

# Only one in 10 make it

by Rakapa Sturm

After winning the Wellington Regional Speech Contest for the Pei Te Hurinui Jones Speech Contest Debbie Rimene had to leave two days before the National Speech Contest to go to Hawaii.

Debbie had been selected for the American Field Exchange Student Programme to attend Kamehameha School for her senior year. Incidentally two of Debbie's cousins also had been chosen in the same exchange programme, all students of Makoura College in Master-ton. Eddie Rimene who is Debbie's first cousin went to Iowa, and Joanne Matiaha, another cousin is hosted in Mendocino, California.

Because the three successful cousins were joining the international AFS pro-

gramme for 85-86 their families were expected to provide funds. This was a very expensive proposition and serious fund raising was needed. The prospective host families with whom the participants lived were also carefully screened and chosen to volunteer for this. But in Debbie's case, having three from the same family and from the same school was highly unusual.

But from their Maori Club "Te Kapa Haka o Makoura" they received tremendous support with fundraising

from socials and concerts. More importantly a komiti was set up called the "AFS ki Wairarapa Maori Students Komiti" to conquer the target amount of \$15,000. All the Komiti officers were whanau. The chairman Mr Pani Himona and the treasurer Mr Henry Te Karu worked hard towards organising fund raising events. Hangi at local rugby fixtures, raffles and woodcutting events were held. Debbie's Uncle Henry was responsible for grants, seeing what donations, and scholarships were available. Many donations came from whanau, local marae and sports clubs in which the prospective AFS students were involved. Other organisations like Eastern and Central Savings Bank and Meat Workers Union donated funds. Debbie's father and brothers are freezing workers, and so Borthwicks Freezing Works donated, also, weekly raffles were allowed there. Numerous organisations and relations donated, and the target amount of \$15,000 was reached in June 1985, after starting in November 1984.

Criteria that the AFS seek in students include interesting and outgoing personalities, then a written report about oneself and interests. Family size, school life and home routine was also required. After all this, applicants must wait for the final selection and their placement in the USA.

Debbie is one of five AFS exchange students in Hawaii, and knowing these students is an enjoyable teenage experience. There is Carlos from Peru, Henrick from Switzerland, Sandy from Sweden and Vibe from the Netherlands.

Like Debbie says "Knowing them is a cool buzz as we all have something in common. We are all away from home and living a different kind of life here in Hawaii. As well as comparing our feelings and experiences of our lives here, we can share our own culture from our homelands with each other".

Debbie also enjoys associating with the five students of AFS at her school, Kamehameha. They have all just returned from overseas from Turkey, Columbia, Brazil, Italy and Bolivia after spending their summer of two months in these countries.

"We talk about our exchanges and the problems encountered. This is benefiting me as well as them" said Debbie.

## Kamehameha School

"I reckon this school is unbelievable" says Debbie. "It retains an amazing number of educational facilities such as computers, microfilms and video gear. Students use them all in abundance. I find the school work easy, not that I'm getting good grades but it's not hard. The variety of subjects are really neat because Kamehameha offers sub-

