

Connections

April 2020 Issue



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A different Summer Camp experience


By Glyn Henman

As the bush fires burned across vast regions of Australia during the spring and summer months, Young Life was forced to make the very difficult decision to cancel our major summer camp program in Jindabyne. With nearly 300 people poised to travel into a region that was under serious threat, the decision became pretty clear.

Once the reality of this decision was absorbed, Young Life staff and volunteers did what we have a reputation for doing. We organised local camps and events around the country so campers wouldn't miss out. The entrepreneurial spirit rose quickly, no fewer than seven activities gathering campers from ten communities was organised in less than a week.

As CEO, I was enthralled by the energy and capacity of the local teams to shift gear and give their young friends a different experience, in some cases maybe a more significant experience of how God's family cares for each other. Hats off to our fantastic staff and volunteers.

I also want to thank the team who spent hours of their time organising a Summer Camp that wasn't to be. The hours involved were significant and we had a wonderful group working behind the scenes for months. For your energy, advice and diligent efforts, thank you!




Young Life Canberra ran a week of fun activities



Ryde Campers at their Summer 2.0 event

...no fewer than seven activities gathering campers from ten communities was organised in less than a week.



Young Life Warren travelled with their campers from the bush to the beach



WE'RE GOING TO THE ZOO



Dubbo youth meet the residents at Taronga Western Plains Zoo



Young Life's Dubbo Area Manager, Karla Stait received the news Summer Camp was cancelled with mixed feelings. Avoiding bushfires and poor air quality was paramount but Young Life in Dubbo had two cabins of young people signed up to go.

"My feeling was, how can we disappoint these kids," says Karla. As she thought through the options, she made a decision, picked up the phone and called Taronga Western Plains Zoo.

"They were so kind. They offered an overnight zoo stay for our campers at a significant discount," says Karla.

Taronga Western Plains Zoo has an international reputation and is right on Dubbo's doorstep and the overnight stay in the Billabong Camp is special. "None of our kids had experienced it," says Karla.

"The night-time tour throughout the Australian animals took place and our little group was joined

by a peacock named George who followed after us. A highlight was the giraffe encounter – having the opportunity to be close to and feed these amazing animals. Another highlight was the kind and interested staff at Taronga Western Plains Zoo who pulled out a tub of board games for us as we settled into our campsite for the night."

"The leaders and I organised a mini camp program and one of our field staff, Aaron gave a short talk about "Living Hope" and our other field staffer Drew shared his testimony."

"We asked the campers, what gives you hope? What causes you to lose hope? And what difference does 'living hope' make to our lives? We shared

what it means for us to have hope in Jesus."

"It was such a good opportunity for these teenagers to have these questions asked and to voice what they were thinking and experiencing.

"One girl didn't seem too interested in the talks, but she let me pray for her. As she was leaving at the end of two days, she rolled down the car window and called out, 'Karla, make sure you tell me when the next camp is.'"

"I want to thank the donors and our community for caring for these young people and Taronga Western Plains Zoo for welcoming us and providing these young people with the experience of a lifetime."



POSTCARD from Lithuania

Hi Australia,

Can I share a story from Lithuania about Dana our new worker?

She is a part-time music teacher at a Christian school that is full of non-Christian teens. We first met Dana several months back at a church when I had the opportunity to share about Jesus' love for the lost and the work we do with Young Life in Belarus and Baltic countries.

Dana introduced herself and explained how the Christian school in Vilnius, Lithuania where she worked, had found itself in an interesting situation – 80 percent of the students are not Christian.

She continued to highlight the situation saying, the majority of students had been expelled from the public school system and the only school willing to take these students, was the Christian school.

Dana and the school were looking for a way to help (beyond academics) these rough and tough teens – many with difficult home situations, problems with alcohol and drugs, depression and anger; and they came to Young Life looking for ways to partner.

Because of Dana's love for students and her faith in Jesus, Young Life was able to employ her part-time enabling her to build life-changing friendships with these teens. She is currently running an after-school drop-in space for students and is putting together a team of volunteers and looking for other ways of providing teens with after-school activities as a bridge to friendships with adult Christian role-models.

