

Young Enterprise Scheme winners

Smart minds and future leaders contest

Waikato – King Country YES Awards 2010

House shorts, electroveins and T-shirts depicting strange ways to die, featured among the winners of the Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) Waikato/King Country regional awards held recently at the Atrium, Wintec House.

Forever Young of Waikato Diocesan School for Girls are the regional winners for 2010.

They were the most successful in forming a company, researching the market and developing their product/service idea of producing sports house shorts for schools into a reality – and making a profit.

Manager of the Smart Waikato Trust and Regional YES co-ordinator, Mary Jensen, said: "All the teams at the awards have done so well to bring a product to market in just eight months.

"They have shown the difference between inventors and entrepreneurs.

"Inventors have ideas for new products and services," she said.

"These students are entrepreneurs. They have taken their idea, developed a point of difference, researched the competition and risks, positioned the product in the marketplace at the right price, have had the enthusiasm and persuasiveness to bring other stakeholders on board, the courage to innova-

tively promote the product and the tenacity and drive to see the whole process through until a steady profit is generated," said an excited Mary.

Awards MC and regional sales manager for the Gallagher Group, Matt Macfie, spoke of Gallagher's commitment to the community.

"It has always been part of the Gallagher family's philosophy to give back to the community – you can see how much the Gallagher Group supports the region as you drive around it and see the many facilities to which it has given major donations," he said.

Gallagher Group also sponsors the Social Responsibility award at the YES national competition to be held in early November in Wellington.

The Young Enterprise Scheme is available to Years 12 and 13 students in the Waikato and is the product of much hard work from students, their teachers and voluntary business mentors.

YES relies on support from the business community. Regional prizes were awarded



YES judge Rob Pascoe with teams from Putaruru and Morrinsville colleges.

by the YES sponsors including Peter Bridges of Staples Rodway, Chris Williams of King St Advertising, Mike Blake of The Waikato Business News, Michelle Jordan-Tong of the University of Waikato, Kaleb James of Stafford Engineering, Rob Pascoe for EMA Waikato, Ray Miller of Te Wananga o Aotearoa, Matt Macfie of Gallagher, Lesley Ann Thomas and Janet Gibb for the Waikato/Cambridge Chambers of Commerce and Warwick Pitts for Wintec.

Owner of Stafford Engineering and trustee of the Smart Waikato Trust, Roger Evans says: "This is a really great programme to be involved in. These young people are future entrepreneurs and employers of our country and YES gives them

some real world experience and starts them thinking outside the square."

Mary Jensen supports this line of thought.

"The recession has shown that people cannot rely on a job being served up on a plate for them – particularly young, relatively inexperienced people. The Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme gives these young people a real sense of what it means to create one's own way in life and the opportunity to put those skills into practice," she said. "It teaches students what it is really like to set up a business and about team building, financial management, leadership, production, risk management and sales and marketing.

"It's really rewarding to see

the groups grow in confidence over the year. They have to do things out of their comfort zone like formally present their business plan to a "dragon's den" of judges; present their wares at a trade fair and produce an annual report for their company," said Mary.

"They even have to pay tax on their profits. The students need lots of support and advice from their business mentors and teachers. Their learning is enormous and the students are made well aware of how difficult it is to be successful. Their enthusiasm and energy is really encouraging."

Mary has completed post graduate qualifications in economic development and has a particular focus on the development of human capital.

"I come from the point of view that it isn't new roads or buildings that contribute most to our economic development, although of course you need a good infrastructure in which to operate.

"Look back through history – it is clever people - entrepreneurs, like our very own Bill Gallagher Senior, who create economic development and the associated employment, well being and high standard of living that comes with it.

"The Young Enterprise Scheme develops the platform to give young people in New Zealand the vehicle and support to practise their entrepreneurial skills.

"Our challenge is to grow the programme through the region," said Mary. "At present 12 secondary schools run it in the Waikato and King Country.

"It needs a really good teacher to drive the programme in the school – so we have to encourage more teachers in schools to pick it up. I think that you can't underestimate how much this programme contributes to the future welfare of our country."

David Hood, former Fairfield College principal, CEO of NZQA, education consultant to Te Wananga o Aotearoa, and chair of the Smart Waikato Trust said: "It is vital that learning in schools is made more relevant to the real world and that the business world and schools work together more closely.

"The school system based on traditional subjects is out-of-date and what is needed is a more integrated, project-based approach to learning which allows students to follow their interests and aspirations.

That way you will have more engaged students and better results for life after school."

"I have seen the confidence of the participants in the Young Enterprise Scheme grow throughout the year, from a nervousness when speaking to adults at the information day in November to them enthusiastically telling us their product story at the YES Trade Fair."

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