

TERM 1, 2013

MALE MENTOR REPORT

Youth Alive Trust

South End Surf Crew

Back up and running again for a whole term already! I have now been around with Youth Alive for an entire year, and it's incredible how fast it's all gone.

Term 1 took a while to get into full swing but this allowed for a strong and purposeful start to the year, one which built off what had been achieved last year.

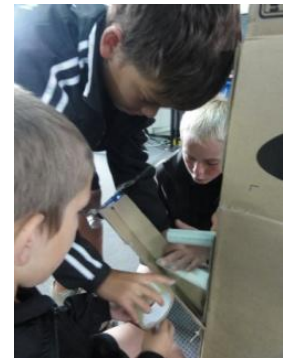
MAN SKILLS

My big project that I spent the beginning of the year working on is a new course called Man Skills. It's an 8 session course that equips year 7 & 8 boys with some of the essential skills for being a man in New Zealand.

The course is run for small groups of three boys at a time, which allows for both lots of practical instruction around the skills as well as better opportunity for relationship building to happen.

Currently some of the possibilities that the course can cover are Problem Solving, What it means to be a man, Tools, Bike Maintenance, Knot Tying, Basic Automotive Maintenance, How to treat Women, Relationships, Setting up a Tent/Bivy and Using a Map and Compass. There are still many other possibilities in the pipelines for future topics to cover.

The course finishes with an outing or extended session which allows the guys to put into practice some of the skills that they have learnt along the way.



Man Skills is not just about the practical element but also allows for a place for the relational aspect of youth work to happen. Sessions like the one around how to treat women proved to be a strong talking point for several of the boys in the schools, many of them were surprised and learnt a lot from this session in particular that will help them in their relationships in the future.

Each session begins with a check in on

how the week is going; this is a brief but safe chance for them to share about what is going on in their lives and allows them to let out some fairly deep parts of their world.



Participants are also required to keep a weekly journal to help them reflect on what they have covered. I run the course in all three schools, with at least one group of boys each week.

One encouraging moment for me was seeing a few of the boys that I was running the program with heading back to their mates at lunch time and start showing their mates how to tie several of the knots they had learnt in that week's session.

NORTH NEW BRIGHTON SCHOOL

This term at North Brighton I have spent the majority of my time working with the year 7 & 8's.

I am currently facilitating six boys through the Man Skills course which takes up a large section of my time at the moment. I have seen these boys take on the idea that the course is not just about developing their skills but also about developing them as people as well. Things like one of the guys coming and explaining to me why he wasn't able to do his home work as things at home had been hard going for the last few weeks and that he would definitely have it done before the next session show me that getting ideas of responsibility set into the boys is definitely getting through.

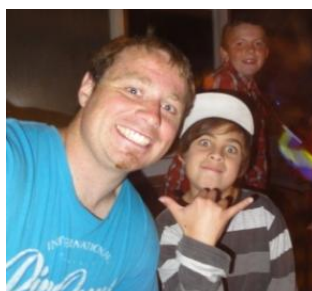
This term we hired out a horizontal bungee for a week which we used almost everywhere that YAT is present. In each of the schools I ran it at the young people had a blast going on it. We also used the time while running the bungee to promote our after school clubs.



My other commitments in North New Brighton are continuing working alongside the year 7 & 8 class on a Wednesday afternoon. Often this can be running games/sports or assisting some of the young people to better understand a part of their work that they are struggling with. It's a fantastic opportunity to build relationships on a wider scale to other parts of my work in North.



The Pool being back in use after being knocked out in the earthquakes was a real highlight this term. This allowed for the swimming sports to happen on school grounds as well as swimming becoming a regular part of school life. The boys always got great joy out of trying to drown me whenever I was in the water!



CENTRAL NEW BRIGHTON SCHOOL

My time in Central New Brighton School this term has seen a scale back from last year with the school wanting to focus more time in ensuring that their young people are meeting the education requirements.

I am currently running Man Skills with one group of three. They have taken onboard the challenges and are loving learning all of the various “man skills”, my guess from their excitement levels about it is that for them that Man Skills is likely a highlight of their week.



My other current commitment in Central is the continuation of the successful leadership group from last year. The leadership group aims to equip and increase the leadership abilities of some of the perspective “leaders” at CNB. To run this group we partner with the Presbyterian support worker in CNB which allows for two perspectives on what it should look like.

A highlight from Central this term was a day out sailing with 80% of the school. Many of the young people hadn’t tried sailing before and were wary about getting out onto the lake in a sail boat by themselves. After their first tries in the boats, for most, they couldn’t get back out onto the water soon enough.

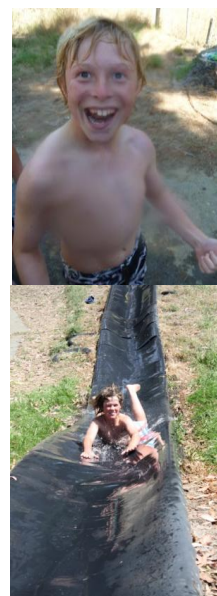
I had the privilege of getting to spend most of the time we spent at the lake with one boy who had broken both arms (so wasn’t able to get the casts wet) sailing him around on a bigger boat. We had a great time zooming around while chatting and avoiding a few near misses.



SOUTH NEW BRIGHTON SCHOOL

Over this first term at South Brighton I have found myself becoming involved in many different ventures from year 3-8.

