

TESTIMONIALS FOR ANNETTE PRESLEY, ONZM

19 November 2016

Kia ora Annette,

I wanted to just let you know how grateful I am that you came to talk to my students on Tuesday. Every single person there came up to me afterwards to express their gratitude and admiration and to tell me how inspiring they found your talk. I know that you felt disappointed at the numbers, but truly, the people who were there really needed to hear what you had to say. As I mentioned to you at the time many of them are out of their countries for the first time, alone and many having left babies and infants behind with partners or relatives. They arrive here bereft, in a strange land where NOTHING is as they have been led to believe by unscrupulous agents. The language, the food, the climate, the cultural relation, the curriculum or the teaching methods are all different from their prior experience. The fact that they are here at all and have survived the first semester is a testament to their courage and tenacity to make a better world for themselves and their families. I know how brave they are because I have been down that same road, but I had the luxury of a job waiting for me. The day after your talk, we had a farewell party for some of the students and I reminded them of the state they were in a year ago and of where they are now. At the moment, they are on the threshold of the next big change – trying to find a job and put down more permanent roots in New Zealand, making friends and finding support once again through their own steadfast activities and determination. Your talk came at just the right time to carry them through to the next phase of their lives here. So be sure that you have made a profound contribution to their dreams, hopes and ambitions. Please thank Michelle also for her support and kindness. I hope that the rest of your stay in Rotorua was memorable.

With deep gratitude

Tony Ward, Dip. Arch., PhD
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