



11 AUG, 2021

## 'One step closer to healing Earth'

Northern Advocate, Whangarei Northland

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Kerikeri children recognised for looking after the environment

**Peter de Graaf**

**A** Kerikeri school has been recognised for its efforts to look after the environment with a range of initiatives including composting, rubbish bin checks, litter patrols and growing their own lunches.

Riverview School, which is part of Northland Regional Council's Enviroschools programme, was awarded Green-Gold status in a ceremony last Thursday.

It's only the 10th school in Northland to reach the top tier so far.

Councillor Marty Robinson presented the award to the schools' Eco Warriors, a roughly 20-strong team of volunteers from year 5 and 6.

Alexander Wall, 9, and Sylva Morris, 10, accepted the certificate and flag, then helped distribute 500 muffins with green icing and gold sprinkles around the classrooms. "The recognition is amazing," Alexander said. "I feel like it's the school's biggest achievement. We need to show the juniors how important it is to care for Earth and stop climate change," he said.

Konging Lim, 10, said the council visitors were shown a series of displays about the school's environmental activities, which included taking part in Project Island Song's floating classroom.

Sylva said the Eco Warriors' duties included weekly bin checks in the

classrooms. "We peer into the bins to make sure paper and other rubbish is separate, and that the paper is clean and flat, not scrunched up."

At assembly every Friday, the Eco Warriors present their findings about which classes were doing well and which ones needed to lift their game.

All classes that followed the recycling rules went into a prize draw.

The Eco Warriors had also made a slide show to get their message across. Kavan Ulrich, 11, said the school also ran a Garden to Table programme.

Every Tuesday, year 4 pupils were split up, with half working in the school's vegetable garden and the other half making lunch with the day's harvest. The crop included spinach, potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower, carrots and cabbages, as well as a variety of fruit.

"It's for our future and the next generation, and for the world," Kavan said.

Victoria Elu, 9, said food scraps like orange and banana peel went into a compost bin. The resulting compost was used in the garden.

Other food waste went into a worm farm or to pigs.

Bayley Wood, 10, said the school also ran a programme called Litter Busters for the juniors in years 1-3.

"They go around the school at lunchtime with gloves and buckets and a vest picking up rubbish. They love it, they have lots of volunteers. Rubbish is quite hard to find so it's like a scavenger hunt."

Other classes had turned old T-shirts into bags or helped plant native trees along Kerikeri's Wairoa Stream.

Bayley said the students' efforts were "one step closer to healing the Earth. I feel really happy that the school has got this award."

Riverview School has 444 students in years 1-6. Other Enviroschools to reach Green-Gold status in recent months are Ruawai Kindergarten and Oruaiti School near Mangonui.

The regional council introduced the nationwide programme to Northland in 2004.

More than 130 schools, kindergartens and early childhood centres in the region take part.



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Alexander Wall, 9, Kavan Urlich, 11, Konging Lim, 10, Victoria Elu, 9, Bayley Wood, 10, and Sylva Morris, 10, celebrate their Enviroschools Green-Gold status.

Photo / Peter de Graaf