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My name is Aimee and I have been at the YMCA for some time now. I came from Central Regional Health School, which is a school that helps people going through hard times in their life. Before that I went to a mainstream college, but I had to leave after my friend committed suicide. School didn't really work for me because I felt I was being judged and I was stuck in a place full of happy people and I was the odd one out.

I don't like change. This year when the staff changes took place at the YMCA, I was not keen. It seemed too fast. But 3 months on I like the changes that have been made. This place no longer feels like a homeless shelter. The staff changed the lighting in the building, the structure of the course and they encourage us to look after our own mess.

The change is now proving really good and is helping achieve more book work I feel very proud of myself. I learnt to take ownership at the YMCA and do things for myself, taking steps forward and not always relying on other people. I know I have to stand up and do it myself. At the YMCA we are accountable for our actions and we learn how to do the right things and learn from our mistakes.

I really enjoy the cultural programme, we have kapa haka in the mornings, and are planning on a cultural exchange to Gisborne. The tutors give us real life experience such as volunteering out at the camp. Some people aren't necessarily used to helping out.

I've nearly gained my level one, which has taken a while, but I'm pushing myself. I want to go to Elite Beauty School. I already have a mentor there, her name is Lorraine and I've been in there and had a look around and it's a really cool place and I want to apply for one of her assessments cos it's hands on and you get extra clients.



AIMEE'S STORY