

Volunteers for sport priceless

By DAVID HILL

Sport Tasman Kaikoura advisor Luisa Coyle says sports volunteers are winners in her eyes.

"Without them the sporting community that we have would not thrive. There are very few people in paid employment working in sport, so almost all clubs are run by committed volunteers making it happen," she says.

It was not just about the faces on the field, but also the secretary, treasurer and all the other hidden jobs that people did to help run a sports club, she says.

Kaikoura's sports volunteers were recognised last week at the Sport NZ / Lotto Volunteer Sport Makers Awards hosted by Sport Tasman after the public nominated volunteers in the community.

"It's always tough to pick two runners-up and a winner, as in my eyes they are all winners," Ms Coyle says.

This year's winner was the Kaikoura "Blue Light Initiative", a group of people that works in with the police.

"Tony Anker (Harcourts real estate), Mike Lawrie (high school teacher), Holly McKee (school teacher), Janine Bell (local business owner), Matt Boyce (police Sergeant) and Tony (police officer), plus the many parents who help get this programme together for kids aged from 13-19 from the Kaikoura community."

It is run over the course of eight weeks at three mornings a week with a 6am start with kids taught a drill and put through some 'exceptional' work outs. They are provided with a cooked breakfast after each session with food



Volunteers . . . From left: Janine Bell (Blue Light initiative), Emma Fissenden (5km Run Series, Duathlon, Heart Foundation Mother's Day Fun Run & Bridge 2 Bridge), Matt Boyce (Blue Light initiative), Tony Anker (Blue Light Initiative), Shannon-Leigh (Endurance Athlete - Guest Speaker), Marty Pattison (Swimming Club).

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provided from fundraising, donations and community grants.

The event culminates with "The Longest Day" challenge.

Some taking part are "at risk", others are there to challenge themselves and gain a sense of accomplishment and also a sense of achievement. All the people that help are all volunteers.

The programme's goal is participation in positive recreation and social activities to help young people to become involved in their family and community and remain at school longer and have a more positive outlook on life.

The runners-up were Marty Pattison, along with Emma Fissenden and Judith Ford.

Marty dedicates hours each summer to organising and coaching junior swimming club groups, Ms Coyle says. This

includes swimming galas and weekend competitions within the club and also against other clubs.

"He is a valuable asset to the Kaikoura swimming community."

Emma and Judith "are a great inspiration to the Kaikoura community", running the Kaikoura 5km run every Tuesday during term time, "no matter what the weather".

"Both of these women are mothers, but still find the time to give back to the community.

"It does not stop there. They also organised the Mothers' Day fun run which saw all its donations going to the Heart Foundation.

"There is the Kaikoura Duathlon, and also recently the Bridge 2 Bridge, a mountain bike and running event in the Clarence Valley raising money over \$6500 for the hospital. All their events are for both children and adults."