

We won't stop reaching out to teens

As the end of the financial year quickly approaches, I am aware 2016-17 has been significant in many ways for Young Life Australia.



We have watched as new groups of young people connect through contact work and new clubs in Maroubra and Parramatta as well as in Ryde and I know this region will gain real momentum in the coming year.

The outreach and camping activities aimed at younger teens and senior primary students has also grown. Wyldlife recognises young people are entering adolescence earlier, and Year 7 is a huge adjustment socially and academically. It's great to see our Young Life areas responding to this opportunity.

Working with high schools continues to be rewarding, as we serve the need for community involvement and help to create a positive atmosphere. I am very grateful to the Young Life staff, volunteers and chaplains who represent us in schools, where young people spend most of their time.

There is more to be done and we will not rest.

There are many more young people who need the presence of a trusted adult outside the family home to support them during this journey called adolescence, as they explore their own faith and values.

Sharing the highs and lows as teenagers explore who they are and discover all that God has for them, is a privilege and a calling.

CANBERRA ON THE MOVE

After many years of faithful prayer that Young Life would be reaching the youth of Canberra things are happening, according to Alex Lee.

Partnered with Christ Church Hawker we have a breakfast club running Wednesday mornings at Belconnen High and are slowly growing our volunteer team. While Georgia and our friends from Hawker stand behind the BBQ whipping up pancakes, toast and hot chocolate, myself and our leaders Rachel, Rachel and Elne are hanging out with students.

"Our biggest hit so far is our giant chess set which regularly sees 10+ students a side debating over each and every move! We are in contact with Hawker College next door with plans to start up a second BBQ for the Year 11 and 12 students.

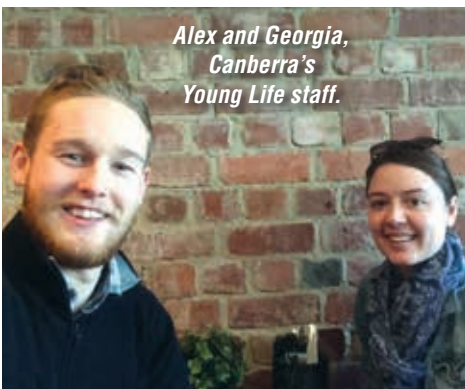
"In just a short time Young Life Canberra will be launching club in week 2 of term 3. It will be running fortnightly on Thursday nights from 7-8.30pm at the Hawker community hall provided to us by Christ Church Hawker. We are hoping more people can join us to make club an amazing experience for Canberra's high school and college kids.

"The space is newly built and includes an indoor space with a full media setup, kitchen, large decked

area and a grassed area to run every kind of activity we can think of.

"After completing Abide last year in Armidale and moving back to Canberra in February I am so excited to be working with Georgia, our committee, volunteers and partners to reach the youth of Canberra.

"So many opportunities have been made available to us that I can't wait to see what happens here throughout this year and the possibilities for 2018!"



Young Life continues to need your help to do what we do; and we appreciate how you have stood with us over the last year.

Can I encourage you to help us now by filling in the giving slip and returning it or making an online donation. Your donation will be used to consolidate new work.

If you share a keen sense of the need among young people, please act today.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support of Young Life.

To all our hard working volunteers at the coal face; to the committee members in local communities, our donors, schools, churches, and the YL board; and to the many who have simply shared the Young Life story with a friend – you are part of the fabric that makes Young Life special.

Glyn Henman, CEO, Young Life Australia

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.



Getting to know Herbie Onapa

Born into a family of five children (three girls and two boys) with Lebanese heritage, life as Herbie remembers it was always loud and loving. She was raised in the suburbs of Sydney, and from the age of 14, lived in Brisbane, QLD. Moving to Brisbane was the best decision her parents ever made, according to Herbie!

"I have always been passionate about children and after initially training as a hairdresser I went on to do a nanny course, which led to tertiary studies in psychology. When I graduated in 2001 I left to travel and work overseas.

"As a nanny, I travelled the world and had some pretty amazing experiences working with the stars of Hollywood, and whilst those years of my life were so much fun, it has not compared to the life I have lived since accepting Christ into my heart in 2002.

In 2006, Herbie was called to go to Sudan as a missionary. It was there she met her husband Sam who is from Uganda. Two years later they married and the year after, had their daughter Isabel.

"Life and work in Africa was an adventure, to say the least," says Herbie.

"In 2014, whilst leading and overseeing the church in Khartoum, we were given 24 hours notice to leave the country. Having counselled and ministered to countless persecuted Christians over the years, we had become a part of the number."

Young Life Australia is a Chaplaincy provider to schools in NSW, QLD and Victoria, including Newling Public School in Armidale where Herbie Onapa is Chaplain.

How did you become a chaplain and what is the school like?

"Young Life was advertising the position of Chaplain at the same time my husband, daughter and I were transitioning from overseas and let's just say, God was "working it all for good."

