RUGBY FOR LIFE®

CHARITABLE TRUST

2025

Q4 REVIEW







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CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS











Whānau and friends of Rugby for Life,

Quarter four has been a busy and rewarding period, with strong post-season club engagement and impactful kaupapa delivered across our communities. Once again, we have seen clear alignment to our three key pillars in action at grassroots level.

A standout highlight was the Sri Lanka cultural and rugby exchange, where four of our players strengthened international relationships and proudly represented our Rugby for Life whānau. Experiences like this build confidence, broaden horizons and reinforce the power of rugby to connect people across cultures. We are excited to see where this relationship will head to in 2026 and beyond.

Across the network, strong funding outcomes totalled $65,690.41 this quarter through Tu Manawa, Foundation North, Lotteries, Grass Roots, Pub Charity and local fundraising efforts.

None of this happens without our dedicated coordinators working closely with committees, volunteers, schools and community organisations to create safe, whānau-friendly environments.

Looking ahead, 2026 will be a significant year for Rugby for Life. We are excited to further evolve and strengthen our Education, Training and Employment programme, creating clearer pathways and even more meaningful opportunities for our rugby communities. This will mean more engaged work force for future economic growth.

To our funders, sponsors and donors, thank you. Your support enables our youth-focused kaupapa to thrive. Together, we continue to build stronger communities through rugby.

Thank you for being part of this kaupapa.
Ngā mihi nui





Ajit Balsingham
Chair of the Board
Rugby for Life

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YOUTH LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT



Removing Barriers, Creating Opportunity

WHANGARURU AFTERSCHOOL PROGRAMME

The Whangaruru community identified that many rural tamariki face real barriers to participation including distance, transport, cost and limited access to activities outside school and rugby. This programme was created to remove those barriers and provide a safe, positive after-school environment where tamariki could build confidence, strengthen wellbeing and deepen whānau connection to the club.

Funding of $4,100 was secured through the Tū Manawa Fund, enabling the delivery of six sessions for 39 tamariki, including 17 aged 9 and over and 22 aged 5 to 8. Van transport and kai were provided at every session to ensure equitable access for all families.

Four sessions focused on horse riding, delivered in partnership with The Farm in Whangaruru, with the final two sessions bringing summer fun on a giant waterslide. Planning included health and safety, transport logistics and significant voluntary hours to ensure the programme was well run and inclusive.

Whānau support was strong throughout, and The Farm partnership has opened the door for long term collaboration. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with many keen to see the kaupapa continue.





THE IMPACT

"This has been the most meaningful work of my role. It shows what is possible when we truly prioritise tamariki."

KERI WYNYARD - CLUB COORDINATOR

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EMPLOYMENT, TRAINING & EDUCATION SNAPSHOT

The Employment, Training, and Education (ETE) programme continues to deliver on its mandate of connecting Rugby for Life whānau and community members with sustainable employment and educational pathways.

This quarter has seen strong momentum as we deepen our collective impact through local rugby networks. By leveraging these relationships, Hikurangi RC and Otamatea have supported 21 people into employment across sectors such as civil works, building, and landscaping. We are proud to confirm we have exceeded our June 2026 goal of 30 placements, reaching 69 total ETE outcomes. This progress is attributable to strengthening strategic employer and education partnerships, which continue to support clients across their training, development, and long-term career journeys.



45 RANGATAHI

We have 45 currently engaged in our Employment, Training and Education project.

Keen to offer apprenticeships or work-experience?
Email matthew.d@rugbyforlife.org.nz

KEY OUTCOMES - Q4 2025



1. 69 TOTAL ETE OUTCOMES

Exceeding Strategic Targets
We have officially surpassed our June 2026 goal of 30 placements. To date, the program has facilitated 56 employment outcomes, 9 education/training placements, and 4 specialised development opportunities via the Sri Lanka rugby trip.



2. CLUB-LED EMPLOYMENT SUCCESS

Hikurangi and Otamatea have driven strong local job creation, supporting 21 individuals into essential trade roles including building apprenticeships and landscaping positions, demonstrating impactful club-led employment pathways.



3. HIGHER EDUCATION PATHWAYS

We have supported 9 individuals into tertiary study, with learners now enrolled across New Zealand in diverse university programs including degrees at Otago, Massey, and Waikato, expanding long-term education pathways.



4. SUSTAINABLE CAREER GROWTH

Casual to Permanent Transitions
This quarter focused on job security, with several participants progressing from casual roles into permanent full-time positions and apprenticeships, reflecting strong movement toward sustainable long-term career development pathways.

CLUB SUSTAINABILITY FOCUS

CHANTELLE PEENI
MAUNGATŪROTO RFC









Maungatūroto Pink Ribbon Walk – Breast Cancer Fundraiser

The Pink Ribbon Walk was created in 2025 to bring the Maungatūroto community together in support of Breast Cancer Awareness Month, with coordination and drive from COORDINATOR NAME, our local Rugby for Life coordinator. With breast cancer having impacted many local whānau, the kaupapa carried deep personal meaning and became more than just a fundraiser.

The purpose was simple. Create a fun, inclusive event that united the community, raised awareness and generated funds for a cause that touches so many lives. Held after the rugby season wrapped up, it provided space for reconnection while walking for something that truly matters.

