

## Media Release

Kaikohe, Tuesday 05 May 2009



## Enterprising education secures top sponsorship

Partnering with regional economic development agency, Enterprise Northland, local electricity generation and lines distribution company, Top Energy has agreed a Regional Sponsorship arrangement to support all Northland secondary schools taking part in the Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme (YES).

YES is part of the broader Education for Enterprise Programme (E4E) supported by Enterprise Northland to foster an enterprise culture in Northland secondary 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.

YES is 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.

The YES Companies, create real products and services, earn real money, pay real tax and hopefully make profits, according to Top Energy CEO, Russell Shaw. “It’s not just an academic course, but a relevant and exciting experience which introduces our students to the real business world and exposes them to possible future career options”, he said.

Examples of YES Companies students have developed in previous years include:

- A Learning to Drive Video
- Spearguns
- Educational Games
- Anti Drink Spiking
- Model & Talent Agency
- Short Film Production
- Anti txt-bullying Software Development
- A Power-saving Device
- Gourmet Pizzas
- A Local Radio Station

The scheme is supported in schools by teachers and by a YES Co-ordinator, who arranges directors' seminars, trade fairs, oral and end of year presentations and teacher/mentor training.

Top Energy has been a long-term sponsor of various E4E Programme elements in the Far North region, but this is the first time the company has sponsored an educational programme which reaches the whole Northland region.

According to Shaw, his company sees YES as an example of how practical education programmes can achieve surprising results. "It's a powerful learning experience which has the ability to be life-changing for some students. Young people can sometimes struggle to apply themselves at school because they don't understand the relevance of what's put in front of them. At a practical level, being involved in the development of a YES Company can really focus their attention and act as a catalyst to get them tuned-in. It's an exciting development in education in New Zealand - one we've supported for many years in the Far North and one we are now delighted to support throughout the whole Northland region", he said.

Shaw also believes YES fits well with other education 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.

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