"The school is Newling Public School and it has a student population of 107, with approximately 70% indigenous children.

"It is indeed a very special school with extraordinary needs and like many chaplain positions, the title and role description is somewhat different to the actual work I do on a daily basis.

"Right now I am primarily doing learning support as I visit each classroom, supporting staff in teaching students reading, writing, and doing assessments – basically helping wherever the needs are.

"My counselling background also allows me to

work with the resident psychologist in running group sessions and programs.

"However, my favourite time of the day is recess and lunch where I am assigned the "special" children, and it's during these times when great opportunities arise, as I redirect behavioural problems and attitudes with the love and acceptance of Christ through communication and play.

I get to have so much fun with the kids whether playing: kicks; bullrush; Spidey; handball; battleship; jenga; UNO; frisbee; football; soccer; music; or colouring... the list is endless!

"I'm all about fun as most of the students are pounded with disciplinary actions that don't reap fun, so when they are with "Mrs O"... they know whatever the consequence, we will smile... we will laugh... we will have fun!



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Connections

June 2017 Issue



ONE MORE REASON for sharing hope

WHEN NETFLIX DRAMA '13 REASONS WHY' WAS RELEASED, IT CREATED A STRONG REACTION.

The story of one teenage girl's decision to take her life was praised for raising issues confronting teenagers, but Australian mental health services were concerned.

Headspace, a mental health service specifically for young people, said it received more calls in the wake of the series from students, parents and schools who had found the content distressing.

It warned against the series, saying depictions of suicide can create contagion, particularly among teens.

Young Life's Ben Staunton had a mixed reaction to the series.

"Even before I had read about it in the papers, I had heard high schoolers I work with talking about it," said Ben.

"For the uninitiated, the series is the based around 13 tapes made by the young girl who commits suicide, blaming a number of people for her decision.

CONTINUED OVERLEAF



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HOBART YOUNG LIFE

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MAKE A COMEBACK

CEO:
A TIME TO ACT

MEET
HERBIE ONAPA

WELCOME IN, THIS IS HOBART!

Lucy Smith is a volunteer club leader at Young Life in Hobart. Here she describes joining the Young Life team and watching young people grow.



Lucy (front row, left) with the Hobart crew at Summer Camp 2017.

“I came across Young Life the year before last. I was part of my church youth group team but we had reached a stage where the youth had all grown up.

“A few of us wanted to remain involved in youth work and we heard Young Life were in need of leaders; so we joined the team.

“The energy at Young Life club is infectious – maybe even overwhelming but in a good way!

“Everyone is in a great mood and throw themselves wholly into the activities. It’s very impressive.

“I think if you were a teenager visiting, it could be daunting but we have a great group of leaders – a mix of energetic up front people and those who are happy to talk quietly one on one.

“This has meant there is space for everyone.

“I can definitely say – Young Life is a place where the teenagers are growing in Christ.

“If I was to share one story, it would be about a Year

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10 boy who was very disengaged and negative about everything. It was surprising to me he would turn up to club. But over the course of a year he did keep on coming and he came to our Easter camp where he spent more time talking to the Young Life leaders.

“And then he started coming to every meeting of our small group called The Real Deal which is for young people interested in hearing more about Jesus and talking about life and what matters to them.

“So even though his home life isn’t great, he is much more engaged in life. He’s connecting with some club members but it’s his connection with the leaders that has really helped him.

“The transformation has been incredible.

“Sometimes you hear stories from the young people about how they are treated at school; how they are bullied and what their families are going through.

“Some share their feelings of depression and even thoughts of suicide and you know you are dealing with young people who are very vulnerable.

“It’s why we try to make Young Life a place where they feel safe and respected and to build trust so they are able to turn to you if they need to.

“I became a Christian when I was a teenager and I want to be able to help other young people experience God and show them they are loved. There is always going to be someone on their side.”

For that reason Lucy, we are glad to have you as part of Young Life!

PANCAKES
Weekly at Clarence and Rokeby High Schools and Bayview Secondary College
CLUB
Friday nights at Howrah Church of Christ
ENJOYING
Working with Energizer Church to deliver a mentoring program for boys
SHARING
Camping endeavours with Youth With a Mission
INVESTING
More hours in relational youth work across South East Tasmania thanks to a \$25,000 grant from the Tasmanian Christian Fund

ONE MORE REASON WHY FROM PAGE 1

“As I watched, I was struck by the notion that her death was seemingly motivated by wanting revenge on those who had hurt her; as much as an inability to go on living.

“Suicide and its effects are devastating, and holding it up in any way as the strong choice or the ultimate way to achieve revenge seemed dangerous and unhelpful.

“However, the series does carry a clear message that the way we treat people matters.” said Ben.

“It shows how small actions can have big impact on people, teenagers in particular.

“It helpfully reveals how people struggling will often reach out in subtle, as well as more obvious, ways.

“It also highlights the danger caused by the over-sexualisation of young woman; and the complicit nature of many who witness or partake in ‘harmless fun’ or ‘locker room talk’.



