



Beau Hamilton, 17, pictured on Hot Water Beach on the Coromandel Peninsula. He saw a group of tourists in serious trouble in the surf at the popular tourist spot and swam out to rescue them.

Young Achievers

Shaken by the September quake, six **St Thomas of Canterbury College** students decided they wanted their Lion Foundation Young Enterprise Scheme (YES) project to help both local and international communities suffering from disasters like earthquakes. The February quake, which killed a classmate's father, only made them more determined. Working in Sam Mackwell's garage after their site-sharing school's early finishes, they developed the Lion Emergency Power Generator, which uses waste heat from boiling water to charge cellphones and batteries, and power lights. Launched by Helen Clark in August, the LEPG sold out at Mitre 10. The students also sent one (and a solar panel) to a Tanzanian village, where it's powering school computers. Their sterling efforts were recognised at the Lion Foundation YES National Awards in December, where they won a clutch of excellence awards. **Beau Hamilton:** In November, the 17-year-old student from Hot Water Beach, Coromandel, spotted a woman

in trouble in the sea through his dad's window and dashed to the beach with rescue gear, saving the woman and five struggling would-be rescuers by leading them out of two rips. Nice to see he was subsequently offered a job as a surf lifesaver.

Christchurch Heroes

Of the hundreds of everyday heroes following February's quake, these four are as humble as they are heroic. You might remember footage of Samoan-born father-of-five **Ahsei Sopoaga** tossing aside rubble as if it were Lego to try to rescue a mortally injured barman. When sharemilker **Rob Mackle** saw news footage of the devastation, he made sure his student daughter was safe then drove to the city centre to join layman rescuers inside the collapsing PGC building. He battled through unstable rubble and his near-overwhelming distress at finding bodies to save three people and help and comfort others. Mackle hitched a ride home at 3am, nearly 24 hours after he got up for

milking. In days to come, distraught and feeling he should have done more, Mackle returned to the building. Seeing professional rescuers were on the job, he went to shovel silt in the suburbs. **John Haynes:** Luckily for the 15 people trapped on the Forsyth Barr building's sixth floor when the stairwell collapsed, leaving the building rocking dangerously, one of them was a trained mountain guide. Using emergency ropes, the Ombudsman investigator belayed all 14 colleagues down the side of the building to safety; he was picked up by a crane. **Steve Hira:** After the quake, the water-filter salesman realised many were struggling with no food, water or power in low-decile Aranui. When his employer refused him time off, the father-of-two (now three) quit and set up the Aranui Food Distribution Centre, which organised donations of food and household supplies, initially feeding thousands a day and distributing \$1.3 million worth of goods over eight months. Now Hira, who was ordained as a minister in November, is living on very little and looking for financiers to help get needy people into new homes.