

Southland Community Nursery and Nature Education Centre

November 2020

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SUMMARY

This document contains the background information for the operation of a community-based Centre for hands-on environmental education, based at Otatara. It is the vision of the Southland Community Nursery Conservation Trust.

The first part of this document provides a detailed description of the operation of the 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 and education centre. 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 20 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.



Southland Community Nursery and Education Centre

BACKGROUND

After 15 years operating the Community Nursery, the Southland Community Nursery Charitable Trust opened a purpose built Community Education Centre facility in November 2013. The centre is a community-based hub of practical learning and engagement with the environment, while providing shelter from Southland's often unpredictable weather. The centre adjoins the working community nursery and natural area and has allowed more Southlanders the opportunity to get hands on education and experience.

VISION

“To connect Southlanders with nature so that people and communities are inspired to take action for themselves and for the environment”.

The **key objectives** of Southland Community Nursery are as follows:

- To actively promote education opportunities outside the classroom for children and young people (Appendix 4 documents the benefits for children of play in nature).
- To have fun exploring nature, to appreciate the wonder of nature for its own worth and for the health and wellbeing benefits nature brings to all our lives.
- To educate and provide a learning situation regarding the cultivation and growing of native plants.
- To provide an indoor venue and natural setting to host school groups and workshops “inspired by nature”.
- To give advice, grow and produce native plants for Southland community restoration projects





THE COMMUNITY NURSERY AND EDUCATION CENTRE PROJECT

The Southland Community Nursery and Education Centre offers a combination of:

1. an all-weather classroom/workshop space close to Invercargill Schools
2. outside nature space with tracks, ponds, wetland and bush
3. an active community volunteer project for growing native plants
4. botanical expertise and proven commitment to community environmental education

A purpose-built education centre has allowed us to greatly expand on existing activities, by further involving and engaging Southland's schools, individuals and community groups in practical outdoor environmental education. All activities are currently run by volunteers.

The facility can be divided into its different uses:

- Education Centre and property use for **schools and other groups**
- Education Centre use for **workshops**
- Education Centre and property use for **meetings and community events**
- Volunteer **Native Plant Nursery**

The social and community aspect to all these uses cannot be underestimated.



THE EDUCATION CENTRE FACILITY

In November 2013 the purpose built Community Nursery Education Centre was officially opened by Patron Ruud Kleinpaste. Bluff's Estelle Leask performed the Maori welcome and over 60 people including representatives from the Department of Conservation, Invercargill City, Southland District and Environment Southland Councils, Venture Southland, Community Groups and individuals all attended. It was the culmination of two years of planning, consenting processes, fundraising and building work.



The Southland Community Nursery Trust community based education centre is purpose built for outdoor hands-on environmental education. This centre is located on an area of land adjacent to current nursery facilities in Otatara, and within easy reach of Invercargill City. The facility is 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 12m x12m 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 allows the Nursery, and other community groups whom we host, to significantly expand current roles in education.

Vehicle access into the building allows for trailer loads of potting mix (beehives, apple press and other equipment) to be driven in, so classes can pot plants inside. A hose down surface means 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 keeps the space versatile for all types of teaching. This allows the range of workshops currently held at the nursery to be expanded as well as weather proofed. The design of the building also guarantees 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 is also be available to the community as a space for workshops, meetings and conferences.

Resources and nature artwork are a key feature of the Education Centre and the Community Nursery Website is a key vehicle for information – www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz
A Southland Education resource was funded by the Department of Conservation and compiled by Bronwyn Graham and activities linked to the Community Nursery Education Centre in 2016.

Schools can enjoy a wide range of nature activities and resources specific to Southland have been developed and are available free on the website at <http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz/education-centre/activities/school-activities/>

School and other group visits are documented with stories and photographs at <http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz/news-and-events/>



THE EDUCATION CENTRE RESOURCES

The Education Centre is equipped with unique local artwork and resources that reflect the species and natural environments around the Centre. The artworks include a wetland tunnel with opening doors, murals, sculptures and giant floor jigsaws. They provide fun ways of learning about our special Southland native plants and animals. Also provided are resources to use on excursions to the ponds and bush areas – they can be downloaded and printed at <http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz/education-centre/activities/school-activities/>

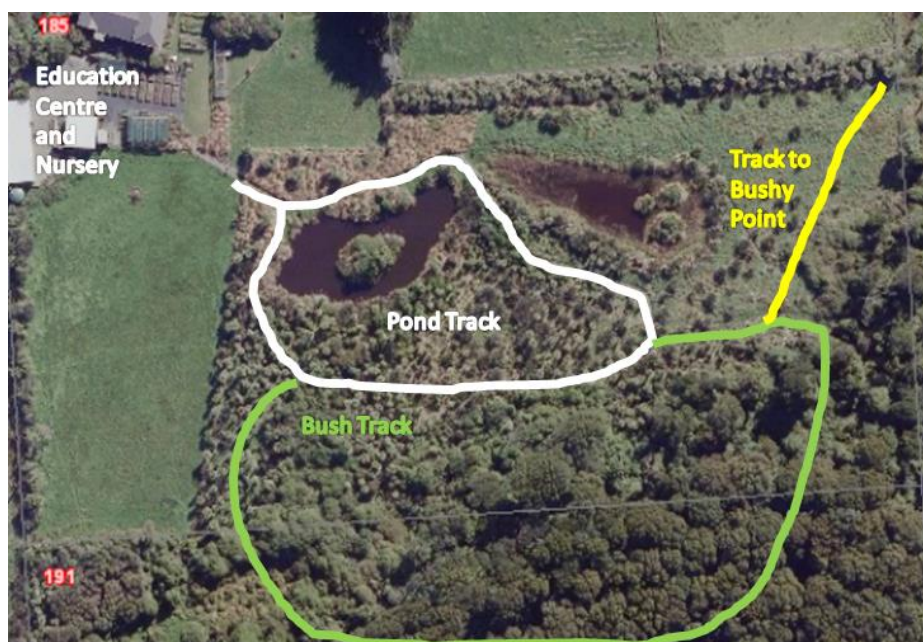
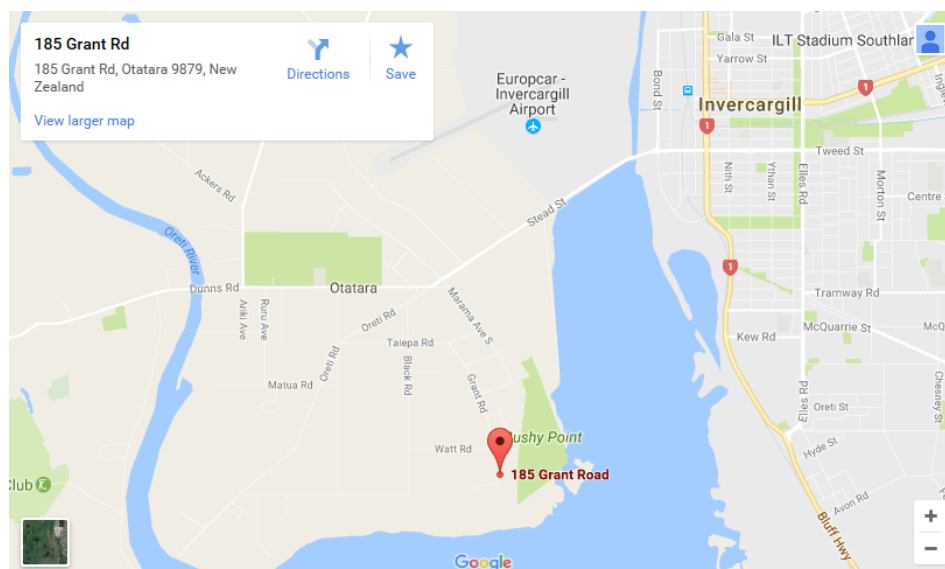


