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# From the rubble: Improving community

## and school engagement

Journal of Educational Leadership, Policy and Practice  
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Harris, Christine<sup>1</sup>

**Abstract:** Engagement with the school community is always a challenge for principals and school leaders, especially when contact is instigated from the school. This article looks at the ways one school and its community developed new ways of interacting

with each other due to the effects and aftermath of the Christchurch earthquakes. It also looks at the way teaching staff and support staff became autonomous in collaborating to meet the needs of the children and families at the school. As the school became recognised as a vehicle for helping the community, a culture of collaborative relationships developed between the school, external agencies and parents. The progression from collaborative relationships to relational trust resulted in an increase of social capital and social cohesion. The changes that evolved through leaders, teachers and parents building strong relationships are highlighted as desirable and essential in order to build a successful school.



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