

Youth want own centre

By DENISE PIPER

YOUNG leaders are waiting patiently for a response from the Whangarei District Council about their proposed youth centre.

Prefects from five main schools have banded together to form the Whangarei Youth Forum.

The forum has called for a free, non-religious youth centre to be set up to combat boredom.

Forum representatives have pitched the idea to the council in a full council meeting and as part of the annual plan, and are now waiting for a response, spokesman and Whangarei Boys' High School student Troy Horan says.

"The big idea for us is partnership," he says.

"We can't tackle all these problems on our own, we know that."

The forum was set up last year and many of the leaders are now year 13 and want to get something done before they move on to tertiary education, he says.

The forum has also asked the council about access to The Church Youth Centre on Bank St but has not had any response, Pompallier College student Francis Kim says.

"Location-wise it's pretty good because it's central," he says.

Troy says the council also has unoccupied buildings which could be used.

The forum says the youth centre could be manned by volunteer youth workers and be open 4pm to 8pm on weekdays and at weekends.

A code of conduct would make it uncool to use alcohol and drugs and ensure the centre is safe, Troy says.

The centre could be funded



Youth vision: Youth forum members Francis Kim, left, and Troy Horan, both 17, want somewhere for young people to hang out other than the library.

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Student Troy Horan

the spectrum," she says.

The council has invited the forum and its convener Jeff Griggs to work together with Youth Transition Services, Manaia PHO and the Northland Youth Development Trust.

Ms Thompson says the forum had two main requests during annual plan submissions - it wanted to give youth a voice and it wanted a space created for youth.

Last week the council and the Northland Youth Development Trust were granted funding for a youth council from the Youth Development Ministry. The council has also supported an application by Youth Transition Services and Manaia PHO for funding for a youth space.

Ms Thompson says the council plans to send out all responses to annual plan submissions by the end of July, a month after the plan is adopted.



Great sight: Doug Wilson, 75, is on a mission for Glaucoma NZ.

Big strides in glaucoma fight

Seventy-five-year-old Doug Wilson has been enjoying the north's sights as he walks the length of the country.

The Tauranga Grey Power president is Nordic walking from Cape Reinga to Bluff to raise money and awareness for glaucoma.

Glaucoma is the leading cause of preventable blindness in New Zealand.

The vision loss often goes undetected but blindness can be prevented with early treatment.

Doug was diagnosed with glaucoma in one eye last September and has had successful eye-drop treatment.

He says he improved from 20 percent vision in the eye to about 90 percent.

Doug says New Zealanders are on the leading edge of preventing glaucoma blindness but Glaucoma NZ gets no government funding and relies on donations.

Doug has encouraged every Grey Power association in New Zealand to put out a collection box during

July, which is Glaucoma Awareness Month.

He also decided to do the walk, which he expects will take 55 days.

"If you even think you might have glaucoma, get it tested and get treatment. The sooner you get treatment the better."

Those wanting to support Doug can donate through ASB Bank, account number 12-3013-0180964-00, or go to www.glaucoma.org.nz for more information.

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