What an opportunity for the community of believers to make a difference in these kids' lives! Please pray for Dana and the students she will be befriending, encouraging and inviting to other Young Life events.

Mark Hamilton

Dana meets with teens through a Young Life partnership in Lithuania



Michael O'Kane joins Young Life in New England



Young Life in New England has welcomed Michael O'Kane in the role of Area Manager. We asked him all about himself.

I'm 42 and married to my beautiful wife Tammy. We have six children. I'm formerly from Sydney and have lived in Armidale for the last 12 years.

My previous jobs include Diocesan Youth Coordinator for Vinnies, TAFE Teacher and Centre Manager for Lifeline in Armidale.

I'm currently studying a Diploma in Theology and attend both Chapel Street Baptist Church as well as St Peter's Anglican Cathedral.

This year I look forward to supporting our local team in their work and consulting with all those who have an interest in the future of young people in our region.

I am very grateful for this role and am looking very much forward to glorifying God in it. To connect with Michael, email michaelokane@younglife.org.au

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

My response

Name _____

Address _____

State _____ Postcode _____

Email _____

Phone (Day) _____

Phone (Evening) _____

Please send me more information on:

- ☐ Becoming a monthly giving partner
- ☐ Volunteers in Schools
- ☐ Serving on a local YLA Committee
- ☐ 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:

Amount \$ _____

Please tick the applicable boxes:

- ☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ One-off
 - ☐ Cheque ☐ Direct Debit
- (We will contact you for details)

Credit card type:

- ☐ MasterCard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex

Name on card _____

CARD NO.

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Expiry Date

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Signature _____

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

We appreciate your support. It really makes a difference!

Please send completed form to:

Young Life Australia
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

CEO UPDATE

BY GLYN HENMAN



In February, Young Life Australia had its first staff gathering for the year and what an encouraging time it was. With our focus on the theme “Deeper, Wider, Every Kid” it was great to hear the heart behind the action from each of our Young Life areas.

The first school term is quickly coming to an end with a number of new things happening around the mission. Wyld Life club for youth age 10-14 years opened in Dubbo and two new Young Life interns began their roles in Canberra to help extend our reach in these communities.

One of the emerging challenges for 2020 will be COVID-19. Young Life is committed to closely following all health department updates and recommendations. At time like this it is easy to feel powerless, but we do have hope and can continue to pray and care for those around us.

COVID-19 may impact Young Life's ability to gather groups of people together, especially as we come to the end of the financial year when many fundraising events usually take place. We will keep you updated on Young Life Australia's website if planned events need to change.

Finally, I'd like to encourage you to keep in touch! Call us and write to your area manager – they would love to hear from you. If your contact details are changing, let us know at the National Office 1300 557 647.

Thank you for your incredible support for Young Life's vision to make a difference in the lives of young people by modelling the love of Jesus in all our endeavours.



FOODIES UNITED BY MARK HAMILTON

Craig Cooney's
Foodies Tour is a hit
with Young Life donors
in Victoria

For the last four years Craig Cooney from The Yarra Valley Touring company (and a member of Young Life's committee for Belarus and the Baltics) has organised a foodies fundraising tour. The day involves friends of Young Life getting together to experience some of Victoria's iconic vistas while sampling some of the best local produce from strawberries, chocolate, cheeses, wines and ciders, to jams and chutneys.

And if that isn't enough, another special ingredient is the people who attend, 30+ like-minded folk getting together to support a great cause. Added to the day is the ability to bid on silent auction items and made tax-deductible donations to Young Life.

"In the past, we have raised on average \$5,000, and the day has been an outstanding success," said Regional Manager, Mark Hamilton. "Each year the demand grows." This year, however, was going to be different as Craig called with some challenging news. Craig usually manages to secure amazing auction items from swimming with sharks at Melbourne Aquarium, accommodation, and all sorts of

other items from the tourist industry in which he works. However, due to the bushfires and coronavirus the tourism industry in Victoria has been hit hard and no-one was donating items.

