

Young Life comes alongside young people to walk their journey with them.

Connecting in their world
Offering support and role-modelling

Making a difference
Instilling confidence and values

Building resilience
Empowering and equipping to navigate the challenges ahead



Our Mission Statement

Young Life seeks to build confidence, values and resilience in Australia's young people through significant relationships with adults who model the love of Jesus Christ.



FROM THE CEO **Glyn Henman**

Welcome to our December newsletter. Christmas is upon us and it is with a great sense of gladness I wish you a happy time among family and within your community this year.

For all of us at Young Life, Christmas represents the moment God revealed His great plan to bring light into the world through His son Jesus. On a personal note, I would like to thank you very much, on behalf of myself and Anne, for being part of our network here in Australia and for your encouragement during the past year.

In this issue of Connections we introduce you to three of our new team members. Anthony Wheaton, Holly Lim and Ben Hura all joined staff in the last six months or so. They have willingly jumped into every opportunity in the schools we serve as well as club and camping activities.

We also announce a new way of supporting Young Life financially through the online program, Good2Give. This allows people to connect with

Young Life through workplace giving schemes. An update from Mark Hamilton comes on the 15th anniversary of Young Life in Belarus. We hear from Mark and let you know about opportunities to see the Hamiltons on a return visit to Australia early in 2017.

Last but not least, Ski Mission has asked for your support in reaching its goal to replace old safety equipment. This will help them continue serving young people through Young Life and other organisations in the decade to come.

I hope you enjoy this issue and I'm looking forward to the next one when we will have stories to tell from Summer Camp.

Merry Christmas and a safe and peaceful New Year.



Young Life is counting down to Summer Camp 2017. The excitement is ramping up. Josh Petrie is a Young Life leader from Bathurst. Is he in training? How is he preparing? Will he be ready?

"Currently, in the lead up to camp, it's all about getting the kids organised," says Josh.

"This can be a long process. Trying to get teenagers to register for camp is like herding cats at times. There is a lot of following up to do.

"This includes plugging camp at club, handing out forms and speaking to parents. Once you get a cabin full of teenagers signed up it's the best! You can start getting pumped for an amazing week!

"The next step is getting myself ready for camp. Of course this means signing up myself and doing the online training. But more important is getting prepared for a full-on week of non-stop fun with little sleep.

"There are big highs – like meeting new friends, spending quality time with the cabin and watching kids overcome fears and challenges. Sometimes there are lows and some camp dramas but always the memories stay with you for a long time.

THERE ARE BIG HIGHS – LIKE MEETING NEW FRIENDS AND WATCHING KIDS OVERCOME FEARS AND CHALLENGES

"Before camp I like to think about how I can help the kids have the best week of their lives and work on my cabin-unity items. In previous years, cabins have had matching t-shirts, giant ties or bow-ties just as an example.

"And I'll be helping myself out by packing aeroguard, comfy shoes and some air freshener!" says Josh.

"One thing I do ask friends and family as the camp approaches is to pray for us; that the campers, staff and volunteers will be safe, have an amazingly fun week and that the campers will gain a lot from what the camp speaker Brett Huggan has to say."

Camp sponsors are helping young people whose families can not afford the full cost. Thank you to those who have generously given! Like to know more? Visit www.younglife.org.au.

SKI MISSION AIMS TO RAISE \$8500



An exhilarating, challenging day on the water with Ski Mission has always been a feature of Summer Camp at Lake Jindabyne.

This year promises to be a big one for the team who run Ski Mission.

Gregg Odum who chairs the group providing the boats and activities for Young Life, says it's time to renew Ski Mission.

"We want to see Ski Mission grow as an outreach. We have always placed the focus on providing a hugely memorable experience. We aim for it to be fun and safe while challenging for young people.

"It's great seeing the boost to self esteem and confidence as teenagers discover their own perseverance and capacity for teamwork."



It will be the largest investment we have made in the last five years and will equip Ski Mission for many seasons to come

Last season Ski Mission spent 26 days on the water in activities involving around 650 young people.

"Young Life Summer Camp is one of two residential camps we attend and our boats were involved in The Ultimate Water Sports Tour run by Young Life Central West. Other days are booked by the local Young Life clubs, community groups, churches, businesses and even families," says Gregg.

"To keep up this pace we would like to replace all of our safety equipment and set up the program for the future."

"Our plan is to purchase brand new life jackets, helmets, gloves and wetsuit shorts.

"It will be the largest investment



we have made in the last five years and will equip Ski Mission for many seasons to come."

"We do need help. Our estimate for the purchase is \$8500 and we are asking Young Life supporters who have seen the value and benefit of Ski Mission to consider donating toward this project."

All donations over \$2 are tax-deductible and can be made out to Young Life Australia with directions to allocate the gift to Equipping Ski Mission 2016.

