



# Community Education Centre Project

*April 2012*



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## SUMMARY

This document is the project proposal for the development of a community-based centre for hands-on environmental education, based at Otatara. It is the next phase in achieving the vision of the Southland Community Nursery Conservation Trust.

The first part of this document provides a detailed description of the proposed project. It covers the project profile, the inspiration and identified community needs driving the project. Community benefits, project outcomes and potential future opportunities are also conveyed here.

The second part of the document provides an introduction to the Trust, its history, and its main activity of providing a community nursery. The Trustees and their credentials are detailed and there is a description of current community involvement. Attached at the end of this document are some awards received by the nursery, volunteer references, letters of support, and outcomes.

The project is unique in that it combines a successful community volunteer project with a proven 15 year track record; the professional expertise and passion of two well respected Southland conservationists and an accessible and inspirational natural setting which combines old growth forest, restored wetland areas and estuary. All within easy reach of Invercargill.





# Project Proposal: The Community Education Centre

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## VISION

We propose to build an innovative, purpose-built community education centre. The centre will be a community-based hub of practical learning and engagement with the environment, while providing shelter from Southland's often unpredictable weather. This will allow more Southlanders the opportunity to get hands on education and experience.

The Community Nursery has the following included in its key objectives:

- To actively promote education opportunities outside the classroom for children and young people.
- To educate and provide a learning situation regarding the cultivation and growing of native plants.

## WHY THE COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTRE IS NEEDED

A purpose-built education centre would allow us to greatly expand on existing activities, by further involving and engaging Southland's schools, individuals and community groups in practical outdoor environmental education.

Without any promotion the nursery and restoration area is already well used by Southland primary and secondary school groups and there are a growing number of schools wanting to come to the nursery/restoration area (over 2000 school children have visited so far). However, about half of the schools booked cancel due to adverse weather.

There is currently no place in Southland offering the combination of:

1. an all weather classroom/workshop close to Invercargill Schools
2. an active community project, with tracks, bush and wetland
3. botanical expertise and proven commitment to community environmental education



### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Southland Community Nursery Trust proposes to build a community based education centre, for outdoor hands-on environmental education. This centre will be located on an area of land adjacent to current nursery facilities in Otatara, and within easy reach of Invercargill City. The facility would be unique for its blend of an all weather centre, professional ecological expertise and close proximity to tracks and a variety of natural habitats for teaching.

The building itself has been designed as a single story workshop space, with views to the bush, custom made to provide a community-based hub of practical learning and engagement with the environment – a teaching and workshop area protected from Southland's often unpredictable weather. The facility will allow the Nursery, and other community groups whom we host, to significantly expand current roles in education.

Vehicle access into the building will allow for trailer loads of potting mix to be driven in, so classes can pot plants inside. A hose down surface will mean spills of soil and sand, nursery clothing such as gumboots and wet jackets, and plant cuttings and litter can be utilised without fear of damaging the facility, as would be the case in a conventional hall.

Facilities such as a projector and screen, audio visual equipment, computer access, sinks, and display areas will keep the space versatile for all types of teaching. This will allow the range of workshops currently held at the nursery to be expanded as well as weather proofed. The design of the building will also guarantee access to wheelchairs and prams, making the facility available to all community members. While we currently envision the primary use to be by school children and students, the building will also be available to the community as a space for workshops, meetings and conferences.



### SITE SELECTION

The proposed site is adjacent and complimentary to the Southland Community Nursery's current facilities and natural environment at 185 Grant Road, Otatara. Slightly elevated from the bush restoration area, the proposed building will have picturesque views of the surrounding landscape.

Added benefits of this site include:

- This site will ensure the centre close access to nursery facilities
- An area of native forest protected by QEII National Trust Covenant that is currently being actively restored with established tracks, ponds, native plantings.
- A nationally important threatened plants garden easily accessed, being within 30m of the proposed site.
- The location adjoins the Bushy Point Community Restoration Area, public conservation land, Gambles Educational Boardwalk and the Invercargill Estuary.
- It is only 15 minutes drive from Invercargill City.

Other sites considered included the Bushy Point Community Restoration Area, Sandy Point recreation area, or utilising an existing building in Invercargill City. However, these sites do not offer the unique combination of factors held by the preferred site. The proposed site offers proximity to outside educational support materials (nursery and other assets described above), the security of locating it beside the Nursery, the already established public access and parking area to the site, and the ease of managing groups and the related educational activities at this location.

Selection of the site is extremely important. Other sites in the area were investigated but ruled out as they did not match the combined requirements for the project (Table 1).

**Table 1: Site Selection Considerations**

	All weather facility	Active Nursery/ Community Project	Natural Environment	Botanical Expertise
Bushy Point			√	
Otatara Hall	√		√	
Sandy Point Visitor Centre	√			
Community Education Centre	√	√	√	√

Given that the land ownership and existing nursery buildings (potting shed and shade houses) will remain private (belonging to Chris and Brian Rance), but the building will belong to the Trust, if funding is successful, careful legal structures will be established to protect the assets of both parties.

Both parties are aware of the commitment this arrangement will require, and feel that it is building upon a history of mutually supportive arrangements which have, and will continue, to work well. The owners of the land have a proven track record of service to environmental – they have covenanted 5 acres of land in QEII Covenant (promoting public access (QEII website "Places to Visit"), have allowed the use of current land and facilities – shade house, new sheds for the Community Nursery for over 15 years.

### PROJECT SITE MAP

The map on the following page shows the location of the nursery and its proximity to the surrounding natural landscape and tracks (tracks marked in red).









### PROJECT DEMAND

Environmental education currently links to the school curriculum over many areas. The current demand shows that there is a growing need for environmental education outside the classroom in a location close to Invercargill schools from preschool to primary and older students. We have consulted with “outside the classroom” teachers Lloyd Esler, Koreena Wilks (LEOTC Southland Museum), Department of Conservation Education Officer Mark Oster and Environment Southland Environmental Education Officer Julie Clifton and Enviroschools coordinator and Nikki Tarbutt about the proposed idea and have been assured that it would be an asset that currently does not exist and would be a great improvement for schools outside the classroom experiences. An education centre located at the Community Nursery would offer this experience for 1, 2 and 4 hour sessions within close proximity to Invercargill.

In addition to the education facility a website education resource would be created linking the curriculum to the activities available at the property and the centre and would offer pre-visit, visit and post visit learning. Part of the project could also be the funding of transport and raincoats.

There is a large body of research that promotes early childhood learning being closely linked with nature<sup>1</sup>.

We have also had student teacher groups (Otago University Teacher Education), and Southern Institute of Technology student groups visit the Nursery. All of this activity has been without any marketing or promotion. There is a strong network of Enviroschools in Southland, as well as many established community environmental groups and environmentally linked school projects. The Department of Conservation supports such initiatives and a project sponsored by Air New Zealand “Kids Restore New Zealand” already has three projects in Southland and is encouraging many more. Kids Restore NZ Trustee Ruud Kleinpaste has committed his support to the Community Education Centre project.

Currently the nursery is open to the public every Friday. A wide variety of people are involved, including gardeners, landowners, farmers, conservation groups, organic farmers, youth training groups, international visitors, school children, scout and guide groups. Enhanced facilities will allow more workshops to be held for these groups, an enhanced learning experience, and less weather cancellations!



