

Digging up a role model with an impressive record

The man behind much-loved Doug the Digger has become the first role model in a nation-wide book programme to crack the 500 assemblies mark.

Local identity Alistair McIntyre marked his Duffy Books in Homes programme Role Model milestone with a special assembly at Totara Grove School last Friday.

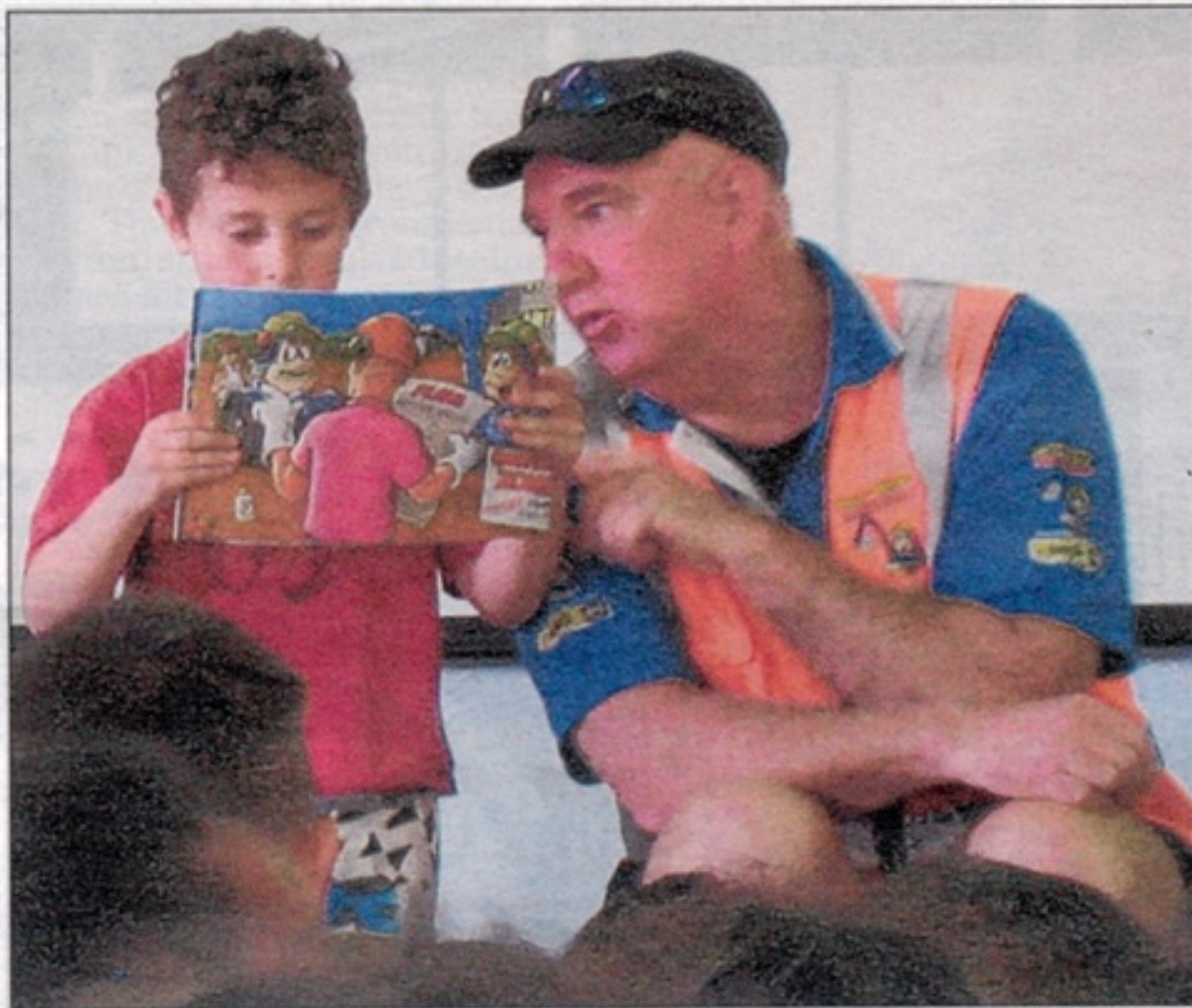
Mr McIntyre has spent the past decade travelling the country, from Te Hapua in the Far North to the Bluff, and presented books at 500 Duffy Role Model assemblies.

"When I first started doing it I instantly fell in love with being a role model and something I love about Duffy Books is all the work behind the scenes and getting involved with schools," he said.

But Mr McIntyre doesn't seem to be the only love-struck person, as hundreds of little eyes watched him in awe as he shared his life story, the inception of his children's book *Doug the Digger* — including his fear of writing — and handed out tips on competent reading to Totara Grove School pupils.

"You're cool," a young girl towards the back of the room continually yelled out for Mr McIntyre to hear at the same time she gave him two thumbs-up.

His rapport with the children is unmissable with the eruption of laughter his sideways cap — dubbed his "artist" hat —



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BOOKWORMS: Alistair McIntyre, aka Doug the Digger, listens as a young Totara Grove School pupil reads Mr McIntyre's book to the assembly.

provoked and the stream of "woahs" stirred by his anecdotes.

He was nominated to become a Duffy Role Model by Te Horo School after he impressed them with a presentation about *Doug the Digger*.

The Duffy Books in Homes programme, launched in 1995,

functions as a form of book club where students at primary and intermediate schools in New Zealand order books from a brochure, which are then presented at Role Model assemblies at the end of three school terms. Each child receives a minimum of five new books each year.