



Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa
NZ Childcare Association

14th May, 2008

ASSOCIATION MEMBERS RECOGNISED IN PRESTIGIOUS AWARDS

Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/NZ Childcare Association (NZCA) members Natalie Cook, Tessa Dunleavy, Dinah Marr and Susan Johnson were among the recipients at the 6th biennial NEiTA Foundation Awards for National Excellence in Teaching and Leadership this week.

Acknowledging the excellent work of award recipients over all categories, NZCA Chief Executive Nancy Bell, highlights the work of the four association members, “these awards recognize the level of high quality early childhood education that our members promote. I congratulate them on this significant recognition of their strengths and talents.”

The award’s objective is to promote public recognition of the thousands of teachers and educational leaders who bring high levels of excellence and commitment to their work in early childhood, primary, intermediate and secondary schools through New Zealand. The recipients are acknowledged for their dedication, their exemplary teaching skills, and their innovative approaches to teaching.

The awards were presented by Hon Chris Carter, Minister of Education, in Wellington.

Natalie Cook, from Massey Childcare Centre in Palmerston North, received the award for Early Childhood – Teaching for inspiring children to recognize and extend their own ideas and find answers. Her enthusiasm also engages parents and staff as well as promoting ‘ownership’ by the children for improvement projects at the centre.

Tessa Dunleavy of the Devonport Community Crèche received the award for Early Childhood – Teaching for her assistance in promoting children’s curiosity and exploration through providing an interesting learning environment as well as being celebrated in a home/crèche partnership. Tessa is also involved in sector workshops, assists the Ministry with centre research and is a mentor to new teachers.

Dinah Marr has been at the Central Childcare and Education Centre in Gisborne for ten years. She received the award for Early Childhood - Teaching for her development of an Aesthetic Education programme that empowers children to learn through active engagement with works of art.

Susan Johnson is head teacher of the Over Two programme at the Dunedin Hospital Early Childhood Centre. Her award for Early Childhood - Leadership recognizes her role as team leader for 15 staff, her promotion of the strengths and abilities in others, and her work in a participatory way so that each person excels in their strengths,, forming a cohesive and functioning team. She is a mentor teacher and a leader who allows teachers and children to 'grow and fly' and in doing so operates a well-ordered, exciting and innovative learning programme.