Over 3,000 volunteer hours are spent in the nursery each year. Propagation workshops are run throughout the year for seed collection, cuttings and grafting and youth training groups

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 4 – Benefits for Children of Play in Nature



often attend the nursery to improve their skills. Open Days are held every year with themes such as wetland creation, planting to attract birds, creating native forest and shelter planting. An all weather centre would complement all of these activities and would increase the potential for these and other workshops.

Expert information about the flora of Southland is essential as a basis for the many individuals, groups and schools undertaking a restoration project and is a main reason why people are drawn to this project. The nursery has built up an extensive information resource – plant lists, seed collecting times, propagation techniques, restoration advice including visiting properties and offering free advice.

Much of this information is now publically available on the website and the Rances property is full of working examples of native shelterbelts, wetlands, shrub borders and forest restoration. A wheelchair accessible track through the wetland areas contains plant signs and a threatened plant teaching garden is available to the public.

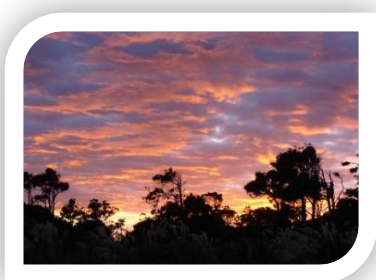




### INTENDED USES AND USERS

We envision that use will be predominantly by schools, pre schools and primary schools in the Invercargill area; student teachers; Southern Institute of Technology environment course students; guides and scouts; and community environmental groups.

The centre would also be available for holding workshops on native plants, plant propagation, restoration techniques, vegetable growing, worm farming, organics, fruit tree grafting and pruning. Workshops could also be held on a number of sustainability topics, arts and crafts, health and wellbeing. The intention would be for free access to schools and paid access for other workshops to help pay for the maintenance and ongoing costs of the facility.



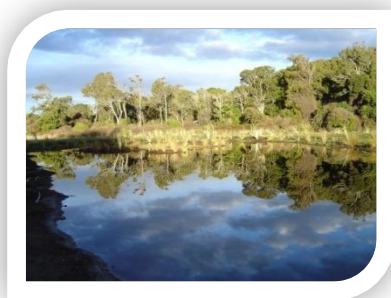
#### A) Environmental Education outside the classroom linked to School Curriculums

- Preschool age children
- Schools in Invercargill and Southland
- Student Teachers
- SIT Students



#### B) Workshops (requiring classroom with close proximity to nature)

- Propagation
- Seed collection
- Cuttings
- Restoration
- Native plants
- Traditional Maori plant uses
- Vegetable Growing
- Fruit Tree Grafting
- Fruit Tree pruning
- Worm Farming
- Art and Craft – stone carving, felting
- Health and Wellbeing
- Sustainability
- Photography
- Corporate Volunteers/workshops
- Pest Control and weedbusters



workshops

### POTENTIAL SUPPORT, INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS:

In this early stage of the project we have contacted and consulted with people who are already involved in our work, or could potentially be interested in being involved as we increase our capacity.

We are currently involved with a number of community groups and organisations. The proposed project would see us continue our involvement with these groups, as well as allow for involvement with new groups. Potential (and existing) groups and organisations are listed on the following page.



We believe in community collaboration, and that working together is crucial to enabling us to achieve our objectives.

- ♦ South Coast Environment Centre – pruning and grafting.
- ♦ Southland Forest and Bird
- ♦ Otatara Landcare Group
- ♦ Invercargill Environment Centre
- ♦ Community Nursery volunteers and users
- ♦ Bluff Environmental Trust
- ♦ Southland Ecological Restoration Network
- ♦ Invercargill Environment Centre
- ♦ SIT Environment Course
- ♦ Organic/Permaculture Courses
- ♦ Transition Towns
- ♦ Southland Multinations Society
- ♦ Otatara Pestbusters

### COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT AND BENEFITS

Currently there are between 10 and 15 volunteers attending the nursery each Friday. On Open Days as many as 100 people have attended and propagation, grafting and pruning workshops are well attended by people from across the Southland Region.

The practical outputs of the nursery are the planting of 100,000 locally sourced native plants into the Southland environment. The nursery provides a learning environment for those wanting to grow native plants but also learning to grow other plants.

The Community of Southland has supported this project for over 15 years and volunteers come to the nursery for a wide variety of reasons and Schoolchildren have been coming to the nursery to learn about their local environment for over 15 years.

The Community Nursery has a relationship with Southland Multinations Society. Every new New Zealand Citizen has been given a native plant at their citizenship ceremony.

The nursery encourages people of all ages and abilities including groups from Disability Southland over two seasons.

The expected outcomes of the Community Education Project are given at Appendix 5.





### PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION

If successful with funding the Community Education Centre project will be managed and operated by the Southland Community Nursery Conservation Trust. They will be responsible for liaising, communicating and designing a facility which will contribute to achieving the outcomes of the Trust. They will undertake the fundraising and management of financials for this project, as they have done with previous projects associated with the nursery.

The Trust will oversee the development of the centre, manage the ongoing maintenance and financial sustainability of the project and ensure that it is run and maintained.



**Photo:** Linda and Chris receiving the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network award on behalf of the Southland Community Nursery Trust (2011).



# The Southland Community Nursery Conservation Trust

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## CHRIS AND BRIAN RANCE – A PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO CONSERVATION

It is our vision that, by our actions, we encourage and inspire an interest in the wonder of the natural world. We believe that all our actions are linked and are integral to living in a sustainable way, working with the environment and not against it. There is a positive energy in nature and closeness to nature can be a wonderfully rewarding, spiritually uplifting and healing experience at all stages of life. Access to nature for all ages and mobilities is a key aim for us.

On our 15 acre property in Otatara near Invercargill we have covenanted 5 acres of old growth forest, restored another acre of paddock into wetland and forest (with formed access tracks), graze sheep and have chickens, and grow most of our own vegetables and fruit. We have created a comfortable habitat for ourselves in harmony with nature. The Southland Community Nursery was established to help ourselves and others, including schools, to grow the native plants needed for their own restoration projects. However, the voluntary nature of the project has developed into much more than just a project to grow plants. Through the nursery we are able to share our vision and educate.

## THE TRUST

The Southland Community Nursery was established in 1996. Our purpose is to provide information, opportunity and support, to increase knowledge about and engagement with the natural environment of Southland. A significant list of accomplishments, formal recognition and a large network of supportive community members, volunteers and participants reflect what we have undertaken over the past 15 years. The Southland Community Nursery Conservation Trust, as a legal entity, was established in 2010. We are proud of the efforts of our Trust and its supporters to date, though still conscious that we are in the early stages of our journey with plenty of exciting projects upcoming over the next few years.

## OUR VISION AND OBJECTIVES

It is our vision that the Southland Community has the opportunity to be active, aware and involved in its natural environment. We believe that this awareness should begin at a young age and we endeavour to work with and make our resources available to people of all ages and from all walks of life. To achieve this vision, we as a Trust have the following objectives:

- To provide advice on New Zealand plants native to Southland.
- To provide nursery facilities, materials and native plant stock to the public.
- To encourage volunteers to become active in conservation by providing a learning environment.
- To actively promote environmental educational opportunities for school children by providing information about native species in Southland.
- To actively promote and provide information and resources about the natural environment of Southland.





### THE NURSERY

We work alongside many community conservation projects in Southland – however our key project has been the Southland Community Nursery itself. The nursery offers free advice, nursery facilities and native seedlings to the Southland public. Rather than a retail plant nursery, plants are exchanged for volunteer time or donated towards community planting projects. A number of successful workshops are held each year on restoration, propagation, grafting and pruning. School visits are encouraged throughout the year with over 2000 school children having visited the facility since 1996.

