

Connections

September 2017 Issue

INSIDE:

Youth in the new
urban setting

Australia's overseas
connections

2016/17 Financial
Year results

Contact work. Is it still
worth pursuing?



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

with Mark Stretton



Hello everyone. Again it has been my privilege to be the Board Chairman for Young Life Australia for the past year. A big thank you to Glyn Henman our CEO, all the Young Life staff, volunteers and donors. Your support and dedication to the young people of Australia is amazing.

The teenage years can be some of the most incredible and formative years of your life but can also, depending on your circumstances, be some of the most difficult. Never in history has there been such a time as this where anything seems permissible and communication and access to information both good and bad so easy. You can appear to have a sea of friends but still be lonely.

Some say the Christian message is out of date but to me the world needs it more than ever. To know that God knows you, loves you just as you are and has a plan for you, a plan to prosper you and not to harm you and is prepared to forgive you for any mistake you have made, is the hope that our staff and volunteers represent.

I was fortunate enough last year to visit a Young Life Summer Camp in Canada and then go to the Head Office in Colorado Springs. I met Glyn there and we got to share our news from Australia with their new president Newt Crenshaw and Marty Caldwell who looks after international ministry. I was very inspired and encouraged, they worked with over 1 million young people last year in the USA.

I have met so many people now, who have shared that their Young Life leader changed their life. Young Life people know how to get alongside young people.

We have grown as an organisation in all aspects, and this brings challenges but when you look at the young people in our country and the challenges they face it is important that we keep focused on making a difference in people's lives. Young Life Australia is grateful for your support as, together, we strive to make a bigger difference in our country, I pray you will stay on this journey with us and see where our mighty God takes us. God bless.



“There would be no Young Life club without contact work...”



Is contact work still making a difference?

This year, Young Life Australia marks 45 years of working with Australian teenagers. Much has changed during that time but one thing hasn't changed – contact work.

So what is contact work? Why is it important? Fudge Jordan, explains.

“I think the most important thing to understand about contact work is why we do it – we can't expect kids to come to us. We need to go to them.”

“It comes down to earning the right to be heard and building trust.”

For Fudge, who trains and leads volunteer teams in several schools, there would be no Young Life club without contact work.

“Young people need our time; and we need to hear their stories if we are to support them.”

One example of contact work is visiting schools and chatting with students informally at lunchtime.

“It can be hard for volunteers – they can feel uncomfortable. They have to approach kids and strike up a conversation.”

“Running a pancake breakfast is often seen as a better option because you are part of a team and have something to do while chatting to kids. Food is always a good subject of conversation!” he says.

Whatever the means, Young Life aims to be a helping hand in schools and to get alongside young people.

“We don't really mind how we do it, as long as we are contributing in a positive way,” says Fudge.

“No matter what we do, we need to be intentional. If we are not intentional, it's easy to skip over this step and focus on planning events for young people.”

“But if we neglect contact work, club and camp become entertainment rather than a place to belong.”

“We want to see young people develop into adults who make healthy decisions and have strong community ties. And we want to open a way for them into the local church, if that's what they choose.”

“We have to show we care about them on their turf, before we can expect them to meet us on ours.”



CEO'S REPORT

with Glyn Henman

I am very happy to be able to report Young Life Australia has seen further growth in 2016-17.

If you are among those who gave to Young Life's work for the first time, welcome! I am very mindful of the trust placed in us when a gift is given toward outreach in a specific area.

If you have been with us for some time, thank you. Your commitment means Young Life is able to sustain a long-term presence in communities and have a much deeper impact.

This is our Annual Review edition of Connections. It contains our 2016-17 financial results and a snapshot of where Young Life Australia stands today compared with our situation in 2011.

I hope you enjoy learning more about aspects of our work you may not have known about; and the people who make it happen. The Board and I are immensely proud of the people – staff and volunteers – who represent Young Life Australia.

As I write these words, I am preparing for the biennial gathering of Young Life committee members.

Young Life committees are instrumental in carrying the vision within their communities. Some have been involved in Young Life for decades and carry much of our organisational memory! Some are new to Young Life, coming alongside our teams to lend their heart and expertise. They stand behind Area Managers as advocates in their communities. They love young people and want to see them encouraged, cared for and given the opportunity to learn about God's saving love for them.

John 15:8 reminds us that any and all fruit produced is to God's glory, we are thankful for his faithfulness to Young Life and the outcomes we have seen this year.



