



ALUMNI

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER



October 2024



*Principal Jane Stanley and students*

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Kia ora everyone,

Welcome to the Spring issue of the Alumni Newsletter. We have school news and updates on our former students, including two national honours and an amazing six former students competing at the Paris Olympics or Paralympics - one bringing home a gold!

You can also read of a musician's success at the recent North Harbour AIMES awards.

There are some changes in the physical landscape at Westlake with an upgrade to our sports facilities and the start of the long-awaited Whare Wānanga project - our special place of learning.

We are following up with two groups of former students about possible class and group reunions for early 2025. For the alumni years of 1975, '85, '95, '05 and '15, next year would mark a decade reunion.

If two or three of you from a particular year would like to get the ball rolling for a class reunion next year, we can assist you with ideas and planning. A popular option is a school tour before heading to nearby Smales Farm for drinks and snacks.

Please get in touch if we can help.

We also love to hear news and updates from alumni around the world, so feel free to email us with stories and photos, and we will do our best to share them with our

community.

[alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz](mailto:alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz).

*Cathy Roughan, Alumni Co-Ordinator*

## Events & School News

### Our Community

#### Possible Reunions 2025



#### **South Island Reunion for Early Westlakers 1957 – 1970**

There have been requests from alumni in the South Island for a reunion, perhaps in the form of a lunch. We are looking for expressions of interest.

If you or anyone you know is interested in this event, please email Robin Reid, a foundation pupil from 1957 including your location. Contact Robin [here](#).

The Westlake Founders 1957 – 1961 meet annually in Auckland, and we are looking to reach out to a broader group of ex-pupils to include anyone who was at Westlake High School, Westlake Girls High School or Westlake Boys High School between 1957 and 1970 – former pupils and staff.

The geographical location of most people who would like to participate will influence the decision about the venue's location.

Please include your location and specify if you are interested in helping with organisation. We expect this event to take place in early 2025.



## WGHS Class of 1990

There is a reunion planned for the **Westlake Girls Class of 1990** for Friday, 28 March 2025.

It will be 35 years since leaving Westlake for most.

Jane Knox and Nikki Horne are organising this event, and details will be posted on the Alumni year 'Westlake Girls Class of 1990', [here](#).

Please let others know so they can save the date and keep up to date as plans take shape.

### Get in touch

[Jane Knox](#)

[Nikki Horne](#)

## Golf Day Fundraiser



## Support WGHS

### Westlake Girls Nine-Hole Golf Tournament Fundraiser

**Half the time, double the fun!**

[Get Involved!](#)

Join us at Pupuke Golf Club for our first-ever Nine-Hole Golf Tournament Fundraiser!

We have lots of teams from the local community already, including some of our alumni. Enjoy a great day out while supporting our community. Funds raised will benefit our Empowerment Fund, providing opportunities for Westlake students and creating sculptural artwork for the Whare Wānanga.



For more information, contact Community Relationships Manager Dean Flyger via the 'Get Involved' button above.

## **Westlake News**

### **International Basketball Success**

Westlake Girls won the bronze medal at the World Schools' Basketball Championships in Macau, China in July – a great achievement for our premier basketball team, and the best placing by a New Zealand team in the ISF World Championship competition.

