

canoe house at Waitangi, helping with the Waitangi meeting house, a commission for the Maritime Parks Board, a miniature canoe for Queen Elizabeth, a papahau for Prince Edward, and numerous others.

Obviously Wallace Hetaraka will in time help to correct the "paucity of carved meeting houses in Tai Tokerau" as mentioned by Dr Bruce Gregory.

The exhibition organiser and designer was Lisa Graig. The Tai Tokerau exhibits were organised by the Tai Tokerau Maori Arts and Crafts Society. Keir Volkerling was responsible for lighting and the erection of Arnold Wilson's "Ode to Tane" and Peter Monroe was responsible for sound.

Bone/stone/wood carvings by Hec Busby and Charlie Devonshire.



Pre-school unit working well

Rita Thomas

The YWCA Mobile pre-school Unit has been so successful in its ten year history, that it has been adopted nationwide.

The unit was established because of the concern shown by public health nurses over the lack of Maori and Island children participating in pre-school services.

"Quite a number of these people may not have the confidence to visit an actual kindergarten or playcentre and assess its value", said former Director of the Hutt Valley YWCA, Mrs Betty Sinclair.

A survey done nearly ten years ago by the Department of Maori and Island Affairs, showed that of the approximately 3,000 Maori and 300 Pacific Islanders in the Hutt Valley, many families had never applied for kindergartens or playcentres.

The Hutt Valley unit, working closely with local kindergartens was set up because of the growing waiting lists for the Lower Hutt Free Kindergarten and the Playcentre.

The unit, which visits children in their homes is equipped with play and educational materials, is not only for the children but for their mothers as well.

Director of the Mobile Kindergarten and a trained kindergarten teacher, Mrs Helen Whatman, feels that bringing mothers out of the isolation of being tied by toddlers to the home, is important.

"Parents involvement is tremendously important as it is better not to

isolate very young children from their mothers", said Mrs Whatman. "If mothers and children can join in activities together it is enjoyable for both, especially if it is in the familiar atmosphere of their own home.

There are large numbers of Maori and Island people in the Hutt Valley as well as some Chinese and Indian families.

Mrs Margaret Zachariadis was the social worker who started the project.

"I prefer to work with people in their own homes rather than in huge buildings such as halls which are cold, impersonal and often frightening. I felt the best way to speak to people was on a person-to-person basis rather than from a rostrum."

She also purchased a van and equipped it with pre-school materials and saw to the running costs.

"I was given a great deal of help from the Departments of Education, Health and Maori Affairs, as well as from the Upper Hutt Kindergarten Association and the Hutt Valley Playcentre. Their representatives thought it worthwhile, especially as it would involve parents, with mothers learning about play and language from their children", she said.

When the estimated cost of establishing the project was completed, the plans were sent to the German Women's Committee of the World Day of Prayer who donated \$7,000 for the now familiar blue van.

Originally, the project was undertaken by volunteers using their own cars. Even Mrs Whatman was a volunteer — with the most simple equipment. However, the scheme has been so successful that Mrs Whatman is now paid a salary by the Education Department.

There are 88 children on the roll at the moment. The unit operates at Hutt Park, Petone, Epuni, Naenae and Pomare and regular reports are made by the teacher and volunteer helpers. But Mrs Whatman spends extra time taking older children to kindergarten, when mothers have a transport problem.

The mobile unit introduces children and their mothers to pre-school education and as they become familiar with it, they go to existing pre-school centres thus leaving room for other children to join the group.

"The mothers' co-operation is vital," says Mrs Whatman. "They are the axis on which the whole project works. Their confidence and support is most necessary. They feel the scheme is so worthwhile that they happily participate in a roster system of homes which they have worked out with the teacher. The furniture in the room is rearranged and black plastic laid on the floor to prevent any mess. The mothers work as aides and provide refreshments."

A group is ten children who arrive at the homes chosen, with their mother and younger brothers and sisters for one and a half hours. This brings together mothers who have things in common.

The project is administered by the Hutt Valley YWCA, working with a special committee and a group of consultants has also been formed. A close liaison is kept with the National YWCA who support the project completely.

"It has been reciprocal as both the YWCA and I have gained much knowledge about the polynesian way of life," says Mr Whatman. "The relaxed relationships that have developed in each of the pre-school groups has been an inspiration to us all".