

second. CHANCE AT learning

Natasha Paul

NGĀPUHI | TE WHĀNAU-Ā-APANUI | TAINUI

I was born and raised in South Auckland but I'm from Omaio on the east coast, Mangamuka up north and Matamata. I have four children. The seed for me becoming a midwife was planted in 2005 when I was in labour with my second eldest. My midwife sat with me and talked about the need for more Māori midwives in the community. The following year I enquired about midwifery studies, but the drive to the North Shore campus was too far for me.



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Accessible education

It wasn't until 2015 that a friend of mine who worked in the kōhanga reo with my two babies told me midwifery was being offered at the Manukau AUT campus. I was shocked. I made a phone call and found they did offer the degree so I thought, "That's it!" I gave myself until the end of the year to pay off my bills and enrolled in the programme.

Whānau support

My husband was really supportive because I'd spoken about it ten years prior. We were going to be financially okay for a few years and he just said, "Go do it." Now when I get a call to go to the hospital, my babies say, "Are you going to catch the baby?" And when I get home they're like "So was it a girl or a boy?" They get really excited.

Extra hours

After high school I didn't do any studies I just did in-between jobs, so when I enrolled at AUT I had no qualifications. My first year was hard because university was new to me. I wish I'd done a bridging course and some foundation papers, it would've

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made things a lot easier. I managed because of the support and extra tutorial classes especially for Māori. There was also a study group with my classroom peers.

Scholarship

A big supporter of the Pu Ora Matatini Scholarship is the Tindall Foundation. Having the scholarship for the past two years has been awesome and the extra support with things like car maintenance, petrol and getting to and from placements. Being a midwifery student, you do a lot of travelling.

Call for more Māori midwives

I definitely think we need more Māori midwives to work with Māori māmā who aren't engaging with midwifery support earlier in their pregnancy. Sometimes it's not just about midwifery, if they're having an up and down day we try to reassure them or open up other avenues of support for them.

The next step

Next year I want to do core midwifery with Counties Manukau DHB in a hospital. They offer a new graduate programme which I'm hoping to do and then reassess where my whānau are within that. Sometimes being on-call takes lots of planning and I want to make sure the kids are at a good age when I get to that point.