

Leaving an environmental legacy

A new partnership between Summerset at Bishopscourt and the Orokonui Ecosanctuary will provide a long-lasting, multi-generational difference to our local environment.

Not only has the retirement village provider pledged financial support for the next three years, Summerset residents have jumped on board to volunteer their time and energy by giving practical help and resources.



General Manager of Orokonui Ecosanctuary, Chris Baillie, and Summerset at Bishopscourt's Activities Coordinator Ron Hielkema show off one of the donation boxes crafted by a resident.

Summerset's Activities Coordinator, Ron Hielkema, is passionate about ensuring residents and their families can visit the sanctuary, take part in educational events, and feel as though they are leaving a lasting impact on their community.

"More and more, residents have a preservation and conversation mind-set with a focus on sustainability. They expect an environmentally friendly approach and are conscious of their footprint – they want to make sure their footprint is giving back," says Ron.

"The Orokonui Ecosanctuary is long lasting. While we as humans are only here for a certain amount of years, it remains for hundreds. Residents get excited about leaving a legacy, and supporting growth and re-growth."

Orokonui Ecosanctuary General Manager Chris Baillie is grateful for the support Summerset's residents are giving to the sanctuary's vision to benefit future generations.



Bart Hellendoorn, a resident at the village, recently put his hands to work making beautiful wooden donation boxes for the sanctuary.

“They will be placed around businesses in the city, are wonderfully made and will make a huge difference,” says Chris.

“Newly retired volunteers still have energy and enthusiasm, and can contribute to a long-term project that has value for their own families.”

Chris is encouraged that residents will be able to enjoy the wheelchair accessible tracks, and is excited that sanctuary staff will also visit the village to bring educational talks, productions, and events about nature.

“The contributions Summerset is making keeps us going and gives us security. We have species here we are protecting, and they’ll now be around for residents’ grandchildren and great-grandchildren to see.”