

OPOTIKI KIWIFRUIT GROWERS COMMUNITY FUND

Ōpōtiki Kiwifruit Growers Working Hard to Grow a Prosperous Ōpōtiki Community

Over the past three years, the Ōpōtiki Kiwifruit Growers Community Fund (OKGCF) has proudly continued its mission of supporting our community, enhancing opportunities for local youth, and providing vital resources to improve the lives of residents throughout the Ōpōtiki region. This update serves as a reflection on the progress and impact of our projects and initiatives, and it's also an expression of our gratitude to the kiwifruit growers whose contributions make these efforts possible. The challenges of the past two seasons have been tough on everyone in our industry, and your commitment to this fund, even amid adversity, speaks volumes about your dedication to the wider community.

The OKGCF aims to make a significant impact in the Ōpōtiki community in the future. We know there are change makers and amazing people in our community that we can support who can make a difference moving forward. They have big ideas for a prosperous Ōpōtiki including a Youth Centre Hub and Health & Wellbeing initiatives for all ages.

We want to be at the forefront of these big projects, and this can only be achieved by reaching a critical mass of consistent support from all Ōpōtiki Growers

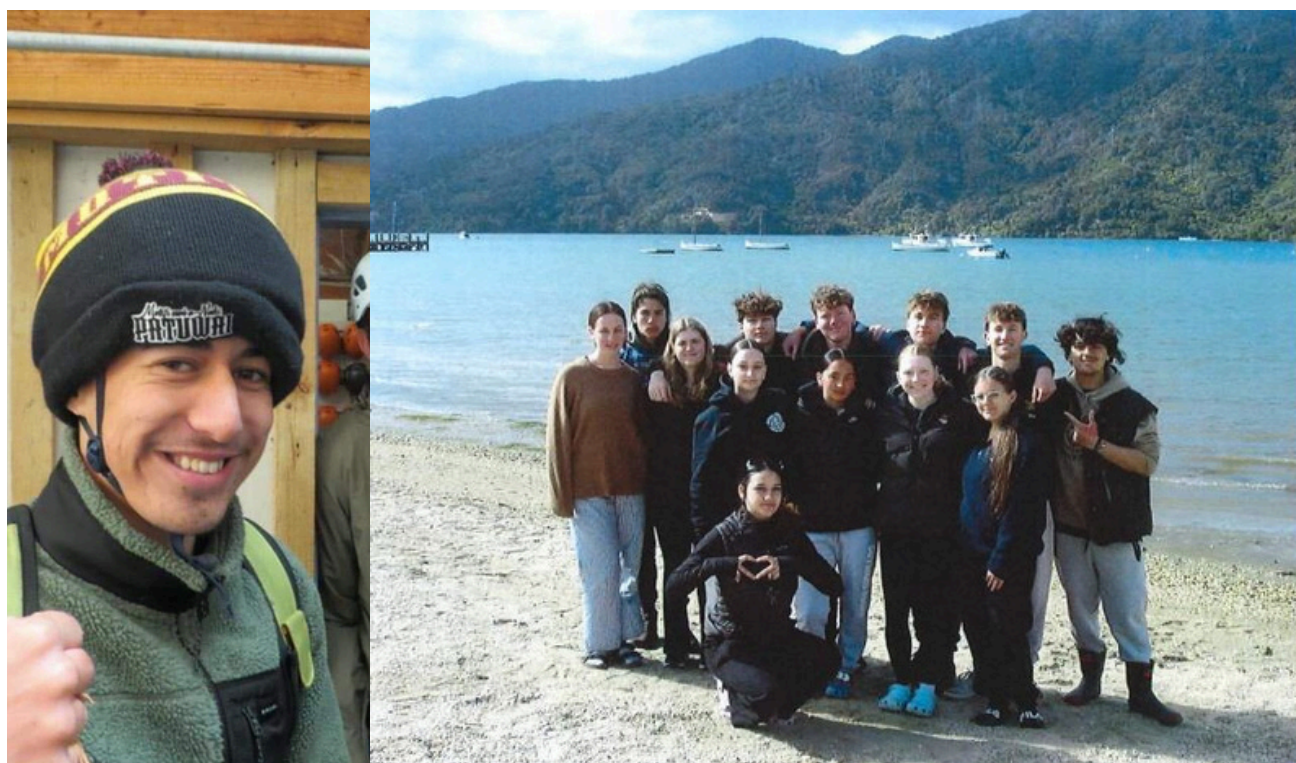


How We Help:

Outward Bound & Spirit of New Zealand

Every year, OKGCF proudly sponsors two placements for Ōpōtiki College students, allowing them to attend life-changing courses with Outward Bound at Anakiwa in the Marlborough Sounds and a 10-day sail training/leadership opportunity with the Spirit of New Zealand.

The significance of these experiences for the recipients cannot be underestimated. Students return to our community with a new focus and genuine personal development that benefits both themselves, their peers and their families by creating a new perspective beyond the parameters of the Ōpōtiki District.



Education Development/Science Kits

Another initiative we're committed to is supporting primary schools in our region with Science Kits. These science kits focus on key environmental factors that relate directly to our industry – Pollination, Bugs and Biosecurity. These Science Kits rotate through classrooms and bring interactive learning opportunities directly to students. Each kit is packed with hands-on experiments that make science engaging, helping kids understand critical topics that are closely tied to our own industry and ecosystem.

