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Corporate Plan Output: Environmental Promotion/Parks Education	

The purpose of this report is to gain support of Community Board members for the proposed Arbor Day programmes for this year.

INTRODUCTION

“Arbor” means tree in Latin. It is the day officially set aside for planting trees and was first celebrated in New Zealand in 1890. In New Zealand Arbor Day is always celebrated on June the 5th (which is also World Environment Day). Arbor Day, or similar tree planting programmes are held worldwide and are designed to foster care for trees and our natural environment.

A review of the Arbor Day activities within the various Community Board areas was undertaken by relevant staff members in an effort to introduce a consistent programme across the city.

Past efforts have included a number of annual planting days in larger regional parks that have involved ongoing participation by a small number of schools. More recently in some ward areas, Community Boards have provided schools with the opportunity to apply for trees through the Area Parks Officers for grounds enhancement, shelter and shade.

Historically, an Arbor Day budget of \$11,400 has been held by the Parks Unit for a variety of community Arbor Day activities that should continue to be supported through this source. Good relationships have been established over time with the schools that have participated in the planting days within some of the cities larger regional parks and it would be difficult to relinquish these partnerships. It is also important however that all schools are encouraged to carry out Arbor Day plantings in some form.

OBJECTIVES

Through this programme, achievement of the following objectives will be fostered:

- The importance of amenity values which contribute to the city’s pleasantness and aesthetic coherence.
- An environmentally aware, informed and responsible community.
- A sense of community, and participation in community events and decision-making processes. (Taken from “A Vision for Christchurch”)

PROPOSAL

It is considered that a programme could be based upon offering all schools the opportunity of plants for school planting programmes as a part of their Arbor Day activities; on the proviso that:

- they provide a planting plan
- they place mulch over the planted area (schools will be advised of Envy's offer of mulch at a reduced price)
- they involve the children in the planting and maintenance of the plants provided
- and that messages learnt during the planting are followed up and reinforced within the classroom (activity sheets will be made available through EPP and Parks)

On site assistance will be available to all participating schools and will be the responsibility of the Park Ranger Service. Rangers will ensure that the correct ground preparation is carried out and that plants are appropriately planted. On request they will also provide an education component on the day - covering the importance of caring for our natural environment including local parks and green spaces.

Administration and media coverage will be co-ordinated by the Parks Unit and the Environmental Policy and Planning Unit. Schools will be asked to select (and pick up) trees from those held by Trees for Canterbury. The purchase of trees through Trees for Canterbury will mean more plants can be acquired allowing more children the opportunity for involvement. All participating schools will receive certificates for their contribution to Arbor Day. Community Board members will be advised of the schools planting programmes within their ward areas so that if they wish they can be involved in the presentation to schools.

- Recommendations:**
1. That each Community Board support the above programme.
 2. That an annual commitment of \$2,000 be set aside by each Board to provide for trees for Arbor Day plantings in schools grounds (within its area of responsibility).

- Chairperson's Recommendation:**
1. That the Board support Arbor Day plantings.
 2. That schools be encouraged to be involved in community planting to recognise Arbor Day.
 3. That the Board consider allocating funding to provide trees for Arbor Day planting in school grounds as outlined in the report.