

Helping villagers in Vanuatu ...



Customer Services Unit Manager David Dally recently travelled to Ambrym Island, Vanuatu, to install piping in remote jungle villages so residents could have a reliable fresh water supply. David was one of 11 people to go on a team organised by the group Youth With A Mission to complete the vital work.

"One of my friends from Alexandria was going, and they had a spot open up in the group," says David. "He called and asked if I was interested in joining them, and I said yes."

After arriving to Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu, the team spent two days gathering supplies and waiting for one of the twice weekly flights to Ambrym Island. Once they reached the island, the Youth With a Mission Group then had to travel by boat – in torrential rain, no less – to reach the first of five villages where the team would be working.

"Part of what was so amazing about the trip was that we actually lived with the villagers, ate what they ate, and were a part of their day to day lives. We weren't watching some sort of tourist display from a distance. It made the trip a genuine cultural experience."

Job Shadowing Grows on Participants

Heather Sumner, a Library Assistant at Papanui Library, decided to trade in stacks of books for rows of flowers. Choosing to spend a day outdoors with Angus Allan, the Mona Vale Coordinator, was a natural choice for someone with an interest in gardening.

The afternoon began with Angus giving Heather a tour of the gardens. He talked about not only what was in place at the moment, but also what the future plans for the grounds were. As a resident of the area, Heather particularly appreciated learning about what was in store not just for next year but the next decade and beyond.

After the tour, Heather spent the rest of the afternoon working with Angus and Brian Mitchelmore, Mona Vale Gardener, working in the flower beds. She also had the chance to see areas not open to the public, such as the gardeners' shed and workshop.

"The experience made me realise how much they do and how hard they work," she says. One important benefit of the program is that the exchange of information isn't one-sided. Participants not only learn about the jobs they've booked but also end up sharing what they do with who they're shadowing. "The job shadowing actually goes both ways," she says. Now Heather helps Brian, who is an avid reader, find good books on gardening in the Papanui Library.

When asked about the programme, Heather doesn't hesitate to recommend it. "I would tell people to do it - it was such a great experience. And there aren't many places where you would have this opportunity."

Having had a sample of job shadowing, Heather is now quite keen to have another go at it in the future. "Though I may try something a bit more out of my comfort range next time."



Democracy Services:

New role music to Council Secretary's ears

Though new to the role of Council Secretary in the Democracy Services Unit, Clare Sullivan is no stranger to the Christchurch City Council.

Starting out as Community Board Secretary for Hagley/Ferrymead, she has worked extensively with the community boards, and in May joined the Democracy Services Unit. Clare came to Christchurch about eight years ago from Wellington and was drawn to the Council straight away.

"I really enjoy providing advice and support to staff and elected members." And she appreciates the diversity of people working for the Council.

"You've got people from a huge variety of disciplines working here – from lawyers to engineers to support staff and more – and that's representative of the city in general."

Claire is also the Democracy Services Unit's representative on the Performance Excellence Network. "I enjoy meeting with staff from other departments. It gives us the chance to see how we can all work to be one team, look at what we do and get smarter about how we do it."

Clare lives in Diamond Harbour with her partner and their two dogs, and is passionate about her involvement with the local singing group. "We sing a cappella, in four-part harmony, a wide range of world music."

At work Clare is just as passionate about career development. "There are always opportunities in Council. I would really encourage staff to look for those opportunities and to take them."



Clare with Rex Harrison, a Senior Corporate Planner in Corporate Services, who is also involved with the Diamond Harbour singing group.