



Individual Award Regional Winner Profile

Wellington, Wairarapa, Kapiti Coast, Levin

Bridget Royce *OSCAR House*

What is your job title?

Area Supervisor. I oversee our four Before and After School Programmes and Holiday Programme. I'm also Programme Supervisor of our largest Out of School Programme.

Give a brief description of a typical day at OSCAR for you.

The day starts at 7:30am which is a great opportunity to get a start on admin and greet children & parents. We prepare breakfast and morning activities which usually involves arts and crafts, board games, dramatic play and dress ups.

Afternoon session starts with the usual preparation of rosters, activities and afternoon tea. Once all children are accounted for, we have a bit of outdoor free play. This is a great time to chill out under the trees and connect with the kids or play a game of tag etc.

This is followed by organised activities, as our programme caters to Year 4-Year 8 children sport (soccer, rugby, netball and cricket) features quite heavily in our programming. Each week I like to add in another couple of activities such as mini putt, races & relays, tugs of war, tent building and treasure hunts just to keep things interesting.

On arrival at our venue homework time is initiated. Although this is not a favourite activity, with staff involvement and encouragement, there is little resistance. Other children are busily involved in art or craft projects which are a personal favourite of mine.

Afterwards we play group games which heightens the energy and excitement levels of the programme and is so much fun.

Then we enjoy wind down activities; 6pm comes around all too fast and an eerie quiet descends and a chance to have development meetings with staff and finish off the last of the admin tasks.

How long have you worked in OSCAR?

12 years, 11 years at OSCAR House. Gosh, has it been that long?!

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

Something I am quite proud of is a leadership programme for our Year 7 & 8's. We were experiencing difficulties with some of our children in this age range, many of whom had been in our programme for several years and were at a stage in their life where they would prefer to being hanging out at the mall with their friends. We considered their interests in our planning but we were finding it was not quite enough.

In April 2009 I developed a plan. The aim was to recognise the needs and developmental stage of our older attendees, to provide opportunities for leadership and personal development and to promote a positive influence of





the leaders on the programme. This has proven to be particularly valuable at our holiday programme. Expectations, responsibilities and limitations were defined, personal goals were established and daily meetings were held. It was in these meetings around hot chocolate and Easter eggs, I discovered the leaders had some novel and interesting insights into the programme and the younger children - they provided a unique view.

Naturally there were a few teething issues - oh how easy a sense of power can go to one's head! But I was truly impressed by our leaders they really thrived on the challenge; it seemed to highlight and encourage their amazing qualities. They helped younger children, encouraged uninvolved children to join in, assisted in running activities and displayed an immense maturity and initiative.

At the end of the holidays a best leader award was issued and all the leaders were rewarded with a special trip. It was great to see such a dramatic improvement in these children and our programme. I think allowed them to attend the programme in a new way and made them feel valued.

Why should you become The OSCAR Foundation National Award winner?

Ask anyone who knows me "what is she passionate about?" Without any hesitation the answer would emphatically be "OSCAR". I pretty much love everything about what we do.

There are so many aspects to my role at OSCAR. I find it constantly challenging and rewarding. When I first started I was young and had little confidence in myself, but through training, support of my managers and working with the children I have grown. OSCAR has an amazing ability to bring the best out of people. The lessons I have learnt are invaluable in the training of our staff.

I am, along with our programme, continually developing. A great example of this would be after having an epiphany watching boys play, pushing each other around a mud pile (My first instinct stop!) I realised I was overly protective under the ideal of safety. At a staff meeting I put a challenge to the staff and we started encouraging adventurous play. A little rough and tumble is acceptable; the aim to challenge the children, encourage sensible risk taking and develop confidence. This was a lot of fun and had some amazing outcomes.

I am always open and available to our parents. Sometimes there are those awkward conversations, but parents appreciate my approach and the interest I put in to their children and I feel this helps strengthen our relationships.

By being involved with the children, providing a stimulating and varied programme with lots of wonderful activities - active and creative - this naturally enriches their lives. I know mine sure is!!

