

Knitting for newborns

Waiheke knitters have put their needles to work and produced tiny singlets and hats for premature babies at Auckland Hospital's neonatal intensive care unit.

Piling up the miniature knitwear ready for sending off, Gaye Hartley of Waiheke Art and Craft Supplies says 22 local knitters took part in this year's initiative and she is still collecting garments.

This is the second year Gaye has handed out the wool and patterns to knitters. Naturally Yarns donated some of the wool while Gaye supplied the rest of the 45 balls of wool.

"One ball of wool makes one and a half singlets. Some knitters will knit one singlet, while others will make half a dozen," she says. •



Gaye Hartley holds the 52 singlets knitted for newborns. Photo Erin Johnson

Playcentre enjoys new playhouse

Waiheke Playcentre is celebrating its new whare tākoro, or playhouse, which reflects the centre's emphasis on family and community.

"Last year we did an internal review about what is important to us as a centre," says member Hayley Pope. "We found whanaungatanga, family and community, was important so we wanted that to be reflected in our design for our whare tākoro," she says pointing to a series of koru on a front panel.

"The koru represent the generations of people that support and surround the child. The smaller one represents the child, then parents and largest representing grandparents and extended whanau. The bottom koru on the opposite side represents the wider local and cultural community that grounds us."

A striking colourful window panel set into the playhouse depicts a tui, Rangitoto, pōhutukawa and a stingray.

"The tui represents the Māori harakeke [flax] proverb which refers to the harakeke plant as a whānau or family group. This proverb complements our Playcentre philosophy and reminds us of the value that each individual plays in nurturing our tamariki and in running the centre," says Hayley.

"Also the stingray is there to remind us that we are guardians of Papatuanuku. The inspiration for this comes from the story of Whaitere, the enchanted stingray."

The playhouse also includes a barrel pump which Hayley says is very popular with the children.

Hayley says several of the centre's parents and former parents helped to make

the project happen.

She worked with Robin Christie from Childspace in Wellington to come up with the designs for the window panels, Chris Miles from Planorama helped with the resource consent, while Dennis Wright did the drawings and HR Construction built the playhouse.

The parent-run early childhood education centre was able to design and build the playhouse thanks to a Lotteries grant of \$19,000. •

Kama Kerr-Bell, Logan Pope, Hayley Pope holding Mia Tengblad Hong-Goo, Arlo Miles and Maia Kerr-Bell. Photo Erin Johnson



Starship desperate for kids clothing

Waiheke doctor Barnett Bond says Starship Hospital's Te Puaruruhau Child Protection Unit is desperate for clothing for toddlers through to young adults, as well as unused toiletries.

"Anything would be much appreciated, the clothes just need to be clean and washed please," says Barnett who works at Starship.

"Also if you are, or know of an avid knitter, please feel free to knit jumpers, blankets, beanies, scarves, whatever tickles your fancy."

Barnett says that he can take the items to Starship and asks that people put items in a paper bag, labelled STARSHIP CLOTHES in large letters and drop them to Casita Miro restaurant. He asks that items be dropped off between 8am and 11am or 3pm and 6pm, but not during the busy lunch time at the restaurant.

Te Puaruruhau is the Auckland District Health Board's service for children and young people aged up to 19 years who have experienced abuse or neglect. •



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