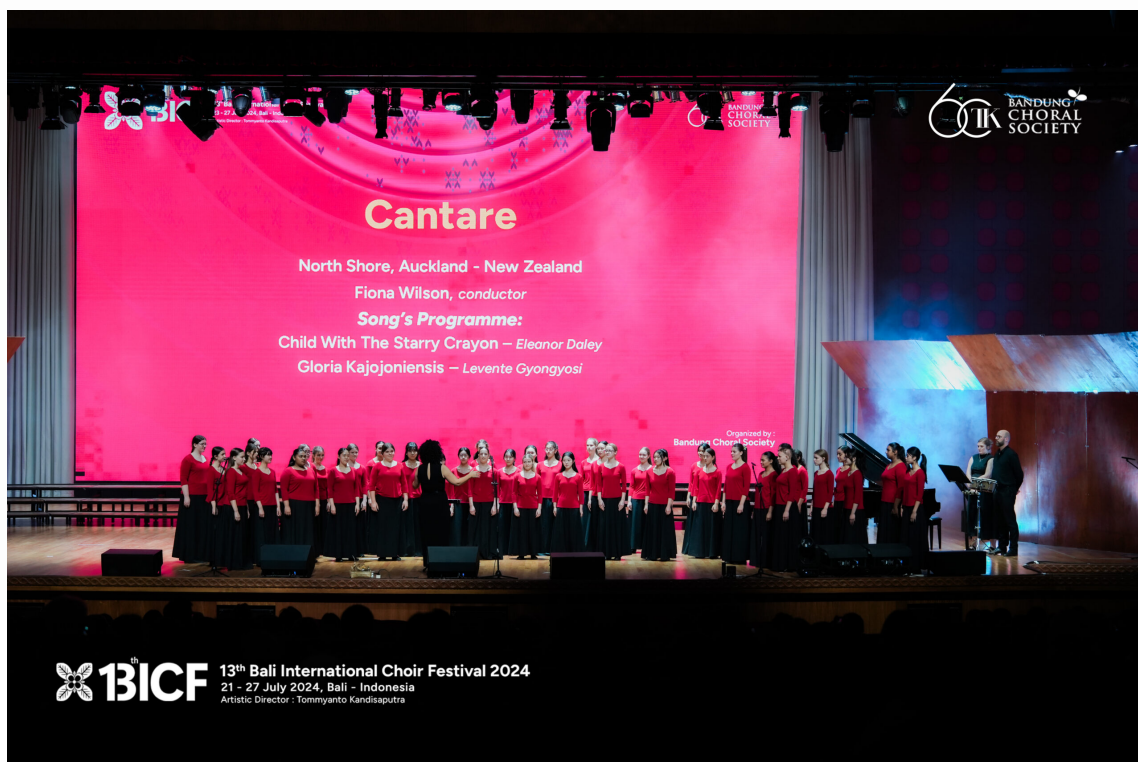


The team earned the right to compete and represent New Zealand at the competition, having won the New Zealand Secondary Schools national title in 2023. In the September/October school holidays, the Premier Basketball team successfully won the national title for the third year in a row.

### **International Music Success**

Cantare, the premier treble-voice choir, had a very successful tour to Bali and Kuala Lumpur in July. They participated in the Bali International Choral Festival and won the Open Category of Teenage Choir and Sacred Music. They then won the next level Champion Category of Teenage Choir and came second in the Sacred Music Category, reaching the Grand Prix final with eight other choirs. What a tremendous effort!

HOD Head of Music and Westlake alumna Fiona Wilson is the Musical Director of both Cantare and Choralation choirs.



## Music Success at Home

Choralation, the premier mixed-voice choir, participated in the World Choir Games in Auckland in July. The competition, concerts and workshops drew 250 choirs from 42 countries, with most performers being adults. This was the first time Choralation had participated in this prestigious event.

Competing in two Champion Competition Categories—Youth Choirs and Sacred Choral Music A Cappella—Choralation won gold medals for both of their competitive recitals.

Choralation was also one of eight invited New Zealand choirs who performed in the World Choir Games' concert, 'Matariki He Kahui Reo'. This groundbreaking concert celebrating the nine stars of the Matariki cluster was performed entirely in Te Reo Māori. It was a powerful musical and cultural experience for audiences and performers alike.

## Facilities Upgrade

We have had a significant upgrade to our sporting facilities with new turf on our two football fields and lighting upgrades. The fields suffered damage during the 2023 cyclone. Westlake athletes now have a new, modern, top-quality artificial surface on which to play.





