



Henderson Creek's Treasure Island pou



Josh Frost

## Ahoy Me Hearties!

Henderson Creek now has its very own Treasure Island, thanks to the imagination of the students of Flanshaw Road School. On a balloon-shaped promontory jutting into the Creek, an intricately-decorated pou inspires curiosity. As well as the skull and crossbones you would expect to find welcoming you to such a place, there is also a selection of natural New Zealand treasures.

"Treasure Island has its theme of pirates and skulls as this is the children's creative way of engaging with the project," explains Arts Coordinator Janet Holt, who worked with the children on creating the entry pillars. "But they are very aware of the environmental treasures to be found on their island, which is reflected in the symbols and ceramic motifs of birds, native flora and fauna, insects, and fish they created."

Students have planted some of New Zealand's rare botanical treasures with Henderson Creek Community Coordinators Simon Grant and Sara Lovitz. These include the critically endangered *Pennantia baylisiana* from the Three Kings Islands, one of the world's rarest plants. "The idea is to make the children more aware of how rich our botany is," says Simon. "It's a bit like a living museum."

Another group has created interpretive signs about the rare plants, and others have built the path that meanders around the island. There is also a group of student ambassadors working with Simon and Sara to learn more about the area's flora and fauna; knowledge they'll share with others.

"For us, Project Twin Streams is about creating a community of students who are really aware of their environment and the principles of what sustainable communities might look like," says Principal Cherie Taylor-Patel. "It is a great lever for real-life learning, linking to the curriculum in so many ways, and bringing the curriculum to life."

Flanshaw Road School has been involved with Project Twin Streams since 2005 when their adopted area was a jumble of rubbish and weeds. With most of the hard work behind them, Cherie says Treasure Island has given the students a renewed focus and another reason to engage with their area.

And this is just the beginning. There are plans for a jetty, kayaks, sunken treasure chests, weta hotels, bird boxes, an interactive treasure trail and more.

Entry to Treasure Island is between 10 and 25 Blethyn Place, Te Atatu South.

## Apprentice Leads the Way

One of the lesser known aspects of Project Twin Streams is the role it plays in giving youngsters life skills.

A Project Twin Streams apprenticeship three years ago launched 21-year-old Josh Frost into a rewarding career. Josh (then 18) was one of two teenagers mentored by environmental management company Parks and Maintenance Services (PMS) during a four month contract on the ParemukaStream. "Josh stood out within the first few weeks as having a good attitude and wanting to learn," says Greg Forrest-Mawson, CEO of PMS.

He made such an impression the company has employed him ever since. "Josh has definitely become a valuable member of the team," says Greg. So much so, that in March he stepped up to the position of Team Leader, while his supervisor was on parental leave. "Josh's performance and standard of work in undertaking this new level of responsibility and commitment has so far been outstanding," says Greg.

As well as acquiring valuable skills and experience, Josh has seen many positive developments during his time working on Project Twin Streams. The seedlings he planted during his apprenticeship have thrived - "It feels really good to see plants I've planted skyrocketing" - and he's encouraged by the increasing number of eels and other wildlife in the catchment. "There are definitely more birds around now; quite a few tui and heaps of fantails."



Stream clean-up results



Our place transformed



## Oh, Rubbish!

One TV, 20 car tyres, 165 plastic bottles, a tricycle, 89 aluminium cans, 113 glass bottles, two wallets, a bouquet of plastic flowers and two shopping trolleys are just some of the rubbish and recycling (1.3 tonnes worth) removed during Henderson Creek's recent CleanUp and Kayak.

Around 60 people turned out on St Patrick's Day to help, including a large group from the Art of Living Foundation, members of the local community and a few intrepid Te Atatu Endeavour Sea Scouts.

Local resident Franz van Dalen happily scrambled about in the mud pulling out rubbish with his son Eugene. He regularly walks along the Creek and says it was satisfying to be part of cleaning it up.

Keen fisherman Graeme Tearle, who brought his motorboat along to collect the bigger items, agrees it was a pleasing 'catch'. It was Graeme's second Cleanup and he says he'll definitely be back.

Sara Lovitz, Community Engagement Coordinator for Project Twin Streams Henderson Creek, says while everyone had a good time, the day was tinged with disappointment. "People are always disappointed to see how much rubbish is in the stream and can't understand how people can do this."

"But until there's a massive change in how people view the environment, we'll continue to have rubbish to clean up. I think it's a case of 'out of sight, out of mind' and people just don't realise the impact."

## CYFS Wall Transformed

On the banks of the Opanuku Stream, a wall of the Child, Youth and Family building has been transformed by a group of talented teenagers. They are involved with 'Our Place' - a community project which works with high-risk youth - to restore the streambanks along Cranwell Park, Falls Park and other adjacent areas in Henderson.

With inspiration from West Auckland Historical Society President Trevor Pollard, and guidance from Project Twin Streams Arts Coordinator Mandy Patmore, the artists have designed and painted an eye-catching mural that chronicles Henderson's past, present and future.

The mural begins with a pre-European landscape and moves through the milling years to present-day Henderson, which is depicted in dirty colours - oranges and browns, with cars, fumes and taggers. This is followed by Project Twin Streams, and the final image is one of the bush regenerating.

It has been a fast-paced project, under three weeks from the first meeting to the unveiling on 5 April. "I wanted to keep them focused and didn't want to muck them around," says Mandy.

"They're really cool kids - they turned up every day on time, were keen, asked heaps of questions, got loads of feedback from everyone who walked past and were really proud of what they created."

"One of them in particular wants to pursue a career in art, and this has helped him figure out where he should be heading. One of the others is really into the planting and has started studying plants at home."

The mural can be viewed from Sel Peacock Drive, Henderson.

## Restructure

The new Regional Environmental Priorities team in Council includes Gill Thurlow, Chris Bindon, Janet Holt and Dot Dalziell. This team has responsibility for coordinating PTS and other urban and rural based programmes (such as Sustainable Catchments) that respond to significant place-based environment and sustainability issues.

Dot is the Programme Leader Urban (reporting to Kim Morresey, Team Leader Regional Environmental Priorities). Dot's role has operational oversight of the urban priority projects and programme leadership for PTS. Gill will take on the Contracts Coordinator role, Chris will be Riparian Coordinator within that team; and Janet will become Creative Engagement Coordinator - when she arrives back from leave later in the year. In the meantime, Mandy Patmore and Kristin Kell will continue to provide support around PTS creative engagement projects.

Brent has moved to a new role of Environmental Partnerships Team Leader, within the Local Environmental Programmes Group in ESU. He says "I hope to have some ongoing contact with some of you through my new role. On a personal note, I would like to state how privileged I have felt to have been recently involved with a project like PTS. Community partners and the council staff involved with the project have inspired me with the degree of passion, innovation, knowledge, and commitment to the project."

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