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TPP takes local school into the outdoors

Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) is working with a local primary school on an outdoor programme that's helping build confidence and teamwork in the classroom.

Paroa School teacher Andrew Sinton-White says the school this year decided to take on the [William Pike Challenge Award](#) (WPCA). The year-long outdoor education programme will see 22 Year 8 students take on eight outdoor challenges, spend 20 hours in the community and develop a new sport, skill or hobby. Paroa School is one of two West Coast schools to take on the challenge this year.

Andrew asked TPP to help the school deliver the outdoor education programme – ensuring pupils experienced the best of the West Coast outdoors under professional guidance and in a safe environment. The latest event saw all 22 pupils spend a day kayaking on Lake Brunner under the guidance of TPP tutors and students.

“We have been really lucky to have TPP’s certified instructors and students involved in the challenge. The competence of the TPP trainees was something that has impressed me so far – as far as I can see, TPP is not just teaching students how to run outdoor experiences, it’s also developing leaders who can independently manage a group over a one or two day event,” Andrew says.

TPP Outdoor Education Tutor Zak Shaw says the WPCA is a great opportunity for the polytechnic to get involved in the local community.

“Education outside the classroom is extremely valuable for all children. We want to help deliver these opportunities in safe conditions, overseen by highly qualified outdoor professionals.

“This has been a win-win for our community – the school is getting access to top instructors and trainees and our students are experiencing the reality of guiding outdoor classes in kayaking, rock climbing and a range of other pursuits.

“It’s also cool that you can get these kids out there on the Coast to see some of the wonderful scenery this place has to offer,” Zak says.

Andrew agrees outdoor education is valuable for children and he has already seen some great results.

“I’ve never seen a class that works together so collaboratively and there is also a level of personal empowerment that the kids have already taken from the work we’ve done. You can put nerves about a looming maths test into perspective when you remember that just last week you completed a 30 metre abseil successfully.”

TPP student Reece Keys says client days with local schools are some of the most valuable within the programme. “Our industry training is very real. We organise and deliver the experiences for groups

under direct supervision of our tutors. I really enjoy the level of responsibility we are given and find the feedback I get afterwards very usable. I grew up in Karamea and think it's cool that I have a chance to show other Coast kids what's in their backyard. We have a great time!"

TPP offers a range of [outdoor education programmes](#) which offer students practical and technical experience. Find out more at www.tpp.ac.nz/outdoor

Find out more about William Pike and the WPCA at www.williampike.co.nz

Photo Credit Zak Shaw Photography: TPP student Nathaniel Sage leads Paroa School pupils on Lake Brunner. *(Please contact for a high resolution version of the attached photograph).*

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