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Healthy habits instilled

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KING Country schools are getting involved in an initiative designed to teach children healthy habits with the support of top sportspeople.

Students from eight King Country schools are part of 22,000 nationally participating in the 2022 Zespri Young and Healthy Virtual Adventure with celebrity heroes Ardie Savea, Ameliaranne Ekenasio, Kane Williamson and Samantha Charlton.

The fifth year of the health and well-being programme starts today and takes Kiwi tamariki on a virtual trip around the globe, instilling healthy habits along the way like moving their bodies, eating extra fruit and vegetables, drinking more water, getting a good night's sleep and reducing leisure time spent on screens.

Kim Harvey, founder of the Young and Healthy Charitable Trust and Virtual Adventure, said each year provided incredible results.

"Teachers, parents and the kids themselves tell 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."

Along the way they are met by their sporting heroes and ASICS ambassadors 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.

"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," Kim said.

The 2022 Zespri Young and Healthy Virtual Adventure, which is free, runs from Thursday, October 20 until Thursday November 24.



SILVER Fern Ameliaranne Ekenasio is one five sports stars involved in teaching Kiwi kids healthy habits. PHOTO SUPPLIED