

St John New Zealand

Celebrating International Youth Day

Promoting Youth Building Peace

In these divisional profiles we will share some of the ways divisions across the country are embracing diversity. We will explore how creating an inclusive environment within these divisions has such a positive impact on the youth members, and their local community.

TE WAIPOUNAMU SOUTH ISLAND

Te Waipounamu is a fully online division where cadets from around South Island Region are given the opportunity to complete badges and attain their Grand Prior online. This is unique in the fact that we can offer this opportunity to cadets who do not have a local division or young people who are unable to attend division. This is particularly helpful for those living in an isolated part of the country such as Kaikoura.

Cadets can log in to their divisional website and select the badge they wish to complete. They are then supported as they complete the required projects listed under the badge, which they then submit this through the website. This is reviewed by the divisional management teams (for green and blue) and by subject matter experts (assessors) for gold members. Along with allowing all young people to complete badges, they are also given the platform to engage in other opportunities the youth program has on offer.

The division currently has 15 people on the role and has not begun actively recruiting yet as Te Waipounamu is still busy setting up some more badges to be available online. As a division that champions diversity and inclusion, the current management team would love to hear from leaders with differing abilities, strengths, and backgrounds that are keen to help with the huge task of creating exciting online content for the badges. Maori language and culture, technology, even the Arts - wherever your passion lies there is an opportunity for you to help create content and leave a lasting legacy in this modern and innovative division. For more information get in touch with Chris.Efford@stjohn.org.nz

TAKAPUNA YOUTH NORTH SHORE

Takapuna Youth Division is located on Auckland's North Shore, in Northern Region. Takapuna is a reasonably large division with around 90 Cadets. Recently they started up a very special initiative, which became known as 'The Kindness Project'.

The idea behind 'The Kindness Project' is that there are too many rules at schools and youth groups. This division decided to have only one rule, "Be Kind". They believe that respect, empathy, good behavior and manners all come down to being kind. This took on a life of its own and sparked a discussion between the leaders on how they can help youth be the change we and they want in the world!

From this "The Kindness Project" was born in March 2017 and it is continuing to flourish every week. This Project encourages cadets to "Be the change and make a difference, one act of kindness at a time!". Every week cadets are challenged to carry out at least one act of kindness, no matter how small. They will then write it down and bring it into division to place into the Kindness Box. At the end of division, a couple of kindness notes will be drawn from the box and cadets will get to share their acts of kindness with others and even earn a small treat from the kindness box.

It started off with notes that said "I helped my mum with the dishes" By the end of the term they had notes that said "I stood up to someone who was bullying a friend" and "I paid for someone else's drink when they were short on cash." They have created an amazing Wall of Kindness that is growing every week, showcasing all of the kindness notes to remind everyone to be mindful of their actions and the impact it has on others.

WESTPORT YOUTH WEST COAST

Westport St John Division is a vibrant and very active division of 65-70 committed cadets, 7 and enthusiastic leaders. They have a very diverse group of cadets with different learning styles. Each night they are empowered to learn valuable life skills and informative lessons from a group of leaders who are caring and thoughtful. All leaders ensure that every cadet is not only felt welcome but that they are important and are given the every to succeed with supportive leaders helping them to take on challenges.

