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# YMCA signs up to aquatic centre in support of its own ideals

A YMCA South Canterbury board member came to a recent meeting with a small slip of paper in her pocket. She had signed up personally as a public supporter of the Caroline Bay Aquatic Centre for \$125.

Such was her enthusiasm and after showing her colleagues the “natural fit” the project had with the YMCA ideals of “building strong kids, strong families and strong communities” she left the meeting with a notable achievement under her belt – the entire board had signed up, placing YMCA South Canterbury as a bronze-level supporter of the new centre and pledging \$3000.

YMCA South Canterbury general manager Keith Shaw is in no doubt about the value to the community the aquatic centre will bring and was delighted to see the board embrace the opportunity to help so willingly.

“This is a facility that will help bring families together. It will provide a sport, recreation, bonding, learning and fitness dimension to the community and in that, it is no different to our own ideals,” Mr Shaw said.

He said YMCA South Canterbury was keen to become a bronze supporter, which meant the equivalent of a \$100 annual payment over the next 30 years, to show support for both the project as well as “some of the people we teach and mentor who make YMCA as great as it is, but perhaps without the financial means to contribute”.

“We are doing it for them, but also because we see much value to the wider community of this new aquatic centre with its exciting features such as the largest therapeutic water area of any centre in the country, and gymnasium, crèche and other family-oriented attractions.”

Mr Shaw said YMCA’s ideals embraced the concept of engagement with the community at all levels.

“Our community is good at labels. We tend to brand some young people as ‘at risk’, or ‘wobbly’.

“But at the YMCA our view is that a young person is a young person is a young person. Each has a valuable contribution to make to society. We just need to show them the pathway,” Mr Shaw said.

YMCA South Canterbury offers free training programmes to people looking to learn new skills in a non-intimidatory environment and gain further educational qualifications with the aim of securing future employment.

Mr Shaw said those programmes were available to anyone aged between 16 and 65.

On offer were Skills4Life training to assist with achievement of NCEA Levels one and two; MAPS for parents and pre-schoolers offering help with numeracy and literacy; STEPS, a free adult training programme for job seekers, and a Heavy Trade licence programme, which is being rebranded to the new programme name of “Drive2Work” in 2011, reflecting the new government policy relative to an unrelenting focus for all New Zealanders who can work to work.

“Our Youth4Youth programme also offers a range of youth-focussed programmes, those being Youth Development, Youth Mentoring and Youth Leadership. All of the YMCA’s programmes and services are underpinned by their core values, those being caring, respect, honesty and responsibility,” Mr Shaw said.

He said the organisation’s support of the aquatic centre would build on all of the YMCA’s programmes. In addition, and from a very practical perspective, “it will also save us having to travel to Oamaru for the water facilities down there”.

ENDS



*Getting into the swim: YMCA South Canterbury has showed its support for the Caroline Bay Aquatic Centre in a financial, vocal and spectacular way in Butler Street Timaru this week, singing the famous YMCA song and donning aquatic gear. Pictured at left holding a cheque for the new centre is general manager Keith Shaw. He is supported by (back row from left) Gerry Pienaar, Steve Bennetts, Denise Saini and Sandy Green. In front (from left) are Maxine Lawrence and Sharyn Kake.*