The nursery is hosted on the property of Chris and Brian Rance, and started from a bare paddock. The facilities that have been built up now include shade houses, plant standing areas, and sheds. Use of land and sheds has been donated, and all labour involved in running nursery is voluntary.

Over 100,000 native plants have been produced by the nursery and planted in Southland's environment since 1996. The nursery currently supports many individual landowners, conservation projects and groups, including: Te Rere Penguin Colony, Otatara Landcare Group Bushy Point Project, Rarotoka Island project, Riverton Estuary Care Society, QEII Covenants. A number of similar community nurseries have been encouraged the latest being at Bluff Primary School in October 2011.

### THE COMMUNITY NURSERY WEBSITE

A new website for the nursery was completed in 2010 and contains much information about native plants in southland, restoring natural areas, places to visit, events etc. It was launched at Waituna at the world wetlands day event and has greatly improved the information accessible to the Southland public about natural environments of the Southland Region.

[www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz](http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz)



The web team – Brian Rance, Chris Rance, Janet Hodgetts, Robin Sallis.



## TRUSTEES

Our Trustees represent the large number of community volunteers and participants involved in the Southland Community Nursery and its activities. Our board members are involved in a number of other conservation groups in Southland, we each bring a strong skill set to the board, a wide range of experiences and expert knowledge in our chosen fields.



**BRIAN RANCE (CHAIR)** Brian is a professional botanist specialising in New Zealand native plants. He is well respected by the Southland Community and is nationally renowned as the expert on the flora of Southland. He is the inspiration behind the Community Nursery project. With his wife Chris they have both been actively supporting environmental projects in Southland for over 20 years.



**LINDA JACKSON (MEMBER)** Linda came to the Community Nursery as a volunteer in 2005. Since that time she and husband Ray have been dedicated volunteers and have become experts in their own right, bringing with them enthusiasm and fun and welcoming everyone with their morning tea delights. Their children and new grandchildren are regular nursery visitors and help bring vibrancy to Friday mornings.



**CHRIS RANCE (SECRETARY)** Chris has managed the Community Nursery voluntarily for over 15 years. She works as a GIS mapping specialist. With her husband Brian they have been active in conservation for many years and included in their many acknowledgement awards are the New Zealand Loder Cup for Conservation in 1999, Forest and Birds Old Blue Award in 1999, the Trustpower Southland Community Award in 2009 and the Southland Environment Individuals award in 2011.



**EDITH JONES (TREASURER)** Edith is active in many conservation groups in Southland as well as having a large area of forest on Banks Peninsula protected by QEII National Covenant. Edith has a master's degree in Business Administration (Finance) and a master's degree in Organisational Behaviour.



**RUUD KLEINPASTE (PATRON)** An entomologist and "Bug Man" - always happy to share his face with a weta. Ruud is one of the insect world's best friends. After moving to New Zealand from Holland in 1978, his work with MAF created a media profile for him which led to a long-running radio show, and a television career that has seen his shows screened in more than 60 countries.

Communication is Ruud's passion, especially the topics surrounding Natural History and the fragility of our ecological systems. Ruud first visited the Community Nursery while helping with the Living Legends project at Bushy Point, Otatara in September 2011.





## COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEERS

Our group is in a strong position. We are well regarded throughout Southland for our efforts and have a number of organisations, groups and individuals regularly engaging in and supporting our activities. Approximately 3000 volunteer hours are spent in the nursery each year (this equates to over \$38,000 per year at Community Trust of Southland suggested rate of \$12.75 per hour). Many groups and individuals are involved – gardeners, landowners, farmers, conservation groups, organic farmers, youth training groups, international visitors, school children, scout and guide groups

## SOME OF OUR COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS HAVE SAID:



*"I continue to visit with my pre-school children and it is an ongoing opportunity for them to learn."*

**Bronwyn**



*"For me the Nursery is a place that I really enjoy being involved with, knowing that I am helping contribute to something positive in our local community"*

**Maggie**



*"I enjoy the social aspect and the personal satisfaction of knowing the plants go all over Southland to similar projects"*

**Chris**

*"I appreciate the knowledge I have gained and pass on my knowledge to my Whanau and even my extended Marae Whanau"*

**Estelle**



*"I love the food and coffee!!"*

**Em**



## ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

**The Nursery** is open once a week between September to July for public and regular volunteers. These public days are hosted by Chris Rance and Linda Jackson. Weekly activities include hands on nursery work – potting, weeding, propagation, structure building, which has lead to the production of over 100,000 native plants for Southland.

In addition to producing plants for projects the nursery open days perform an important networking role where people get together, enjoy each others company and learn skills while meeting new people. This is often utilised by people new to Southland.

**Seasonal workshops** are held throughout the year, usually over the weekends. Topics include propagation workshops, seed collection, cuttings and grafting. Workshops are run by the Southland Community Nursery itself, while additional workshops are also hosted at the Nursery and run by other groups such as the South Coast Environment Society, and organic farm education groups.

**School groups**, scout and guide groups and youth training groups often attend the nursery to improve their skills and experience outside the classroom learning activities, to grow their own plants and create a new environment at their school.

**Annual Open Days** are also held, with themes such as wetland creation, planting to attract birds, creating native forest and shelter planting. We are also involved in and support many conservation projects, ranging from individual QEII restoration, to Community conservation efforts, as listed previously in this document.



### **Formal recognition and support for the Nursery and those involved with it includes:**

#### National awards

- The Loder Cup for Conservation in 1999
- Forest and Bird Society Old Blue award in 1999
- The New Zealand Plant Conservation Network Nursery Award in 2011

#### Regional awards

- Southland Gardener of the year 2009
- Environment Southland Award 2001 and 2011
- Trustpower National Community Volunteer Award 2009/10 Southland Region.



## BENEFITS

The following benefits currently flow from the work of our Trust and the Southland Community Nursery:

- Influencing people across the Southland Region to take an interest in their own environment and do something practical to protect it. Influencing overseas volunteers and giving them a good impression of the Region providing tourists with an ecotourism activity.
- Providing a friendly and hospitable environment for people to meet, share ideas, enjoy company while learning about native plants and growing plants in general.
- As the volunteers and visitors learn skills they are able to pass on their skills to new people and improve our environment.
- Many schoolchildren are influenced, including visits to the nursery by the home school association and student teacher groups.
- New residents are welcomed – in a partnership with Southland Multi Nations society all new New Zealand Citizens are given a Southland native plant at their citizenship ceremony.
- A number of similar community nurseries have been set up throughout Southland – and more to come – Aparima Runaka, Kapuka South Community Centre, Waituna Landcare Group, Riverton, Dancing Star, SIRCET Stewart island, Bluff School/Environment Trust various farm and school properties.
- Encouraging the concept of “Southland native gardens” - reinforcing Southland as a special and unique place to live in New Zealand

## FINANCES

The “seed money” for this project over 15 years ago was Forest and Bird’s JS Watson Trust Fund. Since that time one-off funding has been received from World Wildlife Fund (WWF), Ron Greenwood Trust and Honda Tree Fund and recently again the JS Watson Fund and Biodiversity Advice Fund. We give thanks to these organisations for their support.

