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October 2019



Alumni Newsletter

WG HS

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Hi everyone

With the demolition of the school hall starting in October, it's the end of an era!

The hall is the only part of the school left at Westlake that is shared by all former students.

If you were there from 1957 through to 2018, you've all had assemblies and watched or taken part in a great variety of functions and activities there.



We'd love you to share some memories which will help build up a picture of Westlake through the eras. And any photos you have of events in the hall or any photos at all from your Westlake days would be appreciated. We are always happy to receive photos and yearbooks etc for our Archives. Scanned photos would be great, or if you're in Auckland we can collect things - think of us if you're having a sort out and come across Westlake memorabilia that you no longer require.

Read further in this newsletter for information on the new Westlake Girls Event Centre, to rise in place of the hall. We also feature three Westlakers - a former NZ women's chess champion (Jennya Charamova), an alumna recognised in the Northern Ireland '40 Under 40' list (Rebecca Bryson), and an alumna involved in leadership and governance roles (Ebony Duff).

Alumni Community

What's new?

New Facebook Group for our co-ed founders

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We have Facebook groups for every year, except for the co-ed founders of Westlake High School, with over 3,000 alumni in these groups across all year levels.

In response to several requests, here's another way for the founders of Westlake Girls and Boys High Schools to keep in touch. Join this group if you started at Westlake High School any time between 1957 – 1961, before it separated into the two separate high schools.

[Westlake High School Founders \(WBHS and WGHS\)](#)

LinkedIn page

Thanks to many of you who have joined the new Westlake Girls High School LinkedIn group that we set up a few months ago. We have over 250 alumni connected there already.

<https://www.linkedin.com/school/westlake-girls-high-school/>

Facebook groups

All the Facebook group links are at the end of the newsletter. (The alumni year is your Year 13 / Form 7 year of high school, regardless of whether or not you attended for those 5 years. For example, if you started in Form 3/Year 9 in 1986, your alumni year would be the 'Class of 1990'.)

Events

Key Cygnetures Reunion 2019

A Key Cygnetures Reunion Choir, with singers from each year of the choir's era (1992 – 2008), sang together again at a combined concert at St Matthew in the City in July 2019. This was the culmination of a great few days of music and socialising for Key Cygnetures alumni.

The choir's former director, Elise Bradley MNZM, who was WGHS HOD Music for 13 years, established the award-winning Key Cygnetures choir during that time.

Elise returned to NZ for an Australasian tour with her Canadian Choir, the Toronto Children's Chorus (TCC) in July, and we took the opportunity to reunite with our choral alumni.

We had a great few days singing and catching up with former choir members, music staff and choir supporters, as well as combining with Cantare, Westlake's current premier girls' choir, and TCC, in several items at the combined concert.



Key Cygnetures Reunion Choir

Combined Westlake Careers Alumni afternoon

Westlake Boys and Girls High Schools combined for an inaugural Alumni Careers afternoon function in August, with invited alumni from both schools sharing their experiences of tertiary study and work, with Year 13 students.

We were delighted to welcome eight of our former students back to this alumni afternoon tea event. Thanks to **Caitlin Green** 2014, **Jessica Chong** 2014, **Jess Brooks** 2014, **Kate Chilcott** 2008, **Abbey Broome** 2008, **Penny Peng** 2014, **Chanelle Lyndsay** 2008 and **Laura Davie** 2008.

Year 13 students were able to ask questions of the panel of 20 former students, get their top pieces of advice, and engage directly with those in a career of particular interest to them.

We hope that this is the first of many such valuable and enjoyable afternoons with our Westlake alumni community.



WGHS and WBHS - Alumni presenters at the Careers afternoon

Leadership Panel - Prefects End of Year afternoon tea

Westlake's 76 Prefects have been acknowledged for their outstanding contribution to the school this year. During the High Tea celebration in September, a panel of three alumni shared their experiences and wisdom with Westlake's young leaders.

On our panel (*L-R below*), were **Andrea Nelson (Wilson)** (CEO of the ICC Women's World Cup), **Frankie Ifrah** (National People and Performance Manager for Brian Perry Civil – a Fletcher Construction Company) and **Lina Kim** (fourth-year Law student and President of the Auckland University Law Students' Society.)



