

KIWI KIDS

LOVE KIWI BOWLS

Bowls Canterbury's Kiwi Bowls campaign is proving to be successful in attracting primary school aged children to the game.

No fewer than 1800 schoolchildren from in and around Christchurch have been involved in Kiwi Bowls in March, alone – an astounding figure that any other code would be very proud to have achieved.

This is especially so, as Kiwi Bowls is only in its second year since conception in March, 2008 and centre co-ordinator, Rebecca Maurice, is delighted with the swarms of Year 8 children who have been introduced to the game. In just over 12 months, Bowls Canterbury has brought bowls to more than 3500 Kiwi Kids - and they've loved it!

"The idea is to give the Year 8 students an insight into Lawn Bowls before they hit college, where bowls is a sports option for Wednesday afternoon sports at all secondary schools in Christchurch," Maurice said.

She has been the driving force between schools, clubs, and the children themselves, in arranging the transport from the classrooms to the club greens and

then organising assistance so that the youngsters can gain the fundamental skills needed to play bowls.

Maurice said that the Canterbury centre also ran Kiwi Bowls in November last year (attracting 700) but the increase in numbers this March has shown that March is the best time of the year to run the campaign.

"This March we had approximately 1800 students, from 68 classes in 17 schools participating and, while most of the schools were city schools, seven classes from five of the schools surrounding Christchurch, also enjoyed the fun," she said.

Typical of the enthusiasm between schools and local clubs was that shown in the outlying community of Woodend, just north of Christchurch – something that was acknowledged in the town's local newspaper.

The recent article, headed "SCHOOL'S IN AT WOODEND BOWLING CLUB", read – "Over the next three Wednesday afternoons 72 senior pupils from Woodend Primary School will be introduced to the game of Lawn Bowls. If the enthusiasm,

enjoyment and skill displayed on the first day is any indication, bowls will be on the Woodend summer sports menu starting in October.

"The children were just great," said club Coach, Bryan Sutherland. "With the support of Club President, Kingsley Howie, Secretary Doreen Williams together with the co-operation of Bowls Canterbury who supplied six sets of small sized bowls, the exercise was a winner for everyone concerned".

The feedback has been universally appreciative, with the reaction of the students themselves including "bowls is awesome", 'it was great fun', 'bowls is a great game and I am good at it', 'can we come and have another go?' and 'it is harder than it looks'."

One principal wrote, "The children and teachers just loved the experience, so many thanks for providing us with the opportunity". The principal went on to say she was standing behind one of her students in one of the local shops and the student was telling the shop keeper all about his bowls experience and saying what fun it was.

Another school: "Just wanted to pass on to you how much we enjoyed the bowls yesterday. The children really enjoyed themselves. All credit must go to the wonderful people at the bowling club who treated us with kindness, patience and a good sense of fun. I think the children all benefited from it and hopefully if the opportunity arises again we can come back for more".

So, well done Canterbury, in showing what can be achieved with a little drive, enthusiasm, solid organisational skills and fresh ideas – something that other centres can use as an incentive to achieve similar breakthroughs at school level.

