

Te reo o te KUKI AIRANI

Cook Islands NEWS

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Gymnastics holiday programme

THE MINISTRY of Health-funded 'Gymnastics – the sport for everybody – holiday programme' started yesterday.

The programme was booked out earlier than anticipated, indicating the growing popularity of the sport in the Cook Islands.

Activities for primary school-aged children will take place each morning until Friday at the Princess Ann Hall.

These activities aim to encour-

age healthy behaviour changes in children, as well as promoting positive attitudes towards healthy lifestyle choices.

The gymnastics programme has the additional benefits of providing a fun activity to occupy children during the school break, and also doubles as a childcare option for working parents.

The vision of the Cook Islands Gymnastics Federation (CIGF) is

about leading the way to healthy living and encouraging easy movement through gymnastics.

Through this holiday programme, CIGF will make progress towards one of their primary strategic initiatives, which is to build the gymnastics profile and provide potential opportunities for every child on Rarotonga to experience gymnastics.

To complement the physical

activities, instructors will lead the children in activities such as planting vegetable seeds and making a fridge magnet of a healthy food plate.

The children will also be involved in the preparation of healthy morning-tea snacks using locally sourced food, including fruit and vegetables.

Throughout each day's activities, instructors will communicate health messages in ways

that are engaging and will help the children to remember, such as using puppets, music and visual cues.

Brooke Kneebush, Oceania Gymnastics development manager for Gymnastics Australia, is visiting Rarotonga for the week and will work alongside local coaches to conduct the programme.

"Research tells us that children who have good fundamen-

tal skills such as those developed through gymnastics are far more likely to participate in sport and recreation throughout life," she said.

"By communicating these health messages to children while they are young, we have a great opportunity to promote lifelong change. And the hope is that the children will take these messages home to their parents and siblings too." ■ CIGF