

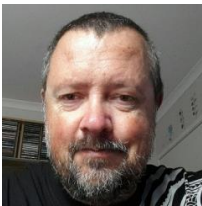
ST JOHN'S COLLEGE (HILLCREST) PARENT BOARD ELECTION CANDIDATE PROFILES

BENEFIELD-LAILAI, Frances



Kia ora and Ni Sa Bula Vinaka, my name is Frances Benefield-Lailai, and I would like to be put forward for the role of Parent Representative on the St John's College School Board of Trustees. As a parent of St John's College, I appreciate the school's commitment to Catholic education and the distinctive Marist charm that shapes the school community. Originally from Suva, Fiji, I immigrated to Aotearoa New Zealand as a teenager and completed my high school education here in Hamilton. Having experienced both the Fijian and New Zealand schooling systems, I value the richness that comes from diverse ways of learning and understanding the world. Navigating migration at a formative age gave me insight into the importance of belonging, identity, and culturally responsive education, perspectives that now inform my personal and professional life. Professionally, I am a Registered Nurse and currently employed as a National Educator with Whānau Āwhina Plunket, supporting the development of culturally responsive and equitable health education for frontline practitioners. With over 10 years of experience in health and education, I bring a sound understanding of how to build respectful relationships, deliver professional development, and contribute to systems that support wellbeing. I also contribute at a strategic level within the organisation, advocating for Pacific Peoples through policy development, equity-focused initiatives, and leadership pathways that reflect the diversity of our communities. If given the opportunity to serve, I would be committed to promoting diversity, inclusivity, and cultural understanding within our school community. I believe in creating a learning environment where all students feel valued and supported, and where a sense of belonging can grow alongside academic, cultural, and spiritual development. Drawing on these experiences, I would aim to contribute to governance that upholds the Marist values. My focus would be supporting the shared aspirations of our St John's College whānau while learning from the wisdom and expertise of fellow board members and our school community. It would be a privilege to contribute to the work of the Board of Trustees, alongside parents, staff, and the wider community. I am committed to serving with integrity and supporting the continued growth of St John's College. Caritas Christi Urget Nos – The Love of Christ Urges Us On | Te Aroha o Te Atua Kei Te Kawe Vinaka vakalevu, ngā mihi nui and thank you for your consideration.

DELPORT, Mark



I have been interested in participating in a schoolboard for a number of years now. While I have no experience in this role or environment I am willing to learn and help where I can. In terms of career I have been a senior solution architect with then healthAlliance and now Health New Zealand for over 15 years. In addition I have achieved a number of coaching certifications from NZ Football for both football and futsal. Due to a large restructure that has happened within the health platform since September last year, I have been unable to coach this year but I have been fortunate to referee some of the games in a sport that I love. I have three children of which Cristiano is my youngest son. My eldest daughter completed her schooling at Carmel College in Takapuna and my middle daughter completed her schooling career at Sacred Heart here in Hamilton, she is currently pursuing post grad studies at Waikato University. We also have two grandchildren aged 4 and a half and 3. I grew up with a very strict schooling background where academics was considered the only option to achieve in life. New Zealand schooling philosophy intrigues me and would like to find way to be involved in this holistic approach. I am passionate about technology and have vast experience in large enterprise level systems. I am just as passionate about sports and support my children in achieving in their sporting goals. I would encourage more support for the lesser known sports.

DEVOY, John



Kia ora, I am John Devoy. Poipioa te kākano kia puāwai Nuture the seed and it will blossom My family and I have been a part of the St John's college community for 3 years. I have 3 children one currently at SJC in year 11, another who has just started at Sacred Heart in year 9 and our youngest is still at St Pat's in Te Awamutu. We thoroughly enjoyed being a part of the school and what it has to offer. I have been involved in the school through coaching rugby. I would like to be elected to the Board of Trustees to help support and continue the growth of our school and all that surrounds it. I feel it is important to put the students and teachers at the forefront of learning through different forums and methods along with providing effective guidance and leadership. I have good experience in strategy, governance and leadership which I think will be of benefit on the Board of Trustees. I would like to see the Board of Trustees continue to support the teachers, staff and allow the students to thrive in their learning and the community. This includes making sure there is inclusivity and diversity in the needs of the students and teachers. It would also be great for the school community to know and see what the Board are doing to help support the students and school as we go forward. Tēnā koutou katoa

