

HOW THE 12-YEAR-OLD IS HELPING PEOPLE GETAGRIP

While it's common for children to make a papier-mâché volcano for their school science-fair project, Ruby Mainwaring looked to her family for inspiration, choosing to help someone dear to her.

Incredibly, the 12-year-old from Palmerston North now has her own business and, at the same time, has made a world of difference to her beloved poppa.

Ruby's science-fair project focused on fashioning a dual grip mat to help Ray Roydhouse (77) unwind screw-top jars in the kitchen, a task that had become increasingly difficult after the muscles in his hands and feet started weakening and disappearing.

"I did it all to help Poppa," Ruby explains to the Weekly. "He has got a neuropathy in his hand called Charcot-Marie-Tooth (CMT) disease.

"He has struggled for a long time to open jars. We did a lot of research on existing products in the market and found a lot of them were too expensive and too hard to use, and none were dual grip."

With a bit of help from her parents Rob (52) and Amanda (49), Ruby set about researching



Above: The Mainwaring family (clockwise from left) Rob, Grace, Hannah, Amanda, Ruby, Ray and Barb. Left: Ray couldn't be prouder of Ruby's efforts.

and creating something that met Ray's needs.

"When Ruby rang me to say, 'I'm doing a science project and I want to do something to help you open jars,' I told her the problem is I can screw the top but the whole jar turns in my other hand, so if you can find a way of holding the jar firm in the other hand while screwing, that will work quite well," he tells.

The invention propelled her from her Palmerston North Intermediate Normal School science fair to the 2018 Manawatu Science & Technology Fair where, despite being up against older secondary school students, she won the premier award for technology as well as the award for best business potential.

Ruby also entered Innovate 2018, a competition for new

business ideas. Out of 91 entries, and the only child in the competition, Ruby made it to the top five.

Since setting up the business in August 2018, getagrip has sold more than 500 units to help people in their day-to-day lives and Ruby's poppa could not be happier.

"I think it's pretty awesome. I'm really proud. I'm proud of the whole five granddaughters for all the things that they have achieved, but this has been a ride full of admiration, love and also tinged with some emotion," Ray says.

"CMT has affected me in quite a few ways. The most serious was I had to give up playing golf because it became too much of a struggle, but with grandchildren you get life after golf, so that was a plus.

It's not life threatening – it's just life changing."

However, it's not just Ray using a getagrip around the house. His wife and Ruby's granny, Barb Roydhouse, suffers from arthritis and thinks getagrip is a godsend.

"It's amazing how often I pop it out of the cupboard for something. It's actually quite a versatile product and that's what I find quite clever about it," Barb (76) exclaims.

Ray adds, "It has a hook on it so it just hangs up in the pantry, and it's just so easy to open the cupboard, pull it out and hang it back up again."

The plan for the Mainwaring family now is to get their product into more New Zealand homes. Rob and Amanda are currently in talks with the Neurological

Poppa's little helper

TWEEN RUBY'S WINNING INVEN



Foundation and Arthritis
New Zealand to promote
Ruby's product.

While the future for getagrip
is bright, Ruby says she is
simply proud to have been
able to help her poppa.

And Ray is chuffed that
others may now experience
the benefit of getagrip too.

"Ruby did this for me,
but there are so many
people out there with
arthritis and other
problems that would probably
benefit from this dual getagrip
much more than what I do.
Given that it's a great benefit to
me, it would be huge for some
other people out there."

For more information and
details, visit getagrip.nz.

Fleur Mealing

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