

Application to train year 12/14 students at Kuranui College to engage in supported volunteer work with the elderly in the Greytown Community.

Contact details

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Name of applicant:

Ann Rainford (Chair), Greytown Community Board

Name of organisation: Kuranui College.

1. Please describe your project, idea or programme.

“Me and You and IT too” is a community initiative for Greytown to link senior students at Kuranui College with elderly people requiring help with IT . This programme has now run successfully for two years and we have received very positive feedback from both the community, school and the students involved.

The “IT” part of this initiative provides the vehicle for developing the knowledge and skills of these youth, whilst enhancing the social connectedness of older people within today’s ever changing technological environment.

We implement a managed and coordinated programme whereby selected local students from Kuranui College partner with older residents of Greytown who benefit from the inter-generational interaction with regard to IT literacy .

Tell us how your project, idea of youth development and Age Concern programme will affect excluded or disadvantaged youth.

Rural health in New Zealand is receiving increasing attention in regards to the unique challenges that accompany life in a rural area of New Zealand. For youth, these challenges include the resultant inequity of access to the range of services and opportunities which are found in larger populations and available to their urban peers. This project offers a tailor made

solution to increasing social connectedness within a small community, which adds value to the lives of youth and elderly alike.

Benefits for youth involved with this initiative include an increased sense of community connectedness. This is achieved through partnership with older people. Through the process of this partnership youth have the opportunity to develop their social skills, their mentoring and instruction skills. In addition to the development of their relationship skills these youth will gain affirmation by having their IT expertise and other skills recognised and valued within their community.

2. How will your project, idea or programme utilise technology?

This initiative is based on using technology to strengthen social connectedness through the interaction of youth and older people in the community.

In addition to the benefits identified for youth, this initiative recognises the importance of IT literacy amongst older people. There is an increasing assumption in many aspects of everyday living that access to information and services through technology is now custom and practice. Those who can't meet that expectation are at an increasing disadvantage.

The partnerships between participants builds on IT needs that the older generation identify. While for some it may include the ability and confidence to use equipment such as mobile phones and their systems, for others a focus on using lap tops, e-mail and web based interactions may have more value.

Success to date

The programme has now been running for two years and both elderly residents and Kuranui College students continue to benefit from this initiative

3. Why do you think that your project, idea or programme is currently needed?

Well-being results from a sense of belonging and being connected to others. However, nowadays many young people have little connection with the elderly, and the old have little connection with the young. Youth can miss out on the rich tapestry of personal and community history which is held by older people. Older people can become socially isolated and that, in turn, can have a direct impact on their wellbeing, cognitive agility and health. Social connectedness affects longevity and mental health. In Wairarapa, about 26% of older people assessed for support needs report being lonely.

Older people who are not IT literate are at increasing risk of social isolation. In addition is the risk of alienation if they cannot connect with government departments, agencies, and banks, (due to bank closures in rural areas). Self- management and independence is increasingly reliant on technology.

While social isolation is an objective measure of periods of social interactions, loneliness is very subjective. The New Zealand General Social Survey (NZGSS) in 2010 provided information which informed a NZ report on patterns of loneliness and identified that 18% of young adults felt lonely all, most, or some of the time. There was a strong relationship between loneliness and poor mental health that was consistent across all ages.

Identified goals to measure success

Increased interconnectedness of youth in the community

Increased interconnectedness of the elderly in the community


Improvement in the IT skills of the elderly

Improvement in the social skills of young people

Increase in the overall mental health of both the young and the elderly who participate in this community venture

Budget

We are requesting a budget of \$1000 to continue this work during the academic year 2020
The money is to be placed into Kuranui College's School Account and Identified for the IT programme.



Simon Fuller
Principal

Ann Raiford, Chair, Greytown Community Board.