

# Sofia's Story

Like too many of the children of Aotearoa, I grew up in survival mode. Just trying to make it through each day. I grew up in dysfunctional parental care bouncing from house to house. By the age of 10 I had taken drugs, smoked cigarettes and drank a lot - I was still in primary school. I started running away from home and sleeping on the streets just to get away.

My circumstances, choices and the abuse that I had endured was leading me down a destructive path. Just before I was chosen for Project K, the police and the justice system got involved, this would have been one of the lowest and hardest times in my life. I was very depressed, suicidal and had been self-harming for over 3 years at this point. The first time I tried to commit suicide I was 13 and I stayed home from school one day and swallowed a bottle of pills. When someone asked me years later if that was a cry for help I said no. You see I didn't tell anyone and when my mother returned home I just lay in bed in wait for it to be all over.

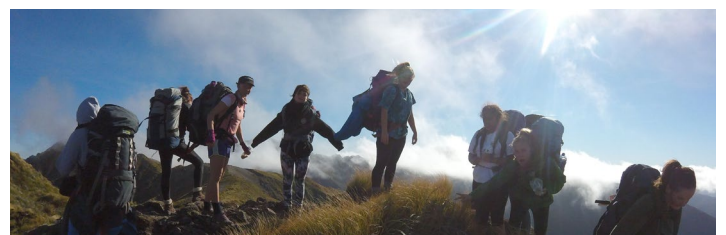
**At that time in my life, I did not believe there was any help that was going to be available to me, there was nobody to cry to.**

Project K honestly has saved my life and it gave me that help, resilience and support when I needed it most. Something happened the moment I got chosen for Project K. It was like I felt actually important, that out of all the students in my school, I got picked. That someone saw potential in me that I didn't even see in myself. Before Project K my goals were to make it to my 18th birthday and not be

a teen mum. I moved out of "home" and stayed in school and passed year 13.

Every single aspect of Project K gave me the ability to do this. I remember not being too scared about it because I knew I wasn't truly alone, that the Project K Manager and my mentor and other support was there and they would help me.

Project K isn't just a year-long programme. It's a lifetime, it has changed my life. I am now studying at University and enjoying life. I honestly with my whole heart don't think I would be alive today if it wasn't for Project K. Project K saved me. So please allow Project K to change more lives for the better and support this great organisation that is creating bright futures for the children of Aotearoa.



**We want every child to know: What they have inside is greater than any obstacle.**