



10 NOV, 2022

## Virtual journey a trip to healthy lifestyles

Te Puke Times, Te Puke Bay of Plenty

UNDERTOWMEDIA

Page 1 of 2

# Virtual journey a trip to healthy lifestyles

## Programme instilling good habits in students

**T**he pupils in Room 2 at Paengaroa School have already this term walked around Italy and Greece. Now they are checking out Japan.

The new entrants are taking part in a 'virtual adventure' to clock healthier habits thanks to the 2022 Zespri Young and Healthy Virtual Adventure.

They are on a virtual trip around the globe, instilling healthy habits along the way.

On Friday, in recognition of their efforts, each pupil in the class was given a pair of Asics running shoes when programme founding Kim Harvey visited the school.

Class teacher Deanna Morgan says pupils take it in turns to wear the pedometer.

"Then there is a little competition to see who's done the most steps. They like the competition," she says.

Resources complementing the programme include videos about the countries they visit virtually.

The programme began on October 20 and Kim says she was delighted to start the adventure for the fifth year.

"We've now had over 120,000 kids through the programme, and each year we see incredible results with teachers, parents and the kids themselves telling us they have more energy, can focus better in class and feel better, which is all the more important as we head to the busy end of year sprint."

The Virtual Adventure was created with the knowledge that healthy habits formed early set a child up for a lifetime of improved physical and mental wellbeing – something Kim says has become even more important as kids have got used to long stints schooling from home over the past few years.

"Our health approach needs to put a strong focus on prevention. This year we are so fortunate to be able to get out and visit so many more of our participants and with more tamariki being in classrooms, we have started our Roving Reporters

campaign, so students can tell us the many stories of how they are using the Virtual Adventure on our private

Planet WellBeing TV YouTube channel.

"We will also be engaging with some of our families to follow them post-programme to see how it continues to influence their choices. So, in addition to the newly upgraded programme platform and added 'travel destinations', there are some

very exciting new elements of the programme this year."

Classes taking part in the virtual adventure work as a team to travel across the world and will virtually meet their sporting heroes and Asics ambassadors Ardie Savea, Amelie Ekenasio, Kane Williamson and Samantha Charlton who will show them around and share some interesting facts about local history and geography, as well as some of their pro health and wellbeing tips.

Participation in the virtual adventure is free due to the support of partners like Zespri and Asics, with The Young and Healthy Trust ensuring teachers in participating schools have the resources and support they need to encourage kids to succeed.

"The programme has been perfected for the digital generation with each child designing a unique avatar which they'll see interacting with their classmates and the sports stars at every stop.

"Better still, every real-world healthy choice – like moving their body, eating a piece of fruit or drinking water – comes with the instant reward of digital points to add to their class total. Over a five week period, these actions start to become ingrained so the likelihood of continuing them is much greater than from a one-off lesson," says Kim.

Zespri CEO Dan Mathieson says the kiwifruit industry is proud to help kids and families get active and instil healthy eating and social habits.

"We're really pleased to see such strong participation in this year's Zespri Young and Healthy Virtual Adventure which we know teaches such important habits at an important time in kids' lives, and looking forward to spending some time with this year's participants in the weeks ahead," he says.



10 NOV, 2022

Virtual journey a trip to healthy lifestyles



Te Puke Times, Te Puke Bay of Plenty



With their new Asics shoes are Tex Tyndall and Nevaeh Belcher from Paengaroa School flanked by Zespri external relations adviser Libby Twiss (left) and Young and Healthy founder Kim Harvey.