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POLYTECHNIC AND RESTHOME PARTNERSHIP PROVIDES STUDENT OPPORTUNITIES

A new partnership between Tai Poutini Polytechnic and the Buller Regions major rest home O'Conor Home is giving carers an opportunity to jumpstart their career in 2010.

The National Certificate in Community Support Services at Tai Poutini Polytechnic is being introduced to Westport in conjunction with O'Conor Resthome in Buller, where the practical component of the programme will be completed. The decision to launch the programme follows its successful introduction to the Reefton campus last year.

Head of Department Roderick Turner says the partnership between the polytechnic and industry is a welcome fit which also meets the needs of the community. "The programme allows students to learn on the job at one of the West Coast's premier rest homes while at the same time fulfilling the 60 hours work experience required to complete the qualification.

"It makes for a terrific learning environment because of the specialist training facilities at the rest home and its adjoining practical and onsite work opportunities.

Turner says as the world's population ages, demand for services in the care industry increases. "Unfortunately it is an industry where facilities are screaming out for well trained staff. The course is ideally suited to school leavers seeking a career in the health industry, or existing carers seeking an opportunity to up skill.'

Community Carers are able to obtain two National Certificates in one year of study. They are; the National Certificate in Community Support Services (Core Competencies) and the National Certificate in Community Support Services (Residential Care), both at Level 3.

Turner says the residential care programme also has a specialist dementia care component which is in high demand currently in the industry. "This programme supports that particular learning directly."

The programme comprises one day a week study over approx 40 weeks. Students must complete a minimum of 60 hours work in the care industry. However, the work experience

does not have to be paid employment and can be voluntary. This could be beneficial for someone seeking to obtain a qualification while at the same time caring for a sick or elderly relative at home, Turner says.

“The O’Conor Home will also assist students to gain a work placement. This means students are not just studying but also learning on the job with a view to gaining successful employment.”

The programme will accept up to 15 applications and begins on 15 February 2010. Generous scholarships are available by application to anyone who enrolls on the programme.

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About Tai Poutini Polytechnic:

Tai Poutini Polytechnic (TPP) offers a range of exciting programmes, has had one of the highest course completion rates in New Zealand for the last 3 years, has low student to tutor ratios and great relationships with business and industry. TPP has campuses in Auckland, Hamilton, Palmerston North, Christchurch, Wanaka, Invercargill, Westport, Greymouth, Reefton and Hokitika. In 2010 Scholarships are available for most programmes (* Conditions apply)*