



Reports on Member of Parliament grants and discretionary donations in the Cook Islands

OCTOBER 2015

MP GIFTING PROGRAM OCTOBER 2015

Mark Brown, MP for Takuavaine and Tutakimoa, has taken a step towards making roads and homes safer in preparation for the current cyclone season. A grant from the Cook Foundation was used to purchase a new pole trimmer, enabling the road clean-up projects for that area to trim branches too high for a chainsaw to reach.

Overhanging branches and trees in close proximity to power lines can always present a danger for cars and homes underneath, especially in the event of strong winds or a cyclone. Such hazardous trees were identified in the village and around homes for the tree-trimming program to target. With the aid of the pole trimmer, the beautification work in the village was made easier and safer. The village has also entered into the Vaka Pride competition organised by Cook Islands Tourism. This is not the first project that MP Brown has initiated with the Cook Foundation. The local MP has been working hard to ensure that these valuable funds provided from the Cook Foundation can be utilised to help with the needs of the community. The last project that was funded by the foundation enabled the community to purchase 1200 metres of rope in order to assist village households to secure their homes as a precaution during cyclone season.



Mark Brown is the vice president of the Cook Islands party and the member of Parliament for the villages of Takuavaine / Tutakimoa which are situated at the back of the town centre of Avarua, Rarotonga, Cook Islands. The constituency is made up of approximately 500 voters and their families.



GENERAL COMMUNITY GIFTING PROGRAM

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Aitutaki School inspires others with assistance from the Cook Foundation

Aitutaki's Araura College has made an exerted effort to become the first and only school in Cook Islands to make a 100% commitment to stop burning rubbish. With the school's strong emphasis on environmental protection, it was of great importance that the school be represented at the national environmental showcase Lagoon Day held on the 22nd-23rd October in Rarotonga. The school's principal Tracey Spiers reached out to the Cook Foundation, receiving a \$2000 grant to assist with the airfares for herself, a fellow teacher and 11 students from Araura's "Enviro Squad".



This is the first time that a school from Aitutaki has been represented at Lagoon Day, and hopefully will not be the last. The costly airfares were definitely worthwhile, with the school's "Enviro Squad" providing the public with an outstanding and inspiring example of what young people can do to help protect their environment. The Araura College Enviro Squad has been engaging in scientific research, finding creative ways to contribute to the protection of Aitutaki's land and precious lagoon.



Araura College is a state funded school on the island of Aitutaki and was first established as Aitutaki Junior High School in 1963. It has a student roll of about 190 students.

The Enviro Squad is an effort by the students of Araura College to make a change and to educate the community in how to care for the environment that they live in. The students have also created a Facebook page where you can view their projects and more stories at www.facebook.com/Envirosquad.

Cook Foundation assists Lagoon Day coordinator

The Cook Foundation provided indispensable support to the recent event Lagoon Day Cook Islands by funding the coordinators, June and Andrew Hosking, to fly to Rarotonga and oversee the two-day environmental show. June, currently living in Mauke, has had a pivotal role in Lagoon Day including setting up, assisting and supervising guides, coordinating bus and foot traffic flow and her very own stall and demonstration.



Among other things, her stall showcased processes for composting, including her very own compost and worm tower idea. The tower highlighted the importance of not burning organic waste, but using it as a source of water and food for nearby trees to grow. For more information on how to build the worm tower, visit www.facebook.com/Cook-Islands-Lagoon-Day-2015-126940637442109/

June's family has lent assistance to the success of the event since it began in 2008. She mentioned that many of her relatives share a passion for caring for the environment, and her vision for the event is for it to become something that would be accommodated within the national budget. Finally, she stressed that families are at the core of education about sustainable living and environmental responsibility, and that each individual has a crucial role in creating lasting change.



June and Andrew Hosking currently live in Mauke and are passionate about environmental issues. They have been the motivators behind Lagoon Day.

Lagoon Day is about working towards protecting the lagoon environment and so aims to educate the public on how landbased activity can affect the marine environment and how best to avoid any damaging practices.

