

Special Needs

The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award in New Zealand

The Helen Anderson Trust – Christchurch

The Helen Anderson Trust is a day service supporting adults with intellectual disabilities. They provide support programmes to meet goals and aspirations; their service focus is community inclusion / participation. Based in Christchurch the Trust set up in 1993 and works with a range of clients from 16 to 65 years old.

In 2004 the Trust introduced The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award programme with the vision that it would challenge and expand individual's experiences and give them good outcomes as far as real-world skills were concerned. These outcomes would include enhanced independence, work experience, an appreciation of the outdoors and interaction with a greater range of people than might otherwise happen.

The programme needed to be adapted to enable individuals with all types of disabilities to achieve the required outcomes. With the developmental support from The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award personnel, they commenced supporting individuals to achieve their Bronze award as the programme was adapted to suit the abilities and potential of the participants.



This was one project that exceeded expectations, due mainly to the way in which the Helen Anderson Trust staff team understood the 'Spirit of The Award'.

This was an exciting time of development. It was felt that all of the Trust's clients would benefit from taking part in the Award. However, the Award programme only caters for clients under 25 years and many of the Trust's clients were well over the age of 25 years.

Having explored an age exemption and deciding it was not an option; the Trust approached the New Zealand Training and Development Director to ask if they could use the same programme for their older clients and call it something else. This was given the go-ahead and the Award programme is now run for all clients but those over 25 years know it as 'The Helen Anderson Trust Challenge Award'. The Trust produces its own Certificates and Badges for this Award.

Debbie Andrews, Manager at the Trust has this to say:

"We never imagined that the Award would take off in a way where people have excelled and completed Bronze, Silver and Gold. The excitement of these achievements has been celebrated with their families, friends, staff and our Board of Trustees."



Over the years we have looked at the hours for the Co-ordinators position and have found, that to provide the necessary support and continuity, we require the position to be 40 hours per week. We have a dedicated person to co-ordinate the programmes and we believe this position has been the reason the programme has been so successful.

We also work with mainstream schools and students that are participating in The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award. They are given an understanding of the disability sector, while achieving their Adventurous Journey or Residential Sections. This has created friendships, teamwork, respect and the understanding that a good leader doesn't always have to lead but knows when to follow."

Participants have engaged with activities such as: archery, abseiling, rock climbing, car grooming, gardening, meals on wheels, vege co-op, dancing, swimming, cricket, Tee Ball, gym, computer skills, sewing, fishing, Wildlife Park Explorations, 0800 HUNGRY, recycling, etc.

Expedition/Exploration/Residential: Here the Trust has looked at what is the ability of the person and what is an appropriate personal challenge to achieve. Participants have been on boats fishing in the Marlborough Sounds, in helicopters up to a glacier, participated in trust exercises with night lines and also Tramps that tested them beyond their usual personal boundaries.

A final word from Debbie:

"The Award programme compliments our mission and is focused on each person individually. It provides an opportunity for participants to grow in so many different ways, most importantly in their independence, personal confidence and life skills. It can provide them with skills to gain employment, or to become involved in parts of community life they may not have felt confident enough to tackle previously."

To date the Helen Anderson Trust has supported clients to achieve both The Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Award and the Helen Anderson Trust Challenge Award with:

31 completed Bronze Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Awards

15 completed Silver Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Awards

7 completed Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Hillary Awards (this includes the Award Leader – Mel Matthews)

24 completed Bronze Helen Anderson Trust Challenges

22 completed Silver Helen Anderson Trust Challenges

11 completed Gold Helen Anderson Trust Challenges



Click the links to find out more:

<http://www.addingtonaction.org.nz/2013/03/day-762-recycling-steps-ahead-at-csfvc.html>

www.sportsground.co.nz/csa/57567/4

<http://www.stuff.co.nz/the-press/news/6635600/Youth-volunteers-earn-gold-awards>