

Strathmore school's community pool plan

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On a peninsula surrounded by water, Strathmore Community School is struggling to teach its kids to swim.

So the school is pitching a \$200,000 plan to cover and heat its decrepit old pool to be a school and community facility.

The pool has not been used since 2006 for school swimming and needs new railing and changing rooms.

Since 2006 only older students at the school have been receiving

swimming lessons at the Kilbirnie Aquatic Centre.

"They only went five or six times," says principal Pele Tui says.

Ms Tui says plans for an upgrade have been in the thinking process since this time last year.

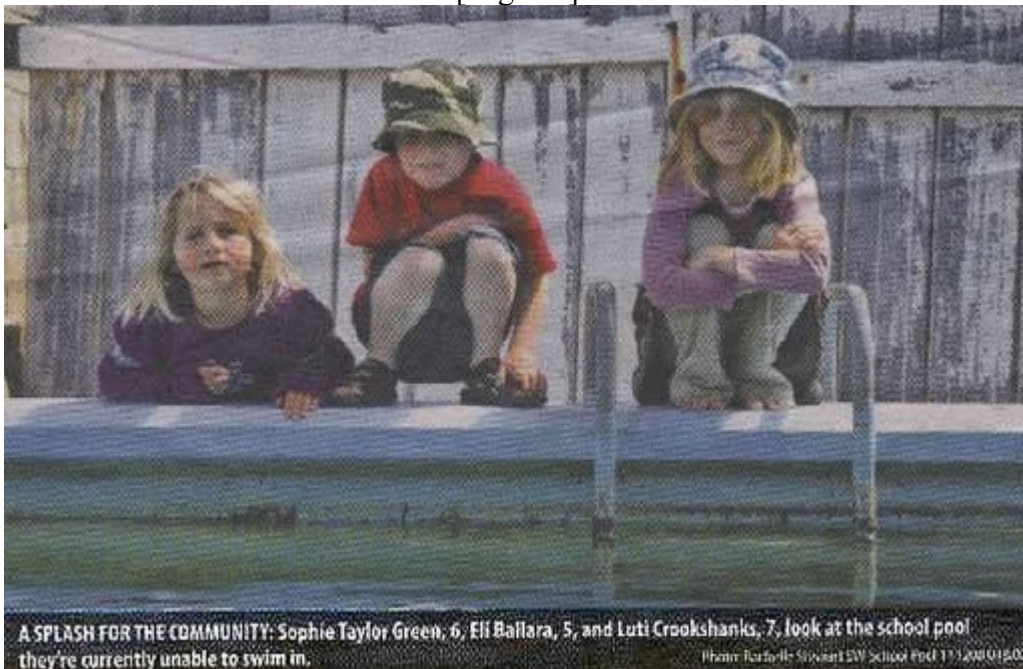
"We have looked at the different costs and have decided for

the long term it makes sense to upgrade it to a heated indoor pool which the whole community can use," she says.

Ms Tui says this will allow pupils at the school to have swimming lessons from a trained instructor for a longer duration.

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A SPLASH FOR THE COMMUNITY: Sophie Taylor Green, 6, Eli Ballara, 5, and Luti Crookshanks, 7, look at the school pool they're currently unable to swim in.

Photo: Rachelle Stewart/LSW School Photo 17/12/08 015:03

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"The progress they made was incredible but it needs to be ongoing, not just a lesson here or there."

She says the outdoor pool is simply too cold for children as young as five to swim in and believes learning how to swim should be made accessible for everyone.

"Not everyone can afford to have private swimming lessons. And in our climate heated pools are needed. It will cost a bit more than just upgrading the pool as it is, but the long term benefits are huge."

Logistics and costs of moving classrooms to and from Kilbirnie pool were also a factor.

To upgrade the pool as it is would cost roughly \$50,000 but Ms Tui says the extra money raised to reach \$200,000 for an indoor pool will enable children at the school to gain invaluable water skills.

"We want them to be competent swimmers by the time they have gone through school here and are ready to leave," Ms Tui says.

"It's an achievable goal and we're prepared to make it happen."

So far the school has support of the community and Friends of Strathmore Community School and are currently waiting to hear back from Wellington City Council to see if they're also on board to help.

"Once we know if we have their support we'll apply for funding," Ms Tui says.

"We'll also hold events such as fairs at the school to raise the money."

And all going well pupils at the school will be making a splash by 2010.

Want to help

- If you would like to find out how to contribute to the school pool contact the school by visiting www.strathmorecommunity.school.nz