Alumni Decade Reunions - 20 year Reunion, Class of 1999

A special thanks to former students **Anna Ashton** and **Kate Grigg** for their hard work in organising the Class of '99 reunion for a successful evening catch up for former school mates. Plenty of memories, great photos and even a Form 7 video were shared. There are now over 150 alumni connected through the Class of 1999 Facebook Group.





A group from the Class of '99 at the Takapuna Sailing Club

30 year Reunion, Class of 1989

The Class of '89 celebrated their 30 year reunion in September.

Over 30 from the alumni year had a very enjoyable catch up, including former students from other parts of NZ and also from Sydney. There are 100 from the year now connected through the Facebook group. Thanks to our organising committee **Geraldine Bayly (Goodwin)**, **Tracey Hansen (Munro)**, **Jeanette Randle (Reynolds)**, **Paula Satterthwaite (Knauf)** and, in particular, **Sarah Beaman (Kelly)** who got involved at the start to get plans underway.

Does anyone still have their green skirt? We do have a number of uniform items but are missing the skirt from that era.



Alumni from the Class of '89 enjoyed a look around their old school.



The organising committee - Geraldine, Tracey, Jeanette, Paula and Sarah.

Alumni Events - 2020

We are happy to support and help with decade reunions for 2020 for the Alumni Classes of 1970, 1980, 1990, 2000, 2010.

(eg the 'Class of 1990' refers to all those who were in the cohort that started at Westlake in Form 3 in 1986).

Get in touch if you are interested in helping get the ball rolling for a decade reunion with your year. Either email or start a conversation through your alumni year Facebook group - alumni@westlakegirls.school.nz

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Thanks to **Shanice Duggan-Keefe**, Class of 2010, who is interested in helping organise a 10 year reunion for her year (2010). Details to come through the 2010 Facebook group.

We also have interest in a 25 year reunion for the Class of 1995 (WGHS 1991 – 1995). There are just 35 members of the '95 FB group at the moment, so do join up if that's your year and encourage others. Thanks to **Carrie George (Lister)** for getting in touch on this.

[Westlake Girls Class of 1995](#)

Decade Facebook groups for possible 2020 reunions:

[Westlake Girls Class of 2010](#)

[Westlake Girls Class of 2000](#)

[Westlake Girls Class of 1990](#)

[Westlake Girls Class of 1980](#)

[Westlake Girls Class of 1970](#)

(Our 1960 alumni are part of the Westlake High School founders group - next get-together to be decided)

Alumni Updates

Alumni Updates

Congratulations to former Westlake rowers – **Sophie Egnot Johnson** (2018) and **Holly Gray** (2017) who represented New Zealand in the NZ U21 team for the tri-series in August. They each won 3 Gold medals.



Holly and Sophie with Double Gold Olympic Rower, Eric Murray

Evguenia (Jenny) Charamova Class of 2005

Former NZ Women's Chess champion



Jenny Charamova is a former New Zealand women's chess champion and World Chess Olympian.

Russian-born Jenny attended Westlake Girls from Year 9 in 2001 to 2004. She had been playing chess since she was young and was a key member of winning Westlake Chess teams, as well as representing NZ at international Olympiads through her time at school.

In 2005 Jenny got a scholarship at Auckland International College and gained an IB Diploma there, the same year that she won the Women's Championship in New Zealand.

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Jennya is now studying for a Masters in Speech at the University of Canterbury and has also resumed her involvement in chess. Recently she was featured in a chess event in Christchurch, where she set a challenge to play 12 boards simultaneously against members of the public.

The challenge was to promote an interest in chess and also to fundraise for the Aphasia NZ Charitable Trust, which is related to her field of study at Canterbury. She won 12 out of 14 games.

She is keen to give back to the game in NZ, grateful to her coaches, New Zealand Chess Association and her parents for their support. She has opened a chess club for kids called 'Chess Stars' where she teaches a programme with a holistic approach, giving children advice not only on how to play chess but how to mentally prepare for the game.