More recently annual funding from plant sales, of approximately \$2000, covers annual costs of potting mix, pots and some minor nursery materials. This generates a production of around 8000 – 10,000 native plants every year, which are planted into the Southland environment. The land and infrastructure of the nursery, sheds and land are donated to the project by Chris and Brian Rance. One-off grants have been used for a shade house and an irrigation system including water tank and in 2010 a new website was funded by Biodiversity Advice Fund.

All work at the nursery, including its management and fundraising is voluntary. Many people from throughout the region are encouraged to work with the environment as a result of the work of the Southland Community Nursery – either on a regular volunteer basis, or for restoration and revegetation projects.





We are well aware of the importance of financial sustainability into the future, especially as our outreach grows and develops. While our work so far has relied on funding grants and donations on an 'as needed' basis, we are now taking a more strategic approach.

Our board are looking into developing supportive relationship with corporate entities, funding organisations and developing a fundraising plan in conjunction with our proposed project (the education centre). We are well established and are looking into the potential to set up a branch of the nursery as a fundraising arm to enable us to continue to provide our services to the community for little or no cost.



## Appendix 1 – Community Nursery Volunteers References

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I heard about the Southland Community Nursery from a friend who had volunteered there and was transforming her high maintenance garden into an easy care native garden that would attract native birds. I loved this idea so I went along to an open day they were holding. I have been interested in Native flora and fauna from a young age and being of Maori descent and active at my local Marae where we use different native plants for cultural purposes, I saw an opportunity to get involved in protecting our native bush, and improving my own backyard.

I started going along on Friday mornings and really enjoyed the learning aspect! I love the beautiful native plant oasis the Rances have created out of a grass paddock and the fact that they acknowledged the Maori names of the many species on display. I also appreciate the knowledge I have gained, I also take my niece and nephew during school holidays they love it. I am passing on that knowledge to anyone who will listen, including my Whanau and even extended Marae Whanau (who in turn share knowledge passed down by their ancestors).

I travel from Bluff to Otatara which is an hour return drive to the Nursery but unless I have work (shift worker) nothing on a Friday is more important to me, and the great morning teas are an added bonus!

**Estelle Leask**  
**40 Bann Street,**  
**Bluff**

I started coming to the nursery initially because I bought a property with an ornamental garden with succulents and conifers, I really didn't like it and wanted a native easy care, low maintenance garden without any budget to buy plants. So I was initially coming to volunteer to earn plants for my garden. I enjoy the social aspect, meeting people with a community/conservation mindset and also the personal satisfaction of contributing to the revegetation project at the nursery and also knowing the plant are going all over Southland to similar projects, that it is slowly making a long term difference. I've learnt so much, I knew very few plants initially; I love to learn about the plants, their Latin names and where they are from and where they naturally grow. So I now care very little about my garden and it shows, but I'm very happy to contribute a few hours a week to the nursery because it has such a wide focus, it's not just one small project but contributes to many. I also appreciate that the standards you set about seed sourcing locally and propagating locally are important, plus I love the morning tea!

**Chris Andrews**  
**Bluff**



My involvement in The Southland Community Nursery has become a part of my weekly schedule. Most Friday mornings it is into the kitchen to make something to share for morning tea before heading off to the nursery to weed or help with potting up. I have been doing this on a regular basis since moving into part time work 6 years ago. Prior to that it was school holidays only.

My original involvement started over 12 years ago, when I first heard about the nursery through my son who was doing some volunteer work there. At this stage we were planning on moving from town out to Otatara to a property with significant bush that would be requiring lots of native plants. It was Chris who suggested that I could make use of the nursery to get us started. So it was at that point my initial plants were potted up in anticipation of planting them out as our project developed. Knowing which plants to choose and where to plant them has been helped by being able to see them in their natural habitat in Brian and Chris's garden and wetlands development. Today as I write this letter I am looking out from my living room at hundreds of native plants that I have grown and planted and it gives me such pleasure. Part of my plan was to provide food for the native birds and to now see the tuis, bellbirds and pigeons feeding on these plants makes it all so worth while. Chris and Brian have been the inspiration though it is Chris who is there each Friday. She has provided the knowledge and skills to make this happen.

It isn't all about the plants either. The camaraderie is also a drawcard. A diverse group of people arrive each Friday, some regulars and some visitors (overseas, volunteers and some just for morning tea) and it is this networking and friendships that have been formed, that is also great. Morning teas have become legendary, along with sharing and discussing of environmental issues, to sharing of veggie plants, recipes and the likes.

I have also had made use of the nursery through my teaching job to bring school children along to pot up natives for a garden at school, and through my involvement with the Southland Herb Society by arranging for the members to visit.

For me the Nursery is a place that I really enjoy being involved with, knowing that I am helping contribute to something positive in our local community.

### **Maggie Elford**

I came to the nursery after moving to Otatara 3 1/2 years ago to plant out our bare house section in natives. What a wonderful initiative to be able to learn how to propagate, grow and then plant your own piece of native paradise. We have planted somewhere between 400-500 plants.

I continue to visit the nursery with my two preschool children (4 years and 22 months) as it is an on-going opportunity for them to: learn about and help with potting up, weeding and watering plants; walk around the wetland; experience and explore natives (with all their senses); and feed the ducks and chickens! Shared home baked morning teas, discussions on harvesting and produce and having fun with like minded people who are passionate about the environment are added bonuses and part of the character of the community nursery.

### **Bronwyn, Liam and Abby**





## Appendix 2

### Letters of Support

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#### **The Community Education Centre**

If we are serious about the continued existence of humanity on our Planet, we have to be serious about our Environment.

Luckily we are becoming more and more aware that this place is actually run by *Biodiversity*, as it has already been for billions of years. Biodiversity and the forces of Evolution have allowed the Planet to adapt to changing conditions; Carbon Credits, however, did not exist until a decade ago.

You'd expect that switched-on governments and leading businesses would therefore put an enormous amount of energy and resources into keeping that biodiversity healthy and functional, as it is our most valuable asset through simple (but complex) concepts such as ecosystem services and healthy food and water. I reckon more could be done.

Luckily there is a world-wide movement that is active in the restoration of our natural systems. It is largely made up of people with a positive outlook and a dedicated, volunteering frame of mind. New Zealand is right at the fore-front of that movement with hundreds of organisations, committed to restoring the health of our Environment.

The Southland Community Nursery Conservation Trust is such an Organisation and it very serious about this goal. It has a *modus operandi* that is not only clever but also very effective: involve the local community in the local projects, creating a sense of ownership and knowledge, while sharing in the beauty and awe of Natural History and ecological systems. Involving the kids ensures the involvement and enlightenment of three generations for the price of one.

Have you *ever* met an ex-environmentalist?

When the Trust signalled their intentions to develop a community-based centre for hands-on environmental education (*the* Community Education Centre) it felt like a "no-brainer" to me. It is exactly what's needed to make the next crucial step for Otatara, the wider community and Invercargill, Southland and - yes - Aotearoa... Everybody can learn from this!

I have absolutely no hesitation in recommending this initiative and would like to urge you to join me in supporting this brilliant and exciting venture.

I hope to see you soon at the Community Education Centre.

Ruud Kleinpaste



20 January 2012

The Community Trust of  
Southland  
P O Box 1646  
**Invercargill**

Our Reference: 217/03/16  
Refer Accession No:



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0800 76 88 45

Email [service@es.govt.nz](mailto:service@es.govt.nz)  
Website [www.es.govt.nz](http://www.es.govt.nz)

Dear Sir or Madam

***Community Education Centre Project - Letter of Support***

This letter is to support the Southland Community Nursery's application to the Community Trust of Southland for funding towards the Community Education Centre.