SITE LOCATION AND PROJECT SITE MAP

The benefits of this site in Otatara, near Invercargill, include:

- A bus parking area, with walk through orchards and food growing areas
- Close access from the indoor Education Centre to nursery facilities and natural areas
- An area of native forest protected by QEII National Trust Covenant that is currently being actively restored with established tracks, ponds, native plantings.
- The location links to and adjoins the Bushy Point Community Restoration Area, public conservation land, and the Invercargill Estuary.
- It is only 15 minutes drive from Invercargill City.

The site offers proximity to outside educational support materials (nursery and other assets described above). The site provides a “wild” but safe environment for outside the classroom education and play. It has a large parking area and the Education Centre building caters for messy or clean activities. Because the building adjoins natural areas it provides for easy and safe management of groups and the related educational activities at this location.



PROJECT SITE MAP

The map shows the extent of the Education Centre site with its bus park, orchards, nursery and its proximity to the surrounding natural landscape and tracks.



PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND OPERATION

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

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

A Community Nursery Health and Safety Plan was completed in April 2016 and updated in 2018.



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

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 mobility 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 since the year 2000. 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.



THE COMMUNITY 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. 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 from 1996 to 2012 and over 5000 from 2013-2018 years alone.

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. Native plants are sold to fund the ongoing costs of the nursery and Education Centre.

Over 200,000 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, Waituna Landcare Group, QEII Covenants, schools and individual landowners. A number of similar community nurseries have been established with encouragement and advice.

THE COMMUNITY NURSERY WEBSITE

The 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



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. Brian and Chris each received a Queens Service Medal for services to Conservation in 2016.



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 20 years. She previously worked 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.



Appendix 1 – Community Nursery and Education Centre References



To whom it may concern,

The Bluff Hill Motupohue Environment Trust with our partners Te Runanga O Awarua are writing this letter of support for funding the continuation of the Southland Community Nursery (SCN) Educator role.

The SCN Educator role supports all of Southland, no matter the school's decile rating. According to the ERO Report 2011-2015 Bluff School is a decile 1, meaning the school draws their students from a low socio-economic community, over half of the pupils are of Māori descent. While this may mean the school receives more state funding, it is still limited in its ability to provide ongoing environmental education as part of its curriculum.

The SCN Education Centre can and does provide the support lower decile schools in Southland need. The opportunity to connect with, value, and learn to protect the natural environment. For Ngāi Tahu, having the SCN Environmental Educator role also helps develop and strengthen kaitiakitanga (guardianship) in our communities. It all starts with our tamariki, growing our future kaitiaki, our future environmental champions.

BHMET and Te Rūnanga o Awarua continue to be inspired by the work of SCN, their education facility and the amazing work of their educator. Without the ongoing support of the SCN, BHMET's Te Korowai Whakahou Native Plant Nursery and other similar community nursery projects and predator free initiatives in Southland would struggle. The mana of the SCN and Education Centre is unequalled it is the lynchpin ties us all and all our important kaupapa together...

The Southland Community Nursery aligns with Ngāi Tahu tānga and our whakataukī to protect the natural environment - *mō tātou, ā, mō kā uri a muri ake nei – for us and our children after us!*

Nei te mihi, maioha
Nā

Estelle Pera-Leask
0276884604

Chairman
Bluff Hill Motupohue Environment Trust
PO Box 4
Bluff 9842, Southland, NZ





MYROSS BUSH SCHOOL

From strong foundations we grow and stand tall together.

Letter of Support for Southland Community Nursery

23 November 2020

To whom it may concern,

I have been impressed with the communication, knowledge, expertise, support and environment that the Southland Community Nursery has provided my school this year.

I first contacted Chris and Bronwyn in Term 3 to seek help with developing our own native bush planting area. They responded professionally and offered their full support including visiting our school on multiple occasions to speak first with me before visiting classes. This then led us to make a whole school trip (various classes over 4 days) to visit the Southland Community Nursery. This was an enriching experience for our students who loved the education workshop, the tangible resources, the bush walk and the warmth and knowledge Bronwyn shared with them during this time. This is one educational resource that we do not want to lose and wish to continue working in partnership with in 2021 and beyond!

Please consider generously, the Southland Community Nursery.

Yours sincerely,

Jamin Lietze
Principal

288 Mill Road, RD2, Invercargill 9872
Telephone: (03) 230 4817
office@myrossbush.school.nz





Hokonui Rūnanga
140 Charlton Road, GORE – 9774
PŌ Box 114, GORE – 9740
hokonui.office@ngaitahu.iwi.nz

Ka nui te mihi atu ki a koutou,

To whom it may concern,

I am writing this letter of support on behalf of the Hokonui Rūnanga who hold mana whenua within the takiwa of Hokonui Rūnanga in Gore, which centres on the Hokonui region and includes a shared interest in the lakes and mountains between Whakatipu-Waitai and Tawhitarere with other Murihiku Runanga and those located from Waihemo southwards.

The Hokonui Rūnanga supports the funding application by the Southland Community Nursery for their Educator role. The Southland Community Nursey is a rare taonga in the community of Murihiku and we want to see the continuation and future sustainability of their kaupapa. The SCN has supported many Māori and non-Māori students, community members, and organisations throughout their time in Murihiku and have contributed to the hauora (well-being) of tangata whenua by reconnecting and educating us back to our whenua.

Hokonui would like to continue the knowledge sharing and ongoing positive relationship with the SCN by enhancing our mātauranga of our rākau and therefore our whenua. We also look forward to an upcoming wānanga on seed collecting to enable tangata whenua to learn how to collect, propagate and grow our taonga, reconnect to the whenua and uphold our mana and rangatiratanga.

We look forward to continuing our great relationship with the SCN where we build resilient communities together.

Please feel free to contact me for more information if required.

