



PHOTOGRAPHER / DAVID ST. GEORGE

STEPPING UP TO MAKE A CHANGE

Geoff and Lynne Pearson are encouraging people to climb walls to solve their problems.

The Hunua-based couple have been running their mobile rock-climbing business ROCKUP for the past decade, visiting schools, gala days and community events with climbing walls and other adventure activities.

Geoff says rock climbing helps the younger generation work out how to cope with many of their challenges and develop positive attitudes.

"A lot of kids today live in a bubble world and they don't know what reality really is so they end up making bad choices. They live in a world where everything is so instantaneous that if someone says no or if they can't do something straight away they throw their toys," Geoff says.

Rock climbing encourages participants to follow the rules and understand the potential consequences if they don't.

They complete the climb one step at a time and there are no shortcuts. Once they've finished they abseil down requiring trust that they are safely harnessed, Geoff says.

"IT'S LIKE WATCHING THE LIGHT GO ON IN SOMEONE'S HEAD – IT INSTANTLY CHANGES,"

"It is a scary leap of faith, as they have to learn to let go. After they've taken that leap, their whole world just changed, their life now means something to them and they know it," he says.

"We get everyone involved, so people are taking turns on the wall while others are encouraging and cheering them on and any climber getting to the top makes everyone feel good," Lynne adds.

As well as rock climbing, Rock Up offers archery, shooting and inflatable obstacle courses, and Lynne says each activity gives participants a sense of achievement and confidence boost.

"It's like watching the light go on in someone's head – it instantly changes," she says.



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Last summer they were involved with cricket, taking their rock climbing walls and inflatables to ANZ Summer Series matches in Auckland, Wellington, Napier and Hamilton.

Geoff and Lynne are passionate about making a change in the world and run a lean business model so they can bring their Rock Up activities to community groups and schools in low socio-economic areas.

“We hold a lot of events in Northland and at the start the kids’ heads are hanging down but after a couple of hours they’re saying ‘please’ and ‘thank you’. It’s a total change in attitude – and that’s why we do it,” Lynne says.

Safety is the most important element for Geoff and Lynne, who take aspiring rock climbers through a safety briefing and demonstration before they get the chance to climb and practise their skills.

“We’ve been operating nine years and we haven’t had one single incident which is a testament not just to equipment, but the safety first attitude we use in all our activities.”

The couple became ANZ customers after the bank bought out National Bank for their business and rural banking.

Geoff says they’re happy to have a bank “that cherishes professional inter-business relationships.”

Their turnover has doubled year-on-year although Geoff says that doesn’t translate to double profit.

“We pay our wages and compliance costs and the rest of the money goes back into the business, updating technology and equipment. We don’t focus on profit; we look at cause and effect and what we achieve. We could make more money but we wouldn’t be doing as many school programmes or deliver as many positive community events.”

Rock Up founders Geoff and Lynne Pearson teaching kids at Wakaaranga School in Auckland how to climb.