The Southland Community Nursery is a well known and respected organisation in Southland, and has been serving the region for a number of years. Environment Southland formally recognised the commitment of Brian and Chris Rance, main drivers of the nursery, by awarding them a Southland Environment Award last year.

I believe, to have an all weather classroom facility that is close to Southland's main population base alongside an active community nursery project, bush tracks and wetland restoration would be hugely beneficial to environmental education and the Southland region as a whole. This facility and location coupled with the huge experience that Chris, Brian and the Southland Community Nursery team would make the project second to none.

Weather is a big part of Southland, and it is disappointing when field trips are cancelled due to the inclement conditions. The building of the Community Education Centre would allow students, individuals and groups to attend workshops regardless of the unfavourable weather.

I look forward to seeing the Community Education Centre up and running; furthering environmental education in Southland.

Yours sincerely

Nikki Tarbutt  
**Environmental Education Coordinator**



*for now and your future*

Community Education Centre  
Project Letter of Support  
19.1.2012.doc

Environment Southland is the brand  
name of Southland Regional Council



31 January 2012

**Southland Community Nursery Trust**  
c/- C Rance  
185 Grant Road  
Otatara

Dear Chris

**Southland Community Nursery Trust - Community Education Centre  
funding application.**

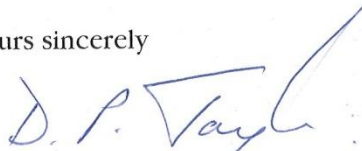
The Department of Conservation is pleased to support your application to develop a Community Education Centre by the Southland Community Nursery Conservation Trust.

This trust has a longstanding relationship with the Southland Conservancy and a proven record of successfully supporting conservation projects and education to the wider Southland community. The botanical and conservation expertise of its members are recognised nationally and are often drawn upon by the Department and our conservation partners.

In our experience over many years working alongside the Southland Community Nursery Conservation Trust we have noticed that many of the schools and groups have to reassess their visit or activities due to the lack of a suitable all-weather facility. By addressing this need, as well as planning future community outreach and education programmes, they are showing a continuing commitment to Southland's conservation and educational needs of both children and adults.

We see the development proposed in their application, as a well planned and natural extension, to what is already a highly valued conservation and education facility in Southland. The Community Education Centre would enable the Southland Community Nursery Conservation Trust to continue meeting the growing needs of the wider community; reflecting and teaching modern conservation principles, as well as traditional māori values and knowledge.

Yours sincerely



Dave Taylor  
Murihiku Area Manager  
for Conservator

**Southland/Murihiku Conservancy**

CUE on Don, 33 Don St, PO Box 743, Invercargill 9840, New Zealand  
Telephone 03-211 2400, Fax 03-214 4486 docDM-900201 - Southland Community Nursery  
Trust-Funding application letter of support.





**Cathy Macfie** BSc Hons.  
CONSERVATION EDUCATION  
HERITAGE INTERPRETATION

'Tahaki'  
51 Huruhuru Road  
Otatara 9 R.D.  
Invercargill

Ph. (03) 213-1267  
Fax (03) 213-1267  
Mobile 0274 534055  
Email: [cathymacfie@xtra.co.nz](mailto:cathymacfie@xtra.co.nz)

13 January 2012

To whom it may concern:

**Proposed Southland Community Nursery Education Centre, Otatara**

Over the last ten years the Community Nursery has earned credibility for its strong educational ethic and volunteer involvement in growing over 80,000 native plants. It has already achieved regional and local awards for its contribution to educational, conservation and restoration projects.

The proposal to develop an Education Centre on its site is a logical step forward that reflects the visionary yet practical thinking of committed Trustees.

The long term opportunities and benefits, as I perceive them, include:

- A protected environment that provides certainty for school visits to the nursery (currently over 200 children p.a.) regardless of weather.
- Recognition that the Education Centre will become the hub for a package of curriculum-linked activities that incorporates the Bushy Point Restoration Project (Otatara Landcare Group) and Bushy Point Fernbird Reserve (QE II National Trust) both of which flank the nursery. The educational potential of these two initiatives is already recognised by the educational sector. The value of a physically central educational centre as a facilitative hub, resource centre and physical meeting (and luncheon) space is self-evident.
- Accessible first hand experience of the inter-relationships which govern Otatara's bush remnants including succession through natural regeneration from estuarine saltmarsh to forest - plus the process of pro-actively restoring developed paddocks to forest, step by slow step.
- Commitment to provide a range of educational resources that are relevant and will engage children from pre-school to secondary school.

In my various roles as heritage interpretation specialist, Otatara Landcare Group volunteer and someone who wants to see Southland make the best of its outstanding natural and human resources, I lend my wholehearted support to this proposal.

Yours sincerely,



I would like to express my support for the development of the Education Centre. The University of Otago College of Education Graduate Diploma of Teaching in Secondary used this site in 2011 to deliver aspects of our paper EDUS 361 -Education Out of The Classroom and we are returning in November 2012. The graduate teachers demonstrated how to plan and deliver a lesson in this setting with a view to taking their classes to this site when in teaching positions. 16 graduates attended the Education Centre and 10 of these have 2012 teaching positions in Southland.

The site is conveniently close to Invercargill, has a variety of well labeled plants, a variety of environments including forest, wetland and restoration and a covered area for discussion and recording. The small size and exposed opening of the covered area did present some problems in the driving rain and hail that particular day, I should add, when we met there for whole class explanation and discussion.

Biology and Junior Science lessons were demonstrated that day and the site lends itself to other curriculum areas also. I did notice its suitability for all sectors; early childhood, primary, secondary and tertiary.

One of best aspects of the Nursery is the active learning offered when children can grow their own seedlings to maturity and plant them in different environments. Such real-life, Educational-Out -Of-The-Classroom learning experiences are well documented in educational research as engaging and motivating for all students.

Jenny Vermunt MTchg, BEd, DipTchg

**JENNY VERMUNT • SECONDARY TEACHER EDUCATION**  
SOUTHLAND CAMPUS •  
UNIVERSITY OF OTAGO • COLLEGE OF EDUCATION •  
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University of Otago - College of Education  
Te Kura Akau Taitoka



162b Black Road  
Otatara RD9  
Invercargill 9879

26 January 2012

Community Trust of Southland  
PO Box 1646  
Invercargill 9840

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing this letter in support of the Southland Community Nursery's funding application to the Community Trust of Southland for a purpose-built Community Education Centre.

I am the Learning Experiences Outside The Classroom (LEOTC) Education Officer at the Southland Museum & Art Gallery. The LEOTC Programme is supported by the Ministry of Education and its purpose is to provide hands-on learning experiences for primary and secondary school students within authentic contexts. Most of the education programmes I deliver are at held at the Southland Museum & Art Gallery, but we also hold programmes at other sites of interest such as the Invercargill Water Tower and Queen's Park.

In order to develop more science-based LEOTC programmes, this year I have made it a professional goal to include the Southland Community Nursery as a site for LEOTC education programmes. Because of its facilities and onsite expertise provided, the Southland Community Nursery is an ideal location for plant studies across many areas of the New Zealand Science Curriculum for both primary and secondary students. These areas are Ecology, Evolution, Earth Systems, Interacting Systems and Chemistry. These programmes would also benefit those who are working on school native bush restoration projects, encouraging more native birds to the school site or developing a school vegetable patch. Although the programmes would be

Page 1 of 2





predominantly Science-based, they could also provide cross-curricular links in other subjects such as Māori, the Arts and English, especially Writing Standards.

