

BUILDING WITH VISION: The Te Papanui Trust Community Youth Centre

By Marie Broderick

WHEN the youth of Papanui were asked at a Christchurch Council Meeting a little over 9 years ago, what they would most like to see in their community, their response was for a place specifically for them, a place they could operate and call their own right down to the choice of decor, music and activities.

Now, many years on and after much involvement and hard work from the Christchurch City Council, the Papanui Baptist Church and the extreme generosity of the St Paul's Anglican Church to donate the site, the dream and the vision became finally within reach.

With the site and funding secured from the outstanding contributions of local businesses and community members, Whyte Construction was approached to bring the vision to life. With four offices, three meeting rooms, a large foyer and mezzanine, art room, recording

studio, computer room and a towering indoor climbing wall among other things, it promised to be an impressive project and a real asset to the local community. Whyte's commercial team worked closely with the Papanui Baptist Church to ensure the project fitted right into the budget they had painstakingly raised and got to work with the help of a tireless team of volunteers.

"The venture was always a dynamic challenge and seeing all the facets of work dovetail together was a rewarding experience." says Foreman Ken Whyte. "The Community Centre continues to be an

amazing catalyst to community and youth development in Papanui and the wider community."

In recognition of the council's, church's and communities outstanding vision and commitment, the project received the 'Supreme Award for Best Practice' at the National Board Conference in 2005.

"There's nothing like this anywhere in the country." Ross Banbury, manager of the Papanui Youth Development Trust and manager of the Papanui Youth Facility says. "It's a venue young people in Christchurch should get excited about". The end result he says goes to show "the power of dreams." ■



The Indoor Rock Wall



Situated just 500 metres from the Papanui High School, the uniquely designed Youth Centre has become a haven and place of opportunity for young people in the community.

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