**"Thank you
for being part
of creating the
future."**

Revenue Growth



Activity Growth

Activity / Year	2011	2017
Communities	7	17
Schools	10	25
Staff	15	40
Volunteers	146	440
Camps / Attendance	3 / 183	9 / 620

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Young Life Australia's Financial Report 2016/17

with Llew Morris, Financial Controller



Young Life Australia recorded another year of solid growth and development during 2016-17.

Revenue increased 12% to \$1.67 million.

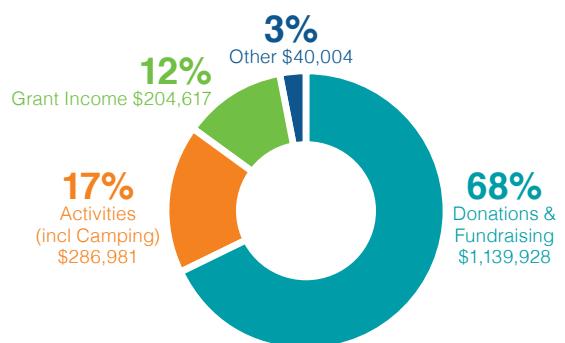
The surplus for the year was \$56,053, which was up 28% on the previous year.

INCOME

Income from Donations and Fundraising totaled \$1,139,928. This is the largest component of income representing 68% of income and is the result of the fundraising efforts and activities in the local communities in which Young Life operates. This category grew by 24% in the year.

Income from youth activities including camping, totaled \$286,981, representing a decline of 7% during the year.

Grant income (including grants to fund chaplains in schools) totaled \$204,617 which was an 8% increase during the year. Grants provided 12% of total funds.

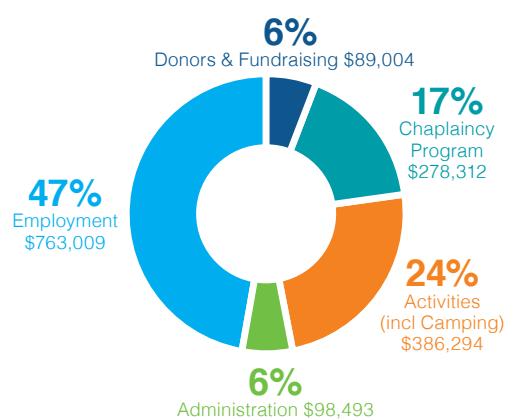


EXPENSES

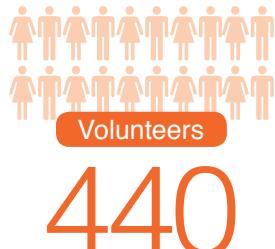
Employment Expenses of \$763,009 make up 47% of Young Life's expenses. This category increased from the previous year with a number of new staff joining and successful fundraising to increase hours. At year end, the organisation employed 40 staff including 6 full-time, 31 part-time and 3 casual staff. This equated to 20 FTE positions.

Young Life continued to achieve operational efficiencies and ranks highly on standard efficiency measures for charities. Less than 5 cents of each dollar of Total Income is spent on Fundraising and less than 6 cents in the dollar is spent on Administration.

The School Chaplaincy Programme continued for the tenth year with 11 chaplains placed in schools in Queensland, NSW, ACT and Victoria. Funding for this programme is mostly via the National School Chaplaincy Program with additional support from private donations and the schools themselves.



OUR PEOPLE





Young Life in the Australian URBAN SETTING



Parramatta happens to be New South Wales' second largest CBD and one of the nation's largest outside of capital cities. It is here that Young Life Parramatta finds itself. The sheer number of people with no connection to a local church is staggering. The city boasts approximately 20,000 students of whom only one in nine may have any meaningful relationship with Jesus or the Church.

Cities have always held high significance from Babel to Jerusalem, and everything in between. The most obvious advocate for ministry in cities was Paul, who in the book of Acts

journeyed from city to city. Paul knew the strategic value of cities and that from urban contexts people would move and carry this message of hope that he had preached.

Parramatta is home to people of diverse cultural backgrounds, with a large population of new migrant families. Parramatta is an urban melting pot, a cultural centre for hundreds of different ethnicities. This has its positives and negatives in terms of ministry. It has made outreach on a pragmatic level very difficult with kids having diverse names from a number of cultural backgrounds, and even some who cannot speak English at all!