Being only fifteen minutes drive from the Southland Museum & Art Gallery, most schools will find the location of the Southland Community Nursery suitable. The number one reason why schools would not use these facilities is because there is no appropriate area to work under cover in bad weather. Not only would many schools have to cancel a booking due to bad weather, but I fear that some schools may be put off booking a visit at all due to the high chance that they will later have to cancel. By providing a classroom on site which is elevated and equipped with roller doors, panorama windows and a viewing platform, students could complete the lesson no matter what the weather. Additionally, the inclusion of a projector or interactive whiteboard and computer facilities would provide an opportunity for more enhanced learning experiences.

If you wish to discuss this matter further, please feel free to call me at the Southland Museum & Art Gallery on (03)219 9069 – work, or (03)213 1416 – home.

Yours faithfully,



Koreena Wilks.

Page 2 of 2

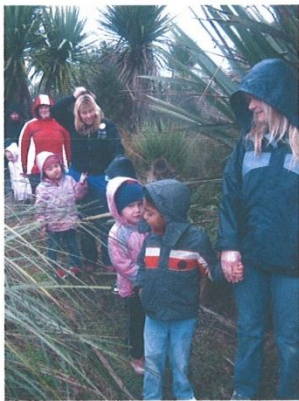


# Otatara community Gardens visit

It was a very excited bunch of explorers who set off to the community gardens. A ride on the bus was a big part of this! But we also had serious business too. We wanted the children to see how small seedlings are potted up, and the size these plants can grow to.



Chris Rance, who with her husband Brian run the gardens, greeted the children and parents as we got off the bus. She talked to the children about the sorts of birds we might see in the bush and held up a fantail picture. Many children shouted 'It's a Piwakawaka'. Chris was very impressed!



She explained about how people can come and help pot up seedlings that are then grown on for them. We had hoped that the children could help plant some small plants but it was too wet so Chris demonstrated how this was done. She offered to give us a tray of seedlings so that the children can have a go back at the Centre. We set off in the rain for a walk around the duck pond. This used to be a paddock but thanks to Chris and Brian's hard work it is becoming a great forest area. I really liked the look of the pond but it would take up all our playground area so I gave away that plan! On our



return we looked at where all the plants are kept. Chris also had some Lemonwood leaves for the children to crush and smell.

Chris and Brian donated approx 65 plants for our new wild area and we are very grateful for their support.

Back at the Centre there was an excited buzz about walking in the rain and the leaves that smelled like 'Lemonade'!

Our next project will be planting our forest. Because of the interest the children have shown in this visit we may plan to visit the Fern bird sanctuary—ON A FINE DAY!

Barbara 24-4-10



Southland Community Nursery Trust,  
185 Grant Road,  
Otatara, 98RD,  
Invercargill, 9879

26<sup>th</sup> January 2012

Dear Chris

Re: Support for Community Education Centre

I am writing in support of the application for a classroom/workshop to be built on Chris and Brian Rance's property attached to the Community Nursery in Otatara.

My class investigated the propagation of native seedlings in our community. We were fortunate enough to visit the nursery, scavenge for seeds and plant these. The children thoroughly enjoyed exploring the bush, and learning about our native plants. Numerous occasions following our initial visit, we attempted to revisit analysing the progress of the seedlings, re-pot and to eventually plant in the bush. However with the erratic weather we were not able to revisit. This was disappointing for the children and myself as they were not able to see the progress of the plants; nor the impact these would make on our community. It would have been an invaluable learning experience for the children to see first hand how a simple gathering of seeds, and propagating can benefit our environment.

Therefore, a classroom/workshop would be a fantastic asset for the Community Nursery where whanau and children could help strengthen our environment without the concerns of the weather.

Please contact me if you would like any further assistance.

Kind regards,

Alice Casey

Primary Teacher at Otatara Primary School





Southland Community Nursery  
185 Grant Road  
Otatara School  
9RD  
Invercargill

3<sup>rd</sup> February 2012

Dear Chris

I think building a classroom at the Community Nursery in Otatara is a really good idea. I really like to learn about plants. It is a really great place to learn. Last year when we went there we went on a bush walk and learnt all about the different seeds and we saw their duck DJ. We got to plant some seeds. We weren't able to get back to them and see them because of the bad weather. We were all very disappointed. If the nursery had a classroom we would have been able to see them.

The nursery would even be able to hold a Fun Day for people of all ages to learn about native plants and animals/insects.

That's why I think the nursery should have a classroom.

Yours sincerely,  
Gabrielle Milne  
Room 10  
Otatara Primary School



Mrs Chris Rance,  
Southland Community Nursery Trust.

February 17<sup>th</sup>, 2012

I write to support your initiative with regard to the proposed development by the Southland Community Nursery Trust.

I have used your nursery in the past and wish to use it in the future with students enrolled at SIT for the degree course in Environmental Management.

Covered facilities would be a great benefit as bad weather often means we have to cancel our proposed excursion to your nursery. An additional interest to our teaching programme is the variety of habitats to be found on your property and on the adjacent land.

I strongly support your initiative.

Dr W. Ross Ramsay



197 Grant Rd

Otatara No9RD

Invercargill

30/01/12

To whom it may concern:

Kia ora,

We are in support of the proposed Community Education Centre at 185 Grant Rd.

The construction of the centre will provide an all weather facility which will encourage the wider use of this whole area.

With the Bushy Point re vegetation project, Southland Community Nursery and our boardwalk in close proximity it is an excellent location.

The benefits to the wider community from children being able to see the tangible results of conservation in action are many.

There has recently been a lack of good, ongoing education about caring for our environment directed towards young people. The proposed centre will fill a much needed gap in Southland.

Regards

Ian and Jenny Gamble





## Appendix 3 – Examples of Awards

### LODER CUP AWARD –1999

28 NEWS

SOUTHLAND EXPRESS, Thursday, August 12, 1999

# Couple rewarded for dedication to conservation

By Dave Howell

A committed Southland couple have won New Zealand's highest environmental award for their dedicated service to conservation.

Department of Conservation botanist Brian Rance and his wife Chris were awarded the Loder Cup by the Minister of Conservation at a function in Christchurch last week for their ten years of voluntary conservation work.

The Loder Cup was instituted by Gerald Loder in 1926 to recognise the efforts of New Zealanders who worked to promote indigenous flora and has been the country's premier environmental award ever since.

This is only the fifth time in its history that the cup has been won by Southlanders, the last time being in 1979, when former conservation board chairman Roger Sutton and his wife Christina were winners.

The Loder Cup follows just weeks after the Rances also won the Forest and Bird Society's prestigious Old Blue Award.

The Rances were recognised for their active involvement in a variety of projects in association with DOC, including a community nursery that promotes the use of indigenous plants in Southland gardens, and an endangered plant nursery where extremely scarce plants are propagated for reintroduction into the wild.

One of the world's rarest plants, Hamilton's Gunnera, is found at only five sites in Southland and is currently being researched and preserved by the Rances.

The Forest and Bird Society's 'The Rare Reserve in the Catlins', which conserves a population of the yellow-eyed penguin, the world's rarest species, is another project to which the Rances devote a lot of their private time and effort.

Mr Rance said education of Southlanders was an important part of the threatened plant project so that people could assist with the conservation of those species.

"One of our primary objectives is to get threatened plants more widely known so that landowners would recognise them and then look after them."