Planning was proudly community led. The event was registered with Breast Cancer Foundation NZ and a fundraising page was launched. Official merchandise was sold on the day, club and community members donated home baking, and Maungatūroto Four Square generously backed the BBQ. Promotion moved quickly through club networks and social media, showing the strength of local connection.

Event Highlights

- 50+ participants took part in the walk
- Many more supported through baking, BBQ and donations
- Strong whānau vibe with pink outfits across the walkway
- Favourable weather creating a positive, energetic atmosphere
- $1,070 raised for Breast Cancer Foundation NZ

Due to the overwhelming support and positive feedback, the club intends to make the Pink Ribbon Walk an annual event. With leadership from coordinators like COORDINATOR NAME, this event shows how rugby clubs can rally communities around causes that matter and create impact well beyond the sideline.

THIS KAUPAPA IS ONLY JUST GETTING STARTED & ALREADY IT'S IMPACT IS BEING FELT WELL BEYOND THE WALKWAY AND FAR BEYOND THE CLUBROOMS.

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PATHWAY TOUR SRI LANKA





Rugby, Culture & Leadership in Action

Rugby For Life launched its first international Pathway Tour to Sri Lanka, creating a powerful blend of high-performance rugby, cultural immersion and leadership growth.

Sparked by connections between RFL leadership and Sri Lanka Rugby, the tour opened doors for Northland players to compete in premier Sri Lankan competition while building life skills well beyond the field.

This pilot is about more than rugby. It is about growing adaptable, grounded leaders who represent Aotearoa with pride.

RFL funded travel insurance and on-ground coordination, while clubs supported flights, visas and living costs. Behind the scenes, significant planning ensured cultural understanding, player welfare and integrity remained the priority throughout.

When players return, structured debriefs and club sharing sessions will strengthen the pathway for future participants. A formal nomination and selection process will launch in 2026, opening the door for more clubs to be part of this global journey.

THIS IS JUST THE BEGINNING & ALREADY THE IMPACT IS REACHING FAR BEYOND THE PITCH







Tour Highlights

- Four players selected from Whangaruru and Kamo Rugby Clubs
- Placement into Sri Lankan premier competition teams Diverse living environments building resilience and independence
- Daily pastoral care check-ins for strong welfare support
- RFL funded travel insurance and in-country coordination
- Strong relationships formed with Sri Lanka Rugby and the NZ High Commission
- Future opportunities including Māori tikanga exchanges and coaching pathways

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CLUB IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS





ONERAHI

COMMUNITY & LEADERSHIP ✓

- Rangatahi refereed U10–Senior Pacific Touch games with strong mentor support
- Committee attended wānanga to shape improvements and growth plans for 2026



OHAEAWAI

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT ✓

- Partnered with local primary school to enter touch teams
- Continued regular Social Club evenings, strengthening whānau engagement and increasing tamariki participation



OTAMATEA

PLAYER & COACH DEVELOPMENT ✓

- Delivered Off-Season Academy with NRU RDO support
- Launched external coaching development initiatives
- Established NZTFI-affiliated Central Kaipara Tag, expanding junior competition opportunities





WESTERN SHARKS

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION ✓

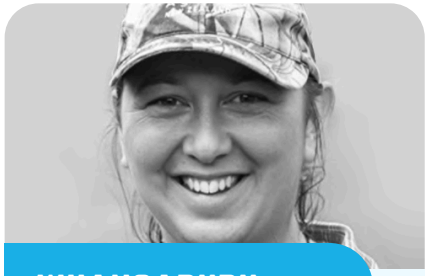
- Launched Fast Five Netball with support from NW Netball
- Partnered with local tennis club to introduce junior tennis
- Strong community turnout at Northern Wairoa Central Day



AUPOURI

FUNDRAISING & COMMUNITY SUPPORT ✓

- Fishing competition raised $8,000 for the club
- Partnered with Ngāpuhi Social Services to support dementia initiatives
- Hosted community sports nights and formed 2026 league collaboration plans



WHANGARURU

RANGATAHI DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNITY ✓

- Delivered successful after-school programme (core highlight)
- Hosted community beach day with local hapū and conservation partners through Sport Northland funding









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Thank You TO OUR FUNDERS, PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Your support continues to strengthen our clubs and the communities around them.

With your backing, we are building more than teams. We are strengthening whānau, growing leadership capability and delivering diverse programmes that respond to real community needs. From after-school initiatives and development academies to cultural partnerships, community sport nights and grassroots fundraising, the impact is practical, visible and deeply felt.

Every opportunity created, every rangatahi supported and every safe space opened reflects a shared belief in the Rugby For Life kaupapa. This progress is collective. It is grounded in partnership, guided by common values and driven by a commitment to see our people thrive.

Together, we are growing confident young leaders, empowering volunteers, supporting coordinators and helping clubs become true community hubs.

Thank you for standing alongside us. Your belief fuels momentum. Your investment widens pathways. Your partnership strengthens long-term impact.

We are proud of what we are achieving together and energised for what lies ahead in 2026, and beyond. Let's keep building strong communities - together.

Ngā mihi nui,
The Rugby for Life Team

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