

SUPPORT

A core aim of the RCOBA is to **Contribute financially** to the well-being of the school. In recent years the Association has supported teams and individual students to attend national and international sports and cultural events. We were pleased to assist Year 13 student, **Samuel Ropati**, to attend a two-week workshop in July at the world renowned Palace Dance Academy in Auckland, which was established by Parris Goebel. Goebel has choreographed award winning dance video and stage



shows for several international music performers, including Justin Bieber, Rihanna, Janet Jackson, Jennifer Lopez, and Nicki Minaj and was appointed by the Prime Minister as NZ's cultural and entertainment curator for the 2020 Dubai World Expo. The Palace is regarded as one of the finest hip-hop dance studios in the world.

Sam has ambitions to work professionally in the dance and entertainment sector and the opportunity to receive further tutoring at the Palace and to meet leading choreographers was undoubtedly exciting but also expensive in terms of travel to Auckland. A small donation from the

Association provided the extra funds required to assist Sam's family to secure his return tickets, for which he was most grateful. Sam provided a thorough report of his experiences at the workshop, abridged excerpts below:

The Palace Dance Studio & My Experience

On Monday July 9th 2019, I set foot in the creative space of The Palace Dance Studio. Being at the course and learning about the history of dance and designs, gave me more inspiration and creative ideas on what I wanted and needed to do to realise my dreams. On the day before our final assignment we had to teach our routines to the other students in the class. When I told everyone to take a two -minute water break, I then saw Parris Goebel in the corner of my eye and straight away I told everyone, "water break is over" and everyone rushed to their spots, knowing that Parris was watching. As I taught the crew, her dad (co-owner of The Palace) showed up and they were both intrigued. When my session finished one of the students told me that they heard Paris talking with my mentor instructor, Elvis, and he told me that they were talking about me!

Parris: "I really like his set. He should definitely audition next year!"

I was so excited but I didn't want to show it nor tell anyone else how I was feeling. On the last day of the course I had to teach one of the crews from The Palace for my assignment. I was extremely nervous but also thrilled to teach the Sorority Dance Crew, as I have watched their amazing journey for years and always admired their

spectacular creative dance routines at performances, gigs and also at competitions where I would actually be competing against them. After teaching them, several dancers came up to me and told me I should audition for a crew next year, they gave me compliments such as “you’re confident, talented and fierce.”



Without the help of **Rongotai College Staff** and the **Old Boys Association**, I wouldn’t have met so many inspiring people and students through the two weeks I was in Auckland. So, next year I’ll be auditioning for the Royal Family crew and hopefully I will earn a place in their team!

Sam, (front row, third from left) with the PTE Class.

At the recent school Prizegiving, Sam informed the editor that he will be travelling with The Royal Family to New York, where they will be dancing in the halftime show at the Superbowl on February 2nd. While Sam is too young to be a working dancer in the USA, he will be assisting with technical and backstage work. This is an amazing opportunity and we are “super” pleased to have helped Sam to achieve this goal.

James Hunter Outward Bound Scholarship

This fund was established in 2018 by the family of James Hunter, following his sudden death in 2017. With the very generous financial support of Old Boys, alongside matching sponsorship from local Tommy’s real estate agent, Ben Terry, we have thus far helped five students attend Outward Bound courses, with two more scheduled to go in December. The following reports from students indicate just how valuable they have found the experience to their personal growth.



Dean Banks, attended his course in May, 2019:

I had the amazing opportunity to go to Outward Bound at the start of 2019, to start with it was simply a beautiful place to spend 21 days, located in the middle of the Marlborough Sounds, the views are always fantastic, full of natural beauty, both on the sea and the land. There were also 13 new and amazing people to meet and hang out with. It’s a great basis for friendship and trust, getting to know and having amazing experiences with, the unlikely crew that you are put together

with. The opportunities I had were fantastic: I climbed a 2100m mountain; paddled along in a waka ama; learned to sail and captain a boat. It also made me much more confident in myself and my leadership ability, I was now able to put my ideas out there without fearing a response, listening instead to critical feedback offered by trusted instructors and allies. My perspective had changed, and now I felt secure in myself, ready to take on real life, outside of Outward Bound's bubble. If anyone reading this gets the opportunity to get that Outward Bound experience, I strongly recommend that they go for it. This is something that you shouldn't pass up, and especially with the Rongotai scholarship available at school.