Nāhaku noa, nā

Riki Parata

Pou Takawaenga Taiao

Kaitiaki Rōpu ki Murihiku Representative

Hokonui Rūnanga

Riki.Parata@hokonuirunanga.org.nz

Waea: 03-2087954

Waea pūkoro: 0273183960 9am-5pm Monday to Friday

Dated: 17/11/2020



To whom it may concern

23/11/2020

We are very fortunate in the Southland region to have the Southland Community Nursery Education Centre. Its very name tells the story of the vision and work supported there.

Southland:

Its local. Not only by location but also by its ecological function. The nursery and Education Centre supports an increase in growth of locally eco-sourced seeds and plants. All of the plants available here are critical to protecting and enhancing “Southland specific” natural ecosystems.

Community:

Brian and Chris Rance are not only locals, but experts in their fields. They have been an integral part of the Otatara and wider Southland community for many years, playing an active role in strengthening community aspirations and connections. Not only do they serve our community (recognised in the 2015 Queen’s Birthday Honours for their Services to Conservation) but the facility they have developed sees a large number and diversity of everyday people joining them on a regular basis to support the vision of strengthening communities through knowledge and experiential learning about Southlands unique native species.

Nursery:

This is a functioning, community run nursery where anyone can come to learn and experience the vital mahi of sourcing, nurturing and planting a large variety of Southlands native plants. This includes the home garden or large forest restoration projects.

Education Centre:

The purpose-built boutique indoor Education Centre set within a native forest, offers ample room and stimulation for experiential learning supported by extensive resources and passionate educators. This facility is also appreciated by the many groups and agencies that hire it for a variety of workshops and community meetings. The Southland Community Nursery Education Centre, is not only in the centre of Southlands highest populated areas; it is also a centre of educational excellence, creativity and fun for families, schools, community groups and businesses who visit from across the region. It is exciting to see how this facility is playing its part to increase quality of employees now entering the broader environmental workforce in Southland.

Education:

No longer is education relegated to a “nice to have” it is far more important than that. The hands-on outside learning that can be seen at the education centre and property, encompasses all ages and backgrounds of learners from across Southland.

Over the past year a part time onsite educator has given a significant boost to educational capability and expertise of this community facility. New education programmes tailor made for schools and groups, has meant that learning has carried on despite the impacts of Covid this year. During Covid restrictions the Educator created resources and challenges for children to use at home, went into schools as they couldn’t be accommodated at the SCN (due to distancing rules), took small leadership groups, provided teacher training and then continued with larger school groups after restrictions were lifted.

The quality of education and facility offered is going a long way to increase and strengthening links between a wide range of schools to their communities and communities to their local wild spaces.

Community Health, Wellbeing and Resilience:

In these times of unprecedented social and ecological stress, there is a growing demand for community educational facilities such as this. Without this facility, its educators and supporters, there would be a significant loss to the wellbeing of Southland.



Ongoing financial continuity is vital to enabling cost effective learning opportunities to continue, and therefore I have no hesitation in lending my full support to this application.

Mark Oster

Biodiversity Programme Leader
Environment Southland *Te Taiao Tonga*

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Mark.Oster@es.govt.nz | www.es.govt.nz | facebook.com/environmentssouthland

Aparima College
33 Leader Street
Riverton 9822

21 November 2020

To whom it may concern,

Letter of Support for Southland Community Nursery's Educator

On behalf of Aparima College's students and staff, I would like to endorse the excellent work done by Bronwyn Graham in her role as Educator for Southland Community Nursery.

During the past 18 months, Bronwyn has supported our school's development of a regenerative native forest and a community garden by giving educational advice and encouragement and by supplying native trees from the Southland Community Nursery. These environmental resources have contributed to the health and wellbeing of our Riverton Aparima community through working bees, community events such as eco-picnics, a student-led EnviroCouncil, and through the growing and sharing of locally-sourced vegetables via our Soup Kitchen and Food Bank parcels.

Bronwyn has also created a supportive hub and network by hosting Professional Development workshops for our teachers and has taken the lead in the sharing of best practice and data collected from Litter Intelligence beach surveys. She has helped set up the development and sharing of curriculum-linked environmental resources between our schools and made them freely available to schools across the region.

It would be extremely detrimental to our Southland community if Bronwyn was to lose her role through lack of funding. Already, Bronwyn invests many more hours than she receives remuneration for, and I can guarantee that she is worth her weight in gold.

If any further information is required, I am very happy to be contacted via email:
lgrove@aparima.school.nz.

Yours sincerely,

Lynne Grove

Aparima College EnviroSchools Coordinator





16 November 2020

To whom it may concern, kei te rangatira, tēnā koe,

The SIT Environmental Management programme has had an extensive relationship with the Southland Community Nursery over the years and the programme would not be the same without the organisation, as well as the Educator role. We truly hope that they are able to find continued funding support for this role.

For many years, the nursery has acted as a hub for events, projects, and activities for our students and the wider community to participate in. Our students are able to join members of the public in knowledge sharing in a wide variety of topics from Kombucha Making to Litter Auditing – fostering the health and wellbeing of the community as well as enhancing the beautiful environment of Southland, which ultimately feeds back into the wellbeing of its inhabitants. None of these events would be made possible without the tireless coordination of the Nursery Educator, Bronwyn. The students and I, along with the community are always stoked to see Bronwyn's posts on the News and Events section of the Southland Community Nursery website and reading about our participation in the events along with pictures. Bronwyn and the nursery truly contribute to the identity of the community and are dedicated to educating the public.

The nursery is also engrained into our programme here at SIT – we take our students to do field trips on the nursery property and Plant ID workshops at the education centre. We recently had the pleasure of being part of the Pūtaiao Tamariki programme that Bronwyn organised with the Methodist Mission Southern to offer environmental field sessions to lower decile schools, giving students from a disadvantaged background (a high percentage of Māori and Pasifika participation based on the demographics of low decile schools) a chance to explore science in a manner that is fun, interactive, environmental and cultural. Having a small part in this programme, I could see how important and significant it was in enhancing the cultural identity of the community and educating our little ones who are our future. This is just one example of why Bronwyn's role is so significant to educating and increasing community participation, fostering cultural identity, and enhancing public wellbeing. On behalf of SIT Environmental Management, I highly support continued funding for the Community Nursery Educator role so that Southland may continue to benefit in the future.

Yours faithfully, ngā mihi,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christine Liang".

Christine Liang,
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23 November 2020

Statement in Support of the Southland Community Nursery Educator Role

To whom it may concern

As Principal of Otatara School I would like to express my strong support for the Southland Community Nursery Education Centre. As a school we have benefitted greatly from the expertise and support of both Chris Rance and Bronwyn Graham. They have assisted our students not only with learning about the native bush and wetland ecosystems but also have been pivotal in helping foster and grow our relationship with the Invercargill City Council Parks and Reserves as well as developing our own projects. Having access to a dedicated environmental educator with the skills and expertise that Bronwyn has enables our students and teachers to develop much needed knowledge and understanding of the importance of restoration and protection, growing them as kaitiaki.

