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Funding helps fire creative opportunities

What does it take to run community pottery workshops?

A supply of clay, a venue with the facilities to shape and fire it – and tutors.

At the Paeroa Society of Arts participants' fees cover the raw materials and equipment, says volunteer joint convener Kay Jenkins. But the ongoing weekend and one-day workshops have only been viable thanks to *Creative Communities Scheme's* funding assistance, which has covered the costs of engaging skilled tutors.

"We try to run two workshops a year, which sustains people's interest and keeps the momentum going," says Kay. "This also ensures fresh stock for our gallery, which is a showcase for our community and one of its visitor attractions, especially now that the Hauraki Rail Trail is up and running in a big way. Most of our patrons are rail trail users or tourists passing through."

The workshops provide creative and learning opportunities for potters in the wider Hauraki area, as the Society has members living in Waihi, Te Aroha and other surrounding communities. The Council is currently accepting applications for Creative Communities grants to assist arts projects and initiatives within the District. Priority is given to projects that offer broad community benefit, promote cultural enrichment and diversity, or enable and encourage young people to engage with or actively participate in the arts. See the notice on this page for more information.

Chinese lessons, Kiwi style

Teachers at Netherton School don't usually blindfold students. But a game devised by Wang Nan – known in New Zealand as Doris – helps her pupils to follow simple directions in Mandarin. She outlines a face on the whiteboard, and a blindfolded volunteer attempts to draw in the missing nose, as his or her classmates call the words for "up", "down", "left", or "right".

Doris is the Mandarin Learning Assistant posted to the Ohinemuri Schools cluster this year, as part of a Chinese Government-funded programme set up under the bilateral Fair Trade Agreement to promote cultural understanding and language education in Kiwi schools. It's managed in New Zealand by the Confucius Institute which has offices at Auckland, Victoria and Canterbury Universities; and while most of the learning assistants are based at urban schools, Hauraki was accepted into the scheme last year through a Council economic development initiative.

Six schools are involved: Netherton, Miller Avenue, Paeroa College, Paeroa Christian, Karangahake, and Hikutaia. "The Council worked together with us to ensure our first Mandarin teacher Selina was orientated into the community, and provided support by administering the financial and reporting requirements," says lead teacher and Netherton School Principal Tracey Adams. This got the new concept of all-age Mandarin language teaching off the ground.

By the end of the 2014 school year when Selina returned to China at the end of her contract, "our children had gained a deeper appreciation of a different culture and were developing some basic Chinese language skills," says Tracey. "Global understanding and the ability to communicate with respect for a variety of cultures is of huge importance to our young people. The principals wanted to continue building on that, and this year we've welcomed Doris into our schools and community."

Doris is in Skype contact with Selina, which aids a real progression of learning. It also helped Doris to know what to expect – though she was worried to realise she would have no textbooks. "In China, we have texts for everything!"

In her home province of Shandong between Beijing and Shanghai, the 29-year-old teaches Mandarin to non-Chinese speakers at Qing Dao Qiuishi College (University). She has previously taught middle school children in South Korea for two years, but this is her first experience of a western country, fulfilling a dream she has had since starting to learn English as a young teen.

Doris knew of New Zealand as a country of beautiful sights, fresh air, a clean outdoor environment – and milk. "I'm very happy to be working in a rural area. It was my first choice," she says. "There's no busy traffic and I enjoy the relaxed lifestyle very much. I have changed and adapted."

New Zealanders are more independent than Chinese, says Doris, who lives with her grandparents at home. "The Kiwi teaching style is much looser and more interactive. It's not that one way is better. They are just different. My classes here are often noisy, but if they are fun, the children will learn and remember more." Her lesson plans even include making dumplings and teaching her pupils how to use chopsticks.

"It's a great opportunity to experience another culture," says Netherton School 10-year-old Maggie Martin-Downes, who hopes to travel to China one day. Fellow student Brady Coldicutt, 12, also thinks his growing language skills and cultural appreciation will be of value in the future, perhaps even leading to a career as an interpreter.