Our rugby teams and other students had the incredible opportunity to see the Black Ferns, the New Zealand women's national rugby union team, train on the new fields installed by local company TigerTurf in June. Our kapa haka performed for the Black Ferns after the session.

### **The Whare Wānanga Project is Underway!**



The Whare Wānanga will be a special place of learning and connecting for Westlake, embracing the theme of 'Te Mana Wāhine', or 'The Empowerment of Women'. The aim is that it will also serve the wider community on the North Shore and contribute to the revitalisation of te Reo Māori and tikanga Māori.

The school is funding the design, architecture, engineering and construction of the Whare Wānanga. We are fundraising to dress the interior and create the sculptural artwork that will form the pou and tukutuku panels.

Westlake Girls alumna, Emma Jane Ormsby, with a team of arts students, has created Māori sculpture artworks which are the prototypes for the interior panels. The estimated cost to complete the interior is \$350,000.

We held a blessing ceremony in June to mark the turning of the soil for the project. It was a special and moving occasion for the large group that gathered at dawn, including kaumatua and current and former students and staff. It was especially pleasing to see alumni from the early 'Multiculture Group' attend the ceremony.



Our Mana Whenua, Ngāti Paoa, laid the foundation for the ceremony under the guidance of Whaea Drina Paratene through karakia and karanga, with support from our school kaumatua, Jerry Norman.

After the ceremony, guests shared kai and were able to view the designs for the Whare.

To see the designs and for more information about this exciting project, please see our [website](#) or [contact us](#).

## Alumni Updates

### The Arts





### North Harbour Club AIMES Music Award

Cecile McNeill, Class of 2018, violist, received the North Harbour Club's AIMES Music Award with a cash grant of \$15,000.

She lives in Los Angeles, where she is studying for her Master of Music degree at the University of Southern California.

Her talent has earned her a Viola Fellowship at the Music Academy of the West and a fellowship for the Aspen Music Festival Conducting Academy Orchestra.

At Westlake, Cecile played in the premier instrumental groups and, at 14, became the youngest-ever member of the prestigious National Youth Orchestra.

She continued to earn accolades for her music as she studied for her Bachelor of Music (1st Class Honours) at the University of Auckland.

Cecile has performed in all the major performance spaces in New Zealand and some of the most respected venues in Europe, including the Vienna Music House.

### Music Award - Rebecca Lee



Congratulations to former student **Rebecca Lee**, Class of 2016, one of two organists to be awarded the Maxwell Fernie Dame Malvina Major Foundation award for 2024.

Rebecca is in Germany, and the grant will go towards her studies for a Master Claviorganum degree at the Hamburg Conservatory of Music.

Rebecca has the ATCL Diploma in Piano from Trinity College, London, and has Grade 8 in violin. At Westlake, she played violin in the Symphony and Chamber Orchestras.

In late 2014, she became interested in the organ, and she went on to specialise in it at the University of Auckland.

## [Read More](#)

### [King's Birthday Honours](#)



Congratulations to two former students who were appointed Members of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours: **Jolie Hodson (née Hampton)** (1989) for services to business, governance and women, and **Emma Scotter (née Daniel)** (1999), for services to Motor Neuron Disease (MND).



Jolie Hodson has been CEO and Executive Director of Spark New Zealand since 2019 and has held other executive roles there since 2013.

The honour recognises Jolie's many accomplishments, alongside the transformation of Spark into a digital services company under her tenure. This includes the co-founding of On Being Bold, a collective of other prominent NZ businesswomen inspiring women at all stages of their business careers, with profits from their annual conference going



towards free leadership development events for Year 13 girls. She has also been an activator with SheEO since its inception in 2017, supporting women with start-ups.



### **Services to Motor Neuron Disease Research**

**Dr Emma Scotter (née Daniel)**, Class of 1999, was appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in the 2024 King's Birthday Honours for services to Motor Neuron Disease research.

