

Hawke's Bay Burns Camp brightens up young lives

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*Campers spend time with Napier firefighters during their time in Hawke's Bay.
Photo / Supplied*

Hawkes Bay Today
By: Georgia May

Hawke's Bay brightened up the young lives of 25 burn survivors as they took part in an action-packed camp.

Established by the Burn Support Group Charitable Trust, the camps involved a series of activities and confidence building workshops for children aged between 8-16.

This year Napier was chosen as the host town and trust events co-ordinator Michele Henry said the camps were held to encourage, inspire and build confidence in those who had been traumatically affected by burns.

"The camps generally give the opportunity for these children to share together experiences that they may carry as memories for years to come," she said.

"Relationships are formed that continue through their everyday life, this is an environment that they are aware they are not alone, they can relate to each other and as a group feel comfortable."

This year's event, earlier in January, was the largest to date with 25 children attending, including seven first timers, who were quickly welcomed into the group.

Fire and Emergency Napier, Rapid Relief Team, Laser Tag, Napier Bikes, McDonald's, Gannet Beach Adventures and Splash Planet were organisations that made the childrens' visit one to remember.

Proud parents Kathy and Peter Mummery said they introduced their daughter Harmony into the camp so she could meet others who had been through similar circumstances as well as simply having "someone to talk to."

"This is the second time that Harmony has gone to camp and we can see how much this has brought her out of her shell. She is normally quite shy and reserved but she chatters away non-stop to her friends that she's made at camp.

"Harmony also gets to participate in horse riding, paint balling, laser force, water rafting and archery among just a few of the many activities on offer."

The couple said Harmony had "flourished" since attending "which made the world of difference to her now bubbly personality."

The trust was formed by Auckland-based Delwyn Breslau whose 8-year-old son, Brendon, suffered burns to 40 per cent of his body in an explosion in 1984.

"After his injury I discovered at the time there was no kind of support to help anyone who had burn injuries or anyone who had been disfigured through burns and I felt that there should be.

"It's hard to watch families watch their loved ones suffer when they have a burn injury and many doctors will tell you that these injuries are the worst and so I just thought I'd get a charity up and running and it's been going for 35 years now."

For more information on the Burns Support Group Charitable Trust or for information on the camps go to <http://www.burns.org.nz/>.