Meanwhile, Doris is making the most of some learning opportunities herself, and the chance to be actively involved in the wider community. She is taking piano lessons; and has crafted some exquisite glass coasters at Paeroa College night classes.



GAME PLAN: Wang Nan (Doris) turns learning into a game at Netherton School. Maggie Martin-Downes uses newly-learned Mandarin words to direct her blindfolded classmate Hollie Wilson.

Annual survey of Hauraki District residents' satisfaction

Next week the Council will commence its annual survey of Hauraki District residents' satisfaction with Council services. The survey is a valuable opportunity to provide feedback on the Council's performance and the results will then inform planning and reporting in the future. The surveys will commence on 8 June and end on 3 July 2015.

Not only are we asking what District residents think of Council services in general, the Council is also undertaking two other surveys for users of the Council's building consent and resource consent services. So if you have used those services in the last year you may be called (randomly selected from a user list) to give us your thoughts. It is possible you could be called more than once, if your name is lucky enough to come through the random selection process for all three surveys! But don't be alarmed as all three surveys are for very different purposes and your feedback would be appreciated on all matters.

What we will be asking

- Your first name
- Which township you live closest to
- Age group
- Ethnicity
- Different questions regarding your satisfaction with the Council's services in general and/or
- Questions regarding a building or resource consent you or someone has lodged on your behalf in the last year.

We will not be asking personal questions other than those listed in this article. If you are concerned with a phone call you've received, please contact our office on 07 862 8609.

The Council has employed the expertise of an external company *Key Research* to undertake the survey over the next month, so if you get a call from their team please give them a friendly Hauraki hello and take the time to answer their easy questions.



PUBLIC NOTICE

Creative Communities Scheme Funding for local arts

Applications for funding assistance to local arts projects and initiatives within the territory of the Hauraki District Council are now being received.



The scheme's three funding criteria are:

1. **Broad community involvement** – Your project will create opportunities for local communities to engage with and participate in arts activities;
2. **Diversity** – Your project will support the diverse arts and cultural traditions of local communities, enriching and promoting their uniqueness and cultural diversity; and
3. **Young people** – Your project will enable and encourage young people (under 18 years) to engage with and actively participate in the arts.

Application forms are available from council offices at: William Street, Paeroa; Rosemont Road, Waihi; Orchard Road, Ngatea.

Applications close 4:00pm Thursday 25 June 2015

For further information contact:

Administrator - Creative Communities Scheme
Hauraki District Council
Ph: 07 862 8609 or
toll free within the District 0800 734 834

LD Cavers
Chief Executive - Hauraki District Council

Road works on the Plains

Rehabilitation work has just started on two sections of Hauraki road. The first is an 850-metre length between Turua and Huirau roads; and the second covers 600-metres between Orchard Road East and Wharepoa roads. The job involves ripping, reconstructing and reshaping parts of the road to improve its strength and surface – and is expected to be complete by the end of June.

The work is being done as an extension to the Area Wide Treatment roading contract for the 2014/15 year. Work previously completed under this contract was a total of about 3km on Kaihere and Rountree roads near Ngatea.

Crown Hill road bridge repainting wrapped up

For the thousands of motorists who pass through Karangahake Gorge each day, it may not be obvious that the Crown Hill road bridge has just been repainted – since the unobtrusive colours haven't changed. But the scaffolding which provided access to the undersides of beams is coming down, marking the end of a four-month project.

The work was needed because the last coat of paint applied about 30 years ago was no longer protecting all the steelwork, and some parts were showing early signs of corrosion, though there was no damage to the structure of the bridge.

When repainting began in February the bridge was wrapped so the old lead-based paint could be removed without any of it falling into the river. The new lead-free paint should protect the bridge for about the next 20 years.

The painters worked during weekends as well as weekdays to complete the job by the end of May. We thank local residents and Hauraki Rail Trail users for their patience when traffic controls were in place.