“I can not recommend the show with a clear conscience, but I do think it presents an opportunity for parents and other adults with teenagers under their care to have a frank discussion about the different issues raised,” he said.

“It is also one more reason why we as adults, must work hard to really listen to the teenagers in our lives.”

WHAT ARE THE STATISTICS?

In 2015, 145 Australian young people aged 15-19 years took their own lives. Of these, 89 were boys and 56 girls.

Suicide is consistently more common in males than females; however 2015 saw a doubling in suicide among 15-19 year old girls.

Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) Causes of Death, Australia, 2015.



SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE THROUGH TOUGH TIMES

WHERE CAN HELP BE FOUND?

For immediate help in Australia dial:

- Emergency 000
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- Kids Helpline 1800 551 800
- Suicide Call Back Service 1300 659 467

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS?
Some signs that a person may be thinking about suicide include:
– Withdrawing from friends, family or society
– Seeking access to pills or other means
– Talking or writing about death, dying or suicide
– Hopelessness
– Rage, anger, seeking revenge
– Acting recklessly, seemingly without thinking
– Feeling trapped, like there’s no way out
– Increasing alcohol and drug use
– Anxiety, agitation, unable to sleep or sleeping all the time
– Dramatic changes in mood
– No reason for living, no sense of purpose in life.
This list is from a Mental Health First Aid factsheet on Suicidal Thoughts and Behaviours, available at mhfa.com.au.

SIGNIFICANT RISK FACTORS
Conditions such as depression, bipolar disorder, eating disorders and substance abuse are risk factors for suicide.
WHAT CAN YOU DO?
If you live with or work with young people and want to be prepared, here is some guidance produced by Mental Health First Aid:
If you think a young person may be suicidal, ask them directly. If they say yes, do not leave them alone. Ask them if they need help coping with these feelings and be ready and familiar with services available locally and online (including those listed above). If the young person is experiencing depression, encourage them to see a GP for support.
Consider doing a course in Youth Mental Health Aid. Young Life Australia runs courses for staff, volunteers and other interested community members. Call our National Office on 1300 557 647 and we will let you know when the next course is to be held. More resources can be found at youthbeyondblue.org.au.



Pancake breakfasts are a tradition with Young Life and in days gone by, Young Life volunteers have served pancakes to students at Glen Waverley Secondary College: but not in recent years.



Which is why Monash Area Coordinator, Anthony Wheaton is particularly thankful for a team from Glen Waverley Uniting Church who have come alongside Young Life to serve pancakes once again.

“Thursday morning pancakes have exploded in popularity since their introduction at the beginning of Term Two,” Anthony said.

“We’ve added another BBQ to our set up and our output went from 130 in one week to 250 the next,” said Anthony.

“It has been so encouraging to see the students chatting happily with the volunteers as they queue up to have their breakfast, before heading out to classes.

“I have been overwhelmed with offers from Year 7 and 8 boys who want to help with the cooking.

“But the best thing is seeing these boys seek us out, as a result of time I have spent with them, building a rapport by playing games in the school yard.

Keen for more news from Young Life in Monash, Victoria? Connect with Anthony at anthonywheaton@younglife.org.au and ask to receive their newsletter.

Colleen, our USA recruit! Just a few of the 250 pancakes we make each visit, in partnership with the Glen Waverley Uniting Church.

School’s in, Club is on!

Karla Stait is Young Life’s Dubbo Area Manager. Here she talks about a program Young Life run in partnership with Macquarie Anglican Grammar School.

“One of the opportunities we have in Dubbo, has been created in partnership with the local Grammar school. Macquarie Anglican Grammar School aims to foster a nurturing school environment through its staff and the school chaplain. Young Life in Dubbo has been invited to play a part in supporting this goal of caring for the students within the school community.

So each Monday lunchtime, Laura Mansell, Gary Woolfe and myself, sign in to Macquarie Anglican Grammar School to host an in-school club.

We spend time getting to know the students by playing some games and creating the space for them to chat with us if they want to; or to simply hang out.

Some of the students who come along also attend the West Dubbo Young Life Club held at the Ray McKay Memorial Guides Hall on a Thursday night, so we get to build on the mentoring relationship established at school.

Young Life is committed to coming alongside teenagers in a relatable way and taking an interest in what they like, think, wish for, and care about.

We are all about relationships and believe this is key to making a difference in the lives of young people, by being the friend they can turn to in a crisis and sowing seeds of hope in their lives.

Volunteering in schools is a great way to support these connections.”

Connect with Karla and the Dubbo team at karla@younglife.org.au.

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From left: Karla Stait, Laura Mansell and Gary Woolfe, Young Life’s visiting team at Macquarie Anglican Grammar School in Dubbo.



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- ☐ Praying for the work of Young Life Australia

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Name on card _____

CARD NO. _____

Expiry Date _____

Signature _____

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

We appreciate your support. It really makes a difference!

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Please make all cheques payable to Young Life.

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