Emma is a Senior Lecturer in Biological Sciences at the University of Auckland and Head of the Motor Neuron Disease Research Lab at the Centre for Brain Research, leading world-renowned research into Motor Neuron Disease (MND) over the past ten years.

She is an adviser to New Zealand's Motor Neuron Disease register, which enables people with the disease to participate in research and global clinical trials. She also initiated and co-leads the New Zealand Motor Neuron Disease Genetics Study.

Emma has a PhD in Pharmacology from the University of Auckland and has received several prestigious scholarships and fellowships that have supported her research in New Zealand and overseas. She has made vital contributions to several Australasian and international projects.

We warmly congratulate Emma on receiving this national honour and look forward to welcoming Emma back to Westlake as our guest speaker at the 2024 Senior Academic Prizegiving.



## Health

### Romy Lee, Youth Mental Health Advisor



**Romy Lee (2015)** is an advisor and practitioner in the youth mental health and addictions sector. In June, the NZ Ministry of Health selected her to represent Aotearoa New Zealand, at the Global Leadership Exchange 2024 in Utrecht, the Netherlands. She led presentations and discussions on global developments in the delivery of services, as well as leadership in the mental health, addictions, and disability sectors.

For the last three years, she has been leading the creation of Aotearoa's first youth mental health lived experience workforce development programme at Whāraurau, a not-for-profit entity of the University of Auckland, and has recently moved to a position with Asian Family Services in Auckland, to create a new youth mental health service. Romy has contributed to the innovation of the mental health system both in Aotearoa and internationally.

With her wealth of experience spanning lived experience, clinical practice and strategic design, she has been an expert advisor to organisations such as the World Health Organisation, NZ Herald, TVNZ and Three, and Youthline.

At Westlake, Romy was Wairau House captain, a leader in Amnesty, and played in the Westlake Symphony Orchestra. She has completed a Bachelor of Counselling and Addiction Practice and has a qualification in health and social services supervision.

This year, the Mental Health Awareness Week website featured Romy's story. You can read it [here](#).

## Sport

### Westlake Olympians

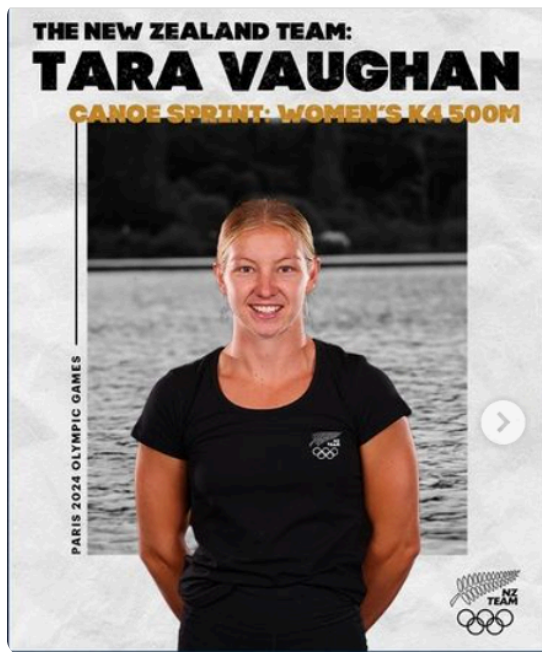


We are hugely proud to have had six Westlakers in the Paris 2024 Olympics and congratulate them all for their efforts in competing at the highest level internationally -

**Jo Aleh** (2004), **Moira Koster (De Villiers)** (2007), **Greta Pilkington** (2020), **Tara Vaughan**(2021) and **Catherine CJ Bott** (2012).

**Anna Steven** (2018) competed in the Paris Paralympics in late August.





### Tara Vaughan (Class of 2021)

Canoe sprinter Tara Vaughan won a gold medal in her Olympics debut! In the K4 500m canoe sprint, led by Dame Lisa Carrington, and alongside paddlers Alicia Hoskin and Olivia Brett, the team had a close and exciting race to become the first New Zealand team to win a K4 500 medal in 40 years.