Part time DOC employee Mrs Rance said all the hard work was worthwhile because it was done for a good cause.

"We think the plants and animals of New Zealand are unique and we would like to encourage those who share that view."

"It would be nice to see everyone in Southland planting at least one native plant for the new millennium," she said.



Loder Cup winners Chris and Brian Rance admire an alpine daisy on a field trip to Fiordland.





## NEWS



**Green fingers:** Southland Community Nursery coordinators Chris, left, and Brian Rance, with nursery volunteer Linda Jackson, are winners of the supreme award at the 2009 Invercargill Southland Community Awards.

Photo: NICOLE GOURLEY 150818

# Community seedling nursery wins top award

By EVAN HARDING

**A VOLUNTEER** group responsible for thousands of native seedlings being planted throughout Southland during the past decade has won the supreme award at the 2009 Invercargill Southland Community Awards.

The Southland Community Nursery, headed by Brian and Chris Rance, of Otara, took out top honours at the TrustPower awards function held at Invercargill's Civic Theatre last night.

TrustPower spokeswoman Melanie Gray said the nursery created a "green, vibrant, eco-friendly Southland one tree at a time" while also encouraging dozens of other people to get involved, she said.

Mr and Mrs Rance, who provide the nursery on their property, said hundreds of people had grown their own native plants on-site and free of charge before taking them away to bolster bush projects, shelter belts and other community projects.

Hundreds of schoolchildren had visited the site in the past decade and 8000 native seedlings had been provided for planting on farms, schools and conservation projects.

Linda Jackson, a nursery volunteer, said it gave her enormous satisfaction to know that plants grown at the nursery made an immediate difference to birdlife and the environment elsewhere.

There were 58 other groups also nominated for awards last night, with Invercargill Deputy Mayor Neil Boniface saying the awards

recognised the priceless contribution volunteers made to enhance the community's wellbeing.

Other winners: The Heritage and Environment Award was won by the Bluff Hill Moutupoehue Environment Trust; the Health and Well Being Award was won by the Royal New Zealand Plunket Society Invercargill Branch; the Arts and Culture Award was won by Stewart Island Players; the Sport and Leisure Award was won by Girlguiding NZ Southland and the Educational and Child/Youth Development Award was won by Invercargill Salvation Army Corps.



rsday July 7 2011

SOUTHLAND EXPRESS

environment SOUTHLAND Awards

Southland's environmental achievers were honoured at the region's 16th community environmental awards last night. The awards are organised by Environment Southland and acknowledge the huge amount of good work being done – often behind the scenes and voluntarily – to safeguard and enhance Southland's environment. The awards are given in eight categories and attracted a record 32 nominations this year.

Here are all the winners...

ENVIRO WEEK

**Local heroes**

When the environment judges were making their way round to visit the 32 nominees who entered this year's awards, they were amazed at how often the names Chris and Brian Rance came up in conversation. This unassuming couple are the driving force behind the Southland Community Nursery, they are stalwarts of the Otago Landcare Group and the Natural History Field Club and they have also developed and covenanted a wetland and area of bush on their property at Otatara. They are a force for good throughout the environmental movement in Southland and their influence can be seen in conservation and restoration projects right across the region.

The Individual Award is sponsored by Forsyth Barr





2 Thursday January 19 2012

# Community nursery triumphs

BY LEEANA TAMATI

A SOUTHLAND non-profit nursery has been recognised by a national conservation organisation for their work in protecting native plants and ecosystems.

The Southland Community Nursery was awarded the Plant Nursery Involved in Plant Conservation Award by the New Zealand Plant Conservation Network (NZPCN) last year.

Run by Chris and Brian Rance on their property in Otatara, the nursery has been operating for more than 15 years, and provides advice and locally sourced native plants in exchange for volunteer time at the nursery.

Chris said it was fantastic to receive the award, which recognised all the hard work put into the nursery.

"It was against all the nurseries in the country, so to get it was really great."

The nursery has been gaining momentum over the years, and now between 10 and 20 people volunteer to help each week.

"Lots of conservation groups, farm owners and people want to restore native plants on to their properties, so they come here to learn how to grow plants for



**Green fingers:** Southland Community Nursery owner Chris Rance with volunteers (from left) Hannah Wilson with Maya (9 months) and Dylan (21 months), and Liam (4), Abby (2) and Bronwyn Graham.

themselves.

"For the voluntary effort, they can take plants away with them for free. You could say they are giving their time and efforts for the plants."

Chris said the nursery grew more than 10,000 plants a year — all the seeds of which were sourced from the native bush and wetland in their backyard.

The bush was originally an empty paddock, but Chris and Brian have restored it to its natural glory, with native plants, which are labelled for the sake of the volunteers, surrounding ponds.

The nursery was about learning, she said, and giving people the opportunity to sow, grow and cultivate their own plants on their own property.

"There's a technique to knowing which plants are which, and collecting seeds at the right time, and sowing them, and that's what we teach."

"We want to get people interested in native plants and conservation."

Children always had fun helping out every Friday morning when the volunteers tended to the plants, she said.

"The kids love it — once they get their hands dirty you can't stop them."

"Quite a lot of new mums come along too because it's a social thing as well as a peaceful working environment."

"It's a lovely environment and there's lots of birds around."

With school children often having a tour of the nursery, Chris said the next big step was to build a proper education facility.

The property had a small shed for morning teas, and a few other sheds to store the equipment, but nothing that could cater for 100 school children, Chris said.

For more information about the Southland Community Nursery or about native plants, go to [www.southlandcommunitynursery.co.nz](http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.co.nz).



## Appendix 4 – Benefits for Children of Play in Nature

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This summary is taken from an article by Randy White. It is an extensive body of research and literature on the significant benefits for children of regular play experiences in nature.

### ***Benefits for Children of Play in Nature***

**By Randy White**

<http://www.whitehutchinson.com/children/articles/benefits.shtml>

Following is a summary of the many benefits that regular play in nature has for children:

- Children with symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) are better able to concentrate after contact with nature (Taylor et al. 2001).
- Children with views of and contact with nature score higher on tests of concentration and self-discipline. The greener, the better the scores (Wells 2000, Taylor et al. 2002).
- Children who play regularly in natural environments show more advanced motor fitness, including coordination, balance and agility, and they are sick less often (Grahn, et al. 1997, Fjortoft & Sageie 2001).
- When children play in natural environments, their play is more diverse with imaginative and creative play that fosters language and collaborative skills (Moore & Wong 1997, Taylor, et al. 1998, Fjortoft 2000).
- Exposure to natural environments improves children's cognitive development by improving their awareness, reasoning and observational skills (Pyle 2002).
- Nature buffers the impact of life's stresses on children and helps them deal with adversity. The greater the amount of nature exposure, the greater the benefits (Wells & Evans 2003).
- Play in a diverse natural environment reduces or eliminates bullying (Malone & Tranter 2003).
- Nature helps children develop powers of observation and creativity and instills a sense of peace and being at one with the world (Crain 2001).
- Early experiences with the natural world have been positively linked with the development of imagination and the sense of wonder (Cobb 1977, Louv 1991). Wonder is an important motivator for life long learning (Wilson 1997).
- Children who play in nature have more positive feelings about each other (Moore 1996).
- Natural environments stimulate social interaction between children (Moore 1986, Bixler et al. 2002).
- Outdoor environments are important to children's development of independence and autonomy (Bartlett 1996).
- Play in outdoor environments stimulates all aspects of children development more readily than indoor environments (Moore & Wong 1997).
- An affinity to and love of nature, along with a positive environmental ethic, grow out of regular contact with and play in the natural world during early childhood. Children's loss of regular contact with the natural world can result in a biophobic future generation not interested in preserving nature and its diversity (Bunting & Cousins 1985; Chawla 1988; Wilson 1993; Pyle 1993; Chipeniuk 1994; Sobel 1996, 2002 & 2004; Hart 1997; Wilson 1997, Kals et al. 1999; Moore & Cosco 2000; Fisman 2001; Kellert 2002; Bixler et al. 2002; Kals & Ittner 2003; Schultz et al. 2004).

