

# FRUITVALE ROAD SCHOOL PARENT BOARD

## ELECTION CANDIDATE PROFILES

### COVEY, Grace



Kia ora Fruitvale whānau, I'm Grace Covey, a proud mum of two amazing Deaf tamariki in Year 1 and Year 3 here at Fruitvale. I'm excited to put my hand up to represent our parent community on the school board. A little about me: I'm Deaf and have a cochlear implant, which means I can hear and speak (and I love to chat... just not during meetings, I promise!). My real passion is making sure all tamariki and their whānau feel included, supported, and empowered to thrive. In my day job, I'm the Communications Manager at Kara Technologies, an AI translation company focused on making information more accessible through digital sign language. Outside of work, I'm all about community, equity, and creating spaces where every family feels like they truly belong. I bring experience too, I've served on several education boards, including as Chairperson of an Early Childhood Education Trust at Ko Taku Reo. I know what it takes to make thoughtful, strategic decisions that reflect the heart of a school and the people in it. I'm deeply committed to helping Fruitvale be the best it can be guided by a strong vision, clear direction, and values we all share. This is a special place, and I'd love the chance to give back and help shape its future. Ngā mihi nui, Grace Covey

### FAUWAD, Nobia



As a parent, Justice of the Peace, and community engagement specialist, I am committed to ensuring that every child at Fruitvale Road School thrives in a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment. With over five years' experience in governance, project coordination, and working with diverse communities, I bring strong leadership, integrity, and a deep understanding of community needs. I'm ready to contribute my skills to support our school's vision and make a meaningful difference for all students and families.

### GAVIN, Rachael



Kia Ora, My name is Rachael. My husband Mike and I, have 4 children currently at Fruitvale. Our oldest two Max and Coby are year 5, Travis in year 3 and Ruby started in year 1 this year. We feel very lucky to have been part of the Fruitvale whanau the last 5 years and for our children to be offered so many wonderful opportunities to grow and learn. I enjoy volunteering at breakfast club and helped with the school pool over the summer and it has been lovely to get to know more students and parents around the school. It would be a privilege to be able to contribute more to the school community by being part of the board.

### HALL, Denise Faye



Kia ora Fruitvale whānau My name is Denise Hall, proudly, Australian-born and affectionately known to our tamariki as "Mrs Hall." My family and I have had the pleasure of being part of the Fruitvale School community for many years. Archie (my loving Samoan hubby of 35 years), our two daughters, and our growing grandchildren have deep roots here. By 2026 eight out of our nine mokopuna will have attended Fruitvale! Fruitvale isn't just a school to us - it's a place where values, culture, and community thrive. It's been my privilege to serve on the Board of Trustees for a total of 16 years, including the past 9 as your Treasurer and Parent Representative. I've also supported the board as a minute taker for four years. For the past nine years, I've worked at Fruitvale as a Teacher Aide and Attendance Officer, roles that allow me to engage with your children every day and contribute directly to their educational journeys. My background includes over 28 years of service in the education sector, and I bring with me not just professional experience, but genuine passion and commitment. I believe in a board that reflects the heart of its community. As a parent, grandparent, staff member, and long-time local, I am dedicated to making sure every decision we make upholds the safety, success, and wellbeing of our students and the spirit of Fruitvale's future. I respectfully ask for your vote to continue serving on the Board of Trustees. Ngā mihi nui, Denise Hall (aka Mrs Hall)

