

Back to the Future

for Rata Street and Arakura Students

Pupils from Rata Street School in Naenae and Arakura School in Wainuiomata stepped back in time, interviewing two local personalities about how they got to and from school many years ago.

Rata Street students interviewed Billy Graham, who has lived in Naenae since he was a young boy. Billy runs a very popular Boxing Academy in Naenae and travels around New Zealand as a mentor.

Billy told the students that 50 years ago his main mode of transport was a bike which he rode to school 90% of the time. He has always enjoyed sport and said that biking everywhere was great for his fitness. Billy played lots of sports at school, including cricket, rugby league, tennis and athletics and later he went on to boxing.

Billy (in his 60s) still works out regularly at his boxing gym, doing sit ups, chin ups and lots of skipping.

He encourages children to keep fit, and walking, cycling or scooting to school is a great start.

Meanwhile Arakura students asked Hutt City Mayor Ray Wallace, when he visited the school to check out their walking buses, how he travelled to and from school when he was a boy.

Mayor Wallace said he went to Te Aro Primary School in central Wellington and walked to school every day. A group of children from his neighbourhood would meet up at a particular corner and all walk to school together, so he joked that he was part of one of the 'original' walking school buses. He said he remembers feeling good after walking to school and it kept everyone fit and healthy.

Mayor Wallace said the only time he was ever driven to school was on 10th April 1968, the day of the Wahine disaster. It was a violent southerly storm, one of the worst recorded in New Zealand's history.

Nowadays he still enjoys walking for health, and often goes out for a walk with his wife Linda around the streets near their Wainuiomata home. Riding his bike is another favourite leisure time activity.

Walking school buses are definitely a hit at Arakura School. At the beginning of Term 1 this year two new groups started, and now a total of around 20 students walk with their groups each day. They find that walking together is fun, and it helps them get to school on time. Parents are pleased too – their morning routine is simplified if their children can get to school independently. Two or three pupils are accompanied by their younger brothers and sisters who attend the kindergarten close to the school. The buses are led by parent volunteers.



*Billy's Motto...
"Kids in Sport, Stay out of Court"*



Mayor Wallace said the only time that he was ever driven to school was on 10th April 1968, the day of the Wahine disaster...