Visit www.younglife.org.au/donate and quote the giving code SKI2016



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YoungLifeAustralia

Connections

December 2016 Issue

Merry Christmas

FROM
YOUNG LIFE
AND A
VERY HAPPY
NEW YEAR
IN 2017



In this issue:

**NEW FACES
ON THE TEAM**

**PREPARING
FOR CAMP**

**SKI MISSION
MAKE AN APPEAL**

**OLD FRIENDS
RETURN TO OZ**

Introducing THE NEW TEAM

Three new faces have joined Young Life in recent months. Anthony Wheaton has joined staff in Victoria, Holly Lim has taken on the role of area manager in Ryde NSW and Ben Hura is working to establish a new area from the ground up in Parramatta.

Here is a little bit from each of them, starting with Anthony.



Anthony Wheaton

As Young Life field staff, Anthony spends his days visiting Glen Waverley Secondary College as a volunteer assistant and mentor to the students.

"Young Life has had an established presence at Glen Waverley over ten years through the chaplain, Chris Douglas, so I've been fortunate to have a lot of opportunities to enter classrooms, mingle with students and ask them about their work," says Anthony.

"As I've become more familiar, some of the younger students have started to seek me out, which has led to playing a lot of lunchtime soccer. I've also been involved in judging the Glenny cook-off and organising Badminton for 80 students.

"I'm learning a lot about High School and how it's changed since I was a student. I was always interested in my subjects but it's really impressive what they are learning today. The students are organised, want to get good marks and are willing to respect their teachers. I've had some great conversations with students," he says.

Anthony began his career in Electrical Engineering. "That was the path I had in mind but after working for 12 years, I see more value in connecting with young people, having honest and motivating discussions, and being a positive role model.

"I was encouraged in my Christian faith first by my Dad and later by the minister of the Lutheran church I attended in Darwin. Both supported me when I pursued overseas mission which was about bridging the gap in basic conditions. Later I became involved in the Micah Challenge and involving young people with Jesus' perspective on these issues.

"More recently I have become inspired through working with the youth in my home church. Half the teenagers who turned up regularly had dropped out of school, and many of them opened up about their struggles with depression and other fears. This motivates me to get alongside and encourage young people to explore the future with hope."



Holly Lim

Holly Lim, also joined Young Life this year. She has been welcomed by the Ryde Wildlife club members and quickly drawn into activities at Marsden High School.

"I am really enjoying being a part of Marsden High School where I am involved as a classroom assistant as well as a part of the student welfare team.

"I have been meeting with donors who have been supporting Ryde Young Life for many years; and I have been working on plans for club and camping in 2017.

"Wylidlife will be a big focus for me. We need some new volunteers and I look forward to developing the team."

Holly studied and worked in architecture before making her favourite pass-time a full-time occupation.

"I was 17 when I had my first experience leading a youth camp at Camp Kedron. I loved being handed a cabin-full of young people and just being expected to do life with them – eating together, playing and doing activities together, sharing life stories and looking at the bible together.

"I have been involved in camping ever since and was drawn to Young Life because of its aim to promote healthy, strong and supportive relationships with teenagers. I love being able to meet teenagers where they are at, and to walk alongside them as they discover who they are and where they want to be in life," she says.

"I always struggled with the idea of being judged and stereotyped when I was a teenager, so being affirmed and encouraged by leaders, friends and family that I was more than enough because of Christ, was key to helping me throughout my teenage years."



Ben Hura

Ben Hura joined Young Life earlier this year to start working on a plan to establish Young Life in and around the High Schools of Parramatta.

Having moved with his family from New Zealand to the Parramatta area when he was still in primary school, Ben went on to attend Cumberland High School and then train as a carpenter/joiner.

It was after high school that he became a Christian which made him

reflect a lot on his teenage years. He felt drawn back into working with youth through his church, and now as part of Young Life.

"When I was at school and in the early years of my apprenticeship I was very caught up with alcohol and binge culture," Ben says.

"Parramatta is where I nearly lost the use of my hand thanks to a drunken stunt on an empty building site. God changed me through that experience and I gave my life to Him."

Ben's experiences have given him a desire to work with young people. "I lacked an older mentor when I was a teenager and so I would just do what I thought other people wanted me to do.

"That led to a lot of pain and hurt. I think young people in pain can struggle with putting their trust in God's love. For me, the key has been understanding God as a loving Father and trusting His plan for me now, including everything that has shaped me to this point.

Ben is excited to be working in Parramatta. "It is a hub for the surrounding suburbs and there is a lot of potential for building connections with young people."

"I am not sure what it will be at this stage but am planning some school holiday activities with the aim of starting club in the new year."



Young people from Belarus and Lithuania at their Summer Camp in August this year with Mark Hamilton saying "Thank you" to supporters.

Milestone for Young Life in Belarus CELEBRATING 15 YEARS

Young Life in Belarus and the Baltics began 15 years ago. This is a milestone for founders Mark and Lera Hamilton and cause for celebration at Young Life Australia.

"To look back and know that lives have changed is wonderful," says Mark.

