

Altrusa Club working on improving literacy

One of the goals of the Altrusa International Club of Te Awamutu is to encourage the improvement of literacy skills in the Community.

And what better day to celebrate it than World Literacy Day, held last month.

At least 750,000 million adults and 264 million children worldwide lack basic literacy skills. In New Zealand adult literacy has improved since the mid 1990s.

However there are still many without literacy skills, and for these individuals there are huge barriers to achieving a good job, a driver's license, and fulfilling their potential for a good life.

This year's literacy theme was 'literacy in a digital world.' Digital technologies are changing the way we work, live, learn and socialise. Those who do not have access to such technology are at a very significant disadvantage, both for learning and engaging in our communities.

In our community Te Awamutu Intermediate students are benefiting from the recently introduced STEPS Literacy Programme.

Altrusa Te Awamutu has donated funds to the school to make it easier for students to access the programme. This programme combines digital and conventional learning methods, to improve young people's literacy skills.

STEPS is a highly structured remedial spelling programme and builds processing and perceptual skills.

Students work with workbooks, a parallel computer programme and have individual time with the teacher.

The school requires a licence each year and the donation will assist with purchasing the workbooks required.

It is hoped to offer the programme school-wide eventually as it is ideal



TC241017STEPS

STEPS teacher Cherrie Rounthwaite working with a group of Te Awamutu Intermediate students.



TC241017SPMARY

ALTRUSA member Mary Karl reading to her grandchildren Riley (3) and Jade (1).

for students with dyslexia or who have English as a second language.

The programme can also be accessed from home for follow up activities.

STEPS teacher Cherrie Rounthwaite says they are very grateful for the donation

which will be used to subsidise books.

She said students have generally responded well and she is seeing steady progress even after 10 weeks. The programme was started in Christchurch and is now offered widely throughout New Zealand and Australia and is

extending to other countries as well.

As well as supporting the local Intermediate School's STEPS programme, members of the Altrusa Club locally were encouraged to celebrate World Literacy Day by doing something in their family or local community that is about literacy.

"This could be as simple as reading to a grandchild, encouraging or supporting individuals to use our fabulous library, or visiting the Aotearoa Literacy website, to see what is available for adults with low literacy.

"Altrusa Te Awamutu recognises what a huge difference literacy makes in peoples lives, as expressed by Kofi Annan: 'Literacy is a bridge from misery to hope. It is a tool for daily life..... For everyone everywhere, literacy, along with education in general, is a basic human right...the road to human progress'."