said.

At 4:00pm, we went to the council and asked for permission. They actually said yes! So when we got home we started to build straight away.

In two weeks' time it was finished. We had a grand opening. The tree playground was a hit for all the kids in Pōhutukawa Bay. The news reporters said, "This tree playground was built by a local kid and her parents and it is the first in Aotearoa!"

Words by Elisa Currie, age 9
Pictures by Zuri Hazlehurst, age 12