

YAT MALE MENTOR TERM 2 REPORT

Term 2 has been the beginning of my role with Youth Alive Trust and it has picked up pace plenty fast.

The aim of the game for me this first term has been to build relationships and learn names, which has so far been fairly successful. This term I have made the beginnings of several great relationships with young people in all three schools. While it took me a while to break into some of the schools I now feel like a regular part of the team at all three. It has surprised me coming into a new community how different each of the schools feel, even though they are relatively close to one another.

After this first term I am feeling well settled into my position as the male mentor, I have plans to diversify in the coming terms to cater for the various needs that are arising.

NORTH NEW BRIGHTON SCHOOL

North New Brighton School has a laid back, skate/surf culture feel to it, it's the kind of feel that's been great to settle into.

Some of the things I've been up to this term include welding, sports, construction projects, 1 on 1 mentoring, helping out in class & joining in with the school disco!

Welding has been a surprise success, while it had the potential to go either way it has been hugely positive. I was given three year 5 boys that needed something hands on and manly to help them gain more confidence. The three were told that we were going to build something of their choice, however it had to be of use to either the school or their class. They decided that they wanted to build a 2nd soccer goal post. We talked to the caretaker who told us that he wanted them to be made of steel but that lacked the welder to do it. After pulling a few strings I managed to get a bunch of steel off cuts and borrow a mig welder to teach the guys how to weld and next term make the goal posts. After our first session of welding all three left with a piece of metal with a few of their practice welds and a huge smile on their faces. I have had their teacher tell me that he can already see positive change happening in all three boys. Not only that but I also had two staff members wanting to get involved and several other young people wanting to try their hand at welding.

Over these holidays there are a few young people from North that will be coming along on the kids camp that I am leading on, this experience together will only help in working with those young people.

Next terms plans involve keeping up much of the same, hopefully within the first few weeks we will have the goal posts done. Later in the term I am signed up to go along to the senior school camp to Hanmer which will no doubt be a great time.



CENTRAL NEW BRIGHTON SCHOOL

Central New Brighton School has the feel of being full of opportunities for those who want them. The amount of external services inputting into the school is fantastic. The school also manages all of these various inputs really well by taking the time to get as many of the services to meet together once a month for a pastoral care meeting to make sure we are all working towards the same goal without the double handling of young people.

My time in the school so far has been spent largely building relationships with staff and students in nearly all of the classes and being present at lunch times and intervals. Towards the second half of this term I started to do a few more formalised programs with young people and now a few of these are more set in stone. These have included working with the house captains to develop leadership qualities with them, spending time with some of the younger guys working around basic social skills and working with a two guys that are disengaging in class often and getting them to do something a bit more hands on. The current happenings with those two guys is getting them to build a half pipe for the school, it is our challenge to complete this next term. It's been exciting for me to see after spending a short time with these two that I have begun to see one of them is already beginning to re-engage with school!

One challenge that I am currently facing at Central is that they have been offered an amazing leadership program for 20 of their students next term free of charge and chances are it will be working with several of the young people that I had



just begun setting up what we were going to be working towards for the rest of the year. While it's an amazing opportunity that will be of huge benefit to the young people it is also potentially going to mean a restructure next term around how my time works out in school. Just like North, Central also has about three young people coming along on kid's camp these holidays which will be great for increasing the relationship that I have with them. Current plans for next term are to continue working with the younger guys around the social skills and as for the older guys it's going to be a bit of a wait and see how that turns out. I am also running the 2012 Central New Brighton School dodge ball tournament starting in week two, which the hype is already building for!

SOUTH NEW BRIGHTON SCHOOL

South New Brighton School was the most prepared for me to come into it and this has reflected in how quickly I have been able to start up here. South come across as fun, surfer and professional, it's a great environment to work in and many of the young people that I have asked about what they think of their school have told me that they think it's a pretty sweet place to be a part of!

Some of the things that I have been up to in south this term include boys club, running adventure based learning (ABL), doing a non sports alternative with a few of the guys that do not want to participate in any of the sports that have been offered, getting alongside a few younger guys (years 2 and 3) by spending time with them in class and spending the last part of a Friday afternoon with one of the senior classes generally just joining in.

Boys club has been a new thing for me and a great idea. While the first rule of boys club is that you don't talk about boys club, I'm writing about it so I think I'll be let off the hook. At boys club there is nothing feminine, it's all about doing something manly and getting the guys to let off some steam in a healthy way. I have been mainly helping out and getting involved this term, between me and one of the male teachers we make it happen every second Friday lunch time. There have been three main activities that we have done this term, sock wrestling, tackle league and bull rush! The great thing about it is that any disputes stay at guys club and there is a high level of respect expected and shown by the guys while they are there both to us and the other students.

This term with the legends (year 5 & 6) guys I ran about six ABL sessions with 10 of them, these were a challenge as the young people that were chosen for me to work with may never function together as a single unit. We did heaps of varied activities and debriefed the many different situations that arose in our time together. The dysfunction of the group made it very difficult for me as a facilitator to get things happening efficiently and effectively. I felt as though there may not have been much progress made in the sessions because of this. This feeling was disproved to me when I had two teachers tell me about improvements that they had noticed in a few of the guys that have been a part of it. Next term I am splitting the group into 'focus groups', these are groups of 2 or 3 young people where we will have 45mins of time together a week for 5 weeks straight. We start our session with a purposeful catch up where we recap over how our week has been and then mention the two best things that happened and then one thing that didn't go so well and how we could approach that situation better. The young people then get ownership over how they would like to spend the rest of the time in the session as long as it's something constructive that their whole group wants to do, not just messing around. I will be meeting with two groups a week for 5 weeks at a time and then work with the other two groups for the second half of the term.

Looking forward to next term the focus groups are going to be a big part of my time as will my Thursday afternoon non-sports alternative. I hope to develop both of these to a point where positive development is happening with the young people involved.



My other involvements this term have included setting up my big brother big sister mentoring which will hopefully be begging early next term and leading at rock solid on a Friday night. Rock solid is YAT's intermediate aged youth group, it's a great place for young people to come and polish of the week.

Next term I am hoping to do a bit of out of school mentoring/catch ups with some of the young people that I am wanting to work with at the schools but do not necessarily have enough time to work with during my time in school.

A long term plan for me would be to run once a term a combined guy's event where I would hand pick a few guys from each of the schools to come out for half a day – a day in the weekend and do something a bit extra and blokey. It would be my hope that I could also get a few of the male teachers from the school to join in as well.

Overall after my first term with Youth Alive, I feel well at home in this new community, I am in love with the community and the young people that I get to work alongside!

With many more exciting times ahead I'll leave it at that.

Thanks heaps for the support, Matt Barnes!