

Media Release

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YES Companies reveal enterprising business ideas

Custom jewellery, bespoke garden sculptures, a new treatment & prevention for head lice and detachable pockets for women's clothing were just some of the enterprising new business ideas being developed by this year's students taking part in the Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme (YES), sponsored throughout Northland by local electricity generation and lines distribution company, Top Energy.

YES is part of the broader Education for Enterprise Programme (E4E) which fosters an enterprise culture in Northland schools, by focussing the curriculum in a way where students can see the relevance of their learning – and to help them develop into enterprising people. It's a year-long experiential business learning programme, where year 11 through 13 students form start-up companies, become directors and follow their own business plans to develop products/services which they market and sell. YES is supported in schools by teachers and by a Regional Co-ordinator, who arranges directors' seminars, trade fairs, oral and end of year presentations and teacher/mentor training.

For many YES Companies the recent YES Northland, Mid-Year Celebration held in Kerikeri was the first opportunity their fledgling business ideas have been introduced to the public.

Top Energy CEO, Russell Shaw was present to judge and present prizes to the winning Oral Presentations teams. The winning team, 'Happy Feet' is a YES Company developed by students from Whangarei Girls' High School. Their company is marketing a very practical device that helps people, suffering from back problems, put on socks. "Clearly we've many talented students involved in the YES Programme this year. I'm impressed with many of the business ideas created by YES Companies and I'm looking forward to seeing those enterprises develop as the year progresses", said Shaw.

One Far North YES Company which particularly stands out - not only for its well researched business plan, but also for the innovative way the five Tu Maia Sports Academy and Broadwood Area School students participate in their YES classes. Being too few students to run individual YES classes at either Broadwood or the Kaitaia, Sports Academy, students get together via Telecom School Zone video conferencing technology in a 'virtual classroom', which is also shared by another group of

students from Roxburgh College, in Central Otago. The group's teacher and online facilitator, Carolyn Bennett is based near Kerikeri.

Appropriately named 'Itchy & Scratchy', this YES Company run by Phoebe Kani, Forrest Butler, Tayla Cook, Jenny Samson and Pahu Kani set out to produce and market a safe, natural eradication & preventative treatment for head lice. Their business idea was strengthened following in-depth market research conducted with years 1-6 schools in the Far North. Encouraged by positive feedback from the schools interviewed, these enterprising students then set about developing their Itchy & Scratchy Treatment Packs, to target Far North junior school children, their teachers and parents.

Says Shaw, "We see YES as a powerful learning experience for Northland's young people. The programme teaches them about the business world and helps them develop enterprising minds. And with this 'virtual classroom' technology now available, even some of our more isolated communities are able to compete with their urban counterparts".

Shaw also believes the YES Sponsorship fits well with other educational programmes his company sponsors in the Far North, including; WaterSafe - which teaches primary school children graduated learn to swim and personal water survival skills and the Far North Science & Technology Fair - which is an effective hands-on way to promote science and technology to secondary school students, while helping them to develop investigative and problem-solving life-skills. END.

Contact: Top Energy Chief Executive Officer, Russell Shaw. Ph: 09 401 5622.