Students from our school, new entrants through to Year 6, visit the Southland Community Nursery throughout the year to initiate and/or extend learning in and about the natural world. During these visits the learning experiences students are engaged in are meaningful, and resources are personalised to meet the various needs and interests of classes.

As a school we are extremely grateful for the ongoing learning opportunities that the Southland Community Nursery provides and strongly support any grant applications that they may make to ensure the continuation of an environmental educator. Supporting students to understand biodiversity and the interdependence of systems, to learn how to grow, plant and care for native species and to recognise and value the importance of the natural world in maintaining our health and wellbeing are significant life skills and a worthy investment in the future.

We look forward to the ongoing provision of an educator at the Southland Community Nursery in order to continue to foster a love of nature and grow much needed conservation and environmental education across our province.

Nāku iti noa, nā

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Sharon Livingstone'.

Sharon Livingstone





20th November 2020

To whom it may concern

I am writing this letter of appreciation in my capacity as a Programmes Coordinator and Citizen Science Manager at the multi award winning charity Sustainable Coastlines.

For the past ten years we have been running nationwide environmental education programmes that aim to educate, inform, inspire, mobilise and enable New Zealanders to look after the waterways and coastlines they love. For the past 3 years this has included the development and roll out of a nationwide citizen science beach litter monitoring and clean-up programme called Litter Intelligence. This programme is funded by the Ministry for the Environment through the Waste Minimisation Fund in collaboration with the Department of Conservation and Statistics New Zealand.

The support we have received from the Southland Community Nursery during the Southland rollout of the Litter Intelligence Programme has been instrumental to the success of the programme in Southland with Bronwyn, Chris and the nursery team connecting us up with schools, educators and interested members of the wider Southland community.

The nursery has also provided us with vital logistical support for our programme through the use of their education room to run the litter data collection training workshops which are central to the work we are doing to develop a community of volunteers able to collect beach litter data to the highest standards of scientific rigour that ensures the data collected meets Stats NZ's tier 1 data standard. The nursery also stores the litter data collection kit that our volunteers use to conduct their beach litter surveys and has served as a vital community hub and base for the programme in Southland.

We enjoy strong connections between the nursery's education and community engagement programmes and the wider community involved in the Litter Intelligence programme. Without the support of the nursery, we would have struggled to establish such a broad base of support and volunteer participation in our programme and for this we are deeply grateful. On behalf of Sustainable Coastlines, I highly support continued funding for the Community Nursery educator and would like to express my appreciation for the important role that their educator plays in engaging, connecting and enabling people to look after the Southland waterways and coastlines that they love.

Thanks and Best Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben Knight".

Ben Knight
Citizen Science Manager
Sustainable Coastlines Charitable Trust

Sustainable Coastlines | 55 Madden Street, Wynyard Quarter, Auckland 1010
info@sustainablecoastlines.org | www.sustainablecoastlines.org



Y.E.S. – Young Environment Squad

Joining the Y.E.S. is a great opportunity to experience fun, hands-on activities and to be involved in. Students experience how to make decisions and take action to improve the physical and social environment of our places and our community.



Benefits for our students:

- A sense of belonging and contribution
- Recognition of the different skills and qualities of themselves and others
- Skills of working together, making decisions, planning and taking action
- Hands on practical ways to engage and learn



The Young Environment Squad (Y.E.S) began in term three as a Sport and Recreation option and although a small group, we packed a lot of adventures into our time. In August Y.E.S. met for the first time and helped with the planting of hundreds of native trees and shrubs along the Waihopai River and increasing the biodiversity of the area. Check out: <https://www.southlandexpress.co.nz/out-about/future-proofing/>



Members have also explored and learned about the Southland Community Nursery (SCN) with the help of educator Bronwyn. Y.E.S. members were inspired and the SCN looks forward to being involved with future developments at JHC junior campus.

See Youth Get Inspired - 7 August 2020 at <https://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz/news-and-events/>

Y.E.S. have since visited Sister Judith Robinson's food forest and learned about how all living things are connected and about our part in the circle of life.

We then surveyed the JHC junior campus for possible growing sites and began planning and planting.

In a joint effort to clean up along the bus stop on Queens Drive, there was way much more rubbish in there than expected.

A visit to the Riverton food forest with the help of educator Nick from the South Coast Environment Centre gave us more inspiration and learning in nature.

We built raised garden beds and had them transported and set up at school. They were filled with wool, straw and compost. This was a great team effort and we are proud of the vegetables and other plants that are growing happily now.

Another outing to Otatara, this time to collect Harakeke to plant on the school campus.

On the JHC junior campus an area of school known as "no man's land" (NE top area) may be planted or developed into a native plant area and fruit orchard over the longer term.



Mr Gareth Oliver

James Hargest Senior College

Layard Street
Invercargill
Southland
New Zealand

To whom it may concern

I am writing a letter of recommendation for the Southland Community Nursery Educator who has supported our school's community projects over the past year.

The Southland Community Nursery Educator has given support to the James Hargest Native tree planting along the Waihopai in June this year during school time. Bronwyn (Southland Community Nursery Educator) helped both the Junior Campus Environment group and the senior campus environment group with the tree planting. This involved at least 70 students and also included a local homeschool group. This helped students who had never planted a tree get involved in the project.

In addition to this, Bronwyn also facilitated and taught a smaller group of environmental leaders how to grow native plants, propagate and care for the plants. She was able to come into school and do this onsite.

In addition Bronwyn initiates Kiwi Conservation Club activities from the Otatara Community Plant nursery which feeds into the wellbeing and learning for many young children in the local area and beyond including my own family. This is always a valuable experience for the local community.

I feel that the role that Bronwyn has, enables events, projects, and activities that increase community participation and enhances the cultural identity of a community (as per the school native planting session). This has enhanced the health and wellbeing, education and community involvement of a diverse range of young people at the school and wider community.

It is a vital role that should continue to be supported.

Kind Regards

Gareth Oliver (James Hargest Senior College)



Kia ora Chris,

We had a great weekend in the Deep South and drove home buzzing with ideas after meeting you and Brian and your amazing network of volunteers.

What you guys are doing is a real inspiration for what can be achieved by harnessing the power of people with a common interest.

Your property is easily the most holistic native bush restoration we have seen anywhere in the South Island and I have written about a lot of farm environment award-winning projects in recent years.

It was really rewarding to see such an inspired vision and that wonderful laid-back southern style of just getting stuck in and doing it. Great stuff.

Ngā mihi,

Rob

(Rob Tipa – author of Book “Treasures of Tane – Plants of Ngai Tahu” 2018)

18/11/2020

When I came to Otatara mid-2015, I knew no-one and nothing much about restoration or the cycle of plant propagation and planting, certainly nothing about the plants of the Southern coastal area. The experience I gained volunteering at the Southland Community Nursery and getting involved in the workshops, planting days and OLG helped me find a place here and develop a skill set I hope to take with me to our new home. It has been a most rewarding 5 years. Thank you for letting me be a part of the great work you are doing here.