FENWICK, Jolie



Tēnā koutou, ko Jolie taku ingoa. It is an honor to introduce myself as an applicant seeking to contribute to the growth and success of our boys at St John's College. As a proud Māori Wāhine of Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa descent, I bring cultural heritage, professional expertise, and a passion for empowering the next generation. I've been living in Kirikiriroa for over two decades, where I've built a fulfilling life with my husband, Dan, and our three sons aged 18, 15, and 12. Boys are truly my world—I grew up with two brothers, and raising my own has been a rewarding journey filled with many challenges, growth, and precious moments worth celebrating. Professionally, I am a Recruitment Business Partner at Te Mātāpuna/Fonterra, and my career spans experience in IT, payroll, and talent acquisition. Additionally, I've had the privilege of representing Aotearoa in swimming—a testament to the drive and resilience I hold in both personal and professional pursuits. My husband, Dan, is a Business Development Manager at Tuatahi Fibre, and together, we've navigated entrepreneurial ventures, including owning a building company, which taught us invaluable lessons in teamwork, perseverance, and leadership. Over my time at St John's College, I've come to deeply appreciate that every boy's journey is unique. Some thrive with structure, while others need time and space to explore their potential. The key lies in championing their individuality, celebrating even the smallest victories, and fostering their growth into confident, resilient young men. I am passionate about building boys into strong leaders by showcasing the breadth of opportunities available to them—whether it be in STEM fields, apprenticeships, graduate programs, or careers in industries like dairy. With my background in recruitment, IT, and payroll, I bring proven strengths in communication, collaboration, mentorship, and championing diversity and inclusion. I would love nothing more than to leverage these skills to guide, inspire, and support our boys throughout their journey at St John's College. Let's create an environment grounded in positivity, encouragement, and unwavering commitment to their success. Together, as one whānau, Tātou Tātou. Ngā mihi nui, Jolie Fenwick

JOHNSON, Karl



Board of Trustees – Parent Representative Application Nominee: Karl Johnson My name is Karl Johnson, and I am the proud parent of a current student at St John's College. I am married to Rachel, and together we are raising two sons – Zach and Toby. As a family, we value integrity, community, and opportunity, and those values are exactly why we chose St John's College. I am putting myself forward to serve as a Parent Representative on the Board of Trustees because I believe in the power of good governance to make a real difference in the lives of students, staff, and families. While I am not an Old Boy of St John's, I am a proud product of a Catholic education, having attended Xavier College (now Cathedral College) in Christchurch. I understand firsthand the role a strong, faith-based education plays in shaping character, discipline, and service – and I'm committed to supporting that legacy for current and future generations of young men at St John's. I love the school's motto, "Growing Great Young Men," because it speaks to everything I value as a father – helping our boys become confident, capable, respectful young men who will make a positive impact in the world. I want St John's to be a school that not only delivers academic and personal excellence but is a place families aspire to send their sons – a school known for its strong values, its vibrant community, and its commitment to developing outstanding young men in the Catholic and Marist tradition. As someone who has dedicated my career to high-performance sport, I strongly believe that sport plays a vital role in developing teamwork, resilience, discipline, and leadership in young men. I will advocate for sport to remain a central part of the St John's experience – alongside academics, culture, and pastoral care. Professionally, I bring over 35 years of leadership experience, including managing teams and delivering outcomes at an international level. In my current role as Turf Manager for two of New Zealand's premier international sports venues, I lead operations that require strategic vision, strong communication, and accountability. I understand the importance of building high-performing teams and creating environments where people thrive. I am committed to representing our parent community with integrity, transparency, and care. I believe in St John's and its mission, and I would be honoured to contribute to its continued growth and success. Regards Karl Johnson

MILLS, Damian



As a current member of the Board of Trustees with a long history and connection to St John's College, I would relish the opportunity to continue to make a difference at a governance level at St John's. I have thoroughly enjoyed being part of the Board, and I am excited to support this team in helping the school community to develop and be better in the coming years. My Dad was one of the first pupils at St John's, and my brothers and I enjoyed our time at the college as well, and especially thrived in the brotherhood that was established and grew as a result of being educated at St John's. This Marist brotherhood is special and still exists to this day. I valued the friendships I made at St John's, and we are all still very close. I am supported in my role as a trustee by my wife, Leah, who is a teacher, my son Harper (current Year 13 student), and our daughter Ava (Year 10 at Sacred Heart). I am currently the Associate Headmaster of Southwell School, bringing over twenty years of educational experience from various schools in the Waikato and abroad. Having this experience has enabled me to support the Board in guiding St John's with decisions related to teaching and learning. I want St John's to continue to be a successful Catholic boys' school into the future and be the number one choice for parents when making decisions about high school for their sons.

MUIR, Brendon



I'm an old boy of St John's College and currently have two sons at the school. For the past nine years, I've served on the Board of Trustees at St Pius X Catholic School in Melville, the majority of those years as Presiding Member. I'm also actively involved at St John's through running the Rock Climbing Squad. Recreationally I enjoy both organising and participating in outdoor climbing, and am a committee member of the Waikato Climbing Club. Professionally, I've spent the last 20 years running a business that develops websites for New Zealand schools, giving me a strong understanding of the education sector and the needs of school communities. As I step down from my role at St Pius, I'd welcome the opportunity to continue serving Catholic education by contributing to the St John's College Board of Trustees. I bring experience, commitment, and a deep personal connection to the school, and would be honoured to support its ongoing success.

