



Julie Chiaroni

I currently work as a High School Career Advisor in a rural school with about 500 students. I trained as a teacher way back in the 80s and have worked in both primary and secondary schools and also in London. For about 15 years I worked part time as our children were young and during that time I ended up working in the “Transition Department” of our local High School where I did some Careers work and various other Life Skills teaching such as Sexuality Education and Drug and Alcohol Education.

In 2003 I left teaching to start up a small business as a provider of Vocational Rehabilitation for ACC. As I was a University Graduate with some experience of careers work I was well suited to delivering a range of services to ACC including Vocational Assessments and Return to Work programmes.

For the following 7 years I was very busy as the business grew and ACC continually moved the goal posts and changed the requirements of the various contracts. I enjoyed the work and met many interesting and admirable people. I worked closely with local employers all over Northland, placing clients in work trials to help them gain new skills, confidence and in many cases paid work. I also liaised with a wide range of training providers to upskill clients by helping them gain new skills such as computer skills, various driving licences and in some cases tertiary qualifications.

In 2010 I stopped working in this area due to a combination of factors. I was looking forward to some time out of work however I was asked to cover for an old friend at back at my local High School doing just two days a week supervising the Distance Learning students and the STAR and Gateway funding. During this time I completed the Certificate in Career Development and very luckily the role of Career Advisor became vacant and I was employed for a further two days per week.

I now work full time as Career Advisor, Distance Learning coordinator and STAR and Gateway funds manager. The roles complement one another and I am lucky to have an excellent Gateway Coordinator who oversees the 65-plus work placements per year we organise for our students and a number of entry level jobs that arise during the year. STAR funding is specifically tagged to provide alignment with tertiary training opportunities and is used to purchase various training and educational experiences for our students including industry based training.

Schools are amazingly busy places and I frequently feel there are not enough hours in the day. I do lots of liaison work with various tertiary providers, universities, polytechnics, private training providers, Armed Forces and Police and ITOs including hosting information and recruitment sessions in our school and taking our students to campuses and off site experiences. I am very busy with our senior students assisting them to explore and choose courses and institutions and attend Open Days and coordinating tertiary enrolments, Halls

of Residence applications and scholarship applications. I regularly invite past pupils back to visit us and share their educational, life and work experiences.

I plan and deliver Career Education Programmes throughout the school across all levels, interview individual students and assist teachers with Academic Coaching and subject specific Career Education. I maintain an enormous databank of Career and Course information and endeavour to keep it all up to date and easily accessed. I provide information for and coordinate a wide variety of experiential activity opportunities such as Spirit of Adventure, Unicef Youth Forum, Outward Bound and Overseas Student Exchanges. Presently I am working with the new Career Education Benchmarks to assess our current school status and identify areas we could improve.

Our young people continually impress me with their amazing skills, attitudes and energy and I feel privileged to be in a role where I can be a positive and affirming influence. The world of work is changing at a faster rate than ever before and our school leavers are faced with a daunting number of options and choices for the future. I try to ensure all our students have some sort of plan for their first step after school but I believe the best thing I can do to future proof our young people is develop their self belief and confidence.