

WPCA

2013 saw the inaugural William Pike Challenge Award (WPCA) being introduced to Waimate High School. Under the management of Miss Westgarth and Mr Simonsen, 10 lucky Year 9 students were chosen to take part in this award scheme.

William Pike began the Award after his legs were crushed in the explosion of Mt Ruapehu erupting in 2007. As a result, he had his right leg amputated from the knee down. At the beginning of the year William came and spoke to the school about his heroic story and introduced the award to the school. The Award is an outdoors activity based programme where the students complete eight outdoor adventure based activities; Learn a new skill, sport or hobby; and complete 20 hours of service within the community.

The first outdoor activity was the Year 9 Aquatics trip to Caroline Bay, Timaru. The whole year level had a day at the beach doing water survival skills in and around the water and a day on the Optimus Yacht's. The Yachts were a very popular addition to the camp.

The next trip was the Survival Skills overnighter. They camped at the Gunn's Bush Christian Camp where the focus was on developing group dynamics and interpersonal skills. Activities included navigating using a compass, building camp fires, camp cooking and bivvy making. The bets were on as to whether the students would last the night in their home made bivvies' as it was a cold night, but sure enough they did! The bush solo gave students first-hand experience of what it might feel like to be lost in the bush at night. They were each dropped off along the track with no torch and spent up to 24 minutes alone, listening to pigs and looking for shooting stars in the cracks of the forest roof. The grand finale of the weekend was a fierce battle of Paint Ball.

In Term 2 the students went to Naseby where they participated in Curling and Mountain Biking. The Indoor Curling Rink gave the students the opportunity to experience the sport of Curling. So after a short video and personalised tutorial, the group rugged up and headed on to the slippery ice sheets. A highlight was having the New Zealand Men's Olympic Team training next to us. In the afternoon they went mountain biking on the muddy tracks of the Naseby forest. There were a few falls and tree hugging incidences but it was a lot of fun.

Term 2 also saw the Golden Shoe up for grabs in the Rogaine competition. The students paired up – mixture of bikes, scooters and some braving it on foot. Rogaine's are like Orienteering but instead of going from A to B to C and finishing on Z, you get a certain time period and you have to try and get as many points as you can in that time. The students were given a map with markers and clues on it. It went as far as Knottingley Park, Te Kiteroa car park and the Golf Course. The students had two hours to get as many points as they could. After one call for help the two hours rolled around quickly and every team bar one was home in time. The point counting took a bit of negotiation but Breanna McKindlay and Claire Rollinson came out on top with 1000 points!

In Term 3 all of the Year 9's had the Snow Trip to Mt Dobson. Some were on Ski's and some were giving their best attempt at Snow Boarding. They had a fantastic day up the mountain, which was a first for some.

With the help of six other Year 9's the WPCA students entered two teams in the Get2Go Competition held in Dunedin. In the morning they went to beautiful MacAndrews Bay and competed in two activities – a problem solving challenge and a kayaking relay. In the afternoon they were based at Logan Park for a Rogaine event and then they did a Mountain Biking relay at Waikari Creek Redwoods Trail. The day was a lot of fun with students trying new activities and challenging themselves. The kayaking in the double kayaks would have been the highlight for many students.

Two more events are planned for when this goes to print – a cross country mountain bike trip and a canyoning experience near Christchurch.

Over the year the WPCA students learnt new skills including art, duck shooting, bass Ggitar, sewing and crafts. The students participated in various community service activities including chopping firewood, coaching, working at Wallaby Wander, SPCA, Lister Home and Riding for the Disabled.

This has been an amazing first year of the WPCA. The students have learnt some new skills, learnt more about themselves and have been challenged in various environments. Thank you goes to Miss Westgarth and Mr Simonsen for their organisation and time over this year.