

For immediate release

29 March 2007

Environment Gets Students Attention

Rotorua's environment will be getting some special attention in April as secondary schools students from around the district compete in the Enviro-Challenge.

Anabella Vidal, Rotorua District Council project coordinator, said the environmental challenge will see students from years 12 and 13 represent their school in a team with up to 10 members. "They will compete in five environmentally themed challenges including an environmental review addressing energy, waste and transport issues at their school, an environmental forum debate on the Rotorua Lakes, a quiz, a recycling race, as well as producing an action poster for their school." She said the activities in the Enviro-Challenge will test practical skills, team working ability, environmental knowledge and the effective communication of information. "Prior to the challenge day each school will receive a two-hour coaching session to help prepare them for the event." They also receive a comprehensive environmental resource kit which provides the necessary information, tools and resources to undertake each challenge successfully.

"The winning school will be the team which demonstrates the highest level of environmental awareness and ability throughout the Challenge as judged by a panel of local environmental experts." One student from each team will also be selected to represent their school to take part in the nationwide environmental ambassador programme.

Rotorua Trust and the Rotorua District Council are the major sponsors of the Enviro-Challenge programme designed and delivered by Envirostate Ltd. Enviro-Challenge aims to raise environmental awareness, provide a stimulating learning experience and to develop environmental networks within Rotorua. The Enviro-Challenge takes place on Tuesday, 3 April at Rotorua District Council.

Earlier this month Rotorua Adventure Therapy Aotearoa Inc (RATA Inc) ran a therapeutic programme for 12 young people who have epilepsy. The weekend programme aimed at providing an opportunity for these young people aged from 17 to take part in a number of activities they might not normally be involved in.

Julie Burne, programme facilitator, said Adventure Therapy was able to provide a supportive and safe environment for those taking part to learn and grow in. "The young people took part in a number of activities including high ropes and confidence course as well as trust activities." She says the group was encouraged to work together utilising individual strengths, abilities and experience to recognise and develop their inner resources and skills. "It also provided the opportunity of meeting new people and developing positive relationships."

Adventure Therapy is the combination of adventure activities with therapeutic change processes, with the goal of making lasting change in the lives of those taking part. RATA provides experiences that can incorporate self awareness, communication, goal setting, leadership, problem solving and team building to encourage people to learn and grow. RATA ran this as a pilot programme alongside Epilepsy Society NZ Rotorua.

The organisations to receive funding from the Rotorua Trust for local events or programmes this month were:

Hindu Council of New Zealand Conference	\$1,500
NZ Symphony Orchestra Rotorua concert	\$10,200
Rotorua Adventure Therapy Aotearoa Programme for children with epilepsy	\$ 3,000
Rotorua District Council Enviro-Challenge	\$7,500

Ends

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