The team had won the same race in the 2023 World Championship, the first NZ team to achieve that feat.

Tara delighted young kayakers by presenting medals to the winning kayakers at the AIMS games in Tauranga last year.

Watch



### Jo Aleh (Class of 2004)

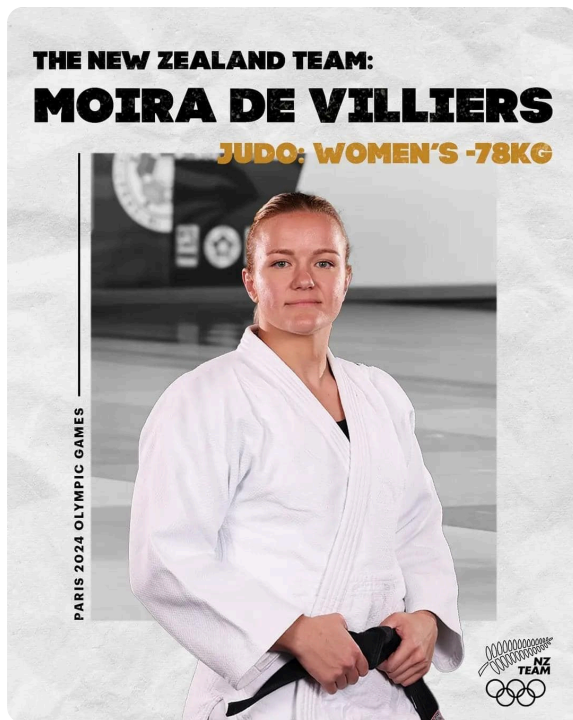
Sailor Jo Aleh is a double Olympic medallist – gold in London 2012, and silver in Rio (2016) sailing with Polly Powrie. Jo was one of the two NZ flag bearers for the Paris opening ceremony. She competed in sailing in the 49er FX Class with Molly Meech in Paris, coming 7th.

Jo was Westlake's first Olympic gold medallist. Following her gold medal win in London, she was appointed a Member of the New Zealand Order of Merit in 2013.

She has had a remarkable career, with significant successes, even as a young Westlake student. In 2002, in Year 11, she won the Tanner Cup, the inter-provincial P Class competition, becoming the first girl to do so since its inception in 1945.

Jo sailed in the inaugural Women's America's Cup in Barcelona in October.

Watch



### Moira Koster (de Villiers) (Class of 2007)

Moira Koster is New Zealand's most experienced and successful female judoka. She has represented New Zealand at multiple international judo championships, including the 2012 London Olympics. She won the silver medal at the 2014 Glasgow Commonwealth Games in the U70kg category and a bronze medal at the Birmingham Games in the U78kg category. In Paris, she competed in the U78kg category.

Her build-up to the Olympics included competing in the 2023 Pan American – Oceania Senior Competition (coming second) and the Grand Prix and Masters Tournament in Hungary and Zagreb. Moira lives in Christchurch and coaches judo.

Watch



### Catherine (CJ) Bott, Class of 2012

CJ Bott is a Football Fern who plays in the midfield. She attended Westlake for her final year of high school in 2012, coming from Tawa, Wellington. Paris was her second Olympic Games, after making her full debut in Tokyo 2020. She was a travelling reserve for Rio 2016.

CJ has made 46 appearances for Aotearoa New Zealand since her debut for the Football Ferns in 2014. She currently plays for Leicester City in the English Women's League, having previously played in German, Swedish and Norwegian leagues.

In Year 13 at Westlake, she was selected for, and co-captained, the FIFA NZ Women's U17 team playing in the World Cup in Azerbaijan.