## HARFIELD, Bronson



My name is Bronson, I'm a 30 year old proud Dad of 2 beautiful girls who both attend Fruitvale and a full time qualified carpet layer. I've lived and breathed West Auckland my whole life from schooling to the local supermarket then at 18 started my career as a civil laboratory technician. After 5 years I then decided to make the shift and start a trade which began with acoustic installation then progressed into my current role in flooring. I've had previous experience with BCITO being apart of their apprentice leadership programme representing the flooring sector and attending flooring national advisory group meetings to speak from an apprentices point of view to which I also gained a certificate. I also have close relatives within the local iwi "Te Kawerau ā maki". Having that connection I feel will help me contribute my values and knowledge around my whānau and whenua which I find is important not just around the table but in everyday life. My dad was also a member of the board at Henderson South primary school where my brother and I attended. I remember his involvement with the school in how he helped shape the tamariki with his strong community presence. This has given me an insight and inspiration to have that voice. I'm a strong communicator, problem solver and have an adaptive personality. I can bring a positive outlook and do anything attitude which I feel makes me a great candidate for this board. I'm very family orientated and granted this opportunity wouldn't only benefit you but would give me the chance to share my morals and experience to help develop a productive team. I appreciate this opportunity and I hope my application is considered. Ngā Mihi, Bronson

## JACK, Megan



Kia Ora tātou, I'm nominating myself to be a parent representative on the school board, because Fruitvale School has been good to my whānau and I want to give back. Plus, I have the time to do so. I'm a 4th generation Kiwi, grew up in East Auckland, and moved West as soon as I could. By day, I'm a GP in Swanson. By night, I try to apply my own parenting advice, with mixed outcomes. I share my opinion a lot, so I'd love to switch modes and share your opinions instead. I personally think the school is great. You may feel differently. Or you may just want to make it even better. I'm approachable and I want to hear your thoughts. Confidentiality is assured. I'm a regular at Breakfast Club on Thursdays, so get to chat to some of your kids, and they're all so awesome. I want to do what I can to ensure they have the best experience in their early schooling years.

## KIRKHAM, Alex



Hello Fruitvale families, my name is Alex Kirkham, I've been connected to Fruitvale School through my daughter Margot who is year 6, and son Wilfred who is year 2. I have experience working in leadership groups and project management through my work, and governance experience as well. I'm passionate about supporting the school to continue to be a great place for kids to thrive, and to be a sounding board for the amazing teaching team. I'm someone who prioritises good communication and hope to support that between parents and the leadership at the school.

## MANSELL, Claire



Hello, I'm Claire, mum to two kids at Fruitvale School – Paige in Kākī and Elliot in Pīwakawaka. We've lived in New Lynn for 12 years, and we feel really lucky to be part of this awesome school community. I'm putting my hand up for the Board because I'd like to give back and help support the school as best I can. I believe I can contribute practical skills that support good decision-making and ensure Fruitvale continues to be a safe, inclusive, and inspiring place for our children to learn and grow. I've worked as a lawyer for the past 16 years, mainly in employment law. I now run my own practice, but I previously lead the employment law team at a mid-sized firm in the city. I have prior board experience; I currently serve on the Continuing Professional Development Board for the New Zealand Law Association and previously chaired the West Auckland Community Toy Library Committee (including through the initial stages of COVID-19). I've got a lot of experience with governance, compliance, difficult decision-making, and advocating for people in challenging situations – all of which are useful skills at the Board table. I understand how boards work, how to navigate complex decisions, and how to ensure we meet our responsibilities to students, staff, and whānau. I bring clear thinking, a collaborative, data driven approach, and a strong sense of fairness and accountability. Fruitvale is a special place, and I'd love the opportunity to give back by serving on the School Board and supporting our school's ongoing success.

## MCALLISTER, Katie



I am excited to express my interest in serving as a member of the Board of Trustees. With a professional background in a company that works directly with the Ministry of Education to upgrade and maintain schools across the country, I bring a unique and valuable perspective to the role, one that bridges technical expertise with heartfelt passion. My day-to-day work involves collaborating with schools and government bodies to ensure that learning environments are safe, functional, and future-ready. This hands on experience has given me deep insight into what it takes to maintain and improve school infrastructure, as well as a keen understanding of the challenges and opportunities facing modern education settings. Beyond my professional credentials, I have a genuine and personal passion for education and community wellbeing. I care deeply about the quality of our children's learning environment, and I believe every student deserves to feel safe, inspired, and proud of the place they go to learn each day. I understand how critical it is for a school to be not only structurally sound, but also a space that fosters belonging, growth, and excellence. As a trustee, I would bring strategic thinking, high standards, and a collaborative mindset. I'm an excellent communicator, a proactive problem solver, and I'm not afraid to ask tough questions when it comes to doing what's best for our school and our tamariki. I value transparency, inclusion, and forward planning, qualities that I believe are essential to strong governance. I would consider it a true honour to contribute my skills, insight, and heart to a school I care deeply about. I'm committed to helping ensure the school remains a place of pride, progress, and positivity for students, staff, and whānau alike.

