

Local residents captivated by renowned neuroscientist



An audience of more than 80 Mercury Bay residents, mostly parents of school-aged children, had the privilege to listen to an hour-long talk by Prof Adele Diamond in the Mercury Bay Area School library on Wednesday evening last week.

Prof Diamond is a professor in developmental cognitive neuroscience at the University of British Columbia in Canada and is recognised as one of the 15 most influential neuroscientists in the world. She was a keynote speaker at a neuroscience conference in Auckland the weekend before last, organised by former MBAS teacher and well-known Whitianga resident, Paul Blackman.

After the conference, Prof Diamond and her husband spent a few days with Paul and his wife, Johanna in Whitianga.

Prof Diamond started her talk with reference to the famous Dunedin Study (a study following the lives of 1,000 people born in Dunedin between April 1972 and March 1973) and then captivated the audience with a whirlwind tour of research indicating, among other things, that self-control is a necessary ingredient for success in life and that children learn best, and are the most keen to learn, when they are involved in things that they genuinely enjoy. She pointed out that there's a reason dance, play, storytelling, art and music have been part of human life for thousands of years and are found in every culture and that perhaps in modern day life, we have discarded the wisdom of past generations too lightly.

A lively question and answer session followed, with several of the audience members thanking Dr Diamond for her willingness to share her insights with the local community.

Pictured is Paul with Dr Diamond after her talk on Wednesday evening.