



Aloha! – Auckland students prepare for a school trip of a lifetime!

Students from three Auckland schools will follow in the footsteps of ancient Polynesian ancestors when they embark on a week-long school trip to Oahu, Hawaii.

Sixty pupils from South Auckland Middle School (Manurewa), Middle School West Auckland (Henderson/Glendene) and Mt Hobson Middle School (Newmarket), are counting down the weeks until they are greeted by pupils at their sister school in Oahu.

All those embarking on the voyage are working flat out to raise the \$2,500 cost in time for the December departure date. For many of the kids this is something they could only have dreamed of, and may be the start of bigger things to come.

Thirteen year old Rachel, from Glendene, said: “I just can’t believe I am really going. I have never been out of New Zealand before and can’t wait to learn about the culture, see the different landscapes and experience how the people live. It will be exciting to see how they cook and what they eat and I am especially excited about seeing the cultural dances and finding out what they mean.”

The fantastic learning opportunity has been arranged by The Villa Education Trust who run the three middle schools. The aim is to enable the teenagers to visualize their learning about battles fought in the Pacific and the impact on society, taught as part of the school’s unique ‘Project Based Curriculum’.

As well as being an amazing academic adventure, Trust founder and creator of Project Based Curriculum, Alwyn Poole, hopes the trip will develop the student’s vision for work and study overseas and raise their own level of aspiration.

He said: “This fantastic learning experience will broaden the horizons of our students who, without it, may not consider all the options available to them. If ten of our students from South or West Auckland follow a path of study overseas as a result of this trip, then we will have achieved a hope that we hold for them. We have developed a great relationship with the school in Hawaii, and are looking forward to a long term partnership with them that will open up pathways for our students and teachers to explore.”

During the trip, to further enhance the cultural experience and to enable students to feel part of modern day Hawaiian society, they will each be ‘home stayed’ with a local family and will spend time volunteering at Wai’alea Elementary Public Charter School. Alwyn added: “By immersing the children in the community, to help and support their new friends, we hope they will not only create life-long friendships but also increase their own sense of identity.”

Visits to landmarks including Pearl Harbour, the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific and the Polynesian Cultural Centre have also been arranged as well as a trip around the University of Hawaii campus.

Children and Whanau from the three schools have joined forces to host sausage sizzles, evening suppers and sponsored fun runs to raise the much needed cash, but there is still a way to go before the target is reached and the children and organizers can feel confident that the dream will come true.

Angela Withers, Social Studies teacher and fundraiser at Middle School West Auckland (MSWA), said: 'We are determined to raise the cash needed to make this a reality for our children. We have such a great community here at MSWA, and I feel really privileged to be working with the families to make this happen. The parents clearly value what we are doing and they want only the best for their sons and daughters, it's great to witness their interactions and to see how strong, close and determined each family unit is.'

Further money spinning events will be held over the coming weeks to promote the trip and boost funds, including additional 'suppers', further sausage sizzles and numerous sponsored events.

To find out more about the opportunities offered to students by The Villa Education Trust, at any of their three middle schools across Auckland, or the Villa NCEA Academy (new for 2016), please visit our website www.villaeducation.org.nz

Information can also be found on the above website about the unique, integrated Project Based Curriculum.

From Henderson to Hawaii - Students from Middle School West Auckland selling chocolate as part of their fundraising efforts for the trip of a lifetime, with Social Studies teacher Angela Withers (far right) and Office Manager Suzanne Irving (second from left)