Supporting Youth Development

We're also dedicated to supporting local youth programs, like the Blue Light initiative, which provides positive experiences that allow young people to discover new interests and explore their potential. In 2022, OKGCF supported Blue Light's daily excursions to Rotorua, where 24 youths enjoyed activities like zip-lining, canopy tours, gondola rides, and luge sessions.

Later in the year, Blue Light organized a weekend trip for eight local youths to Taupō, where they joined young people from across the country for a fun-filled two-night stay at the Blue Light lodge. The Taupō trip included visits to DeBrett's Hot Springs, quad biking, farm tours, jet boating, and more. Coming up on January 22, 2025, Blue Light will be hosting a community pool party with funding from OKGCF.

This event will include games, music, food, and plenty of fun for all ages. We invite everyone to join in—and for those keen on some hands-on help, there will be a BBQ ready for the cooking!

Te Kaha Defibrillator

One of our key contributions to community health was funding a defibrillator, now permanently stationed at the Te Kaha Police Station. This defibrillator, obtained through a grant, provides a vital, accessible resource for the area in case of emergencies. Though we hope it never has to be used, its presence brings peace of mind to the community and helps ensure immediate support in a life-threatening cardiac event.



Support for Ōpōtiki College Year 13 Students: A Sailing Experience During COVID

Two years ago, when COVID-19 restrictions continued to disrupt traditional school events, OKGCF stepped in to support the Year 13 students from Ōpōtiki College by funding an unforgettable overnight sailing trip on a former America's Cup boat around the Hauraki Gulf. Many of these students missed out on regular school activities, so this sailing adventure on Steinlager II offered them a unique experience during challenging times.

Year 13 student Mahaki Mihaere-Neha said the memories of this once-in-a-lifetime experience would forever remain with him and he hoped others would also get to experience this great opportunity. "I am proud that this two-day sailing trip gave me the chance to honour Sir Peter Blake's memory by getting to sail aboard the Steinlager II" he said.

The students returned with a sense of camaraderie and appreciation for the support of the local community.



Supporting Local Identity: Ōpōtiki Sports Club Jerseys

OKGCF is committed to offering positive alternatives that create a sense of identity in our community. We know our social issues are well documented and receive significant media coverage. We support initiatives that promote genuine Opotiki pride and identity such as the Ōpōtiki Sports Club. As part of this commitment, we provided 500 printed sports jerseys to the Ōpōtiki Sports Club for distribution to local youth athletes. These jerseys, emblazoned with the OKGCF logo, have become a source of pride for young athletes as a direct and clear alternative to gang influence and regalia that have been prevalent issues around our town, especially among youth. OKGCF wants to be part of the solution by creating a positive visual presence and a sense of unity within the community.

Assisting the Opotiki College Cadet Unit

We recently granted funding to the Ōpōtiki College Cadet Unit to assist with transportation costs. This support will enable cadets to travel to various training sessions, competitions, and community events, fostering qualities such as discipline, leadership, and community involvement among participating students. The Cadet Unit plays a critical role in youth development, and we're proud to support their efforts in building tomorrow's community leaders. Recently the Cadet Unit have had a skills camp, .22 rifle target shooting, 3 steps of life first aid and CPR lessons from Hato Hone St Johns, and a visit to the HMNZS Te Kaha Frigate.



Building for the Future: Our Endowment Fund and Big Project Plans

In addition to our ongoing projects, OKGCF is taking steps toward sustainability by establishing an Endowment Fund with the support of the Eastern Bay Community Foundation – who are an integral part of our infrastructure and support.



This fund is a financial foundation that will support these types of initiatives in perpetuity, ensuring that the Fund's impact will continue well into the future, regardless of economic circumstances. By growing this endowment, we're making it possible for the OKGCF to offer consistent support to our community in the long term. Looking to the future, we have also earmarked approximately \$40,000 for a Big Project that will benefit the community as a whole. While we haven't settled on a project yet, one idea is to develop a multi-discipline event hall, similar to a scaled-down version of Baypark in Tauranga. This type of facility would serve as a gathering space for sports, community events, and social activities, benefiting residents of all ages. Though we wouldn't be able to fund the entire project, our contribution could kick-start a larger community effort, with the potential to bring a versatile venue to our area. We know the appetite for creating positive initiatives is alive and well in Ōpōtiki and our district has a long and proud history of extremely generous philanthropic community mindedness. We see it as a privilege to be a focal point for a prosperous and positive Ōpōtiki District by growing our fund.

Thank You

As we wrap up this update, we want to once again acknowledge the challenges that growers have faced over the past two seasons. Your commitment to the Community Fund amid these pressures has been instrumental in keeping these initiatives alive. From education and youth empowerment to health and community pride, your contributions have enabled tangible, positive changes in Ōpōtiki, and we couldn't do it without you.

The Ōpōtiki Kiwifruit Growers Community Fund is proud to serve our district, and we remain committed to making an impact through meaningful projects and sustainable growth. We look forward to another year of partnership with each of you, working together to build a stronger, more vibrant community that reflects the resilience and generosity of the people within it.



Thank you once again for your ongoing support and dedication to the community we all call home.