



Two girls at breakfast in the Health Camp, 1982. Photo Terry O'Connor.

All good children

All Good Children, by Auckland photographer Terry O'Connor and television journalist Katherine Findlay, explores the daily life of a typical Children's Health Camp.

"How many mouths have you got? One.

How many ears?

Two.

Well, that means you have to listen twice as much as you talk."

"The Camp director welcomes a new bunch of young recruits to a health camp adventure. And on an adventure, it's important to listen so you don't miss anything.

"He believes that all children are good children and that most will respond to a positive approach. During a stay at camp each child will be singled out and praised for good deeds, no matter how small."



Two boys comb their hair in the morning at the Health Camp, 1982. Photo Terry O'Connor

For most New Zealanders the yearly health stamp is their only connection with the health camp system, but for many thousands of children and parents, the health camp experience has changed their life.

Health stamps have been published since 1929 to aid the camps. New Zealand's first health camp, however, was founded in 1919 by Dr Elizabeth Gunn, who lived to see not only the initiation of the health stamp system, but also many more health camps held all over the country.

Today, more than 2,000 children go to our health camps each year. Casualties of a new poverty that often has little to do with money, Katherine Findlay points out, many of the children are emotionally disturbed. Most have learning difficulties and almost half come from broken homes. The Pakuranga camp is typical of the six Children's Health Camps run by the Health Department and the Children's Health Camps Board. The other camps are situated at Whangarei, Gisborne, Otaki, Christchurch and Roxburgh. A new camp will be opened at Rotorua this year.

In words and over 90 photographs, throughout **All Good Children** it is the child's experience of a Health Camp that predominates: the anxiety of parting with parents, undergoing medical checkups, getting used to the dormitories, a new daily routine of work and play, meeting numerous other children and slowly getting to know the staff.

Through to the joy of new achievements, of being understood and cared for, plus the new experience of bush and nature walks, and visits to the zoo, for many children who have not been there before. Working very much in the humanistic documentary mainstream of photography, Terry O'Connor's viewpoint is tender and compassionate.

"He photographs from the heart," says the editor of **PhotoForum**, John B.

Turner, Senior Lecturer in Photography at Elam School of Fine Arts, Auckland University."

All Good Children was conceived by Terry O'Connor, who not only edited and sequenced his photographs, but also collaborated with designer Helen Humphries and the printers of the book. Dedicated to the children in it, and to all children, this is his first book. His aim was to show parents and their children what it is like at a Health Camp; to see how it fulfilled its aims and objectives.

For convenience of access he chose to photograph the Pakuranga Children's Health Camp which is nearest to his home. He worked weekends at first, then took time off from his job as a commercial printing salesman for Wilson & Horton, to allow him to follow one intake of children through their stay from start to finish, from before breakfast to after bedtime every day. The result was nearly 2,000 photographs, made over a period of one year, from which 90 were chosen for the book.

Terry O'Connor was born in Auckland in 1946. He has worked as a technical sales representative in printing and in photography. Active as a freelance photographer since 1975, his photographs have been published in various magazines and newspapers in New Zealand and overseas, in addition to the recent books **By Batons and Barbed Wire**, and **The Tour**. His photo essays on such topics as Samoan immigrants, a top jockey and a Salvation Army home have appeared in **PhotoForum**, **Auckland Metro** and the **Listener**. Currently working on a television documentary, Terry O'Connor lives in Auckland with his wife and son.

Katherine Findlay was born in 1947 in Palmerston North. She has a B.A. in English from Victoria University, and prior to full-time journalism, worked for the State Services Commission, Foreign Affairs, and the Department of Trade and Industry in Wellington. A feature writer for the **Listener**, **Auckland Metro** and other journals, she aims to be diverse, although she has a special interest in the arts and current affairs. As a broadcaster in Auckland, she has worked for Radio Pacific and Television New Zealand. She is currently a reporter for the television arts programme **Kaleidoscope**.

PhotoForum Inc. is a non-profit society dedicated to the promotion of photography as a means of communication and expression. It has branches in Auckland and Wellington. **PhotoForum** magazine is published three times a year. Recent editions include **The Wanganui** by Anne Noble, and **The Way We Like It**, the 1983 Desk Diary of Contemporary New Zealand Photographs.