Lesley Catteral



As the Southland Community Nursery (SCN) develops, and for different fundraising opportunities, the SCN gathers references – our Patrron Ruud Kleinpaste wrote this reference. It still seems very relevant today. Following references were written in 2017.

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



"Otatara Community Nursery and Education Centre is such a valuable resource, we have nothing else like it in Invercargill. It is big enough to host our group and has a great range of resources available to use. Our kids feel safe there and being able to do bush walks of the track make it feel like we are deep in the wild bush. It is so exciting to have such a great venue where we can foster a love for nature in our kids."

Jacqueline – Kahui Manu - Home Based Education Group

Southland Community Nursery is an ideal place to run workshops, it is very welcoming with its beautiful native nursery and surrounding re-established native bush. A perfect place to relax, go for a walk and be inspired, to set people in a great frame of mind when back in the education centre, an ideal, all weather building for running your workshops. I love this place!

Honorlea Mangion – workshop tutor

As a Kindergarten teacher I have found that the Southland Community Nursery Education Centre in Otatara is a great venue to take pre-schoolers, for several reasons

- The Education Centre is a safe environment for young children to learn in. Because our children feel relaxed in the Education Centre building and they are more likely to engage in all the learning opportunities that Chris and her team provide.
- Chris and her team have a wealth of knowledge that they are willing to share with not only teachers and children but with parents as well.
- The activities that Chris provides are meaningful to our pre-school aged children. Chris and team relate very well to our children, sharing their knowledge in a warm and friendly manner, therefore our children respond enthusiastically.
- The Education Centre is vibrant and full of wonderful activities for children to do.
- Walking around the outside area of the Education Centre children are encouraged to use all their senses to explore with and to help develop their ecological identities. The children can make connections with the natural environment, while learning to be kaitiaki (carers of the land).

Overall I have found the Southland Community Nursery Education Centre in Otatara an amazing place to take pre-school children and I will continue to emphasise this fact to my colleagues.



Wendy McLachlan
Nature Discovery Teacher - Kindergartens South

It's hard to grasp the impact that the Southland Community Native Plant nursery has had over the years, unless you have been present in the events hosted there. The large, warm, dry space and particularly the warm, committed people have enticed children as young as my own 3 year old son, who would continuously ask if today was a nursery day, through to young families, local landowners and the retired generation.

Down the path is an example of courageous restoration of a healthy Southland ecosystem, carried out by the owners through their own vision, commitment, innovation and long, hard work. It is ideal to couple with the native plant nursery and the education programmes. I have watched understanding dawn in the eyes of visiting school groups - teachers, parent helpers and students alike - as they experience the life in the wetland and forest with Lloyd Esler, linking the learning inside with the living example in Lloyd's own inspiring demonstration. Seeds and cuttings are collected and brought inside where students get a hands-on experience, with learning tailored moment by moment to their level of understanding and readiness by Chris, a skilled and knowledgeable botanist.

The warmth of the shelter is, I am certain, a reason why many people can continue to gather and contribute; especially those who experience arthritis, those with young children and those who would not consider themselves able to stand outside in all weather or for extended periods. The size allows for movement and for large groups, keeping the school groups focussed by allowing space for them time to explore the murals and hidden doors created by volunteer contributions. The nursery does not offer just a contribution to local ecosystems, but also to the health and welfare of volunteers and to the future attitudes, understanding and options for New Zealand's young people.

Kari Beaven – Nursery and School volunteer

The Education Centre facility worked very well for our honey extraction workshop and we would certainly use the facilities for future workshops of the Southland Bee Society. The ease of access to the building for equipment, the open space to the south of the education centre would work well for open hive demonstrations and the atmosphere of the surrounding environment fits very well with our approach to bees and the environment. All in all, an excellent facility.

Sonya Crook
Southland Bee Society



I have been involved with the Southland Community Nursery now for over 17 years, and I often get referred to as the longest serving volunteer!!!

My original involvement started, 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. Now all these years later it gives me great satisfaction to see 'our patch' doing so well and to know that hundreds of native plants that I have grown and planted are doing so well. 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.

Over the years I have been both a regular and irregular attendee on Friday mornings. These days, as we live out of town, I am a little more irregular with my attendance, but when I can I love to turn up and help. 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.

Since the opening of the Education Centre the opportunities that are provided have expanded. Not only does it cater for school children but also for adult learning. My involvement recently has been the workshops, both as a participant and a leader. From making natural beauty products, to grafting and pruning apple trees and foraging. There is something for everyone.

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 on a variety of levels.

Maggie Elford – Nursery Volunteer

“The Southland Community Nursery is an excellent place to hold hands-on workshops for a range of groups. I have been involved in running technical plant ID workshops in the Education Centre and am impressed with the convenience and versatility of the set-up. When using the Education Centre we are ideally placed to work indoors (where



we have all the usual facilities like desks, projector, tea making facilities all in an easy to clean space) while also having the beautiful wetland and forest right at our doorstep. This mix of indoor and outdoor spaces provides for real-world learning opportunities right in the heart of a vibrant and successful community nursery and restoration project.”

Jesse Bythell - QEII Rep Southland

The Community Nursery has been an inspirational asset for Southland for many years now and must have seeded many hectares and young minds with hands on conservation ethic, through the tireless efforts of Chris, Brian and their supporters – keep it up.

Colin Meurk - Ecologist, Christchurch

NEWS 15
Southland Express, November 14, 2019

Otatara pupils ‘building connection’ with bush

BY ABBEY PALMER

“IN order to have kaitiaki for the bush, the kids need to know about the bush.”

Otatara School teacher Yvonne Green said children would only understand how important it was to protect the environment if they were given the opportunity to be immersed in it.

“It starts with building a connection.”

Otatara School pupils spent last Thursday morning “rambling” through a nearby bush area as part of their outdoor classroom day.

Established by Sport Southland’s Made to Move team, Southland Community Nursery, and Otatara School, the initiative was intended to “inspire play in nature”, Mrs Green said.

“It’s also about building social and emotional intelligence. “Some of the kids who struggled a bit in the playground are now really getting in to this.” Children had since started leading walks and navigating the bush themselves, she said.

Every fortnight, pupils would also spend a lunch time taking part in a “bush ramble”.

“We usually have about 12 to 15 kids each time.

“It’s about them gaining an appreciation for those close noticings about the bush, whether it’s about trees or bugs in the bush.”

Pupils had also worked with Invercargill City Council’s Parks and Recreation staff around conservation, including weeding the bush area.

Made to Move school facilitator Carla Werder said it was about children getting to know their back yard.

“There’s a real space where that natural play has been lost.”

Despite most pupils living near bush areas, some of them had never been in one before, she said.

