



Individual Award Regional Winner - Profile

Melanie Budge

What is your job title?

Supervisor OSCAR Programmes Paeroa

Explain what a typical day at OSCAR is like for you?

Working with children doesn't make any day typical. Mostly days are creative days full of fun. Breakfast Club starts at 6.45 am, thanks to our wonderful staff I can begin a little later. The best part of my day is when the children wave out to me, smiling and say "Hi Mel, whats on?"

Afterschool programme "Children's Carehouse" starts at 2.30pm with our first child arriving, then a flow of children from 3.00 pm onwards, taxis arrive from 7 different schools in our area. Always cooking up delicious cakes, toasted sandwiches, great big pots of vegetable soup, cutting up fruit, and always a little voice saying I'm hungry. Bikes to fix, paintings to paint, ramps to build, huts to pull down and make again, that's what we like to do. Of course holidays organising 250 children from 3 towns, 50 teenage leaders and 70 other staff and volunteers can raise the blood pressure a little, but outcomes are great.

The other planning side of my job is hugely important, talking with staff, proposals, budgets, accounting and fundraising. Maintenance of our wonderful centre, takes a bit of planning and being the sort of person who loves bright colours, there is generally some project going on that involves paint, builders, or both. We are fundraising for a mini village to be built alongside our under 5s playground, lots of playtime for children.

I must say my day for "Carehouse" doesn't end at 6pm.. website updates, organising teenage leaders for day camp, activities, phoning parents, more paperwork.

How long have you worked in OSCAR?

Over 15 years running children's programmes in Paeroa.

What do you feel your greatest achievement has been in OSCAR?

Our programmes and centre are visited by many organisations, including this year delegates from 30 countries who work with children. We work very closely with Social Services in our area and our programme has a great community feel. The profile of children has been raised in our community, and this can only be good. I have also been able to show the children a kinder way of doing things, through mentoring staff, and showing kindness to others. I also spoke at the "Keeping Kids Safe" Conference about our programme.

Why should you become The OSCAR Foundation National Award winner?

Its would be so much fun getting an award for something I love so much. I believe through kindness, compassion and understanding, children can start the change needed to make the world a better place for the future.

This is the difference we are making in our OSCAR programme, changes in attitude. My passion is children and I know an award will help me in lots of ways make an even greater contribution to our community.