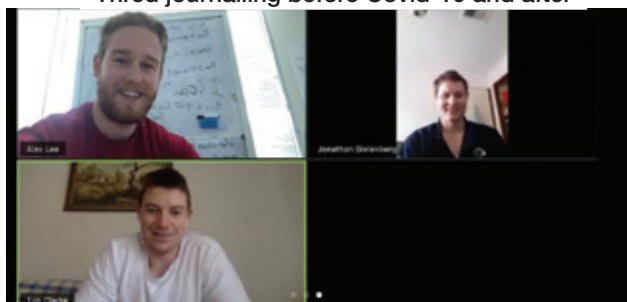
"The day went ahead, and some Young Life supporters donated other items, so we had 10 items to auction instead of the usual 30 which meant we quietly downgraded our fundraising goal to \$2500."

Mark let the tour attendees know the difficult situation and encouraged everyone to make strong bids and large donations. "We were amazed as the bids and donations came in, resulting in little over \$9,300 raised on the day!" said Mark.

A huge thank you goes out to all who supported the day by donating items, bidding strong and making tax-deductible donations. "And we are so grateful to Craig Cooney for organising the tour and donating his time in these difficult times for the tourist industry." [Should you be interested in going on a private tour of some of the best sights in Victoria, contact Craig on 0433 757 857 or info@yarravalleytouring.com.au]



Thred journaling before Covid-19 and after



Following the Thred

This year at Young Life Staff Conference, the team embarked on a promise to share insights from their personal bible study using Thred Journals.

Thred Journals encourage you to read the bible, write down your thoughts, give them a title and then to share your journal with a friend so they can pick a title and ask you about it. "That's the secret – Thred Journals come in twos. One for you and one for a friend with the emphasis on mutual encouragement and accountability," said Alex Lee.

It was developed as a tool by Young Life in Hong Kong, "but it's not a Young Life tool, it's for anyone keen to make discipleship their focus in 2020," says Alex.



**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.



ACROSS STATE LINES

MONASH & BAROSSA VALLEY



With Summer Camp cancelled and five days to plan, the quick-thinking team from Young Life Barossa Valley in South Australia put together a mini camp. "We decided to join forces," says Anthony Wheaton, Young Life's Area Coordinator from Monash in Melbourne.

"We aimed for the essence of Summer Camp with a shorter, smaller water-sport themed program. Three of our boys from Mount Waverley were up for the road trip and our Canadian volunteer James got behind the wheel for the drive to Barmera, on the banks of Lake Bonney, South Australia."

"The 14 campers tried their hand at skiing, canoeing, knee-boarding, wind surfing and of course biscuiting. We are so grateful to our volunteer boaties and trainers. Then in the evenings we led a fun Club program, helping kids process the experience as a sign of God's love for them."

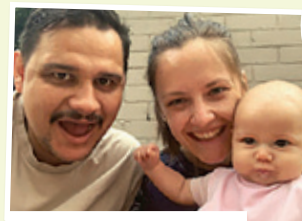
Ryde welcomes Ben and Jen

Young Life in Ryde has a new Area Manager in Ben Hura. Ben has been serving as Parramatta Area Manager for the past four years and he will continue to oversee the Parramatta Area as well as Ryde.

"We have also welcomed local resident, Jennifer Mantakul to the Ryde team," says Ben.

"Jen has been volunteering with Young Life for the last 12 months. Having grown up in the region, Jen has a deep passion to impact local young people which can be seen in her voluntary work organising council youth events.

"I am particularly excited by the way Jen shares her faith and mission as a part of her everyday life



**Ben and wife Taren
with daughter Zoe**



**Jen who
joins Field
Staff in
Ryde**

and keen to see how Jesus will continue to work through Young Life in the Ryde area.

"Holly Lim has left an incredible legacy with the young people in the area and it is a joy to continue her work in 2020!"



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