The year started off by going on camp with the year 7 & 8’s to Woodend for 3 days. This was a great opportunity for the classes to begin bonding, it also allowed me a great opportunity to get to know some of the year 7’s better. Camps are always a huge highlight for me and this camp was no exception with many great memories from it and several relationships expanded to a new level.



At South I am currently running one Man Skills group. These three are really enjoying the time they are getting trying their hand at many varying manly activities. Again these three boys have shown me how beneficial a program like this is to them by the ways they are reacting to the information and taking it on board.



During term 1 I have spent Friday mornings in 3 year 3 & 4 classes working alongside a few boys that just need a bit extra to see them succeeding. At the end of the term I began taking one boy out of class to make a model plane. While I have only had the one session with him you could tell that he really appreciated the one on one attention that he was getting while we both worked together to make the model. He has already approached me in school again telling me how much he is looking forward to continue to work on it.

I am working alongside six year 5-6's to help them improve their reading. Not being a big reader myself I could identify with the boys as to why they didn't want to read. So I have begun doing 'activity based reading' with them. This is the same level of reading they need to be doing however made significantly more practical than sitting down with a cuppa and reading a book.

One afternoon for reading we baked biscuits, however before they were allowed to even look at the ingredients as a group they had to read through the recipe. Then I assigned the boys to what job they needed to do. Before they did their part of the recipe they had to find where their instruction and ingredients were on the sheet and read it to me before they acted. At the end of the session they all had some delicious biscuits and didn't realise how much they had all read. I had their teacher approach me afterward and she told me that she had asked one of the boys "what did you read with Matt this afternoon?" to which he replied "we didn't read we just did baking."



My other big commitment with SNBS is the coaching of their year 7&8 basketball team. Again for me this is allowing me to take something that I love doing and sharing that passion with a bunch of interested young people. The competition runs over the next two terms and I am really looking forward to this new part of my role.

And finally at South we have the ever fantastic boy's club. Term 1 saw us doing many rough and tumble activities and sports which the boys just love. The highlight from the term would no doubt be the zap chair that we brought in on the last day of term. Almost all of the boys had a go and everyone had a great laugh watching people's faces and reactions as they get zapped.



GUYS DAY OUT

Term 1's Guys Day Out program included Cave Stream, Abseiling, Storm the Heights, Snacks, Epic Hot Chocolates, a life talk and top leaders.

The highlight of the day was Cave Stream; most of the young people had never been there before and were blown away by how cool it is!

The Canterbury High Country was an area that not many of the guys had stopped in before, which made for constant amazement from the guys about just how cool it all was.



From the feedback I got from the young people 19 out of the 21 that came tried something new on the day! Several of them wanted me to run a Guys Day Out camp that did similar sorts of things over a whole weekend.



A few highlights for me were, seeing young people pushing their comfort zones to try new things. At abseiling one guy got right to the no turning back edge of the rock face (60m+ high) and then backed out after much thought. For many others that were afraid they made it down!



Another that really made my day was at the end of cave stream one of the guys made the comment "that was so cool, way better than just playing Xbox!"



OTHER INVOLVEMENTS

Around all of my in schools work I also have a few other things going on to keep the community presence up.

One of these is helping out at rock solid, our year 7 & 8 youth programme on a Friday evening. This term we saw numbers fill to capacity after we promoted it while running the horizontal bungee at each school. Its a common question from young people wanting to know what is going to be happening next week and you can tell they are



looking forward to it the moment they walk out the door. Term 1 saw events such as a pool party, guy/girl split night, chocoholic night, a van rally, laser strike and several other great evenings!

Another part of my role has been to continue going along to CDN Trust's (Community Development Network) Kids Camp. My role on camp is the program director which is perfect for me to be able to relate with the many young people that come on camp that I work alongside on a day to day basis. On April camp we were able to get lots more young people from our schools than usual. This camp we had over 20 young people from North, Central and South come along, and nearly half of the camp was from the greater area!

Once a week I meet up with a young person that I originally met on kids camp and now mentor through Big Brothers Big Sisters. It's a time that he absolutely loves as it gives him a chance for a break from his tough life and some one on one attention that he can struggle to get elsewhere.

My other commitment in term 1 (while not technically part of my role) was helping out run the South End Surf Crew. A new venture started by one of the SNBS parents giving young people the opportunity to learn to surf for free. Surfing being one of my absolute passions, this was a great chance to get out there and help out volunteering both my time and equipment to help out. In turn it adds to the relationship with parents and young people that I am regularly working with. The crew became so popular we had nearly 20 young people and several others expressing interest in wanting to be involved. We had plenty of support from parents and local surf legends helping out in the water to keep the young people safe while helping them improve their surfing abilities. We also had most weeks a special surf guest come in and add their bit to the afternoon! A really top community venture that I am proud to be a part of.



TERM 2

In both CNB and NNB I intend to begin replicating the idea of boys club (that is currently successfully running at SNBS), during a lunch time while I'm in most weeks to allow the boys to have a chance to let off a bit of steam and do something a bit more physical than normal in a well structured environment.

At NNB I am beginning mentoring 4 boys one on one to give them that bit extra.

In at SNBS it's to continue and improve on what has been set up in term one, especially with the basketball as this is the first time that South has had a basketball team in many years.

Another Guys Day Out is planned to be run later in the term and the excitement for it is already huge!

With another exciting term ahead that's where I'll leave it.

Matt Barnes

Big ups to the Todd Foundation for supporting my role for another year!

