

# Rainbow mountains sustain Juno's taha wairua.

As I sat with Juno creating two paintings, I was drawn into her world of slow, calm strokes of paint onto the paper. She thoughtfully combined colours, watching carefully to see how they merged and changed as they blended together. As one stroke of the paintbrush created a curved line, Juno told me that she was painting a mountain. I wondered if she knew the story about our sacred mountains, Ōtanewainuku, Pūwhenua,

Harawene, and Mauao? I began the pūrākau, "A long, long time ago, before there were people in Aotearoa, there were four mountains in the Hautere Ranges." Juno continued her mahi, and told me, "My rainbow mountain loves my painting." In her next re-telling of the story about her paintings, her work had become the "Rainbow Ranges." I wondered if she had been a little inspired by our majestic local maunga?

## ***My thoughts on Juno's learning.***

Juno has a unique way of expressing her thoughts and feelings that is quite magical to behold. Molly has just written a story about her love of the waiata, Tūtira mai ngā iwi, and how she connects so deeply to it. Painting taps into this expression and empowerment of her wairua too. Taha wairua is about the things that celebrate who you are as a person. What you believe, and your spiritual connections. Juno is already aware of what nourishes her taha wairua, and what makes her heart sing. Taha wairua is part of Sir Mason Durie's metaphor of Te Whare tapa whā, of hauora - health and wellbeing. It represents how all aspects of our health are intertwined, so that wellbeing is supported holistically. Like a whare, we need all areas of health to be well for a strong sense of wellbeing. Juno is so instinctive about how to nurture her own hauora, and her expressive paintings were another example of how she does this. Her interest in te pūrākau of Mauao will contribute to her hauora too, as her understandings about our significant maunga strengthens her connection to them.

## ***How can we continue to support his learning to grow for Juno?***

I am sure that Juno will find many ways to continue to nurture her taha wairua through her love of the arts. I would like to re-visit the pūrākau of Mauao with her, as it seemed like it resonated deeply. Some time ago we made costumes so that we could act out the story. I wonder if being Pūwhenua, a beautiful mountain that rainbows were sure to visit, would be something she would like to do?

Aroha nui, Tanya  
January 2023



# Our exploration of the pūrākau of Mauao continues.

This interest in “Rainbow ranges my home”, continues to inspire Juno to express her thoughts on paper. As we sat together on another quiet morning thinking about how a maunga with no name became a very much loved Mauao, I mentioned how sad he felt when he learnt Pūwhenua does not love him. Juno thought for a moment, and as she drew her maunga, she thought that Mauao was sad because people kicked him and hurt him. I agreed that would be a sad thing. This big feeling was still on Juno’s mind when she shared her next thought; “He’s sad my shoes. I broke my shoe.” We all know just how deeply Juno loves shoes, and this would be one of the biggest sadness Juno could imagine!

I am inspired by how much Juno is thinking about this pūrākau, and know that we will be exploring it much more. This is still so much of the journey of Mauao to be explored! Growing a sense of Tūrangawaewae me te kaitiakitanga - Place and environment, is an aspiration of Ngāti Ranginui. Juno will grow with an understanding of the stories and importance of significant landmarks locally. As she learns to love and care for these special places, they in turn will nurture her hauora. There is something quite unique and grounding about feeling connected to a place and the people within it. It is essential for a contented life, and I know that Juno has many ways to express her growing knowledge.

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