## PATEL, Bhumit



My name is Bhumit Patel, and I am honoured to stand as a candidate for the Fruitvale School Board of Trustees. As a proud member of the Fruitvale community and a parent of a child currently attending the school, I am deeply invested in the wellbeing, growth, and success of all our Tamariki. I believe that every child deserves the opportunity to learn in a safe, inclusive, and inspiring environment where they can reach their full potential. Fruitvale School already has a strong reputation for fostering a sense of belonging and high-quality education, and I am committed to helping our school continue to thrive.

**Connection with the School and Community** Over the years, I have actively participated in school and local community events, supported fundraising activities, and engaged with teachers and parents to understand the needs of our learners. My involvement has strengthened my belief in the importance of strong partnerships between the school, whānau, and the wider community.

**Experience and Skills** I bring with me professional experience in business management, education, finance, community services, along with skills in governance, decision-making, and strategic planning. I have worked with diverse groups and understand the importance of listening to different perspectives before making decisions that affect our children's future.

**Vision for the School** If elected, I will focus on: Supporting high-quality teaching and learning, with a strong emphasis on literacy, numeracy, and wellbeing. Ensuring all children feel valued, included, and safe at school. Encouraging open communication and transparency between the board, staff, and parents. Advocating for resources and opportunities that enhance both academic and cultural growth. I understand the responsibility of serving on the board goes beyond governance – it is about ensuring our school remains a place where every child is supported to succeed, every teacher is empowered to inspire, and every parent feels welcomed and heard. I am committed to working collaboratively with fellow board members, the principal, staff, and our community to make thoughtful, well-informed decisions that benefit all students. It would be a privilege to represent our community on the Board of Trustees, and I humbly ask for your support.

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## RAI SHRESTHA, Kreepa



I joined the board in February 2024 and feel incredibly grateful for the opportunity to contribute to a school that means so much to my whānau. My two children, Omna and Numi, are proud Fruitvale students, and our family feels a strong sense of connection and belonging here. I genuinely love being involved, and my time on the board continues to fill my cup in so many meaningful ways. I am originally from Nepal and have called Aotearoa home since 2002. New Zealand has shaped much of my adult life – from university through to my career and raising a family – and I feel deeply connected to the diverse, caring community here in West Auckland.

**Professionally**, I'm an Environmental and Occupational Health and Safety Specialist with over a decade of experience working across New Zealand. I've worked in a range of roles, including as a Senior Environmental Scientist, where I've led complex risk assessments, championed workplace safety, and collaborated with a wide variety of stakeholders. I'm passionate about wellbeing, equity, and sustainability – values that deeply align with Fruitvale's kaupapa. I believe my background in health and safety, project management, and community engagement helps me bring a practical, thoughtful, and solutions-focused perspective to the board table.

**Outside of board responsibilities**, I love being part of everyday school life. I regularly volunteer at the Breakfast Club, where I get the chance to connect with students, staff, and other parents over kai and kōrero. These moments remind me why Fruitvale is so special – it's a school with heart, where everyone is welcomed and valued. Being on the board has been both humbling and uplifting. It gives me the chance to advocate for our tamariki, support our school's leadership and staff, and contribute to a learning environment where every child can thrive.

**Beyond my professional and volunteer roles**, I'm an avid reader and gardener. I love cooking, exploring the outdoors, and spending time with my family and friends. I'm also passionate about sustainable living and enjoy supporting the arts – from music and theatre to film and literature. I am proud to be part of this wonderful community and look forward to continuing to serve Fruitvale School with care, commitment, and purpose.

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