But, I have found families who have recently found a home here keen to connect into local community activities. There is a real sense that by connecting into community, they can set down local roots and call this their home. It means that youth are playing in the park like they did in the old country; there is no scepticism or fear on the behalf of parents to let them outside.

This is not the case with the majority of urban youth though. It is a rarity to see young people of the city outside their house after school. There is a certain determination of second-generation students to succeed at their schooling and extracurricular activities. There is an obsession with online fantasies that keeps them inside playing their gaming system of choice rather than connecting in the park. Above all there is still a misconception about the safety of urban environments for young people by parents. So consistently we are challenged by the question: Where are the kids at? The ones who are out and about we connect with, but considering there are almost 20,000 young people in this city where are they hiding?

Besides our work in schools doing pancake breakfasts, this has meant the key to success is having a robust online presence. It is a new take on meeting young people 'where they are at' because right now





BY BEN HURA

somewhere they all find themselves, is in the online sphere. Social media allows young people a taste of club before they come; to help them know what to expect when they get there. The online environment has become another place for connecting with young people although we are keenly aware of its problems.

The demands of an online life are taxing on any young student, which has seen an increase in their desire

Consistently we are challenged by the question, where are the young people at? Where are they hiding?

to connect IRL (in real life). A face-to-face conversation is something some of these students are dying to have because of the inauthentic nature of online community. A place to disconnect could be our next camp slogan as we offer a place of solace and authentic community for young people to come to.

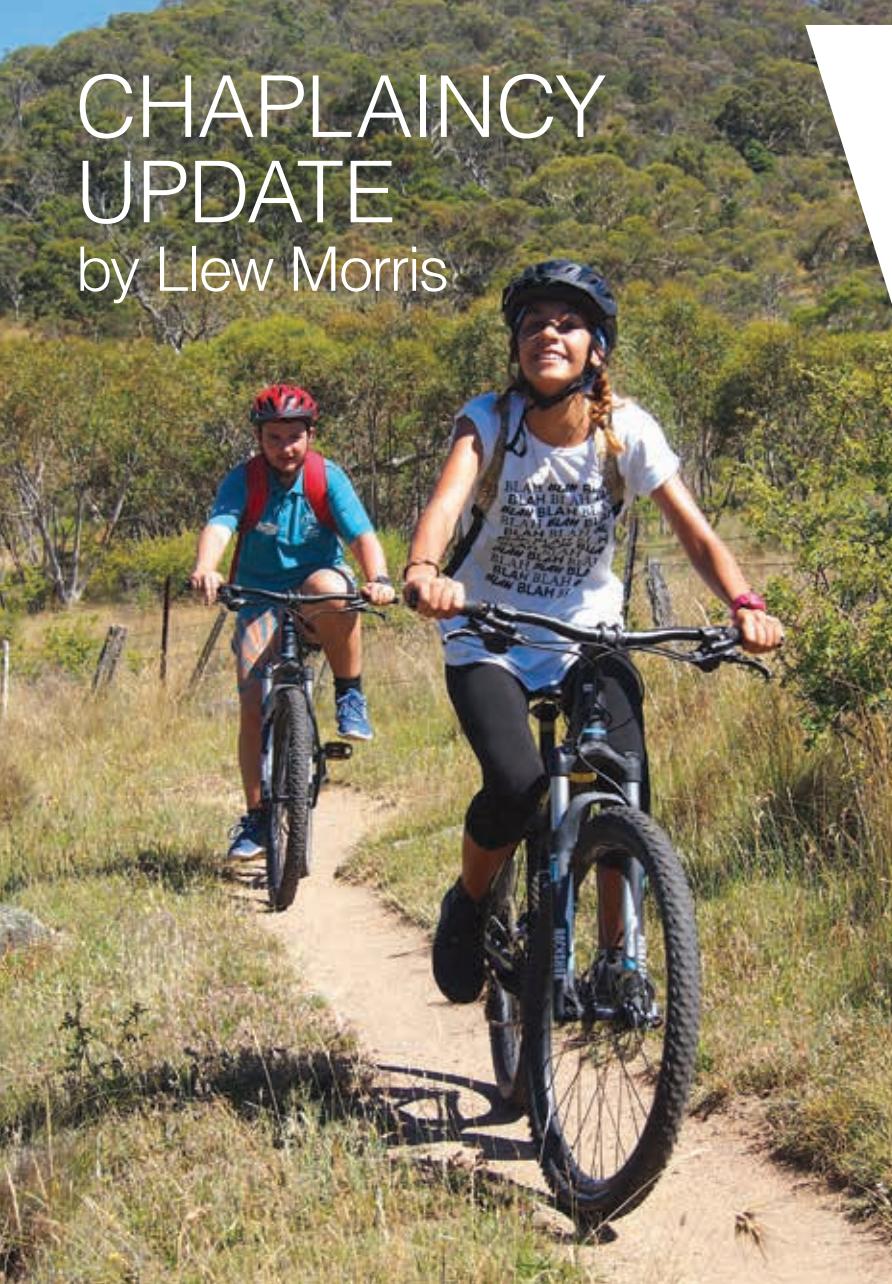
Beyond this, urban Young Life leaders must continue to engage young people IRL (in real life) and earn the right to be heard through showing the benefit knowing Jesus brings to life.

