

Four more years for Futureintech

2007 marks a significant milestone for Futureintech. The initiative was launched in 2003 on the basis of an initial four year programme, a period which comes to an end this year. We are delighted to announce that Futureintech's performance so far, and the overwhelmingly positive response and support it has received, has resulted in New Zealand Trade and Enterprise's decision to provide funding for a further four years.

Futureintech is therefore officially no longer an idealistic experiment but an established programme of acknowledged value. Over the past four years, employees and volunteers, educators and industry representatives have responded to the need for young people to be informed about careers in technology, engineering and science. We are witnessing results.

Although measurable proof of Futureintech's impact will take time to develop, anecdotal evidence from teachers demonstrates that Ambassadors do have an impact on students' career choices, and that individuals have benefited from the exposure to wider possibilities.

Over 200 young industry professionals currently volunteer in schools as Futureintech Ambassadors, and around

the country Futureintech has some form of contact with 978 schools and 149 industry partners. In the first six months of this year alone over 340 school visits have been made by Ambassadors, working with students from primary through to senior secondary level on group or individual projects, or simply explaining what their jobs entail and offering careers advice.

Karen Cebalo **Teacher, Browns Bay School**

Karen's group of Browns Bay students are entering the Transpower Neighbourhood Engineers Awards.

Environmental Engineer and Futureintech Ambassador Andrew Congalton advises Neighbourhood Engineers Awards entrants at Browns Bay School as they design a fitness trail.

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"Students are learning such a wide range of skills in a practical real world context. Most recently Andrew took them out to measure existing equipment and then find out the average heights of things. They learnt about measuring accurately, using the correct units, how to round numbers and how to work out an average."

**Jennifer Wong, Year 13
Westlake Girls High**

"Futureintech was extremely helpful in guiding me along to determine my career path. I was interested in chemical engineering but was far from being sure about it.

"Apart from having a website with a lot of practical information, Futureintech also organised a fantastic visit for me to talk with a chemical engineer about her work, who gave me really useful advice and an insight into the industry. Now I've seen some of the things she has worked on, I'm quite inspired to pursue the career path of an engineer."

**Jerry Khoo
Transportation Engineer (Beca)
Futureintech Ambassador**

"One of the major advantages of being involved is personal satisfaction. Nothing feels better than being able to contribute and give something back to the community, which is possibly one of the reasons I ended up studying civil engineering. And the sense of this personal satisfaction is something that will keep me passionately motivated and excited in my work. Besides, explaining how things work to the kids also gives me a chance to reflect on the way we do things."

Futureintech Ambassador Jerry Khoo works with students at Sunny Hills Primary to make drop-off and pick-up times safer for the whole school.



**Sean Milnes
Mechanical Engineer (NZ Steel)
Futureintech Ambassador**

"I had a great time. I visited the class on three occasions a fortnight apart, and between my visits the kids did work developing specifications to focus their thinking, looked further at material selection, did some research, and collated everything together for their presentation.

Sean Milnes and students at Sunny Hills Primary examine aerial photos of NZ Steel.

"I enjoyed the opportunity to bring some engineering knowledge to the community in a fun environment. It was great to work with the kids, who were excited to have someone from outside come to their class and teach them some interesting new ideas."



Busy times

Recent months have seen dramatic increases in the number of Ambassador visits to schools. In Futureintech's most active term to date, Facilitators in some regions have co-ordinated up to 20 Ambassador interventions in a single week.

This achievement indicates the value schools place on the real-world perspective brought by Ambassadors to different areas of the curriculum.

It also reflects the confidence Facilitators are able to have in their trained Ambassadors. When Facilitators can trust Ambassadors

to respond to the unpredictable demands of a classroom and positively represent themselves, their industries and Futureintech, they are able to send them to schools unaccompanied and ensure that increasing numbers of visits are possible.

Six months of GAS

Get Alongside a Careers Advisor was launched last December by Futureintech to reach the areas of New Zealand not catered for by Facilitators. IPENZ members are encouraged to make themselves available to their local school as a source of information on careers in engineering.

Over the past six months, 44 IPENZ members have risen to the challenge and registered as GAS engineers.

Chris Treleaven, Associate Director (Structures) at Maunsell Ltd in Auckland, has been in contact with Westlake Boys, where his son is a student.

"The careers advisor has been very receptive to the idea of students considering engineering as a career having access to a practicing professional. My employing organisation has a large variety of engineering work and many younger engineers willing to share their insights and experiences with school students. I have offered to facilitate workplace visits in support of this contact, which was viewed very favourably by the careers advisor I have spoken to.

"Feedback I have had is that most careers advice students receive is pitched from the perspective of the various tertiary institutions that offer engineering qualifications, with many being guided in that direction on the basis that they have achieved the necessary academic benchmarks in algebra and physics. While these are no doubt necessary skills, I believe it would give students a better basis for selecting a future career if they were better informed on what is on the horizon beyond university life.

"I think this effort will allow students to make an informed choice on engineering as a career, and also raise the level of understanding of what sort of things engineers actually do within that section of the community."

FUTUREINTECH FACILITATORS

If your school could benefit from this fantastic resource, please contact your local Futureintech Facilitator.

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Futureintechnews

Farewell to Neil Potter



Neil Potter, Facilitator in Christchurch since 2004, is leaving Futureintech to return to the classroom.

In an impressive demonstration of work/life balance, he has secured the position of Deputy Principal at Twizel Area School where his wife, Kay, has also been appointed Assistant Principal.

Neil has been behind much of the growth of Futureintech's reputation in the South Island and has made the most of his previous experience in both teaching and engineering to gain wide-ranging contacts and enthusiastically establish connections between schools and industry. He will be much missed and we wish him all the best in his new role.

Neil says of his time as a Facilitator: "It's been a wonderful experience for me to work with the Futureintech team over the last three-and-a-half years. I have met fascinating people in both industry and education. It has also been an opportunity to inform teachers and parents of the fascinating careers their students and children can follow.

"Although I am returning to teaching, I am sure that I will be using Futureintech in some capacity to provide great information and opportunities for the students, teachers and parents I meet.

"I wish the Futureintech team and the staff at IPENZ well in the future. Thanks to the teachers who have invited Ambassadors into their classrooms. Finally, thanks to the Ambassadors from industry whose enthusiasm is reflected in the eyes of the students they encounter."

Southern spread

Futureintech is expanding in the South Island. Recruitment is in progress for new Facilitators in Dunedin and Invercargill, as well as in Christchurch with the departure of Neil.

www.futureintech.co.nz

Futureintech's website contains a wealth of information for students, parents, teachers and careers advisors. It has profiles of young people working in technology, engineering and science, and the companies they work for, along with information on different courses, careers and scholarships available.

The experience of Facilitators around the country indicates that a quality service can best be provided by working locally. The former Otago position will therefore be replaced by one full-time Facilitator in Dunedin and the creation of a new part-time role in Invercargill.

These appointments, along with the recent position created in Napier and successfully filled by Jenny Dee, will bring the number of Facilitators around the country to nine.



New career brochures

The first of Futureintech's new range of careers brochures will be available from next week. Created in collaboration with the New Zealand Institute of Food Science and Technology, the new publication offers an insight into the diversity of careers within the food industry.

Brochures promoting careers in science and in chemical engineering are also being developed and will be published before the next issue of **enews for schools**.

Website relaunch

The new-look Futureintech website will be launched at the beginning of July. While continuing to offer the current resources of course and career information and profiles of Ambassadors and employers, the new site will have a cleaner, more up-to-date appearance and more intuitive navigation.