



Raglan Area School  
Te Kura A Rohe O Whaingaroa

## End of Year Leaders Prize Giving Speech by Emma Higgins - Head Student

Tena koutou katoa,

Ko Karioi te maunga.

Ko Waikato te awa.

No Whaingaroa ahau.

Ko Raglan Area School toku kura.

Ko Higgins toku whanau.

Ko Scott toku papa.

Ko Claire toku mama.

Ko Emma toku ingoa.

No reira, tena koutou, tena koutou, tena tatou katoa.

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Kia ora everybody. My name is Emma Higgins. I am a year 13 here at Raglan Area School, and also one of the two head students for 2023. I must say, it's a bit surreal being up here on this stage in front of all these familiar faces - but I am very grateful to have this opportunity to speak to you all. Before I begin, I would like to start by recognising the efforts of our outstanding students. Whether it's putting in the countless hours of study to ace those exams, excelling in sports, upholding the values our school holds dear, or creating beautiful works of art, you have all evidently displayed incredible dedication and talent in many different ways - and each award that has been given and received today is proof of your hard work.

Though let's not forget about those who have supported and guided us over the years, and continue to encourage us to reach our full potential - our teachers and parents. You



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have all also played a massive role in our achievements. Despite the challenging and unpredictable past few years, with months away from school due to Covid-19 lockdowns and teacher strikes - you have been beside us. Day in and day out. Investing both time and energy, while also putting in the extra effort - ensuring we have the resources we need to succeed.

In the end, it's a team effort. It's the combined dedication of students, teachers, parents, and the backing of our Raglan community that allows our school to thrive. Together, we've created an environment where greatness is not just possible; but it's encouraged - which is something I am very proud of, and grateful for. So in appreciation of this, I please ask for another massive round of applause.

Now, along with this environment, we have also created one which fosters fun. We seem to be pretty good at keeping things interesting at Raglan, and routine is never our preferred choice for too long. I arrived at this kura as a year 9, coming from the small country school of Te Mata just outside of Raglan. Given that I had been accustomed to mostly gumboots and cows for the previous 8 years, let me tell you that back then, I never would have predicted the events that would occur for the next 5 years to come at Raglan Area School.

Thanks to Dave O'loughlin over there, I still remember my first trip in the ragged school van very clearly. I'm not sure if it was the rave music on full blast at the back, the tiny pothole in the road, the van's lack of suspension, - or even a bit of all three - but all I know is that when we hit that pothole my head definitely hit the ceiling as well.

Looking back, most of the time, I've found that we've been pretty entertained at school. We've had the luxury of being able to watch a new kid get absolutely annihilated by a flying dodgeball almost every lunchtime, or tackled to this very floor from murderball every PE class - and of course the teachers did not hesitate to get involved in the fun.

Even locked up in quarantine, Mr C managed to serenade us during our Zoom calls with some self-made science raps on his guitar - accompanied (naturally) by his little green dinosaur puppet. You don't get that anywhere else.

I would also like to make a special mention that I've never heard of any other school that sells toasties for one dollar. I'm not gonna lie, those certainly got me and my friends through those double periods on Wednesdays - so a big thanks to all the volunteers from feed the kids that make these kinds of things possible for our students.

So apart from exploiting the cheap toasties - if I was to give advice to all the students staying here at Raglan Area School, it would be this: keep building and adding to our



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kura. Just as we've created a vibrant, encouraging, and entertaining community - try and highlight any improvements to be made - and continue to make it even better. It's often the little things, like having a chat to your teachers in the hallways, or sharing a good laugh together, which can help in shaping the culture and spirit of our school. So take the initiative to try new things, participate in school activities, and contribute your unique talents. Whether it's excelling in academics, sports, the arts, or even helping to organize events like our school discos and balls, your involvement and attitude improves our school's experience for everyone.

Moreover, year 13's, remember that learning doesn't ever really stop after this prizegiving - the difference is that now we can begin to choose our path, and shape where it takes us. Continue to be curious, embrace new opportunities, push the boundaries, and always strive to be the best version of yourself. And don't forget to have fun along the way, because that's what makes the memories you'll cherish for a lifetime. But most importantly, I want to congratulate you. Today marks a significant turning point in all of our lives, a day of celebration for our achievements, and for making it through an entire 13 years of schooling. Whether you're off to uni next year, working, travelling, or simply seeing where the wind will take you - remember to take the principles learnt from your experiences here, and extend them to the broader world. Remember the people that guided us through, and most importantly remember that you are not wandering into this next stage of life alone. There are many people sitting in this very room (friends, parents, and teachers) - who I'm sure you can always turn to - and I encourage you to keep making these meaningful connections in the future. Since in the grand scheme of life, it's these connections that will be with us all the way - making our journey truly beautiful. The world is big, and each one of you has the potential to do something great in it. I wish you all the best of luck for your journeys ahead, and I'm excited for the incredible futures you will create.

So, as we wrap up this year, let's celebrate not just the awards but also the hard work and the support that got us here. Congrats to all of us for making it through the challenges, for creating some interesting stories to tell, and for embracing the spirit of our unique school. And one last massive thank you to everyone who has come together over the years to make our time great at Raglan Area. For us students, there is also a range of people who we don't always recognise - those who work tirelessly behind all of our successes: caretakers, cleaners, office staff, nurses, counselors, the board of trustees and more. We appreciate you, and we couldn't do it without you. One thing I've learnt while being at this school is that - through the ups and downs - those who have guided us have shaped who we are today, and they will remain by our side as we



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navigate the future. So with this, I would like to leave you with a proverb which I believe is relevant to everyone in this room:

"Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takitini". - My strength is not as an individual, but as a collective.

Thank you everyone for listening,

Tena Koutou, Tena Koutou, Tena Koutou Katoa.