

Chris Parkes

Chris graduated from PN Teachers College in 1973 and began teaching in various Auckland primary and intermediate schools from 1974. She worked as a classroom teacher and as a music specialist and it was while she was working with a group of gifted music students in the late 1970s and early 1980s that her interest in gifted children began.

She had her first child in 1982 and her daughter was intensely interested in music from an early age, so Chris began to explore the needs of a musically talented child. This brought her into contact with the methods and philosophy of Dr Suzuki.

She returned to teaching in 1987 and continued to be involved in classroom teaching and music. She taught choirs, a school orchestra and conducted local music festivals

In 1990 her son was born and he was an enquiring and precocious child who was able to read at three and showed many of the traits of a gifted child. He found school very difficult but Chris and her husband were able to get him into One Day School run by the George Parkyn Centre. This was when she first met Rosemary Cathcart and really began to explore the identification and needs of gifted children.

Chris began teaching at One Day School in 1997 and began studying Philosophy for Children through the George Parkyn Centre. Staff training was on going and Chris was able to attend conferences and meet with many of the leading academics working in gifted education. However she feels that the most important teachers at that time were the students themselves who continued to challenge and lead her into new experiences and ways of thinking.

During the early 2000s Chris returned to study and finally completed her B.Ed through Massey university with papers in gifted education included. She continued her interest in music and was a co conductor of the APPA music festivals in the Auckland Town Hall in 1999 and 2000. After leaving One Day School she worked at St Peters College in Auckland until she retired from teaching in 2009. Since then she has been on an adventure, moving to a remote part of Central Otago where she became an ambulance volunteer, ran a B&B and bought and ran an Early Childhood Centre with her husband.

She is now living in Ruakaka in Northland where she is enjoying surfing, walking, reading, playing the piano and taking on the fresh challenge of sharing what she has learned over the years about our wonderful, elusive, challenging and truly wonderful gifted students.