When it comes down to it, we must seek to launch more Young Life areas in urban environments because of the number of students in cities who do not know Jesus. There are overwhelming numbers of young people in urban environments that are desperate to hear about the love that our Lord has for them. It is when we make an impact in these urban centres that we will truly see a wider impact as these young people who we impact scatter throughout the world carrying with them the light of Jesus.



CHAPLAINCY UPDATE

by Llew Morris



Young Life has been placing chaplains in schools since 2007. Chaplains have a distinctive role in schools, providing pastoral care within the school, and linking the physical, psychological and spiritual wellbeing of the students, staff and parents within the school community. The ability of chaplains to connect with students in their world is an important and powerful way of extending Young Life's goal of building confidence, resilience and values in young people.

Our chaplains meet with students on demand or on referral as well as delivering a variety of values-based programmes according to the need within the school – these range from anti-bullying, self-esteem and identity issues, to anger management and resilience-based welfare programmes. Chaplains also get involved in delivering information and training programmes for parents on family, adolescent and child-rearing issues.

Funding for our chaplains comes from a number of sources, including the federally-funded National Schools Chaplaincy Programme, supplemented by private donations and the schools themselves.

This year we welcomed Herbie Onapa (Newling Public School), Bethany Smith (Alexandra Hills State High School), Jared Stocks (Mooroolbark East Primary School), Arianne Tassios (Ermington Public School) and Katrina Trevaskis (Bairnsdale Secondary College) to our team of chaplains.

There are currently 11 chaplains working for Young Life in schools across NSW, Queensland, ACT and Victoria.

I wanted to be challenged

Lesley Vale is a Young Life chaplain and works at Minimbah Public School in Armidale where she has lived for 43 years.

Her role is funded for 1.5 days per week which see her honing her handball skills and helping the children hone their reading and writing skills.

She accompanies classes on excursions and helps with craft activities so she is able to listen to the children and chat about their thoughts and worries.

As part of Young Life, Lesley was invited to attend Summer Camp in Jindabyne this year.

She agreed to talk about the role God has played in her

life over 37 years.

"I thought it would be a great opportunity and I wanted to be challenged to get out among other people."

"I think everyone is challenged when you are around young people and it was great being with them on the camp."

"It was wonderful to see the teenagers who came along with us from Armidale climbing mountains, abseiling and skiing on the lake."

"You might take these things for granted if you live near mountains, but for those of us from flat country, you don't have that opportunity every day!"



The lost boys: a lesson in finding



by Alex Lee

During my year in Armidale with Young Life's Abide training programme we were challenged to get to know as many high school students as we could and among many others, I got to know three indigenous guys. I'll call them Ben, Will and Mike.

Ben I had met briefly on summer camp; Will and Mike I met for the first time hanging out at the indigenous scholarship club room at their school.

Every week all year long I saw Ben at his school when we cooked a pancake breakfast and I would see Will and Mike at the club room at another school, and I would see them both at Young Life club where we would play sport, eat dinner and spend a short time discussing a bible verse.

Although I was hanging out with dozens of students each week, I started to get to know these guys in particular and was able to take them along on a local weekend trip to the

beach where we water skied. The boys described it as the 'best day of their life.' Those two nights we read and talked through the parable of the two sons, and having gotten to know them and slowly unpack the Gospel, both Will and Mike gave their lives to Jesus to the joy of Ben (who had given his life to Jesus months earlier).