“The purpose of today is really about getting them to understand their social responsibility.”

Southland Community Nursery educator Bronwyn Graham said she hoped the outdoor classroom would “spark an interest” and become integrated in to everyday learning.

“We have a strong link with the school and we work together to be able to provide these opportunities for the children.”



Getting stuck in: Otatara School pupil Ellie Gray (10), of Invercargill, crawls through a man-made tunnel in the school’s nearby bush area, also known as their outdoor classroom.



Appendix 2 – Examples of Awards

QUEENS
SERVICE
MEDALS
2016

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 2012
- Queens Service Medals 2015

Regional awards

- Southland Gardener of the Year 2009
- Environment Southland Awards 2001 and 2011
- Trustpower National Community Volunteer Award 2009/10 Southland

stuff.co.nz



Governor-General Sir Jerry Mateparae chats with Brian and Chris Rance at the investiture ceremony in Auckland where they were both awarded Queen's Service Medals for Services to Conservation.

Years of conservation work honoured

JENNY CAMPBELL

A Southland couple's decades of conservation work have been formally recognised with Queen's Service Medals.

Brian and Chris Rance were both awarded the honour last year, but were overseas when the investiture ceremony was held in Wellington. So they were presented their medals at a ceremony in Auckland in April.

The honour was "very special", Brian said.

The most significant aspect of the honour was the recognition that the pair should receive them together, Chris said.

"Having a husband and wife receive the awards together is quite unusual I understand," she said.

"The bonus of us not being here to receive it in 2015 has meant that my mother, Marjorie Lund, aged 85, from Yorkshire, UK, returned with us after our holiday so she was able to be present in Auckland at this auspicious occasion for us."

Being able to receive the award in Auckland was another plus as Chris' only relatives in New Zealand live in Northland and were able to attend.

Brian's brother and wife came up from Invercargill to be there.

"We have worked together for more than 20 years as volunteers on conservation and education projects in Southland so it was appropriate we were both recognised," he said.

"It was a surprise, but a thrill and a reward for something we enjoy doing and are passionate about.

"The conservation work we do involves a lot of dedicated people and this award is recognition of everybody who participates in conservation projects and makes it happen," Chris said.

"This honour acknowledges the input of others."

Brian works as an ecologist with the Department of Conservation and Chris runs the Southland Community Nursery and Education Centre, which they have initiated at their property at Otatara near Invercargill.

They have been involved in the management of the Forest and Bird Te Rere yellow eyed penguin reserve in the Catlins for more than 20 years, with management of the reserve, organising and leading regular planting and maintenance days and co-ordinating the annual penguin counts.

Chris has sourced funds to keep various environmental projects running.

She is also a representative on the Southland Ecological Restoration Network.

At their property the couple grow native plants and organise the community nursery, teaching others about propagation of native plants, which can then be used in restoration projects around Southland.



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.

"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.





rsday July 7 2011

SOUTHLAND EXPRESS

ENVIRO WEEK



Awards

environment SOUTHLAND

Southland's environmental achievers were honoured at the region's 16th community environment 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...

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 Otagara 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 Otagara. 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



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.

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

28 NEWS

SOUTHLAND EXPRESS, Thursday, August 12, 1999

Couple rewarded for dedication to conservation

By Dave Howell

A 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.

the wild.

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

The Forest and Bird Society's Te Rere 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 Southland plant for the new millennium," she

said.



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





Big day: From left, Brian Rance, "Bug Man" Ruud Kleinpaste and Chris Rance speak at the opening of the Nature Education Centre at Otatara on Friday.

Fanfare as new centre opens

By JENNY CAMPBELL

Celebrating more than two years of planning and hard work was the order of the day at the opening of the new Nature Education Centre at Otatara on Friday. Centre patron "Bug Man" Ruud Kleinpaste was guest of honour with about 60 guests joining in the celebration.

The centre is next to the Southland Community Nursery on the property of Chris and Brian Rance. Inside the building vibrant murals depicting the local environment and interactive nature displays by local artist Janet Hodgetts make it a

“We believe the best way for young people to learn about nature and the environment is to be out in it.”

Chris Rance

captivating environment for children. A moving Maori blessing by Estelle Leask from Bluff and Dave Taylor from the Department of Conservation set the mood for an afternoon of enjoyment and learning. In opening the facility Mr Kleinpaste emphasised the community benefits of the

project, commending the Rances for their vision and making it a reality. Earlier in the day he accompanied children from Limehills School on a bug-hunting expedition around the property.

Mr Rance described the important natural features of the property and their philosophy of encouraging people on to their property to learn about nature, which he linked to New Zealanders' national identity.

Mrs Rance thanked the many people who had made significant contributions to getting the centre from a vision to completion, along with key sponsors the Community Trust of Southland, Venture Southland, Department of Conservation, and Southland Forest and Bird Society.

"We believe the best way for young people to learn about nature and the environment is to be out in it," Mrs Rance said. "It is an all-weather facility which complements the existing outside facilities of the nursery, tracks, ponds, native plantings and bush here which have been used by schools and volunteers over the past 15 years."

The Nature Education Centre can be booked by schools and for workshops through the Community Nursery website southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz. A public opening afternoon is planned for November 30 from 2pm till 4pm.

OUR COMMUNITY, OUR PEOPLE

Nursery celebrates fifth birthday

MORE than 5000 people, from preschool and primary school pupils to secondary school and Southern Institute of Technology students and others, have visited the Southland Community Nursery Education Centre in Otatara since it opened five years ago.

As well as focusing on everything endemic, especially Southland natives, birds, insects and frogs, the centre has also hosted workshop participants, from art, natural body products, apple pruning, grafting and pressing, flax weaving, native plant identifying, plant propagation, photography, biodiversity and pest workshops.

"It was a great day back in 2013 when 60 people joined in, including our MC 'Bug man' Ruud Kleinpaste and Estelle Leask who fabulously opened the building," voluntary nursery manager Chris Rance said.

Mrs Rance said five years on, it was now time to "encourage all the people who had supported the centre throughout the years, and also welcome any new people, in particular primary school teachers, to come and have a look at the nursery and centre".

So a fifth birthday celebration will be held on Sunday, from 2pm to



Community focused: Southland Community Nursery Education Centre voluntary nursery manager Chris Rance shows Rob Tupa's recently published *Treasures of Tane, Plants of Ngai Tahu* book.

Photo: Janette Gellatly

4pm, which everyone was welcome to attend.

Although the Southland Community Nursery had been operating for more than 20 years, the Education Centre was a new idea in 2013, she said.

"The idea was simply to get children outside the classroom enjoying and marvelling at nature,

and I'd say we have achieved that with most groups... I can't think of a school which has cancelled a trip to the nursery since the building opened, despite Southland's sometimes inclement weather."

As well as the various educational events, volunteers have also taken part in running the plant nursery for the past 22 years, which

had resulted in about 200,000 native plants being produced and planted in Southland.

