

# Learning to protect kids

By GEOFF LEWIS

Being able to recognise child abuse and intervene successfully was the aim of a group of 2011 Child Protection Studies diploma graduates.

Based in Anglesea St, Child Matters was established in 1994 as the Institute of Child Protection Studies and was renamed Child Matters in 2010.

Communications adviser Rachel McGuire said Child Matters was the only specialist child protection education provider in New Zealand and it provided half-day and five-day courses along with a full-year NZQA-recognised diploma programme.

The four women who gathered last week following their graduation from the diploma programme included Sheryl Ririnui, who works for Birthright Waikato.

Sheryl wanted to become a child advocate and help reduce child abuse. The diploma programme had given her a better idea of how to approach situations of abuse and know what to do.

"When I used to see something happening in public I'd just freeze. Now I know how to deal with the situation."

Katrina Bourne is the manager of Four Winds, the only licensed Pasifika early childhood centre in Hamilton working with Samoan, Tongan and Cook Island Maori preschoolers.

I had completed the previous workshops and certificates and I wanted to build my own knowledge

and skills in the workplace and build my confidence around being an advocate for children and families."

Debbie Saba works for Barnardos' KidsStart home-based care and education service for under-fives and undertook the child-protection diploma after being offered the chance, along with two workmates.

"The diploma is all about having the knowledge. To be able to support families and to know what to look for."

Natalie Barlow works with youth in Newton and has previously completed a three-year bachelor's degree in applied social science through Waikato University. She works for Art for Aroha in Newton and helps with counselling in schools.

Ms McGuire said Child Matters' five-day certificate was its most popular programme and material in its diploma programme was not covered in other social work or teaching degrees.

Sixteen of the 22 diploma-programme students graduated on May 19.



**GRADUATES:** From left, Debbie Saba, Natalie Barlow, Sheryl Ririnui and Katrina Bourne.  
Photo: KELLY HODEL