

Media release

Friday 29 July

From: Victory Village Forum Organisers

(Families Commission, Victory Village Nelson and Inspiring Communities)

New Zealand's First Forum on family-centred, community led development challenges communities and government to think differently.

Organisers of the Victory Village Forum in Nelson (held this week, 27- 29 July) believe that the timing of the over booked Forum is very opportune with the release on Wednesday of the government's Green Paper on vulnerable children.

"Let's make raising, not just educating our children, our business", says Mark Brown, Principal of Victory Primary School.

Brown was also a member of the frontline forum group which helped develop the Green Paper. However he was speaking primarily as a member of the Victory, Nelson community that has been on an inspiring journey together. It is this journey that Victory Village Forum was convened to celebrate and learn from.

His statement echoed comments from Minister for Community and Voluntary Sector Tariana Turia who opened the forum: "Whanau wellbeing is well worth the work" she said.

"...we are here to celebrate and be inspired by the story of Victory - a community which has persevered over the last ten years of steady progress, driven by community collaboration through which this village has developed into the amazing community it is today. This community has certainly earned its name, Victory Village."

Brown asserts that Victory is not the only community capable of working together to see positive change.

"The forum over the last three days has shown that communities from all around the country are using their strengths to achieve amazing and positive outcomes for families and whanau", he says.

David Hanna, from Inspiring Communities noted that the forum was "great timing".

"As New Zealand is beginning to engage with the Green Paper, we can use Victory Village as one positive example of what's possible. We can learn a lot about the issues raised in the Green Paper from existing community initiatives which actively engage families at the centre of all activities and decision making", says Hanna.

250 people attended Victory Village Forum from all over the country and representing the community, business, health, education and government sectors. These

participants were encouraged to talk about what is going on in their communities around New Zealand, discuss challenges and learn from each other.

“A consistent message across the forum was that we need to think differently about supporting families and creating communities in which children can have positive experiences and achieve their full potential. Let us focus on what’s working, and not on what isn’t”, says Carl Davidson, Chief Families Commissioner.

Co-organised by Victory Village, Inspiring Communities and Families Commission was the first family-centred community development conference in New Zealand. The forum which was filled to capacity demonstrates that there is wide-spread interest in learning about new and innovative ways of working within and across communities.

The Green Paper on vulnerable children is a discussion document intending to gauge public opinion on what the government can do to improve services for children and their families. Consultation for the paper is open until February 28, 2012.

ENDS

Notes to editor:

- Representatives to the forum include; 103 community organisations/iwi groups, 74 government agencies, 31 from schools, 26 from local government (including Mayors and Deputy Mayors), 10 from funding organisations, 4 from academic and research institutions and 2 from business.
- A report from the forum will be available end of August
- The ‘Paths of Victory’ case study report on Victory Village can be downloaded from the Families Commission website.
<http://www.familiescommission.govt.nz/research/service-delivery/paths-of-victory>
- Tariana Turia’s opening speech from Victory Village forum is online:
<http://www.voxy.co.nz/politics/speech-victory-village-forum-hon-tariana-turia/5/96378>

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