Watch



### **Greta Pilkington (Class of 2020)**

Paris was the Olympics debut for sailor Greta Pilkington. She sailed in the ILCA6 (one-person dinghy), formerly the Laser Radial class.

Greta is a talented youth sailor who has won two Optimist national titles and sailed a range of boats.

She won the women's open title at the ILCA 6 national championships in 2022 at just 18.



### **Anna Steven (Class of 2018)**

Anna Steven is a para-athlete sprinter on the New Zealand Para-Olympics team who debuted at the Tokyo 2020 Olympics. In Paris, she competed in the 200m T64 event.

Anna has excelled over shorter sprint distances since taking up the sport competitively at the age of 16.

By 2019, she was setting Oceania records as a senior athlete.

This year, alongside her intensive training schedule, she has completed her studies and graduated with a Bachelor of Science!

[Read More](#)

### **Charlotte Graham White Sox Team**





**Charlotte Graham (Y13 2023)**

Charlotte was selected for the New Zealand Women's White Sox softball team that played in the Canada Cup in British Columbia in July 2024, playing as pitcher. This was a remarkable achievement for the 18-year-old.

At Westlake, she played in the top school teams from Year 9, and she plays for the North Harbour Roosters Softball Club, representing North Harbour in many tournaments throughout New Zealand.

Before her national selection, she was on the New Zealand Junior White Softball squad.

We look forward to seeing what comes next for Charlotte in her softball career, as the sport will be reintroduced into the Olympics for 2028 and 2032.

### **Father-Daughter Breakfast**



The Father-Daughter Breakfast took place in the Event Centre in September. We run this popular event every two years, alternating with a Mother-Daughter breakfast.

The Event Centre was full, and parents and students were treated to an inspiring speaker, former student **Lynley Allison**, and a lovely breakfast. The function was organised by

the Westlake Rowing Society as a fundraiser.

Lynley (Class of 1990) shared her journey from the physical limitations of having Perthes disease, a hip condition, in childhood, through being a pro-triathlete to the work she does now. As a teacher, mentor to athletes and volunteer at cycling and rowing events, she uses humour and her life experiences to motivate others.

As a teenager, Lynley overcame her hip condition meaning she could participate in sport. She was in the winning Westlake U19 rowing team that won both the Dawn and Levin Jubilee Cups in the Maadi National Rowing Regatta, the top awards for female rowers.

She trained as a teacher and pursued her interest in sport, running marathons and triathlons, winning her first age-group Ironman title in Hawaii in 2001. She turned professional the following year and won Idaho's Ironman Coeur d'Alene in 2004 after finishing second at Ironman New Zealand.

Her long medical journey continued, with numerous significant challenges calling on her resilience. These included two hip replacements, the loss of family members, and life-threatening surgery, which culminated in the amputation of a leg just below the knee.



*Westlake Girls Alumni Co-Ordinator Cathy Roughan (L) with Lynley Allison*

Lynley teaches at Kaipaki School near Cambridge. She sees teaching her students resilience as just as important as teaching them the curriculum. Her students nominated her for an ASB 'Good as Gold Award' in 2023. You can see this wonderful tribute to her [here](#).

Watch

## Connect With Us

### Facebook

Please like our [Westlake Girls Alumni and Friends](#) Facebook page.

We'll keep you informed of Westlake events you may be interested in, any alumni reunions, and alumni news. There are private Facebook groups for all of our alumni years and some musical and instrumental groups. The links are on the alumni page of our school [website](#).

### LinkedIn

Our [LinkedIn](#) group has 3,500 alumni and has a helpful tool for finding Westlake alumni in particular fields or locations.

### Email Us

The contact address for any queries about Westlake or alumni is [alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz](mailto:alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz)

### Subscribe to this Newsletter

If this email was forwarded to you and you'd like to subscribe, click [here](#).

**We love hearing stories about what former students are doing; please get in touch if you have news to share!**

### Westlake Girls High School

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