

‘Wonderful winter camp’ for burns kids

A group of young burns survivors converged on the Ruapehu area recently for a camp with a difference – enjoying a winter get-together rather than their usual summer break.

Taylor Lodge at Pokaka was host to 26 young people and their supporters and staff from Burns Support Charitable Trust.

The Trust runs a number of camps and events for burns sufferers, including the youth camp, with the aim of providing a supportive experience where the group have all got experience with burns injuries.

“The camp is five days where the kids can develop relationships with others who share their experience – they realise they are not alone.

“They develop their confidence and self-esteem through these camps and they really flourish.”

During their camp they got to play in the snow at Whakapapa and take a ride in the Sky Waka gondola, visited the National Army Museum in Waiouru, the Dinosaur Museum in Raetihi, mountain biking on the Ohakune Old Coach Road, climbing at Vertigo Climbing Gym, and enjoy chocolate éclairs at Ohakune’s Skiers Inn.

One of the camp kids, Tom, said the best thing for him was the snow sledding and “chucking a few snowballs”. This was his fourth camp and he says they are a “good excuse to get away and do something different”.

His father, who is a volunteer on the camp, said it was a great way for the kids to get together and share experiences.

“Some of them are from pretty hard backgrounds and there’s a lot of things they would never get to do.”

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Jovana, originally from Serbia, talks about her burns, which came from an exercise treadmill when she slipped off it and became trapped and the treadmill track kept going, causing third-degree burns to her leg.

The camp was a great place for the kids to share their stories in a fun and free place.

Michele Henry, events co-ordinator, said she wanted to tell the *Bulletin* how kind and supportive the community of Ohakune were regarding the Camp.

"The Taylor Lodge owners, Kylie and Ben were more than welcoming, at each activity the business owners or staff could not have been more accommodating, this was noticed by all the leaders, parents and myself," said

At the Lodge, they enjoyed a quiz afternoon as well as an evening talent quest.

The Trust encourages parents not to attend the camp, to help with kids develop more independence, but they do make exceptions for newbies.

The Trust also runs retreats for women who have suffered burns as well as 'men's days out'

As well as thanking the support from the Waimarino community, Michele says there is the opportunity for people to sponsor a child to take part in camps. Readers can donate by going to www.burns.org.nz and clicking on the donate button.



Wonderful winter camp kids at Kings in Ohakune. The camp provided the children a chance to spend time with others who also experience life after burns and subsequent surgeries.