On future plans, she says, *'I plan to continue promoting chess in Christchurch. Hopefully some of the kids will be able to go overseas and experience what an international competition is like. My main focus is, however, on becoming a speech therapist and growing further in that field.'*

Jennya is keen to link up with Westlake chess players when she gets the chance to visit Auckland.



Rebecca Bryson, Class of 2003
Business Owner, Hair and Makeup artist
'40 Under 40' list Northern Ireland

Rebecca is a hair and makeup artist now based in Belfast, Northern Ireland. This year she was recognised in the '40 under 40' list for Northern Ireland, noted for her make-up artistry and successful 'Curvy Chic Bridal' Business.



Through her 14-year career in Makeup and Design, she has worked with 100s of bridal parties, models, photographers, and film makers, and has worked on numerous short and feature films and television shows. She works closely with the Belfast Fashion Week team for their annual event. A career highlight was being selected by renowned makeup artist Pat McGrath to join her assisting team at Paris Fashion Week in 2017.

Rebecca attended Westlake 1999 – 2003, singing with the premier choir, Key Cygnetures. She

dedicating yourself to the task at hand and completing it to the highest standard.

She completed a BA at the University of Auckland, majoring in Jazz Singing, followed by a Certificate in Fashion Makeup and Special FX Makeup at the Samala Robinson Academy in Auckland. She furthered her skills in Special Effects as a trainee at Universal Studios in 2013, and in 2017 she completed training in Advanced Prosthetics under a world-renowned expert.

Rebecca is the owner of Curvy Chic Bridal, Northern Ireland's only exclusively plus-size boutique and the largest of its kind in the UK and Ireland. This has led to several industry awards and nominations, as well as support from the local community. She also jointly runs a bridal agency 'Bridal Artistry NI' for hair and makeup artists.

Rebecca also uses her skills as a volunteer. She says, *'One of my favourite things is working with the charity 'Look Good, Feel Better', helping women feel special while going through or recovering from cancer treatments.'*

Rebecca and her family do frequent food drives for their local food bank as the family lost everything 6 years ago and had to rely on food banks to get by. So they like to regularly give back to those that find themselves in the same position.

Rebecca hasn't been back to NZ for many years but is looking forward to returning next year for the wedding of a Westlake friend.

Ebony Duff, Class of 1997

Trained lawyer, Executive Manager to CEO at Waikato Tainui

Ebony has just taken on a new Chief Advisory position for Waikato Tainui as part of the Senior Leadership Team. This follows on from over two years as the General Manager of the National Māori Radio Network. She has been featured in news items and articles on Māori Broadcasting this year. An extensive interview in E-tangata included her journey through her years at Westlake. (Read the full interview [here](#).)



Ebony was Deputy Head Girl in 1997 and was active in groups such as Theatre Sports, Netball, Dragon-boating, Debating, Manu Kōrero and MUNA. She enjoyed languages, studying French and also excelled in English and Spanish throughout her senior years. She undertook three years of distance learning for te reo Māori through the Correspondence School until Year 11.

She says, *"Only now do I realise that taking the time to nurture diverse friendships at school sets you up with a 'business network' for life, and this includes your responsibility to empower younger students. Throughout the busy-ness of life in a well-resourced school with many opportunities to be grateful for, it was important to me as a girl coming from a small community in Kaitaia, raised by one parent living in social housing, to stay grounded. This has followed me through my career. As Six60 reminded us during Māori Language Week - 'Kia mau ki tō Ūkaipō, kia mau hoki ki tō whānau' - 'Don't forget/uphold your roots my friend, hold your family close'."*

Ebony graduated with a conjoint BA/LLB degree from the University of Auckland, majoring in Māori Studies and was subsequently admitted to the Bar. She started her career as a solicitor at specialist law firm Kāhui Legal in Wellington, before moving into policy roles at various

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She was the youngest elected trustee of the Rūnunga Nui (Governance Entity) of her iwi Te Aupouri in the Far North, and one of her proudest milestones was being a Treaty Settlement negotiator through the final stages of negotiations to the Deed of Settlement of the Te Aupouri Historical Claims in 2012.

