

Media Release

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Broadwood Area School students get work experience

Local Lines company Top Energy's School-to-work Programme offers Scholarships, which encourage Far North secondary school students to stay at school, while getting paid work experience. The young adults who are granted Scholarships are able to get practical part-time work experience across a whole range of work disciplines and many find permanent work with employers in the region, after completing their Scholarships.

For senior students in the Far North's more isolated areas however, the prospect of finding part-time work after school is limited by their community's geographic isolation, in terms of travelling distances, time and costs, as well as an general absence of employment opportunities.

Despite these obstacles eleven senior students from Broadwood Area School, inland from Herekino Harbour on the Far North's West Coast, got to experience paid part-time work first hand, during their school holidays recently.

Their opportunity was made possible thanks to Top Energy's School-to-work Programme and the vision and dedication of their teacher, Maree Blokker. Maree and her students worked hard to identify job opportunities and, under special School Holiday Work Scholarships, these students all found part-time positions over their two-week holiday break.

Harly Nicholson, Jocelyn Brown and Arapeta Chapman-Barber were employed by the Ngapuhi Hokianga Society to develop, promote and run a childrens' holiday fitness and entertainment course, after one of them attended an OSCAR training course on the subject, in Wellington.

Skye Robertson furthered her interest in a butchery career by working at Personal Choice Meats in Kaitaia and two other students also found work in Kaitaia. Halen Grbich, with a keen interest in archaeology, worked at the Kaitaia Public Library, while Emma Davis worked at Kaitaia Hospital, furthering her interest in a possible healthcare career.

Brothers, Hiiritia and Ihaia Pihema, Mae Henry, Jack Olsen and Chase Herbert all gained work experience with farmers in the district. They were involved in many farm work activities including, milking,

fencing, feeding animals, general farm duties and even tree planting. They all agreed their experience on the land was hard work but enjoyable and several of them now want to take up farm work as a career when they leave school.

All eleven students agreed that in addition to the learning aspects of their work, they appreciated the opportunity Top Energy's School-to-work Programme had given them to earn some money for themselves.

Said Top Energy Chief Executive, Roger de Bray, "The Far North presents some challenges when it comes to our more isolated districts, as we all know. The great thing here is that we were able to find a way to get these young adults into paid work experience and not be disadvantaged by Broadwood's isolation. Judging from the feedback we've had from Maree, the students and their employers, this school holiday work option has been an outstanding success." END

Contact: Roger de Bray, Top Energy Chief Executive Ph: 0-9 401 5440