"It's definitely the 'community' part of the community nursery which has meant the project has prospered for so long and continues to do so.

"Those who want to see a nature restoration project in action are also welcome, which we hope will inspire their own projects."

As well as activities for children, there will also be tours of the bush, nursery and education centre.

Native plants will be given away on the day and there will also be a selection of plants and Honorlea's natural body products — Kakariki Natural Beauty — for sale.

Author and freelance journalist Rob Tupa, who took more than 10 years to research his book *Treasures of Tane, Plants of Ngai Tahu* about the traditional uses of natives, will also have copies of his book at the centre.

For more information, phone Chris Rance on (03) 213 1161.

■ Southland Community Nursery Education Centre's fifth birthday, 185 Grant Rd, Sunday. Tours and activities 2pm-3pm; afternoon tea 3pm (bring a plate of finger food to share).



Appendix 3 – Benefits for Children of Play in Nature

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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How many of us remember the joy we felt when we played ‘make-believe’ in our backyard or the local park, or squelched about in mud when it rained? With the time pressures of today and concerns for children’s safety, spending time outside has become something we need to plan and supervise—but the benefits are well worth the effort. Below is some insightful information into the benefits of outdoor play from Nature Play QLD and the University of North Carolina.

1. Nature brings the best out of children

It’s estimated that children today spend 56 per cent more time indoors than playing outside.

In theory, playing indoors appears easy because we don’t have to worry about sun, snow, rain, strangers, etc. But this controlled environment limits a child’s potential. The benefits of playing in nature are almost infinite. Spending time in nature keeps children’s minds fresh. It exposes them to varying situations where they are forced to learn and adapt to best fit themselves into the prevailing conditions. For instance, playing in uneven heights, conditions and surfaces helps children to hone their coordination and balancing skills.

2. Stops the vanishing freedom

In today’s age and time, it’s easy for parents to dwell on thoughts of dangers and the risks of outdoor play. In fact, more children get seriously injured falling from their bed than playing outdoors. It’s worth reflecting on the impact that is being passed on to children if parents fear the outdoors. Childhood should be filled with healthy outdoor risks and adventure.

3. Increases resilience and ability to negotiate risks

Climbing on trees or other objects helps children understand the risks involved in the process; they become better at risk assessment. Even if children sustain a minor injury, something in them grows. They also learn problem-solving skills, and they develop a deeper appreciation towards physical sports.

4. Social benefits

When children step outside, they get plenty of opportunities to interact with other playmates. In nature, they can connect with others, help each other, share their learning and solve problems together. Children often collaborate to have the best experience. They might also find a friend to reach out to when consoling



themselves during times of need. Moreover, it helps children to act freely, while not escaping their responsibilities.

5. Physical and mental benefits

The outdoor environments that we see on television can be far different in the real world. So, the only way to truly experience nature to the fullest is to step outside—from the singing birds, buzzing bees, the taste of wild berries and beautiful sunsets, to the other quieter miracles. No electronic device can replace the natural association with Mother Nature.

Direct association with nature has both mental and physical benefits. It has also been proven to improve mood, and reduce depression and mental fatigue. Children who are involved in regular outdoor play benefit from increased flexibility and gross motor skills. More outdoor time also improves vision and reduces body inflammation.

6. Promotes 'smartness'

It's already proven that nature provides children with a buffer from stress. One 2015 study in California, involving 60 participants, showed how walking in nature can eliminate stress. It can also promote 'smartness' in children.

Spending time in nature and outdoors improves children's ability to focus and concentrate. Studies in the US show that schools that use outdoor classrooms, and other forms of nature-based experiential education, support significant student gains in social studies, science, language, arts and mathematics. Students in outdoor science programs improved their science testing scores by 27 per cent (American Institutes for Research, 2005).

7. Improves self confidence

Real confidence is not about winning in a video game. Accidentally or not, you can help with your children's confidence by letting them connect with nature—where your children can be face-to-face with the real world.

Nature can act as a great healing tool for children who suffer from low self-esteem. Children who are exposed to the natural world experience a greater degree of self-control, peace and discipline. Armed with such gifts, a person's confidence level is sure to elevate to the next level.





8. Improves nutrition, reduces obesity

Children who grow their own food are more likely to eat fruits and vegetables (Bell & Dymont, 2008), and to show higher levels of knowledge about nutrition (Waliczek & Zajicek, 2006). They are also more likely to continue healthy eating habits throughout their lives (Morris & Zidenberg-Cherr, 2002).

9. Improves health and reduces illness

Children who play more in the natural world fall sick less often than those children who restrict themselves to indoor spaces. Regular exposure to the outside world boosts one's immune system. As a result, a child is able to combat illness better. It also specifically improves eyesight (American Academy of Ophthalmology, 2011).

10. Reduces stress

Green plants and vistas reduce stress among highly stressed children. Locations with a greater number of plants, greener views and access to natural play areas show more significant results (Wells & Evans, 2003).



Nursery plants seeds of learning

By HANNAH MCLEOD

Environmental exploration and education is what it was all about for Makarewa Playcentre pupils when they visited the Southland Community Nursery in Otagara last week. Pupils and parents wandered through the restored native forest before gathering at the nursery's new education centre to check out the indoor mural and try their hands at planting native seedlings. Parent Kate Minehan said the playcentre had used environmental themes in everything they did over the past year, which had started with a visit to the nursery in 2012.

"We teach the children about what we can do to help our environment, we've come back a year later to see what has changed, and to introduce our new members to the nursery," Mrs Minehan said.

Nursery manager Chris Rance said the group was the first playcentre to use the new education centre since its opening three weeks ago.

The new centre, which was under development for two years, includes a mural by artist Janet Hodgetts, which is made up of paintings of Southland environments.

There are little wooden doors all over the mural which people can



Plant pals: Lucy Minehan, 4, pots up some native plants with her classmates during their environmental education day at the Southland Community Nursery in Otagara last week. Photo: 628710020

open to reveal native animals and plants that are commonly found in that environment.

The nursery includes 2 hectares of native bush restoration area, parts of which are open to the public.

It is run entirely by volunteers, who cultivate native plants which are often donated to community groups, but are also sold to the public.

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2.13 The Eye



Eye: Makarewa Playcentre pupil Benjamin Elder, 2, opens a door on the mural at the Southland Community Nursery in Otagara. Photos: HANNAH MCLEOD/FAIRFAX NZ 62871004



Plant pals: Isaac Elder, 4, pots up plants with his classmates during their environmental education day at the Southland Community Nursery in Otagara. Photo: 628710063



LEARNING ON-SITE: Surrey Park Early Learning Centre pupils, from left, Aiden Dougherty, Charlie Hegarty, Isla Baron and Siobhan Maguire, all 4, with the prizes from the native bird painting competition they took part in at the Southland Community Nursery in Otagara on Monday. The overall winner of the competition was Bethany Hughes for her Albatross painting.