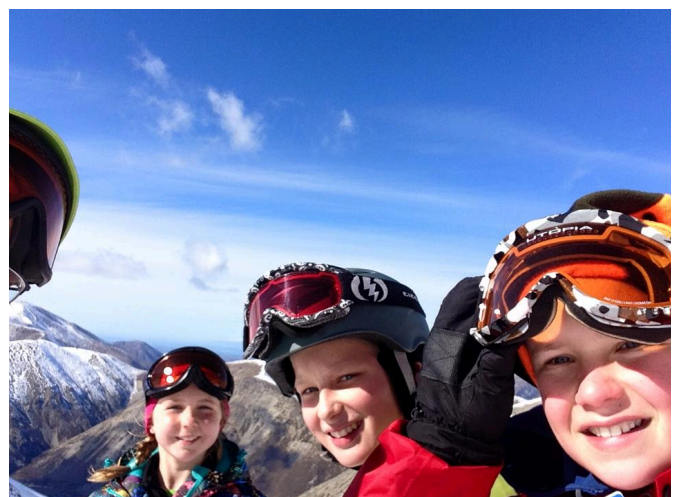
Westport is a fantastic place for outdoor activities. From ski camps and tramping to whitewater rafting and surfing at the beach - badge and first aid lessons and are cleverly crafted into these engaging outdoor activities. At their divisional camp, this year cadets had lessons on navigation, river crossing, caving, bivvy making, and bush first aid. Over the years, time and time again leaders at Westport Division have seen the benefits of helping cadets get out of their comfort zones and pushing them to their limits. Cadets learn more about themselves and each other in a challenging but supportive and safe environment. By getting outside, cadets are learning to trust their own abilities and to look after each other. They learn to embracing opportunities that present themselves and apply the skills they learn here, to make a difference in their local communities. A different approach to positive youth development - but one that works in this community.

They also ensure to include knowledgeable community members during divisional nights who are only too happy to come in and bring some interesting lessons that help towards the objectives of the badge. Gold level bring their research objectives as a speech, giving them all good experiences of public speaking, knowledge sharing, and knowledge building. The younger group bring their research discussed comfortably in a group. This is highly successful, with all cadets really growing in confidence..

With the diverse and big numbers of cadets that come, Westport focuses highly on the St John Core Values. Cadets are regularly given core value tickets which go into a tin for a prize at the end of the term or camp. They also created their own core value song which is often sung at division and camps.

At Westport division, they limit writing, and instead quiz cadets learning with questions or games. The division realise their cadets have just spent the whole day at school so allow younger cadets to draw or create posters instead. Having interesting lessons in a happy and fun environment ensures successful learning and is inclusive of all learning needs. Westport Cadets are very community minded and are often seen out there doing activities, helping in the community and fundraising.

The management team believe having a diverse range of leaders is highly beneficial to cadets - and having planning meetings over desert they believe goes a long way too. West Coast Division were winners of the recent St John Youth Video Competition to celebrate 90 years. Check out their video here <https://youtu.be/KlpTaYwdgvQ>



TAURANGA YOUTH BAY OF PLENTY

Tauranga St John youth division, one of 5 in the Tauranga area is made up of forty passionate cadets. They wanted to get amongst the community, showing them how St John Youth care and want to get involved and make a lasting impact. Marking 90 years of youth in NZ, Tauranga leaders asked cadets to bring in personal items for Women and Children such as face cloths and tooth brushes. These were then placed into bags that the cadets purchased with the purpose of being able to help women and children feel cared when arrived at women's refuge.

Tauranga's divisional manager said "we're celebrating our 90th birthday by showing the community we care". Each pack was handmade and varied from sanitary items for young teenage girls through to hair ties, clips, locally made soaps and plant based healing creams.

The cadets and leaders were inspired to do something after an article was published last year about children arriving at the refuge with multiple bruises.

As a division they have displayed the values "side by side" and "make it better" on such a meaningful level. It was these values that motivated and encouraged the cadets to reflect on what they have and what they can give. The article published by a local media team was shared and viewed by many and soon the article made it into the International St John's newsletter "The Link" With Tauranga being recognised on a work wide stage for their awesome care packages.

However this is not all Tauranga division have been up to. They are planning numerous other projects for the year including supporting the charity Love Letters. They support kids in hospital, particularly long stay patients to personalise their hospital room. They write names and messages of hope using A4 letters crafted by groups and individuals.

As we celebrate this years International Youth Day with the theme Youth Building Peace, we can all be incredibly inspired by Tauranga Division. Together they are showing us how simple actions can make such a huge difference to the lives of others and sharing with us ways we can continue to build peace in our own community by upholding our core values.

