

The New Zealand Herald

Drive opens doors for kids who have little

By Vicki Woolley

5:00 AM Saturday May 14, 2016

Benjamin Eitelberg and Erin Furness are trying to outrun winter.

On May 20, the Fitness Locker coaches will bundle into their van and head to the Hauraki Plains to deliver much-needed donated sports gear and apparel to two decile 1 schools – and they are hoping to get there before the weather turns.

Organiser Eitelberg explains: "We started the gear drive five years ago and were humbled by how little some of these kids had. We knew that whatever was donated would go a very long way. This year we would like to beat the start of winter with the much-needed clothing."

The Gear Appeal is run with Sport Waikato's Project Energise, an initiative designed to advance children's activity, nutrition and overall health in the Waikato region.

Along with the donated sports gear, Eitelberg and Furness lead a group exercise session at each school, with the emphasis on participation and fun. Eitelberg believes sport can be a catalyst for lifetime change.

"One pair of shoes, an item of clothing or even a cricket bat could change the path of a child, whether it be in sport or just life in general," he says. "In addition to associating themselves with inspiring people, it builds better confidence which in turn develops these kids into good people – and maybe even sporting stars."

Te Kura o Waharoa received donated equipment last year and Sport Waikato Energiser's Eruera Keepa is excited about the opportunity this offers to the school and community.

"We have been able to introduce the kids to sports they wouldn't normally get to try – our kids now know how to play hockey. When a child picks up a piece of equipment and doesn't know what it's for, that sparks intrigue: they are curious to know how it works, so they learn a new sport and pick up some fundamental skills at the same time.

"And the gear isn't just being used in the school, it is also being used for sport in the community."

Paeroa Central School and Kerepehi School are this year's appeal beneficiaries.

Sports Gear Appeal

What: Pre-loved sports gear and apparel collection

When: Daily until May 18



Donated sports gear and equipment has brought fresh excitement to Te Kura o Waharoa and the surrounding community.

Where: Auckland drop-off locations: Format Limited, FuelMe, T3

Hamilton drop-off locations: Bob's Bikes, Fastlane Fitness, Shoe Clinic, Swim T3.

SwimZone Matamata

For more information: email info@fitnesslocker.co.nz

By Vicki Woolley

– [NZ Herald](#)

Copyright ©2016, NZME. Publishing Limited