Photo: BRITANNY PICKETT / FAIRFAX NZ 629201536



Appendix 4 – Community Education Centre Outcomes

Example of the wide ranging Priorities and Outcomes of the Community Education Centre

Sectors & Priorities	Outcomes of the Community Education Centre (CEC)
<p>ARTS, CULTURE AND HERITAGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage participation, and involvement in, and appreciation of Arts, Culture, and Heritage • Provide appropriate and sustainable facilities and infrastructure • Support Southlanders to achieve their creative potential • Reduce barriers to ensure reasonable access for all in the community • Celebrate the diversity of culture in Southland • Preserve and encourage interest in our heritage 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • The Southland Multicultural 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. • Workshops on traditional Maori plant uses could be run at the CEC. • A wheelchair accessible building would allow those lesser able and prams to attend and participate in CEC activities.
<p>COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create social as well as economic benefit • Have strong community support • Provide a platform for other business development • Are not inconsistent with other sector goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial savings for schools and community groups for planting restoration projects. The CEC would allow schools to attend even in wet conditions. • Financial savings for individuals wanting to plant native gardens. • Sustainable model that volunteers “pay” for their plants by volunteering their time.
<p>EDUCATION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a learner-focused approach • Encourage partnerships and collaboration between relevant parties, including community • Support Southlanders to achieve their potential • Add value and quality to the learning environment • Address needs identified by community • Reduce barriers to ensure reasonable access for all in the community • Encourage participation in education and life-long learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The CEC would allow students, their families and teachers to gain hands on experience of; propagation, seed collection, cuttings in an all weather environment. • 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. • The CEC would provide workshops aimed at young people and adults promoting life-long learning, not just for the formal education sector.



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



Appendix 5 – Community Use of the Education Centre

ACTUAL USE OF THE EDUCATION CENTRE – 2013-2019

Since opening the Education Centre in November 2013, visitors to the property (excluding weekly volunteers) are as follows:

- 2013 - 389 visitors
- 2014 – 1010 visitors
- 2015 – 1120 visitors
- 2016 – 1127 visitors
- 2017 – 1049 visitors
- 2018 – 847 visitors (Nursery Manager away for 4 months overseas)
- 2019 – 1649 (Educator employed part time from Lottery Funding)
- 2020 - 1124 Reduced Educator hours and Covid 19 impacts

The increase in visitors is due mainly to increasing numbers of schoolchildren using the facility and increased workshops being held. The Community Nursery weekly volunteer session have been well supported for over 20 years and a wide variety of groups use the centre and visit the property for meetings, social gatherings and conservation events.

We anticipated that use would be predominantly by 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 is also available for holding workshops on nature related subjects.

This anticipated use has proved to be correct and use of the facility increased since the Education Centre opened in November 2013, as follows.

Actual Activity	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018*	2019#	2020**
Total Visitors (excl volunteers)	449	1010	1120	1127	1049	847	1649	1124
Schools								
Pre-school, Kindergarten, home school	61	193	201	365	229	176	228	20
Primary school	101	197	355	270	313	207	479	482
Secondary school	75	104	90	40	39	0	100	40
Tertiary	20		36	12	15	24	30	83
Workshops	63	149	191	178	205	165	275	184
Other Visitors	129	367	247	262	252	275	237	50
School Outreach (Covid response)								265
Friday Nursery Volunteers	548	371	600	490	449	306	554	288

*In 2018 the Nursery manager was away overseas for 4 months for a bereavement in 2018 (figures to November 2018)

In 2019 large school groups increased markedly due to Educator employed from Lottery Funding



** In 2020 Covid-19 Pandemic impacted on school group attendance and other groups and volunteers attending the Nursery and Education Centre but outreach increased.

Other visitors include garden groups, conservation groups such as Kiwi Conservation Club, Multicultural Society, Scouts, Pippins, Landcare Groups, Organic Groups, Farm Forestry, Herb Society etc.

Predominant use has been as anticipated with early childhood age groups – however average class size of primary schools has been surprising with 50 pupils, while early childhood age groups average 20. Large class sizes do create issues as they are generally too large for activities and therefore need to be divided into two groups requiring two or more voluntary tutors.

Workshops are varied and continue to increase with an average of 14 people attending each workshop.

Teachers workshops have been an important feature - enviro-schools, kindergarten teachers, caretakers, environmental leaders.

Other community workshops have increased markedly since the opening of the Education Centre and have included:

- Native plant propagation from cuttings
- Native plant seed collection
- Native Plant Identification
- Fruit Tree Grafting
- Fruit Tree pruning
- Apple pressing
- Art Workshops
- Natural Health products
- Photography
- Corporate workshops
- Pest Control and weedbusters workshops
- Foraging
- Bee Workshop
- Night Biodiversity Workshop
- Flax Weaving
- Bird Identification



COMMUNITY SUPPORT, INDIVIDUALS, GROUPS AND ORGANISATIONS:

We are currently involved with a number of community groups and organisations. We believe in community collaboration, and that working together is crucial to enabling us to achieve our objectives. Some of the groups we collaborate with are as follows:

- ◆ South Coast Environment Centre (SCES)
- ◆ Southland Forest and Bird
- ◆ Kindergarten South
- ◆ Otatara Landcare Group
- ◆ Invercargill Environment Centre
- ◆ Community Nursery volunteers and users
- ◆ Bluff Environmental Trust
- ◆ Southland Ecological Restoration Network
- ◆ Invercargill Environment Centre
- ◆ SIT Environment Course
- ◆ SCES Organic/Permaculture Courses
- ◆ Transition Towns
- ◆ Southland Multicultural Society
- ◆ Otatara Pestbusters
- ◆ Southland Landcare Groups
- ◆ Environment Southland Enviroschools
- ◆ Department of Conservation
- ◆ Forest and Bird's Kiwi Conservation Club
- ◆ QEII National Trust
- ◆ Bush Haven Bird Rehabilitation Trust

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER INVOLVEMENT AND BENEFITS OF A WORKING PLANT NURSERY

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 have been the planting of over 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 20 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 20 years, but have increased since 2013 due to the building of the Education Centre facility.

The Community Nursery has a relationship with the Southland Multicultural Society. Every new New Zealand Citizen in Southland has been given a native plant at their Invercargill City Council or Southland District Council citizenship ceremony.

The nursery encourages people of all ages and abilities. This has included groups from Disability Southland over two years.

Since 2013, in addition to workshops, community events have been held such as Matariki events, Christmas break-ups, community group meetings and Kiwi Conservation Club events.

The outcomes of the Community Education Project are varied and extensive and are listed in Appendix 4.



SOCIAL AND COMMUNITY ASPECTS OF THE PROJECT

The social and community aspects of the project cannot be underestimated. See the many and varied community events at <http://www.southlandcommunitynursery.org.nz/news-and-events/>

