



Sharing healthy eating and healthy activity messages with Northland children

Over the past 18 months, Sport Northland with support from the Northland District Health Board and Sport Waikato, have been introducing Project Energize to Northland Primary Schools. The aim of this project is to improve children's physical activity and nutrition, and ultimately to improve their overall health.

The project was developed by Sport Waikato eight years ago, with every Waikato Primary School now being deemed an "Energize" School. Sport Northland has been piloting the project with 12 Decile 1-3 Whangarei schools since the beginning of Term One in 2013.

Northland children, along with the communities, have increased health problems such as lack of fitness, poor teeth, poor bone strength, and obesity. Project Energize has been designed to improve our children's health.

These health problems are all associated with decreasing physical activity, increased inactive time, decreased intake of calcium, fruit, vegetables, and increased intake of fat and sugar-dense food and drink. A series of key messages related to nutrition and activity is promoted to the Energize schools and their whānau. The messages reinforce activity of all kinds, and simple nutritional messages.

In Northland, two 'Energizers' support between five and seven schools in Whangarei and implement all kinds of activity and nutrition initiatives, such as: Ki o Rahi modelling and interclass/interschool competitions, huff puff games ideas for teachers, large and small ball skills sessions, cross country and athletics training support, home play challenges, sandwich challenges and home and school vegetable garden support to name a few.

The Energizers have undertaken initial evaluation of the programme, and are currently collecting post evaluation data. Evaluation includes a 550m run test of all 7-10 year olds, physical activity profiles with each teacher, teacher surveys to gauge skill and confidence levels, parent food and drink surveys to gauge home nutrition, and a school stocktake with information on school support and priority levels for physical activity and nutrition.

Currently Sport Northland is working on planning for Energize for 2014/15 in Northland.



About Sport Northland

Sport Northland is Northland's Regional Sports Trust – a charitable trust with a core purpose of 'creating a more active Northland' and a vision that 'All Northlanders are healthier through regular, lifelong participation in sport and physical recreation'. The trust focuses on physical recreation and support for grass roots sports organisations through a new approach working with targeted sports in targeted communities throughout Northland.

Sport Northland also has a number of flagship programmes, events, facilities and activities under its umbrella – these include the multiple national award winning 10,000 Steps Northland programme, the national award winning region-wide Run/Walk Series, the national award winning Top Energy WaterSafe programme and other successes such as Green Prescription, Active Workplaces, He Oranga Poutama, Taitamariki Tuu Ora, early childhood and school based programmes and work across the region's three districts through six Sport Advisors.

Sport Northland also owns and operates both the ASB Leisure Centre and the ASB Northland Sports House, and owns (but contracts out the management of) the Whangarei Aquatic Centre. 📍

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