



Fast art: Natalie James, 6, took the day off school to help mayor Len Brown decorate a fibreglass horse which will be auctioned off for the Kidz First Children's Hospital.

Natalie does her bit

By **LISA HONEYBONE**

A fibreglass horse isn't what Natalie James, 6, is used to drawing on but it didn't stop her lending the mayor a hand for a good cause.

The Rothesay Bay resident helped Len Brown paint one of 18 horses which are part of the Resene Fastest Art Exhibition.

The life-size horses have been turned into works of art by celebrities like Marc

Ellice, Karen Walker and Lucy Lawless.

They were unveiled at the twilight races at Ellerslie on Wednesday, February 16.

The horses will be auctioned off in March at the end of Auckland Cup Week with proceeds going to the celebrities' chosen charity.

The proceeds from Natalie's and the mayor's efforts will go to Kidz First Children's

Hospital to which Natalie is a regular visitor.

She has the rare Apert Syndrome which caused her skull to fuse before birth.

New Zealand's Next Top Model host Sarah Tetro, who grew up on the Shore, was in Wairau Park on February 11 decorating her horse.

The fibreglass horse will be auctioned off for her chosen charity, CanTeen.

Tribute to son

'Hardest day since he died'

By BERNADETTE COONEY

The father of Pike River mine building contractor Michael Monk, killed in the blasts which took the lives of 29 men, said Monday was one of the hardest days since he died. Bernie Monk, a Paroa publican, spoke to a full house at a requiem mass in memory of his son at St Bede's College.

"This is the hardest thing to see you all in uniform ... I feel as if I've been robbed," he said.

Michael boarded at St Bede's from 2000 to 2004 and was head prefect. The fourth generation West Coaster was the youngest of Bernie and Kath Monk's three children.

In 2005 Michael had a gap year in Ireland before coming home to complete his building apprenticeship. He was 15 days short of his 24th birthday when the first explosions at Pike River occurred in November. Three months on, the Monks were "slowly but surely" healing but were determined to lobby for the removal of bodies from the mine and to find out precisely what went wrong, to ensure lessons were learned. They were conducting a private investigation but could reveal little until the findings of the



In honour: Family watch as St Bede's College pupils perform a haka following a requiem mass in memory of old boy Michael Monk, one of the 29 miners lost to the Pike River mine blasts. From left, college rector Justin Boyle, Michael's father Bernie Monk, brother Alan and mother Kath.

Loved man: Michael Monk, aka "Sunshine".

Eucharist rite: Fr Denis Nolan administers communion at the requiem mass.

Royal Commission of Inquiry were known.

"Today has also been a great healer. It's tremendous to see so many of Michael's former school friends and the acknowledgement of the college," Mr Monk said. Mrs Monk said the college had been a positive influence on Michael. "He was not a scholar, he was a plodder, but with the guidance and spirit of St Bede's he became a loyal, conscientious young man."

Michael's older brother Alan, sister Olivia and partner Gemma Schud-

derboom were at the mass.

Father Mark Walls spoke of the honour the college had in calling Michael one of their own and said he was "living proof that you can take the boy out of the West Coast but you can't take the West Coast out of the boy. He fundraised for Canteen and won a car for the most money raised, and was made head prefect...I have no doubt that Michael completed what he was created to do. He was a loyal and committed friend, known the length and the breadth of the West Coast as Sunshine".



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Weepu to grin and beard it until Hurricanes comeback

Piri Weepu's started running again, but it'll be a while more before he adds shaving to his regular activities.

The Hurricanes halfback has taken on a remarkable likeness to Willie Apiata in recent weeks as he's stepped up his rehabilitation from a badly broken right leg.

Weepu has made the decision not to crop his beard till he has played his first Super Rugby match of the season and in a show of support teammates Ma'a Nonu, Cory Jane and Victor Vito have jumped on board.

It's quickly become a humorous distraction from the seriousness of Weepu's injury.

"I can't afford to buy any shavers and also my brother [Billy] keeps stealing mine and breaks them, so that's why his face is the way it is," he laughed when quizzed about his burgeoning beard. "Also I just can't be bothered shaving."

And though flattered by his teammates' gesture, Weepu's got reservations about whether Vito will last the distance or if Jason Eaton's latest facial growth is related to his recovery at all.

"I don't know what Victor's up to. I don't know if his missus will let him grow that. He's a bit of a pretty boy him-

self, so he likes keeping his quite tidy.

"Pig [Eaton] is the king of beards of course as you saw last time when he hurt his knee when he had the Castaway look."

It's not the first time the Hurricanes have become the Hairycanes. Eaton famously grew his hair and beard for 10 months in 2008 before raising \$6000 when he shaved it for children's cancer charity CanTeen.

"The goal is to not shave till my very first Super 15 game," Weepu said. "It's probably about the same as we predicted around April-May. At this stage the goal is to be back fully running around and taking part by then."

On a more serious note, Weepu began jogging two weeks ago and is on track for a full recovery after breaking his leg against Taranaki during the ITM Cup.

"I can run a bit, cycle, row and my favourite, grinder," he said. "I've just started leg rehab doing lower body weights. Nothing too heavy like Hosea's [Gear] big legs, but I'm getting into things in terms of building up the muscle around my injured leg."

Weepu said he had one of the six screws in his leg removed with some success.

"I've still got five left and a plate in my leg. There were six altogether. It [the one removed] was right through both bones to keep very thing steady.

"It was the one that was supposed to come out, but the pin broke and only a little bit of it came out." Fairfax



Piri Weepu



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Powerco open day

Powerco is giving Western Bay residents a chance to meet its staff and give feedback on the company's long-term plans for the region. An information kiosk has been set up at the Tauranga Library/Civic Arcade in Willow St, where it will be open between 10am and 3pm until Monday. Visitors will get a free coffee voucher. Powerco will also be holding an open evening at the company's new Omanu substation from 6pm until 8pm on Thursday. The substation at 574 Maunganui Rd will cater for the city's current and predicted load growth and will transform 33,000V down to 11,000V before feeding it out to the surrounding networks. A house on the substation site was auctioned and the proceeds were divided between CanTeen in Tauranga, Greenpark Primary School and Back Up NZ.