

## Trust wants to add positive touch

By MICHELLE HYLAND

The Touch Love Health Trust plans to introduce its massage and positive touching programme into more North Shore Schools.

Chief executive Eva Scherer says the benefits of massage have been recognised for many years but New Zealand's negative touch culture means not enough positive touching is going on.

Ms Scherer created the programme three years ago and offers it free in schools. She also introduced the programme to schools in Poland in July.

The programme was launched last year at Marlborough School in Golenfield. Ms Scherer hopes to extend it to Bayview, Manuka, Glenfield, Windy Ridge and Geenhithe primary schools.

Principal Christine Wargent is delighted at the response she has gained from students and she is backing a plan to introduce it to a cluster of schools in the North Shore this year.

Mrs. Wargent says the benefits for children include a reduction in the level of aggression by students, improved concentration, the development of a positive view of themselves, learning new skills, increasing awareness of other's feelings and needs and stress relief.

Touch Love Health Trust specialist therapists visit the schools to present the programme which takes close to an hour and involves up to 20 students.

Three massage techniques are used on the hands, back and head and music is played during the massage.

The trust also runs Children Massage Children workshops which train teachers in massage techniques and how to present them to children.

In its mission statement the trust says it "stands for the fundamental right of all children to closeness and belonging - and essential and basic factor for their life, health and well being. Our programmes teach peace in the purest form"

The trust wants to introduce its programme nationwide "to prevent child abuse, depression and suicide in New Zealand.

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