



15 JUN, 2021

## School programme to teach kids healthier habits

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By **ZOE GARDEN**

**T**he Young and Healthy Adventure programme has returned for another year to install healthy habits into Kiwi kids while rewarding them with a virtual trip around the globe.

More than 20,000 Kiwi kids completed the 2020 Zespri Young and Healthy Virtual Adventure with encouraging outcomes: eating more fruit and vegetables, drinking more water, reducing leisure screen time by 71 per cent and halving their junk food intake.

The latest statistics show that 79 per cent of Kiwi kids are watching 2+ hours of recreational screen time.

Only 11 per cent meet the recommended guidelines.

The programme is aimed at primary school classrooms all over Aotearoa and is occurring in term four from October 18 to November 19.

The 2021 adventure will see tamariki (children) virtually visit global destinations like Japan and Peru.

They will be accompanied by New Zealand sporting legends and ASICS ambassadors Ardie Savea (rugby), Ameliaranne Ekenasio (netball), Kane Williamson (cricket) and Samantha Charlton (hockey).

Points are earned through completing real-world habits like moving around, drinking water, eating healthy food and getting more sleep. Classes work

together as a team to earn points.

This allows them to take charge of the choices they make every day and better their physical and mental health.

At each destination, an ambassador will meet them to show them around and share interesting local history and geography.

Young and Healthy Trust (YAHT) founder Kim Harvey created the Virtual Adventure after becoming concerned for the growing health crisis in New Zealand. "YAHT was set up to help address the growing problem of the declining health of our children," Harvey says, "and the population as a whole."

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The habits formed in childhood can set us up for a lifetime of great physical and mental wellbeing.

The programme hopes to encourage healthy habits like reducing screen time and eating fruit and vegetables by reaching children and their families in an innovative, fun and easy way to build knowl-

edge and self-management of habits that contribute to good health and wellbeing.

Feedback from teachers and the kids have been positive.

"Kids have told us that they feel great during the programme and have more energy to learn," Harvey says. "It's even encouraging their teachers and parents to adapt healthier habits."

Harvey and YAHT are looking forward to having 20,000 places for the 2021 Zespri Young and Healthy Virtual Adventure.

Participation for the term four programme is open to all primary school classrooms including east Auckland and is free.

➤ **Teachers and parents can sign up at [youngandhealthy.org.nz](http://youngandhealthy.org.nz).**



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*Young and Healthy founder Kim Harvey with Rata Street school kids.*

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