

To begin this application, we need to describe our class. We have been on and continue to be on an amazing journey. It has caused us all to become highly passionate about the ENVIRONMENT. We have done so much work and thinking about the environment and how we can make changes to protect the earth.

1. Where you started from

We began this journey during Plastic Free July. We watched videos about how plastic was harming the environment. We saw the impact that plastic had on sea life and we discovered



that plastic has an incredibly long life. We saw huge rubbish build ups on beaches. We wished to do something to help.



We wanted to try and use less plastic, so we began with our lunchboxes. We encouraged our parents to buy less plastic. We spoke to one of the parents in our community who is incredibly passionate about the environment. Lorella came in and talked to us about her amazing work in reducing plastic in our community. Lorella gave us ideas on how to make easy changes to reduce our own plastic usage. She talked about our lunchboxes and how we could begin with reducing plastic there. We talked about not using straws when we go to cafes. She made us think about our plastic bag use. Did we really need a plastic bag each time we shopped?

2. What did you do?

Whilst we were partaking in Plastic Free July we went to the Taranaki Recycling centre to see how the recycling system worked. We discovered that GladWrap can not be recycled, but is something we use frequently. After some research, we made some bees wax wraps to cover our food. We wanted to make them at school because they can be expensive to buy and if we made them at school everyone would have one to utilise. We also switched to using reusable bags for our class shopping as we knew that in Taranaki we can not recycle soft plastic. We have



even made our own fruit and vegetable bags that we gifted for Mothers Day.

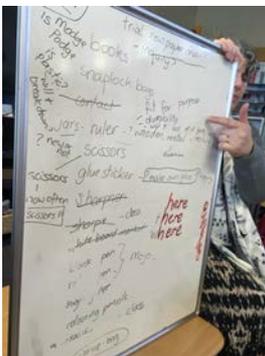
This work led to us evaluating our classroom rubbish. We noticed that we use plastic bin liners, so we experimented with using paper bin liners. We tried a few different ones and made adaptations to improve the effectiveness. Now, we only use paper bin liners. We were also able to drastically reduce our plastic waste, and only use one bin in our block which does not even need to be emptied everyday!



Our progress made us feel enthused! We turned our attention to our morning tea programme. We voted to become completely plastic free. We already used reusable bags but we still sometimes purchased crackers in plastic or sauce in bottles. We decided that rather than buying foods in plastic we would make our own instead. We are still trialing different recipes, but so far we have enjoyed most of them. We are learning more about the herbs and vegetables in our school gardens. We are learning which herbs go well in different dishes. We are learning when to plant and replant vegetables so that we can utilise our vegetable gardens all year round so that we can be more sustainable.



After our work in the kitchen we began to look at our stationery. This resulted in us doing an entire inquiry into our classroom stationery. We did experiments into the durability of different rulers and enviro pens and pencils. We wrote letters and emails to stationery manufacturers to ask for their advice. We did lots of trials with different glues. We wrote letters to the principal and staff at our school, sharing our findings and requesting a change to the stationery list. They accepted our ideas and now the entire school use eco-pens, wooden rulers and recyclable pencils. We do not cover our books in plastic sticky covering any longer.



During this work, we began doing weekly walks to collect rubbish. We call ourselves the 'Kaitiaki of Ngamotu Beach'. Each week a group go to collect rubbish at our local beach. We then weigh the rubbish to see how much we have collected. We keep a record of this data so we can continually analyse it.

Recently, we did an extra clean up after the Colour Run. It was shocking to see how much rubbish was left lying around even after



the council had done a huge tidy up. We grouped and categorised the waste. We identified that lots of the rubbish was from the pouches the powder paint was in and prizes from the event sponsors.



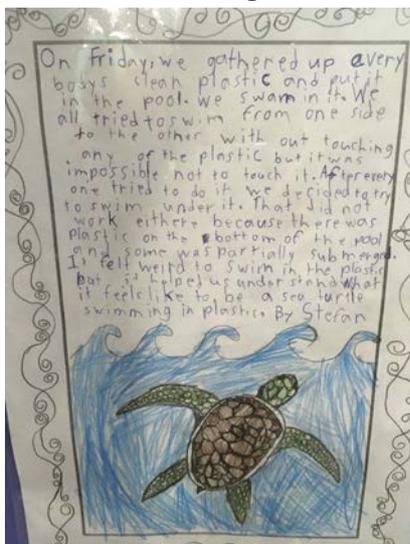
We wrote to the organisers of the event explaining our findings. They visited us and were really shocked at the mess and thankful for our help. They are now looking at how to improve the event for next



year and how to minimise the amount of waste that the event creates. We spent time designing plastic free alternatives for the powder paint and M&Ms. We also created posters to inform and educate our community about reducing plastic, minimising rubbish and the impact of plastic to sea creatures. We took these posters to the council to share our message with the public. We visited the local paint

shop who sponsored the event and showed them our ideas for alternative ways to store the powder paint and M&M's. The staff took our ideas and are going to take these back to the managers of the business.

After our big collection at the beach we noticed that sadly, we had missed a lot of rubbish that had already been



collected by the tide. We decided to experiment with how it feels swimming in water filled with rubbish. For our last swimming session



of the year, we added plastics to the swimming pool and swam amongst the rubbish. We discovered that it was incredibly hard to swim without bumping in to the plastic. We wrote about our experience and the impact of plastic in the sea.

3. Progress you have seen

We have learnt so much. We have learnt about the dangers of plastics in the environment. We have helped educate and inform our communities. We have drastically reduced the plastic waste in our own classroom and this has fed back into our homes and our communities. We can see less plastic at our local beach. We have a guarantee from the colour run organisers that next year will be waste free. Most importantly we have learnt that every little bit of help does help and that we can really make a difference.

4. What will you do next?

We are going to continue to be the ‘Kaitiaki of Ngamotu Beach’. We are adding up the weight of all the rubbish we pick up from the beach. We hope to message other schools. We are hoping that other schools will join in and protect other areas around our city. If every beach has 4kg of rubbish picked up every week, imagine how much it will all be! We are now looking at helping to reduce water pollution by creating a rain garden at our school. We have begun researching, discovering, investigating, fundraising and now we are at the planning stage. When our rain garden is built, we will learn from it what works well and what doesn’t. We are still learning about eco friendly stationery and more recipes for pestos, hummus and crackers. We are building up our gardens more. We will continue to learn more and more about how to change our habits to care for our community and beautiful Earth.

“We can make a difference”

Koromiko/Pinatoro Class

Moturoa School

New Plymouth