Mac Johnson, attended course in September 2018:

"When I was there I often thought of why James was a big supporter of Outward Bound as a place of development, and it wasn't necessarily very hard to determine why. I gained many valuable traits that I will take with me both into my final year at Rongotai, and then out into the big wide world, and I really owe that to you and everyone else that helped me get there, so thanks for that!"



Fares Fawzi, Dean Banks, Mac Johnson and sponsor Ben Terry.

JAMES HUNTER OUTWARD BOUND SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT 2019:

Jonathan London



I am Jonathan London and I love Rongotai College. I have an older brother who was the first Academic Prefect in 2018 and a younger brother who will be going there in 2021. I arrived in year 9 knowing barely anyone in my class and I was more worried with my grades than anything else. However I soon realised that there was a wealth of opportunities if I was willing to go for them. In year 10 I decided I would try to take every opportunity I could. Since then I have had no end of opportunities and support in this. I have been involved in the mathswell competition, interact club, debating, choir, music night, talent quest and the Wizard of Oz production. Over the years I have played a variety of sports including badminton, floorball, squash and, this year, football and futsal. Next year I am looking to take Art, Music, Maths, Spanish, Physics and Chemistry. 6 subjects at year 13 is going to be a lot of work but I feel ready to give it a go. This school has given so much to

me and once I leave it will give that to my younger brother. Next year will be my last chance to give back to it before I leave for university and to make sure that he and all the other students have as good an experience as I am having. On Outward Bound I am hoping to gain leadership skills I can use in my school and other groups, as well as having an awesome experience to prepare me for a full year. I want to push myself to go harder and make some new friends along the way. Thanks again to everyone who has supported me in this and I can't wait to tell you all about it when I get back!

Members wanting to support the James Hunter fund can make specific donations through the [website link](#) or using the reference 'Outward Bound' in online banking payments. **Also see the donations page at the end of the Chariot.** All donations are sincerely appreciated to help us to sustain this worthwhile personal development opportunity.

Whanau Support Group award

A new initiative, He Pō Whakanui, an evening to celebrate Māori students' success and to farewell the 2019 Year 13 class of Maori leavers, has been launched by the Rongotai College Tangi-te-Keo Whānau Rōpū, Whanau Support Group. After much thought and consideration, the Whānau Rōpū, have created six Teina (Junior) and six Tuakana (Senior) awards that will be presented and celebrated. The RCOBA is honoured to support this initiative, selecting and donating the senior award trophy, **He Koru**. This award is given to the Senior Student who has embodied the BEST values across all areas of school



life. The koru is said to represent new life, growth and regeneration. In this taonga, the koru symbolises the journey of Rongotai Tamatāne as they receive the light of knowledge from those before, grow as young men in the present, before passing on their legacy to those yet to come. He Koru, *I takohatia e te whānau o Rongotai College Old Boys' Association*, will be inscribed with the school motto: *Kapohia te mātauranga me hōatu rā; Receive the light and pass it on.*

Newsflash!



Sweet Georgia is Wellington's much loved charter boat that has been operating in Wellington Harbour and Marlborough Sounds since 1993. RCOB **Mark Alty (1976-80)** has purchased the vessel from iconic owner Paul Gubb and is in full swing with Christmas functions. Early in 2020 we will be holding the first of many RCOB functions aboard Sweet Georgia. Anyone wanting to host a function on board for your team, class or year-group can contact Mark at info@sweetgeorgiacruising.com.

Welcome to our new Old Boys!

At the school Prizegiving on Thursday, December 5th, **Kiran Richards** (Arts Captain, 2015) and **Adam Rybinski** (Head Prefect, 2018), welcomed the Year 13 Leavers' class into the Old Boys' Association.

