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Outdoor education a hit with Raglan Area School students

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Raglan Area School students have been getting outdoors and getting academic results with Karioi Project’s NCEA Manaaki Ao programme.

The programme, which was piloted at the school in 2017, is inspiring the young conservationists future career choices and helping them grow in confidence and develop leadership and work-ready skills.

Year 11 students Brandon Gannaway, Keylin Walker-Pitman and Sienna Hanson, all 15, say one of the best things about the programme is

getting out of the traditional classroom setting.

“It’s something different from school and it’s been really fun,” Sienna says.

“It’s pretty cool exploring the community around us,” Keylin says.

They hope the skills they gain on the programme will provide opportunities for further study and future career choices.

“I hope it helps me to get a job, something around biology, diving, field work,” Keylin says.

“Getting outdoors has helped inspire my photography,” Brandon says.

“I’ve always wanted to do something outdoors with animals,” Sienna says.

Tutors Annie Lorenzen, Amber Jones, Bex Eivers and Kristel van Houte have been working on marine and freshwater themes, and this included a trip over the harbour to Te Akau, which was a hit with the students.

“I really enjoyed going over the harbour in the boat. We went on the beach and lit a fire and cooked some food,” Sienna says.

Annie says the students of all levels thrived on the activity-based experiential learning, which encourages them to value their environment.

“It was great to see students display the knowledge, abilities and skills they have and that they don’t

normally get to show. One student was able to discuss traditional methods of catching tuna (eel). He was stoked to be able to teach the teacher and realise the value of that traditional knowledge in today’s environmentally sustainable world.”

Manaaki Ao is run in partnership with the school, Papa Taiao Earthcare and A Rocha Aotearoa New Zealand and aims to develop NCEA students’ skills in sustainable and ecological actions and enable them to earn NCEA credits through hands-on practical conservation activities.

In the outdoor classroom the students are introduced to a variety of local environmental issues and initiate and develop sustainable solution to address the issues facing their generation.

Janine Jackson

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