After this weekend I continued to see these guys at school and at club, and started a bible study with them and a fellow leader. That leader and I would drive around for an hour every Sunday afternoon to try and find the boys who, without fail, were never where they said they would be: but when we did find them they were glad to meet together, hangout, eat snacks and learn to read the bible and pray.

Throughout the year we sought them out every week and managed to meet with Ben and Mike on average every second or third week. At the start of

the following year I took Ben and Mike on summer camp along with two other boys, Jim and Jake who I had seen often at school but not yet gotten to know properly.

During that week all four boys expressed that they wanted to change their lives and follow Jesus. For them, change has been slow and there is a lot of brokenness in their lives. They still don't fit into a church youth group, but another leader is now meeting with them most weeks to read the bible and continue along the road with them.

These boys have taught me the value of relational ministry, they have humbled me and reminded me that even my own ministry to them isn't about me or even up to me, it's all in God's hands and so as hard as it was to support them when they wouldn't show; and as hard as it has been to let them go and return to Canberra, I know they are in His hands and that He loves them even more than I do.

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Young Life's international connections



Young Life Australia has close ties with two international ventures.

Fifteen years ago, Mark and Lera Hamilton moved to the Baltics where they planned to establish Young Life and more recently, Brooke Filipovski emigrated to Macedonia where she too hopes to grow a team and work with young people.

"Since Mark and Lera outlined their

vision to work with young people in the Baltics, Young Life Australia has been lending our structure and providing team training and support internationally," says Glyn Henman, CEO of Young Life Australia.

"We have seen the mission grow in Belarus and Lithuania with hundreds and hundreds of teenagers impacted due to Mark and Lera's patient work.

"I know that Brooke and Brendan are similarly dedicated to making Young Life happen in Macedonia.

"We are very thankful for what is happening in Europe. It really is a privilege for Australia to play a part and I am eager to see Young Life Australia offering support to others in the network, especially in our region," he says.

POSTCARD FROM BELARUS

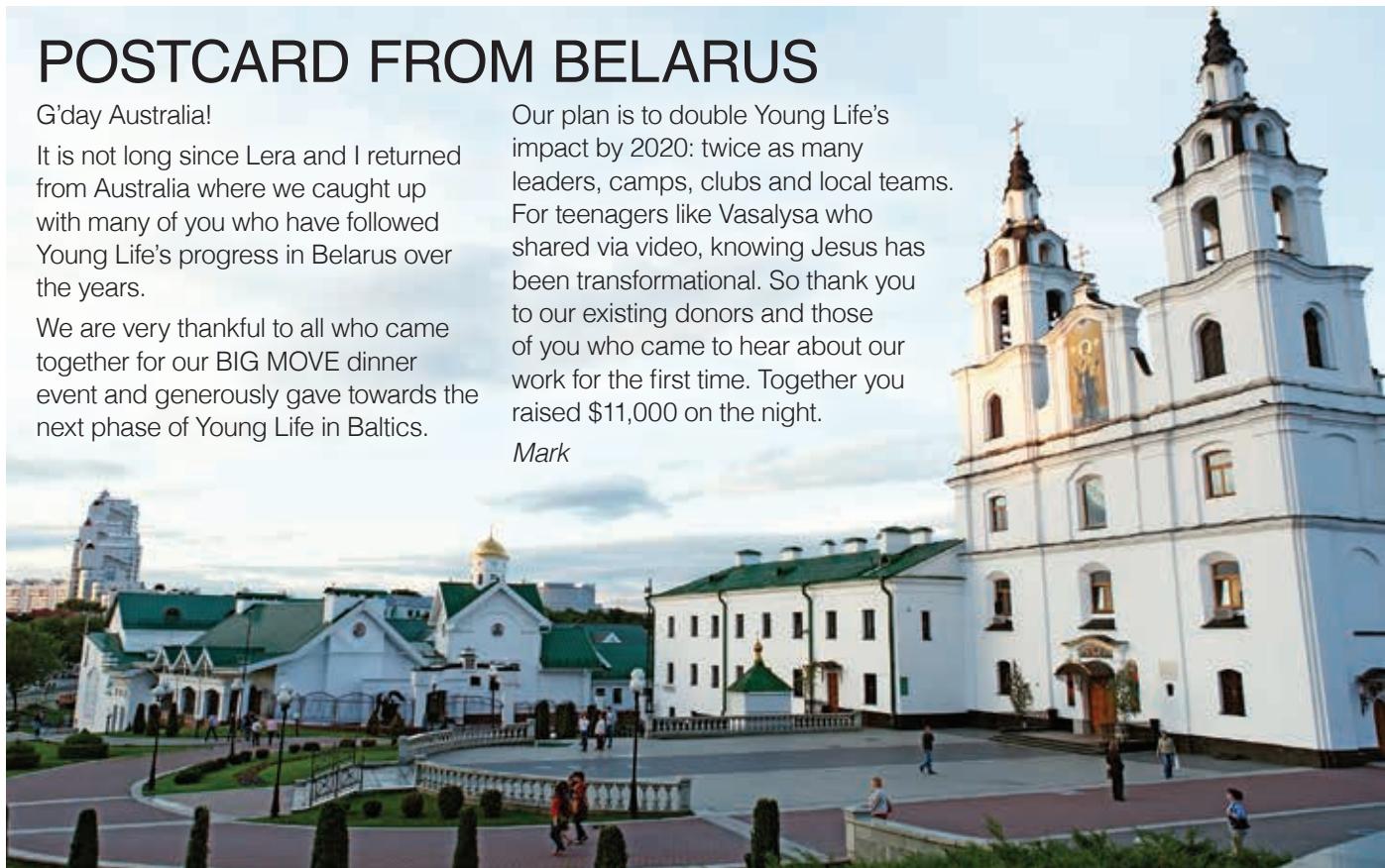
G'day Australia!

