

Press Release
(For immediate release)
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Enriching the lives of earthquake victims

Invercargill youngsters attending the Enrich@ILT learning facility are on a mission to help families in earthquake-ravaged Christchurch.

Enrich@ILT centre manager Alana Findlay said over 50 students were in the process of completing passion projects with a service learning component which related to the Christchurch or Japan earthquakes.

“The focus is on the empathy factor and giving back to those less fortunate,” she said.

“Their passion projects are based on helping those who have been affected by the earthquakes and they have certainly developed some unique ideas which encompass both their objective and their own learning passions.”

Jacob Craig and Bede Dodd-Edgar, both eight, have organised a clothing drive to source garments of all shapes and sizes to send north where they will be distributed to families in need by the Salvation Army in Christchurch.

Jacob, a Year 4 student at Waverley Park School, and Bede, from St Patrick’s Primary School, designed and printed posters encouraging people to donate their unwanted clothes to the cause.

Other initiatives students had embarked on included filming a safety video for pre-schoolers and programming a computer game which highlights earthquake safety scenarios.

Another group was collecting books for Discovery 1, a Christchurch school with similarities to Enrich@ILT.

“Their school building is in the red zone and therefore can’t be accessed at the moment,” Ms Findlay said.

“Some of our students rung their peers at Discovery 1 to find out what they need and were told they are currently working from a spare room at the back of hospice and had no books to read.”

Other enterprising students had organised a quiz night and the inaugural Invercargill primary school chess tournament to raise vital funds.

“It’s pretty rewarding when you watch the things they come up with,” Ms Findlay said. “Just when you think you’ve got a handle on them, they throw something else amazing at you and you just go ‘wow’.”

This week is Gifted Awareness Week, designed to raise the profile of both exceptional students and their educational opportunities in New Zealand.

Enrich@ILT, which opened in 2009, has 114 talented youngsters enrolled from Invercargill’s 22 primary schools, ranging in age from Year 1 to Year 6.

The Invercargill Licensing Trust and ILT Foundation recently approved \$125,000 and \$248,900 respectively in operational funding to ensure their continued success.

ILT Foundation and Invercargill Licensing Trust chairman Alan Dennis said Enrich@ILT was highly regarded in educational circles in New Zealand and internationally.

“This unique facility has not only put our city on the educational map, it’s providing our children with such a valuable learning pathway,” he said.

“It’s equipping them with what will undoubtedly be a lifelong passion for learning and thirst for knowledge. It will be fascinating to see what the future holds for Enrich@ILT students.”

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