

# Arts, karate move to landmark hall

By KAROLINE TUCKEY

Upper Hutt children will get a new fun house, with the establishment of The Spot, in the old Upper Hutt Baptist Church hall, which will provide both karate and performing arts classes.

The multiroom hall on the corner of Milton St and Fergusson Dr has been purchased by Arts a Go Go! performing arts for kids and will also house Seido Karate Upper Hutt, with plans to welcome other complementary community organisations in the future.

Arts a Go Go! director Rachel Main says the venue is a great space for children's organisations, and the hall is about to get a new lick of paint and beauty treatment.

"This was a real opportunity, and the next step for me was to have my own place.

"Already I've arranged preschool music classes for during the day. I can now add to the Arts a Go Go! lineup.

"It's going to be completely renovated, and purpose-built flooring for karate will go in - you'll see a transformation."

Arts a Go Go! runs dance, drama, singing and Irish dancing classes, with several classes happening in tandem on Saturdays, and has costumes and sets previously stored at another premises, she says.

"We need the space - there's a lot of group work and creating pieces and choreography; and children learning the techniques and devising their own choreography; and in drama lots of improvisation where they go off to various parts



**Energy centre:** Rachel Main and Graeme Jarvis will bring their child-focused organisations Arts a Go Go! and Seido Karate Upper Hutt together at a new community-focused facility, The Spot, on Fergusson Dr. Photo: KAROLINE TUCKEY

of the room to practise.

"The kids are excited about it being their space and that we can have all the costumes here, and I think they think it'll be dress-up every day, instead of once a term."

The partnership between organisations works well, Mr Jarvis says, with some parents already noting that there could potentially

be combined after-school runs for children to karate and performing arts classes at the same point.

"Our children's programmes set us apart from other schools, we've got 60 per cent child members, and there's real opportunities for whole families to get involved here," he says.

Both organisations are grateful

to their previous venues, which treated them well, but which they had outgrown, and say they have received plenty of support and congratulations from the community for their new endeavour.

Fundraising projects to help with the move into the hall and to buy new equipment include lolly sales, a monster garage sale,

discos and a live band.

"Even though it's a business, it takes a lot of money to run, and we don't want to pass those costs on, so we're just trying to do it as efficiently as we can, with help," Ms Main says.

The schools plan to open at The Spot at the beginning August, ready for the third term.