



LazySneakers

LazySneakers (CC59654) is a newly registered charity founded by 16 year old student Maia Mariner (Ngāi Tai, Ngāti Koata and Samoan Chinese).

Since its launch in 2018, LazySneakers has collected over 8,000 pairs of reusable sneakers and distributed over 7,500 pairs to people across Aotearoa, with the help of an established network of LazySneaker ambassadors.

In our interview, Maia shares her inspiring story and talks about her goal to give away 10,000 pairs of sneakers by 2023.



Maia Mariner of LazySneakers

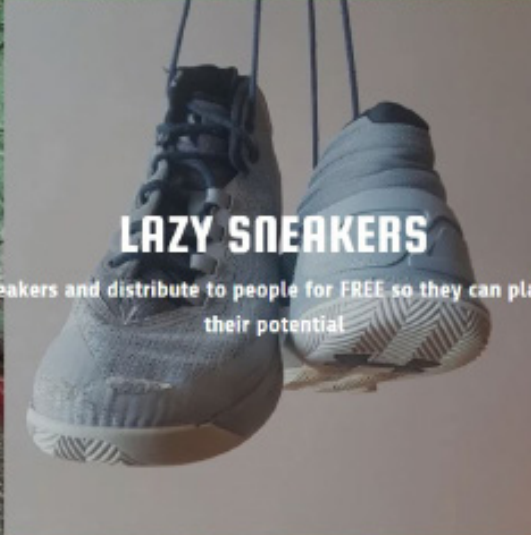
What's the story of LazySneakers?

I was twelve when I came up with the idea for LazySneakers. The inspiration came when I noticed that some of my peers struggled to participate or play sports because they didn't have the appropriate footwear. Material hardship is a reality for so many families and I felt compelled to help. I brainstormed ideas with my whānau (family) and decided to start a 'sneaker bank' where people could donate their 'lazy' or unused sneakers to those who could reactivate them to play, participate and reach their potential.

We strongly believe that our kaupapa (purpose) is about creating a movement and not a monopoly. We have grown to have over 20 collection sites across Aotearoa and a site in Australia. The movement is fielding interest from Asia, Africa, USA and the Pacific Islands.

LazySneakers relies on other community groups for operational support (such as drop-off points). How have you found collaborating with other charities?

We are extremely humbled by the range of large organisations who have supported the LazySneaker movement from across the private and public sector. This exposure has seen many more big brands coming onboard! We also have athletes that play for a variety of sports teams including the All Blacks and the Silver Ferns, that reach out and donate sneakers. However, our biggest supporters are our sports communities who actively support all young people.



How has leading a charity contributed to your life?

The experience has helped me appreciate and put into action the values of promoting kindness and fairness – those instilled in me by my whānau. I have met a lot of interesting people, made friends and built great connections. As part of promoting our kaupapa, I've also had to step outside of my comfort zone and develop confidence when sharing our story on media channels such as TV, Radio, Podcasts and online publications.

What advice do you have to all the other young rangatira (leaders) out there who want to get involved in their communities?

If you truly believe you can make a difference, remember your values and surround yourself with positive people. You will get pushed back, you might get ridiculed or even fail, but that's ok. The kaupapa is bigger than the setbacks and the people around you will always have your back! Keep on going, learn from the experience and have fun.

What's on next for you and LazySneakers?

Our goal is to give away 10,000 pairs of lazy sneakers by 2023. We can only achieve this by profiling more about the LazySneakers kaupapa and networking to develop more collaborations, partnerships, and attract more ambassadors. We are now a charitable trust, which allows us to explore opportunities for resourcing and attract more interest from a wider audience.

As for myself, 2022 is about defining what independence looks like. It's a year of transition as I'm in my final year of high school – meaning I am currently thinking about university options in 2023. Whatever I do, I know it will need to hold my interest and be anchored in my values.

To find out more about LazySneakers, find them on the [Charities Register](#) (CC59654) and visit their [website](#).