

Stars in their midst

There's plenty of local talent on offer for filmmaker Linda Niccol.

RAUMATI film-maker Linda Niccol found the 14-year-old star of her latest film – Joseph Lane – up a ladder, wearing a cardboard bird mask, in the local church's nativity play.

With her last, current, and future films, she prefers to work with locals. "There are pockets of experts across all industries in this region," she says.

The laidback lifestyle of Kapiti and Horowhenua doesn't mean that businesspeople spend more time in togs than ties. It also doesn't mean they

necessarily work in isolation. There are some innovative goings on, and they're happening in successful collaboration.

New Zealand's Olympic uniforms this year were designed by a collaboration of Levin companies under the banner Kapinua. Olympic chef de mission Dave Currie was amazed a small regional organisation could produce such an amazing design.

Tourism has also been working collaboratively. Regional tourism manager for Nature Coast, Chris Barber and a team of local writers, photographers, web designers, and publishers, recently launched The Nature Coast Project.

This sees 58 companies pulling their marketing dollars together to build a

domestic campaign aimed at attracting more domestic tourists to the region.

Niccol also co-wrote the feature film *Second Hand Wedding* – soon to hit the \$2 million box office mark and shot entirely on the coast. Her latest, a short film *The Poets*, was inspired by the poem *The Beats* by Raumati South poet Lyndsay Rabbit.

The cast and crew include some biggies in the film industry; veteran production designer John Girdlestone; and Jeff Simmonds, whose unique animation films with brother Phil earned them the 2006 Spada (Screen Production and Development Association) New Filmmakers of the Year award.

Niccol says living in the district "drives you to want to have that community feeling".



Community spirit: Linda Niccol (left) with her new star Joseph Lane and poet Lyndsay Rabbit (right).

Picture: JANIE WALKER