"We can now see the pattern of generations. At our 15th birthday party held in Minsk, one of the leaders, Yuri, shared how Lera and myself taught Oleg, who taught him (Yuri), who taught Dima, Katya and others who are now teaching a new group of teens."

Mark grew up in Melbourne Australia and Lera grew up in Rochester, New York. They met in Belarus where Mark was living and working after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Lera was visiting and volunteering at Summer Camps. They married in 2001 and have been living in Belarus ever since. They have five children and are expecting their sixth.

"We both love the people and history of this area. The Orthodox, Roman Catholic and Lutheran churches have an historic presence here but there is little in terms of youth work.

"There is an entire generation of adults with no experience of Christianity. It is their children who we meet, many of them hungry to know more."

Hamiltons in Australia

From December to May, Mark and Lera will be in Australia, connecting with those who have supported Young Life in Belarus and the Baltics.

"We are looking forward to sharing our hopes and plans. The dream is for Young Life to double in size across Belarus and the Baltics, and to work with parents as well as teens.

"For this to happen, we need more staff and volunteer leaders but we are so grateful for God's faithfulness to us in the past; and for the prayers, encouragement and financial help of everyone in Australia," says Mark.

HOUSE & CAR SIT NEEDED – CAN YOU HELP?

Young Life missionaries, Mark and Lera Hamilton with their children return to Australia on furlough between 12 Dec 2016 and May 2017. They are in need of accommodation (a house-sit for part or all of this time, or use of spare rooms in your home) and the use of a vehicle.

If you are able to help, please contact Mark or Lera on (03) 9016-3815 or email mark@young-life.lt

To donate visit www.younglife.org.au/donate

My response

Name _____

Address _____

State _____ Postcode _____

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Phone (Evening) _____

Please send me more information on:

- Becoming a monthly giving partner
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- Sponsor a teen to Summer Camp
- Praying for the work of Young Life Australia

I wish to partner the work of Young Life Australia through financial support:

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All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

We appreciate your support. It really makes a difference!

Please send completed form to:
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PO Box 240, West Ryde, NSW 1685

Please make all cheques payable to Young Life.

Young Life Australia complies with all provisions of the Privacy Act. Be assured that the personal details you provide will be entered directly into the Young Life Australia database and will not be disclosed to any third party. We may use your details to send you information about the work of Young Life Australia. If you would like to know what information Young Life Australia has on you please call (02) 9877 5144 during business hours.

Please do not send any further details about Young Life Australia

If you would like to receive news from Anthony, Holly or Ben as they work to support and connect with young people in their areas, or discuss ways of being involved as a committee or club volunteer, please contact the national office on 1300 557 647.



THE TWO OF US

Every week, friendships are formed between leaders on the Young Life team and the young people in their communities. Many of these friendships become lifelong. Sophie Wilksch (left) studies law and also works on Field Staff in the Barossa Valley. We interviewed Sophie and club member Felicity, who has recently graduated from High School.

1. How long have you known each other and how did you meet?

Felicity: That's a good question. I'm not really sure!

Sophie: We met initially through family friends, I think Felicity was in Year 9 so that is four years ago and then we connected through school, camps and club.

2. Can you tell us something you like about the other person?

Felicity: Sophie's constant encouragement to everyone around her.

Sophie: I love Felicity's willingness to try new things, and the confidence to follow through with ideas. She has also grown into an incredible leader within her school.

3. What is something you have in common?

Felicity: Our faith and studying the bible together. And coffee. Definitely coffee.

Sophie: Seeing young people growing in confidence and finding their identity. Also our families share a farming background which is cool!

4. How often do you meet up? What do you do, typically?

Felicity: We have been meeting up once a fortnight or monthly for bible study and going to Infusion with Young Life every month for a long time.

5. What is one memorable experience you have shared?

Sophie: I got to be a supervisor for a weekend retreat that was part of the Cert III qualification Felicity did in Year 11. She received two qualifications, one in Christian Ministry and the other in Child Services. In October I attended an award ceremony where Felicity was joint winner of VET Student of the Year. We have also had some memorable road trips, and learned a lot about different NGOs that operate in the CBD of Adelaide.

6. Name something the other person is passionate about and something they are great at.

Sophie: Felicity is great at connecting with people and making them feel at ease. I think she is passionate about experiencing the best that life has to offer, and she is great at pursuing her dreams.

Felicity: Sophie is passionate about sharing God's word in her own unique way. She is great at putting a smile on anyone's face.



Good2Give is a website that makes giving to charities easy. It can be used by individuals or by businesses where workplace giving is part of the culture.

Some organisations match employees' donations to support the issues that matter to their staff. Good2Give provides a platform for this to happen.

It's possible to set up regular or one-off donations directly to the causes that matter to you most, the tax benefit is immediate and there's no requirement for credit card details.

Have a look at the Good2Give website and visit the section for donors. You can search for Young Life Australia and view our newly added profile.

Every donation Young Life receives is of great help to us! We hope Good2Give will be of help to you too.