On returning to Auckland and the North Shore with her family in 2013, she continued in governance advisory roles through her work at Auckland Council, utilising her relationship management and influencing specialist skills to harness Māori strategy development through local property projects and partnerships.

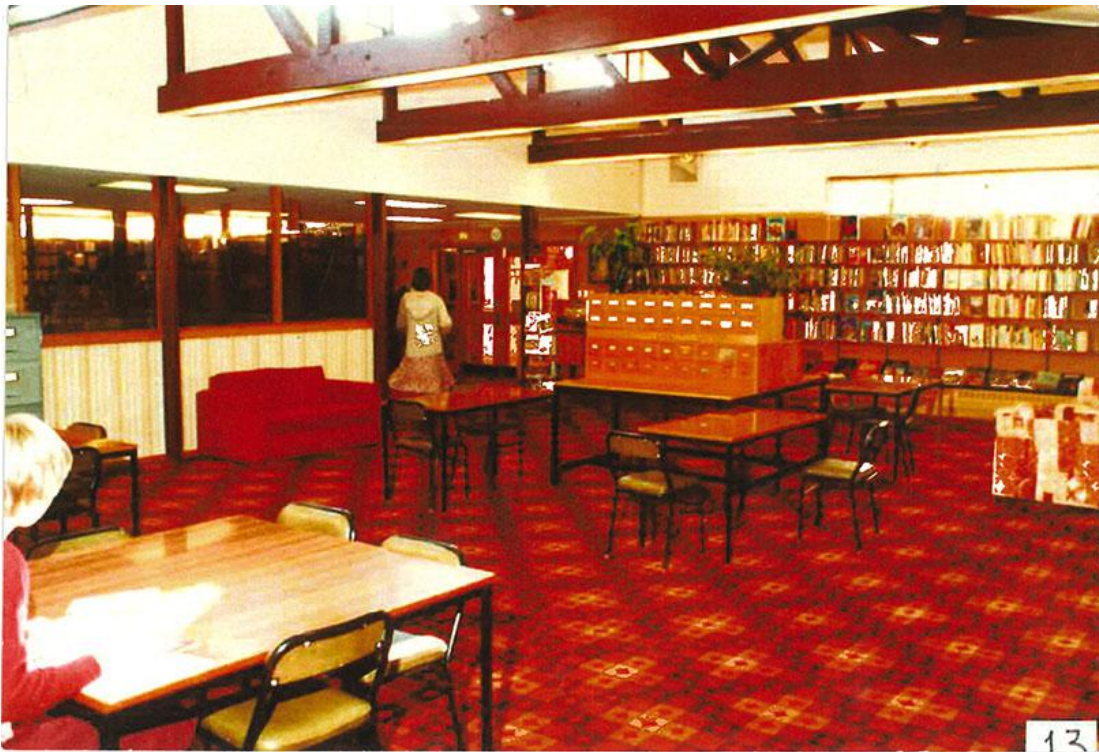
Ebony's current work is focused on implementing the iwi roadmap for inter-generational success by 2050 and she feels fortunate to have been given the opportunity to reconnect with her grandmother's affiliations in the Waikato. She has re-entered school life as a governor, being a trustee at Birkdale Primary School and a volunteer sports administrator - returning to netball umpiring after qualifying 20 years ago at Westlake!

In her role she is proud to work for and alongside a range of exceptional female leaders and women of service, and aspires to take on more governance roles herself in the future.

Looking Back

Is this Westlake as you remember it?

These show the Entrance foyer and the Library. We don't have dates for them!



Westlake News

It's the start of an exciting new era, as WGHS's 1957 hall is demolished to make way for a multipurpose Event Centre.

