

For Jessica, it's a job with passion



An 11-year-old Fairlie girl has a job that is the envy of her schoolmates.

Jessica Brien has the official title of ice cream reviewer for Tui Muir's ice cream and lolly shop in Fairlie.

Jessica took up the position in November last year, after she approached Ms Muir at her shop and asked her what a particular ice cream tasted like.

"Tui didn't know, so she asked me to taste it and tell her what it was like," Jessica said.

After a very accurate explanation of the ice cream, Ms Muir asked Jessica if she would be able to do a write-up about it.

"I eat the ice cream and then write about what flavours come to my head, then I write it up on the computer," Jessica said.

With Tip Top novelty ice creams being her present task, she is given every opportunity to get a clear taste of the flavours, as she eats more than eight ice creams a week.

The ice-cream company has acknowledged her tasting abilities with a free T-shirt.

"It's great to have a kid doing this. Adults make enough decisions for them. I think they can decide what ice creams they like," Ms Muir said.

Jessica has completed four reviews for the shop and Ms Muir said sales of the ones reviewed had increased.

"Fairlie is a small community and all the kids know Jessica so they will try the ice cream because Jessica said it's nice," Ms Muir said.

Jessica's love of ice cream may come from her father Kevin, who is just as addicted as she is.

Her favourite ice-cream flavour is goodie goodie gum drops and she seems to be the envy of her friends at school because she gets to taste the new flavours before they go into the freezer.

"They wouldn't believe that I got them for free if I wrote up the review," said Jessica.

Her mum, Marielle Venrooy, is just as pleased about the job as Jessica is.

"She's just amazing and brilliant on the computer," Ms Venrooy said.

One of the other reasons that Tui's Treats in Fairlie needed an ice cream reviewer was to increase sales of lesser-known products.

Ms Muir spoke to the distributors about the ice creams she was stocking and was told there were certain ones that weren't selling, so they were the ones she got Jessica to review.

"It's the kids' shop so I want them to be involved as much as possible, and who better to know what is nice to eat than the children eating them," Ms Muir said.

Jessica doesn't see being an ice-cream reviewer as a career choice as she wants to get more involved with acting, but she does see the need for a lolly reviewer and is happy to put her hand up should Ms Muir need to fill the position.

■ By Lora Taylor

Herald Correspondent

DREAM JOB: Fairlie's Jessica Brien is the envy of her friends as the local ice cream reviewer for Tui Muir's ice cream and lolly shop in Fairlie.

— Photo John Brown