

Thursday, 30 July 2015

Waihi Ward Reflections

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Kids enjoy our great indoors



STAR-SPANGLED BANNER: Brodi Rolton, 9, creates his fabric artwork.

Getting stuck into fabric art was a hit with kids at this month's Waihi Library school holiday programme.

Volunteer tutor Kerry Smith supplied a swag of bright fabrics for creating appliquéd banners, bamboo rods to hang them, and a magic ingredient that meant the young artists could employ a no-sew technique and complete their works in just two hours. Their patterns were drawn on to Visa-Fix – fusible sheets of glue with a peel-off paper backing. These were stuck to the reverse of the appliquéd fabric, cut out, and then ironed on to the banners with adult assistance.

"It's easy," said seven-year-old Hamilton visitor Mea Rolton.

Mea's brother Brodi Rolton, aged nine, also enjoyed the activity during the pair's stay with their Nana in Waihi.

Waikino six-year-old Shavarn Bidois was justly proud of her turtle banner; and was also a keen participant in the fingerprint art, card making, and mask making workshops that were on the programme. Chess, drama, and stories were among other options on offer.

Waihi librarian Karen Wickliffe said the free programme was once again very popular with school children across a wide age range, and attracted more boys than usual.

"The activities are a great introduction to new interests, crafts, or art mediums; and the drop-in format seems to work well for people. We really appreciate the wonderful volunteers from our community who make the programme possible."

Kerry, who led a fabric art session in each week of the holidays, said she was happy



TURTLE LOVE: Shavarn Bidois, 6, hoists her completed banner.

to help out by sharing skills she grew up with and some of her "hoard" of materials. "Our family are big users of the library."

FOCUS ON

Our Golden Oldies

Our older citizens are an important part of our community – and in Waihi, over-65s make up 25% of the population. That's why local Councillors wanted to find out whether there are any gaps in the services available to senior residents, which Council assistance might help to fill.

"We started by holding a meeting last month to which we invited representatives of all the relevant service agencies, community, church and support groups we could think of," says Councillor Pam Keall.

Twenty-five people from different services – virtually all volunteer-based – took the opportunity to come and share information and experiences with Councillors and Council staff, helping us benefit from a wide range of input and expertise!

A number of strengths were noted, including the dedication of many volunteers, and the caring attitude of a community that wants to help its older people. There are ways in which the elderly could be invited to assist the community, too, for instance in certain areas of education at schools.

Particular gaps identified included a need for affordable pensioner housing. "Waihi has the biggest waiting list in the District for Council flats," says Pam. This issue will link in with the Council's upcoming Pensioner Housing Strategy.

Another concern discussed was the limited transport available to residents with restricted mobility. While some needs such as rides to Waikato or Thames Hospital medical appointments are catered for, local shopping trips and errands can be more difficult – especially when an extra pair of hands as well as a ride is wanted.

Being unable to get out also causes social isolation. "Loneliness is a problem for many older people in our community," says Pam.

Age Concern is helping to address this through its new volunteer visiting service, and is establishing a stronger presence in the Hauraki area. But some people are unaware of the range of services they can access; and there's no combined approach to distributing information about all the existing services.

Pam says one way forward where the Council might be involved in is to engage a coordinator working across the various organisations. A related initiative would be to produce an up-to-date information card summarising all the services available, with appropriate contact details. This would be distributed through health centres and community hubs to get the message out.

The Waihi Ward Councillors will report back to the service groups at a follow-up meeting on 11 August, at 9.30am in the Waihi Memorial Hall supper room.

Any service providers to the elderly who are not yet involved and would like to contribute can contact the Council's Policy Analyst Katy Hurd, by phoning 0800 734 834 or emailing katy@hauraki-dc.govt.nz.



Plastic fantastic paves the way

There's something different about the timber being used to build a new sand-ladder from the Whiritoa surf club to the sea. The slats are made from the same recycled plastic as the beach access marker bollards we installed last summer – each one containing the equivalent of 20,000 supermarket bags.

The plastic timber is not only environmentally friendly and competitively priced, but attractive and durable. It won't rot or crack in the sun or salty air.

The original accessway was extensively damaged by huge surf during Cyclone Pam in March, with the force of the water smashing slats and even breaking sections of the metal chain linking them together. Council staff will construct the new sand-ladder over the next few weeks as weather permits, extending it about six metres to a total length of 30 m after discussions with Beachcare and surf club representatives. For the surf club, the structure provides good rescue boat and quad bike access across the beach.

An additional section of walkway is also being installed between the top of the beach and the playground, using materials that could be salvaged from the old access.

Dog owners - Get in quick

The final day for dog registration payments is tomorrow - Friday 31 July.

A penalty fee will be added to your dog registration fees in August if you have not registered your dog(s) on time.

You can pay at any office by cheque, cash, eftpos or credit card, online by credit card or by internet banking (full amount please). If paying by internet banking, please remember to send in your signed dog registration form.

If you no longer have a dog, or you have any changes, please call in to one of the Council offices or phone 07 862 8609 / 0800 834 734 (within district), and speak with one of our helpful customer services advisors.

One day left for award nominations

If you know of an outstanding community volunteer who deserves recognition, or of a local 13 to 25-year-old who has excelled in education, sport, culture, arts or service, tomorrow is the last day to nominate District residents for the Council's 2015 Citizens and Young Achievers Awards.

Nominations for both sets of awards should be received by the 31 July, on forms available from our offices, libraries and the Council website. Get in quick! Our selection panel needs time to ensure that these special awards truly reflect the value of the recipients' efforts. This year's presentations will be made in the Paeroa War Memorial Hall on Wednesday, 14 October.

Heartlanders tour rolls back the years

- Waihi will be transported back to World War I days when Army trucks roll in on October 24.
- The National Army Museum's travelling exhibition, *Heartlanders: New Zealanders of the Great War*, aims to bring the stories of our soldiers back home to the communities where they began. It's being housed in three large shipping containers currently being refurbished into museum galleries. These will be craned off the trucks in the Council carpark next to the Salvation Army Church, and arranged in a U shape with the container sides open.
- The tour has received assistance from the Lotteries Commission World War I commemorations fund. Waihi will be its only Hauraki stop among 14 North Island locations, and Councillor Harry Shepherd says all the ward councillors support providing the site in upper Seddon Street.
- The town was chosen as a destination because the Waihi area contributed a significant number of men to the New Zealand Expeditionary Force, including the New Zealand Tunnelling Company, says National Army Museum marketing manager Nicola Bennett.
- The free exhibition will be staffed by civilians from the National Army Museum, supported by a small group of serving soldiers who'll be driving the big trucks. Interactive elements will include a special computer pod providing access to information such as the service records of individual men and women.