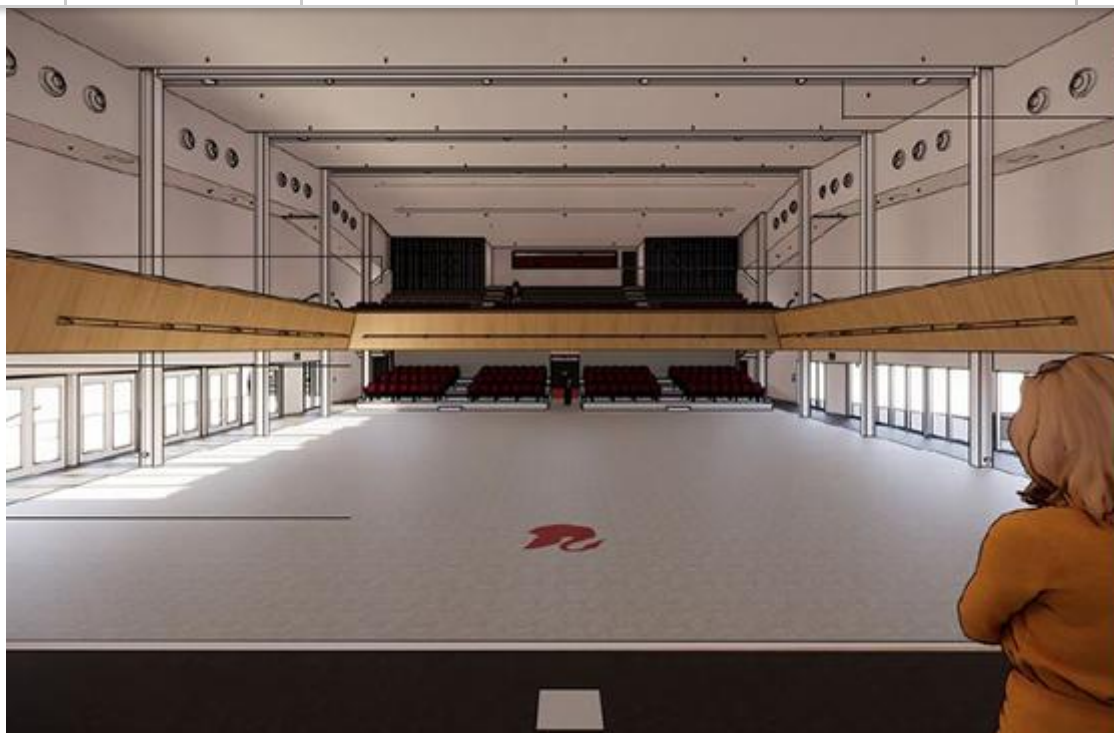
Auckland-based Teak Construction has been awarded the \$10m building contract. Work on Westlake's new Event Centre is due to begin mid-November, and the estimated 16-month build should be completed in time for Term 1 2021.

Westlake's Property Manager, Grant Brown, says the ground floor will seat 952 students, and the mezzanine 374. "When the current hall was built in 1957, the school roll was in the hundreds and it could seat all of the school, with a capacity of 443 students. Today we have 2,300 students, so the new centre will be able to seat at least half of the school, which is a fantastic advancement."

The Event Centre will also feature a large stage, glass foyer, back stage space and percussion room. It will be used for music, drama and dance performances, assemblies, ceremonies, alumni events, and parent information evenings - to name just a few.

Our Westlake community will have the opportunity to be involved in fundraising activities for the Centre, so watch this space!





An artist's impression of the main auditorium from the stage

Alumni Association Update

Westlake Girls Alumni

Westlake Girls Class of 1966

Class of 1967 Westlake Girls

Westlake Girls Class of 1968

Class of 1969 Westlake Girls

Class of 1970 Westlake Girls

Class of 1971 Westlake Girls

Class of 1972 Westlake Girls

Class of 1973 Westlake Girls

Class of 1974 Westlake Girls

Class of 1975 Westlake Girls

Class of 1976 Westlake Girls

Class of 1977 Westlake Girls

Class of 1978 Westlake Girls

Class of 1979

Westlake Girls Class of 1980

Class of '81 Westlake Girls

Westlake Girls 1978 - 1982

Westlake Girls Class of 1983

Class of '84 Westlake Girls

Westlake Girls Class of 1985

Class of '86 Westlake Girls

Class of '87 Westlake Girls

Westlake Girls Class of 1988

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