

Youth group big earners

Mangapapa praised by World Vision

by Kayla Dalrymple

EMPTY tummies led to full coffers for the Mangapapa Church youth group over the weekend.

There are 27 high school students in the group that takes part in the 40-hour famine every year. Last year they raised about \$4000, the most raised by a church group nationwide.

This year they were at it again. Although the final amount has yet to be tallied, the group has already raised more than \$5500. The church assets finance committee also made a contribution.

The 40-hour famine started on Friday night and the group met for a camp sleep-over on Saturday, finishing off with church on Sunday.

Because of their past fundraising efforts, World Vision chief executive officer Chris Clarke visited the church and preached during the service. He was on hand to congratulate and chat to the group as the noon end time neared.

"It is unbelievable for a church in provincial New Zealand to raise so much money. I think they will be close to being top church again, which is just phenomenal.

"Meeting these people who have got a real sense that they can make a difference in the world, and seeing that passion and spirit, is the best part of the job."

There are more than 4000 churches in the country.

"The 40-hour famine is a New Zealand rite of passage. We are trying to encourage people to have a world view bigger than themselves.

"When you are overseas and you are talking to a mother whose child is dying of an illness, and you tell them that people in New Zealand went without for them, that is really powerful."

Toni Hoskin and her husband Craig are the youth group leaders. They held the sleep-over at their house on Saturday night.



CEO APPROVAL: World Vision chief executive officer Chris Clarke (left) journeyed to Gisborne over the weekend to congratulate the Mangapapa Church youth group for their 40-hour famine efforts. Last year the group raised more than any other church in the country. Lara Watson, Layton Hockey and Paige Rofe are pictured about 20 minutes before they were allowed to eat for the first time in 40 hours.

Picture by Rebecca Grunwell

"I feel stoked for the kids. In a day and age where it is tempting to be egocentric, to see them think of others and raise money for people they have never met, is really cool," says Mrs Hoskin.

The group started planning for the famine around five weeks ago.

"Everyone should give it a go. It is hard but when you look at the big picture, it is so worth it."

Funds raised from this year's 40-hour famine will go toward World Vision's nutrition and food security projects in Bangladesh, where eight million children are chronically hungry.

Brett Hockey, 14, says the hardest part was skipping Saturday morning breakfast.

"This is the second time I have done the famine. It is not that big a deal giving up food, but you can get lots of money for it and it really makes a difference."

Famine veteran Lara Watson, 17, says this was her fifth 40-hour famine.

"For me the hardest part was playing netball on Saturday. We had to run around a lot. If you are doing it alone then you are not going to have a very fun weekend. But being with friends and doing it together makes it easier."

Third-time participant Jaimee Fisher, 17, says water was her go-to to get through the weekend.

"The hardest part is definitely the countdown of the last 15 minutes. Drinking lots of water helps with the hunger pangs.

"You do not have to give up food though. You can give up technology or something else, or just do the 20-hour famine. It is worth it."

The famine has been running for 41 years. Over the past four decades more than \$70 million has been raised for vulnerable children in developing countries. This year 123,000 Kiwis participated.

Figures around the country are still being tallied, so it is not known whether the group will be the top fundraising church in the country again.