It is not long since Lera and I returned from Australia where we caught up with many of you who have followed Young Life's progress in Belarus over the years.

We are very thankful to all who came together for our BIG MOVE dinner event and generously gave towards the next phase of Young Life in Baltics.

Our plan is to double Young Life's impact by 2020: twice as many leaders, camps, clubs and local teams. For teenagers like Vasalysa who shared via video, knowing Jesus has been transformational. So thank you to our existing donors and those of you who came to hear about our work for the first time. Together you raised \$11,000 on the night.

Mark



POSTCARD FROM MACEDONIA

When Brendan and I first met, we talked about his love for his father's homeland. Ten years later, here we are settling in to Skopje! Macedonia is a country of two million. The people speak Macedonian, Albanian, Turkish, Serbian in that order!

My hope is to help develop, along with committed young Macedonian people, a sustainable model for what Young Life can look like in Skopje.

Young Life is certainly needed here as there are almost no youth ministries reaching young people beyond the church (and the church is very small).

Young Life's relational approach to reaching young people will certainly resonate with the culture here. Young people like to be together and I believe building solid friendships between caring adult Christians and teenagers will be attractive in the culture.

The family is also so valuable here, and I feel contact work needs to take place between volunteers and the families of these teens, even more so than in a western culture.

There is a huge opportunity to impact whole families with the message in this way.

Brooke



Brooke's tips on starting a conversation with a Macedonian:

Macedonians are incredibly social people and they are very interested in others so it isn't too hard! They all love their families, so you can talk about this and they'll go on and on. For young people, like young people everywhere, they are interested in pop culture, so it is easy to ask them about music, movies and fashion.

The most delicious dish to share with Macedonians:

The produce is so delicious in Macedonia so, I'd say, anything in season is great – but especially their Shopska Salata – a cucumber and tomato salad eaten with or without onions depending on preference, topped with shredded feta cheese made from sheep's milk.

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Karin's role: Ready for the moment when...

Have you ever wondered in what way you could be involved in helping young people through Young Life?

Karin Le Roux leads the team who mentor young mothers through Young Life Australia's Young Lives programme in Bathurst NSW. She is also a dedicated volunteer.

Earlier this year, Karin volunteered to cook meals at Next Steps – a camp especially designed for those who want to grow as Christians.

"Next Steps gives young people the chance to think about what it means to be a disciple, to read from the Bible and pray – individually and for each other," explains Karin.

"This year we had a small group, all girls, and I was the cook for four days. I had meals with the campers and leaders and so I got to know the girls really well in that time."

"I loved the chance to serve God and the girls. I was able to pray for the girls over the four days in the kitchen.

"I learned young girls may look like they are secure in life and don't need anything. But once you spend quality time with them, you realise they need a mentor they can open-up to.

"They start sharing their everyday struggles and joy."

Find out more about volunteering with Young Life at younglife.org.au/become-a-volunteer.



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