

Volunteers

by Bronwen Wall

What do you do in your free time? Some people choose to be volunteers – people who like to help others. I talked to some young volunteers to find out why they do it.



Loch Green – Repair Cafe

Loch is eight years old and volunteers at the Repair Cafe in Levin.



Bronwen: Kia ora, Loch. I've heard that you volunteer at the Repair Cafe. What is a repair cafe?

Loch: Well, the Repair Cafe is a place where you can bring broken things to be fixed. Volunteers are there to give you free advice and help. It's good for the environment to repair things instead of throwing them away. There are quite a few repair cafes around Aotearoa.

Bronwen: That sounds great. How do you help at the Repair Cafe?

Loch: I go along with my dad. He helps there, too. First I say "Hi" to everyone. Some people bring in things to be fixed, and others just come to have a look around. I make tea and coffee and give out cakes and biscuits to make them feel welcome.

Bronwen: What do you enjoy about volunteering?

Loch: I find out all sorts of interesting stuff about the things people bring in, and I really like talking to new people. The best thing is that it makes me feel good and makes me smile. Helping people is very satisfying.

Bronwen: It sounds like you have a fun time. Thanks for talking with me, Loch. Keep up the good work.



Te Ranginui-a-Ihu Ngariki Irwin – Te Wairoa Charitable Trust

Te Ranginui lives in Te Araroa on the east coast of the North Island. He helps out at Te Wairoa Charitable Trust, which looks after the local environment.

Bronwen: Kia ora, Te Ranginui. You are a volunteer, aren't you?

Te Ranginui: Yes. My two brothers are volunteers, too.

Bronwen: Tell me about why you volunteer.

Te Ranginui: We live in the best place on Earth – and we want to look after it. Te Araroa is the first place in Aotearoa to see the sun each day. We have a great beach, where we can fish straight from te moana. We've also got the Raukūmara forest, and we've got Te Waha o Rerekohu – the oldest and largest pōhutukawa tree in the world.



Bronwen: It sounds like a special place. No wonder you want to look after it.

Te Ranginui: Yes. Our whānau started a **rōpū** called Te Wairoa Charitable Trust. The trust looks after our environment and helps us connect to our **whenua**.

Bronwen: What do you and your brothers do to help?

Te Ranginui: The trust set up a native plant nursery on our whenua, and we join in with the rest of our rōpū to look after the plants. We water seedlings, and we put them in pots. We also pull out weeds and identify the different seedlings as they start coming through. We're really lucky to have the nursery. It helps us to connect with our **taiao**.

Bronwen: Thanks for telling us about your mahi, Te Ranginui, and thanks to you and your brothers for helping make Te Araroa even more special.

rōpū
an organisation

taiao
natural environment

whenua
land

Eulie Norton – Climate and Community

Eulie is ten years old and has been volunteering since she was seven. She volunteers to help make her community and the world a better place to live.

Bronwen: Kia ora, Eulie. Tell me about the volunteering that you do.

Eulie: I try to do whatever I can to help people take action about climate change. I've spoken at council meetings, and I've sent letters to the government about problems caused by climate change. I talked to a special government committee as well.

I also help out at community events. We had a Matariki event, and I served soup and washed dishes afterwards.

I've organised and helped with beach and riverside clean-ups, and I've also spoken to my local council about building a new community swimming pool. Our old pool closed in 2019. My friends and I went to lots of birthday parties at the old pool, and my school went there for swimming lessons and competitions. We all miss the old pool and want the council to build a new one.



Bronwen: Why do you volunteer so much?

Eulie: I'm trying to help build a better community and a better world – for me and for everyone. The Matariki event was held so that people from my community could come together to have fun and support each other.

I help with beach clean-ups and climate change because I think it's important to show that we can all do things to help our planet. If I do these things and talk with people about them, it helps make the environment better, and it helps people understand how important these places are for animals and humans.

And if I didn't tell the council, they might not understand how important a swimming pool is to my community and kids like me.



Bronwen: It sounds like a lot of work.

Eulie: *It is a lot of work, but it also feels really good because I'm doing something for our future.*

Bronwen: Thanks, Eulie, for telling us about your volunteering.



There are many young people doing great things to help make Aotearoa New Zealand a better place to live. Thanks to all of you for working so hard for our communities.

