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“Healthy Holiday Handstands!”

The kids of Cook Islands are turning upside down in their excitement for attending the Ministry of Health funded **“Gymnastics - The sport for every BODY – Holiday Program”** this week. Up to 30 children have attended the half day program each morning instructed by Cook Islands Gymnastics Federation coaches and mentored by Gymnastics Australia’s Oceania Development Manager Brooke Kneebush.

A highlight of the program is the opportunity to use a new inflatable tumbling strip funded through the Cook Islands Ministry of Health grant that made this program possible. The air filled mat enables the gymnasts to run and tumble seamlessly, without interrupting skills, or risking tripping over. “It will certainly lead to improved skills and increased safety” stated Brooke. Other highlights include the opportunity to participate in intensive training and reinforce skills day after day, meeting new friends and plenty of fun and games.

Major aims of the program are to promote the benefits of physical activity, the importance of drinking water for hydration and appreciating the value of fruit and vegetables as “fast foods” for a meal or snack. To reinforce these take-home health messages games have incorporated the concept of making healthy food choices, morning tea refreshments have included an array of health foods such as locally sourced fruit, and art & craft activities have included creating a rainbow of colourful healthy foods, a beaded bracelet of favourite healthy foods and a paper art fruit bowl.

Media are invited to view the program which takes place between 8:30am and 12:30pm each day this week, with ideal photo opportunities between the following times:

- 9:35am – 10am
- 10:30am – 10:55am
- 11:15am – 11:40am

Brooke Kneebush will remain in Rarotonga until Tuesday 1st May and is available for interview by contacting local mobile number 50069.

To find out more email Teina Taulu cookislandsgymnastics@gmail.com

