

Students take to pickets and planting in bid to prevent Palm Beach erosion

The dunes at Palm Beach have taken a bashing in recent storms, but they got some care and attention recently from local school children.

The year five and six students from Te Huruhi School's room 12 planted spinifex and pingao, and then decorated fence palings to protect their plants late last month.

When they returned a couple of days later, however, they feared their hard work had been undone when they saw their palings had disappeared.

"The children were very sad and thought they had been stolen," says Waiheke Resources Trust engagement and projects coordinator Kristin Busher.

In fact, the palings had been picked up by an Auckland Council employee who arranged for them to be secured to posts that have now been dug deeper into the sand and linked with a rope to discourage people from walking over the new plantings.

Palm Beach Coast Care coordinator Margaret Peacocke says that on the planting day, the students made a presentation to the accompanying adults of what they had learned about the plants.

"I was impressed by the students' knowledge of the long-term benefits of planting spinifex and of the importance to the plant's survival of not walking or sitting on them," says Margaret.

The dune planting was part of the Marine Education Initiative project which is funded by the Waiheke Local Board and supported by the Waiheke Resources Trust



Students from room 12 at Te Huruhi School planted spinifex at Palm Beach on Friday 26 July

and Sustainable Schools, says Kristin.

"I have been working with the students engaging them with their marine environment, giving opportunities to explore the types of issues our marine environment is facing and then deciding on some direct action they can take here on Waiheke," she says.

"One of the aims is for the students to connect with existing community groups or initiatives and to work alongside them, so connecting with the Palm Beach Coast Care Group's dune-planting programme at Mawhitipana was a perfect fit."

This planting was the first for the 2019 season and, if the plants can get established, they will provide a natural barrier between the sea and the land, reducing the likelihood of major erosion.

Waiheke students will present the work they have done this year as part of the Marine Education Initiative on Friday 16 August at a Waiheke Marine Action Celebration Day.

Students will showcase the actions they have taken through presentations and stalls. The event takes place at Surfdale Hall and starts at 10am. • Erin Johnson

Chopper charity's filthy

Waiheke's energetic, competitive types would need a muddy good reason not to get stuck into a mucky new fundraising event designed for the Westpac Chopper appeal.

More people are rescued by helicopter on Waiheke Island than anywhere else in Auckland, and Auckland Rescue Helicopter Trust's (AHRT) Lincoln Davies hopes some island teams will step forward to compete in the inaugural Westpac Chopper Challenge due to be held at Matakana on Sunday 17 November.

"Almost one third of our missions are to Waiheke Island, so the residents are a big part of our community," he told *Gulf News*.

"We would love it for some Waiheke residents to get a team together and we hope each team will be able to raise \$5k which is approximate cost of a mission. If you put it another way, that team is helping save a life or someone in medical need."

The Westpac Chopper Challenge is a

new addition to ARHT's annual line-up of events. Involving a 3km obstacle course, created by Action Matakana, it is designed to put participants through their paces.

"This event is aimed at anyone who loves a good physical challenge," says ARHT Events Manager Leanda Hunt. "You won't find a canapé here but what we do offer is a whole heap of muddy fun! There is even opportunity to run two laps of the course."

Obstacle course racing champion Liam Wilkinson of Ascend Fit is on board with the inaugural event.

"Liam will give our teams all the tips and tricks needed to train hard and complete those obstacles, making sure everyone is prepared for the challenge ahead," Hunt says.

Hunt cites strength, endurance, stamina and teamwork as essential qualities for the challenge.

"We hope every participant will smash



P 09 372 2954
F @daisychainfloristwaiheke
E flowers@daisychainfloristwaiheke.com
W www.daisychainfloristwaiheke.com
8a Miami Avenue, Surfdale, Waiheke Island