PALMER, Ben



My name is Ben Palmer, and I am standing for election as a parent representative on the St John's College Board of Trustees. My wife, Becky, and I live in Hamilton and have three children. Jack is currently in Year 9 at St John's, Emma is Year 11 at Sacred Heart Girls' College and Harry is in Year 6 at Marian Catholic School. As a family, we value the strong Catholic character, academic focus, and well-rounded formation that St John's offers its students. Professionally, I am a corporate and commercial lawyer at Tompkins Wake in Hamilton. I work closely with a wide range of clients including businesses, councils, and charitable organisations to provide practical legal advice, navigate complex issues, and support sound decision making. I will bring this experience to my role on the Board, with a strong focus on governance, risk awareness, and constructive problem solving. Over the past three years, I have been a parent representative on the Marian Catholic School Board and gained a solid understanding of the responsibilities of school trusteeship. I believe in fostering strong partnerships between the Board, Principal, staff, and families. I would welcome the opportunity to serve on the St John's College Board and support the Principal and leadership team in delivering high quality education, sporting and cultural outcomes.

POWELL, Sophia



I currently have 2 sons attending St John's, and work closely with Catholic schools in the Hamilton Diocese for employment. I will bring to the Board a fresh perspective & definitely some volume being a hearing impaired parent. I enjoy life as a busy mum of boys, with our holidays & weekends usually spent being on the go with trail riding, camping & water sports, when we are not actively involved in the college sports seasons. I am keen to give back to the college community as parent voice. Being an active volunteer both here and my son's hometown, I can call on many avenues of experience to bring the best to our Board. I am organised to a tee and enjoy a good coffee & a chat about most things. I am empathetic and energetic and feel these attributes with benefit my role as your parent rep.

SONNTAG, Bridget



I am putting my hand up as a parent representative for the St John's College Board of Trustees. My husband, Marcus and I have lived in Hamilton since 2016 and own a local franchise business. We have three children: a daughter completing her schooling at Sacred Heart, a son in Year 10 at St John's, and another who will be starting in 2026. Professionally, I am an Operations Manager at a technology consultancy based in Innovation Park, leading business operations, team development, and resource planning. I have over many years of leadership and operational experience across the technology, utilities, and public service sectors. I bring strengths in collaboration, practical problem-solving, and ensuring decisions are translated into tangible outcomes. My approach to governance is outcomes-driven – aligning strategy with clear action. While this would be my first role on a school Board, I bring experience in financial oversight, reporting, and leading operational delivery. I believe that every student should be supported to achieve their personal best through high school, developing confidence, resilience, and compassion along the way. At the same time, I believe the school must continue to challenge itself to raise the bar in academic excellence, especially as it navigates the challenges of upcoming NCEA changes. I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to the St John's community.

STOKES, Kelly



Kia Ora, Ko Maungatautari te maunga te rū nei taku ngā kau, Ko Waikato te awa e mahea nei aku māharahara, E mihi ana kinga toku o neke, o Waipā e noho nei au, Ko Kelly Stokes toku ingoa. As a new parent to St John's College in 2025, I have been impressed at the overall standard that the current board and school leadership team have set. I am also pleased to see the pastoral care for our young men, and that it is valued as highly as the student achievements. For these reasons, I would like to join the School Board, and continue the work of those who have come before me. I have personal strengths in applying strategy to operational outcomes, and am experienced in governance settings, due to my 20+ year career in government and engineering. If I was elected to the Board, I would seek to learn as much as possible from the school leadership team, as well as the other board members, and use this knowledge to identify areas for enhancement that I could contribute to. The provision of strong strategy and sound policy allow good decision making, which then drives school success, and ultimately creates good men and citizens. The continued delivery of a great school experience would be my focus, and I would be privileged to assist the school to deliver that through my service to the Board.

TUFFERY, Hayden



As a proud parent and active member of our school community, I'm thrilled to stand for election to the Board of Trustees. My motivation comes from a deep personal investment in the success of our school and its students. Over the past two years, I've had the privilege of coaching junior sports at the school—an experience that's given me a front-row seat to the dedication and passion of our teachers and staff. I hold immense respect for the work they do every day, and I'm eager to support them by helping ensure our governance is strong, transparent, and focused on what matters most: student wellbeing and achievement. Professionally, I bring senior leadership experience from large organisations, where I've led strategic initiatives and driven impactful decisions through the use of data and analytics. I believe this background will be a valuable asset to the board, particularly in areas like strategic planning, budget oversight, and policy development. I'm a collaborative thinker who values diverse perspectives and believes in respectful, solution-oriented dialogue. If elected, I will advocate for:- Strong Values: Creating and maintaining a school environment that reflects the values most important to our families and community- Clear Communication: Ensuring families receive timely, transparent updates and have meaningful opportunities to be heard- Future-Focused Leadership: Preparing students not just for academic success, but for life—by embracing innovation, wellbeing, and community connection. I'm standing for the Board because I care deeply about our children's education and the role our school plays in shaping their future. I want to contribute to a team that listens, learns, and leads with integrity. If given the opportunity to serve, I'll bring energy, empathy, and a strong sense of responsibility to the role. Thank you for considering my candidacy. I'd be honoured to represent our community and help make our school the best it can be—for every child, every family, and our shared future.