*"There's no way that we can help children to learn to love and preserve this planet, if we don't give them direct experiences with the miracles and blessings of nature."*

Anita Olds





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## Appendix 5 – Community Education Centre Outcomes

### *Community Trust of Southland Priorities and Outcomes of the Community Education Centre*

CTOS Sectors & Priorities	Outcomes of the Community Education Centre (CEC)
<p><b>ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage participation, and involvement in, and appreciation of Arts, Culture, and Heritage</li> <li>• Provide appropriate and sustainable facilities and infrastructure</li> <li>• Support Southlanders to achieve their creative potential</li> <li>• Reduce barriers to ensure reasonable access for all in the community</li> <li>• Celebrate the diversity of culture in Southland</li> <li>• Preserve and encourage interest in our heritage</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CEC would allow workshops for arts and cultural projects such as stone carving, photography and felting. The garage door and wet floor would enable these messier projects to be undertaken but in a weatherproof space.</li> <li>• The Southland Multinationals Society is currently supported by the Southland Community Nursery by supplying plants for residency and citizenship ceremonies. Building of the CEC would allow all weather workshops for this group to be run.</li> <li>• Workshops on traditional Maori plant uses could be run at the CEC.</li> <li>• A wheelchair accessible building would allow those lesser able and prams to attend and participate in CEC activities.</li> </ul>
<p><b>COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create social as well as economic benefit</li> <li>• Have strong community support</li> <li>• Provide a platform for other business development</li> <li>• Are not inconsistent with other sector goals</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Financial savings for schools and community groups for planting restoration projects. The CEC would allow schools to attend even in wet conditions.</li> <li>• Financial savings for individuals wanting to plant native gardens.</li> <li>• Sustainable model that volunteers “pay” for their plants by volunteering their time.</li> </ul>
<p><b>EDUCATION</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have a learner-focused approach</li> <li>• Encourage partnerships and collaboration between relevant parties, including community</li> <li>• Support Southlanders to achieve their potential</li> <li>• Add value and quality to the learning environment</li> <li>• Address needs identified by community</li> <li>• Reduce barriers to ensure reasonable access for all in the community</li> <li>• Encourage participation in education and life-long learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CEC would allow students, their families and teachers to gain hands on experience of; propagation, seed collection, cuttings in an all weather environment.</li> <li>• The CEC would provide a facility that combines; an all weather classroom, active community nursery tracks bush, wetland and estuary and botanical expertise in one place – and would be unique in doing so in Southland.</li> <li>• The CEC would provide workshops aimed at young people and adults promoting life-long learning, not just for the formal education sector.</li> </ul>



CTOS Sectors & Priorities	<i>Outcomes of the Community Education Centre (CEC)</i>
<b>ENVIRONMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect, preserve and restore Southland's environment</li> <li>• Enable and encourage people to appreciate the environment</li> <li>• Promote awareness of environmental issues and concepts of sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The CEC would allow students, their families and teachers to gain hands on experience of; propagation, seed collection, cuttings in an all weather environment.</li> <li>• Participants attending the CEC would result in Enhanced biodiversity in the Southland Region from propagation and planting activity in school grounds and in support of local restoration projects.</li> <li>• The CEC would increase awareness of bush, wetland and estuarine ecosystems.</li> </ul>
<b>HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve health and social outcomes for Southland residents</li> <li>• Promote communication and collaboration between agencies in the Health and Social Services sector</li> <li>• Effectively meet a demonstrated need in the Health and Social Services sector</li> <li>• Support and empower vulnerable people in our community</li> <li>• Strengthen the ability of organisations to operate well in the Health and Social Services sector</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased understanding of Southland's environment, seed saving and propagation help to develop transferable skills for vegetable gardens and fruit orchards.</li> <li>• Sense of pride, belong and purpose for participants who are volunteering and "earning" their plants which leads to improved self esteem.</li> </ul>
<b>SPORT AND RECREATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage participation in sport and active recreation</li> <li>• Encourage community engagement in sport and recreation</li> <li>• Provide appropriate and sustainable facilities and infrastructure</li> <li>• Support Southlanders to achieve their sporting potential</li> <li>• Reduce barriers to ensure reasonable access for all in the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Doing physical work at the CEC promotes physical activity by students getting active through their involvement in practical action in their school such as gardening.</li> <li>• The CEC fosters student and community engagement with local recreation opportunities in the outdoors.</li> </ul>





## Appendix 6 – Education in Schools Poll

### Environment should be taught in schools - poll

Monday, 10 October, 2011 - 15:31

Environmental education should be taught in all schools, say over 9 in 10 New Zealanders. An overwhelming majority of New Zealanders support the teaching of environmental education in every school, a new Colmar Brunton poll released today reveals.



More than 9 out of 10 people (94 per cent)\* agreed that all schools - from early childhood to tertiary level - should include the importance of caring for the natural environment and living in a way that preserves it for the future. WWF-New Zealand commissioned the poll ahead of the general election as part of their work to promote the importance of environmental education

WWF-New Zealand's Education Programme Manager Wendy Barry said: "New Zealanders care about protecting our natural heritage and feel very strongly that these values are passed on to the next generation. People understand that a healthy New Zealand society depends on a healthy environment - this is a message we want the Government to hear and to act upon."

A manifesto on Education for Sustainability has been produced for all political parties by WWF, Enviroschools and the New Zealand Association for Environmental Education (NZAEE) to encourage policies that recognise the importance of empowering and inspiring young New Zealanders to live in harmony with nature.

Ms Barry said: "The huge support for engaging our young people in environmental issues sends a clear message to our Government that they should not ignore. Our political leaders have a clear mandate from the New Zealand public to adopt policies that support learning about sustainability in our schools, early childhood centres and tertiary institutions.

"Education for Sustainability is a great model for excellence in delivering the whole curriculum because it is based on the values of quality teaching and learning. Its positive benefits reach beyond learning about the natural world, to include improved social engagement in a democratic society."

WWF-New Zealand has expertise based on 20 years working with schools. Each year, WWF provides more than \$50,000 funding to schools for action projects, helping thousands of students take part in activities designed to protect their local environment. These can range from gardening projects to water quality monitoring to exploring alternative forms of energy to power their classrooms. ENDS

Notes to editor

\*Colmar Brunton polling question:

Please think now about schools and education, from early childhood through to tertiary level. Some schools currently teach about the importance of caring for the environment and ways to look after it, while some schools don't.

Do you agree or disagree that all schools should teach the importance of caring for the natural environment and living in a way that preserves it for the future?

Of the respondents, 74% strongly agreed, and 20% slightly agreed, totalling 94% in agreement. 1% neither agree nor disagree, 2% slightly disagree, 2% strongly disagree, and 1% say they don't know.





**Southland Community Nursery, Christmas Break up, December 2011**