



INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOLKIT

PROJECT TITLE: Vision Waitakere

Tags; elderly, sustainability, restoration

This is a great example of using a variety of techniques with a particular audience in order for them to critically examine their assumptions around the environment, envision a new future together and take some actions. It used a combination of facilitated discussions, multimedia resources and hands-on activities.

Detail

Wendy Claire, Project Twin Streams Co-ordinator for Henderson Creek, talked to the residents of Vision Waitakere Gardens, a retirement village situated on the banks of Henderson Creek, about getting involved in Project Twin Streams. "Initially there wasn't a great deal of interest in the project with some residents seeing themselves as too old, too frail, or too busy to be involved. However, a small group formed to explore ways they could be involved with this project and create a better world for their grandchildren."

A streambank planting was proposed with Vision Waitakere residents, their friends and families, their immediate neighbours on the stream bank the West Auckland Historical Society, and the wider Waitakere community. The event, complete with live music, BBQ, face painting etc was a great success and 1300 plants went into the ground.

Resident's concerns about their ability to undertake ongoing maintenance of the planting was addressed by collaborating with the children at Henderson Primary school who are enthusiastic and energetic partners in the adoption of this site.

The next project organised with the residents came out of a screening of the DVD 'An Inconvenient Truth'. Following this was a lively discussion with residents discussing what they could do right there in their own environment to address issues relating to climate change.

The disposal of all the village's organic waste in the Council tip was identified as unsustainable. So they took up the challenge of researching sustainable ways of recycling. After a group visit to the WCC worm farm they were inspired to successfully apply for funding to Council's new Waste Not Fund for a state of the art, industrial capacity worm farm for the Village.

The enterprise of this group continues...the end of 2008 saw their next project of purchasing and installing a 3,000 litre rainwater tank come to fruition.

As a consequence on their involvement with Project Twin Streams, the village has now become a leader in innovating sustainable environmental action and host groups and individuals who come to see and learn from their example. Until their contact with Project



INNOVATIVE LEARNING TOOLKIT

Twin Streams they had not thought of the wider issues of climate change and being able to affect change in the environment themselves. The state of the stream banks, overgrown with weeds and used as a dumping ground was lamented but people didn't know what to do about it. Now they are engaged with the stream restoration of Henderson Creek, and have worked on Management to change their thinking and practices as well.

Air conditioning has been replaced with natural air-flow in the dining room and new communal lounge, residents are changing to CFL (low energy) bulbs in their apartments and switching off towel rails and appliances not in use. They have also pressed management to build compost bins in the village grounds.

This is a great example of partnership and collaboration, of working with a particular audience targeting their needs within their own culture, norms and structures, and of using a number of different approaches and techniques in order to engage, and eventually transform perspectives.