

Salute to veteran kindy teacher

Early childhood education pioneer



Warm praise: Pat Hubbard received a succession of glowing tributes at her farewell.

Pat Hubbard, one of the longest-serving teachers in New Zealand, has retired at the age of 80.

Originally from England, Mrs Hubbard moved to Dunedin in the early 1970s and to Wellington in 1985.

She taught in several centres in Wellington, most recently at Mt Victoria's Piko Piko Clyde Quay Kindergarten.

In addition, she has undertaken academic research in child development, worked for the Department

of Education and for the Wellington Community Childcare Association.

She has also served on several early childhood education advisory boards and set up a quality assessment register for childcare centres.

Pressed to nominate the most enjoyable aspect of her long career, Ms Hubbard said she enjoyed being an associate teacher, supporting and mentoring new teachers.

"I love working with kids. But over recent years it has been hard

to keep up. Age is catching up with me."

Ms Hubbard's contribution was marked at a farewell ceremony at Education House last Thursday, during which Jenny Varney from Wellington Kindergartens noted Ms Hubbard's efforts for early childhood education.

"She was at the forefront of change and development of quality in early childhood education through her advocacy for training and qualifications for adults in childcare services," Mrs Varney said.

Maggie Haggerty, a senior education lecturer at Victoria University, spoke of observing Ms Hubbard teaching.

"It blew me away watching Pat work with the children," Ms Haggerty said.

"The quality of interactions with the children and the connections with their families... it was very much based on establishing relationships."

Ms Hubbard arrived in Dunedin with a masters degree in child development from the Oaks Institute in the US.

There was a strong feminist movement in Dunedin at the time, led by the likes of Anne Smith, Phyllis Leavitt and Sonja Davies.

Ms Hubbard joined them to help secure funding for a Dunedin project to assist women to work by providing a childcare option where children were well looked after.

"We wanted to combine the best of what children would get in the home with what they could get in a high-quality centre," Ms Hubbard recalled.

So the Dunedin Community Childcare Association was born, a milestone in the development of the early childcare and education association that exists in New Zealand today.

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