



Creating everyday heroes

WORD FROM THE CEO

Just like that I'm here again, reflecting on yet another adventure-packed circuit around the sun as we prepare to pack down operations for some well-deserved R&R.

It's the season of heightened kindness and giving for many but these acts don't need to be seasonal. For us, they are in our DNA and in our belief that the best gift anyone can give is to believe in someone for who they are. It's believing that every person has untapped potential waiting to be discovered, and it's why we see our programmes as an investment in people, empowering them with new courage to take control of their lives and relationships. To us they become heroes, our everyday heroes.

If this sounds familiar, you may have already learned about our mission to create everyday heroes on our new website. If you have a moment, pay us a visit (we're still at the same address, www.adventurespecialties.co.nz). The refreshed site launched in September is brimming with lots of fresh new content and information about AST. If you feel like supporting us, there's a page just for you too! The project was led by our Development Manager Jared Partridge and I'd like to thank him for the hard work he's put in to getting it up and running.

Another big project ticked off this year was our inaugural Social Impact Report, which paints a detailed picture of how we are creating everyday heroes. Adventure Therapy Manager Amy Horn compiled the report to illustrate some of the things we do to tackle some of society's challenges and make a positive difference in our communities. Though the issues are complex, and the challenge is real, the report shows that we are moving positively towards our mission of 'growing great communities through outdoor adventure.'

Drawing on the theme of everyday heroes, I'd like to acknowledge those of you who helped us raise enough money to replace our computer systems and equipment. We have reached the cloud! So thank you to everyone who contributed.

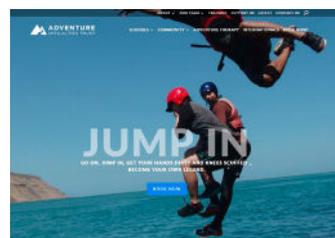
Also let's not forget Christmas is about relationships, family, friends and of course celebrating the birth of Jesus. As we sign off on another successful year, let's remember the reason for the season and this Christmas we'd like to invite you to join us in creating more everyday heroes.

Wishing you a safe, joyful and adventure-packed holiday season.




Tim Wills
CEO

[Click here](#) to check out our website.





We are proud to have produced our inaugural Social Impact Report in 2019. Evaluating our outcomes is an integral part of providing successful programmes and ensuring they make a difference in the lives of our participants. We ask participants to complete an evaluation of their experience. This feedback is the data we have drawn on in terms of understanding our social impact.

The inaugural Social Impact Report is a culmination of input, support and advice from many fabulous colleagues world-wide, especially The Collaborative Trust, Youth Health and Research team in Christchurch who acted as consultants. Our data indicates that we are achieving positive results in our intended outcomes and given a greater understanding of how well we are doing so we can celebrate our successes, consider changes to improve our service, and better articulate what it is that we do on our programmes. Looking ahead, we plan to tell our story even better. We will do this by revising our intended outcomes and developing more comprehensive data collection tools.

The diagrams below provide a visual snapshot of our social impact. If you would like to read the report in detail, head over to our website and click on the link 'About' tab or click on the Social Impact Report below to be taken straight to our Report online.



100%
Improved sense of wellbeing



81%
Improved inter-personal connection



79%
Improved personal development and confidence



Jump in the waka!

We are embarking on an exciting journey towards bi-culturalism and as part of the Adventure Specialties whānau we invite you to voyage with us. This is one of our new pou (pillars) of our strategic plan. Our hope is to deepen understanding of Māori world view, support development of Māori outdoor leaders and create a welcoming space for Māori to work and participate on our programmes.

As part of our journey and to input into our own awareness, next year, we're going on a retreat to the East Cape to stay on our trustee Andrea Fox's marae. This is an exciting opportunity to dive in and explore the richness of manaakitanga of Te Whānau Apanui, providing a unique and tangible learning environment.

We have been also making some simple steps this year to learn some te reo Māori and this is where your opportunity to jump in the waka begins. As a small wero (challenge) you may want to join us in adding te reo into your week. Each week we will post the Māori word/phrase we are all trying to use on Facebook and you can post us how many times you managed to use it in conversation by the end of that week.

Staff Update

Farewells

We said goodbye to Denise Talamahina, who has been our dedicated administrator for five years. The pastoral care she provided for the team will be dearly missed.

We'd also like to thank and bid farewell to our awesome 2019 interns, John, Lydia and Georgia. They have been a fantastic addition to our team and it was great to see each of them develop over the course of the year.

Welcomes

We have welcomed Jaci Skelton to the team as our new administrator. Jaci's only been with us for three months but says she can already see how our programmes offer hope and a bigger picture of the world:



"Part of my role includes entering evaluation forms after groups have participated in one of our programmes. There is such a contrast between those that tick all the highest scores (having an amazing time) and then the ones that you can tell have probably come from undesirable circumstances and it just shows me how much these programmes are needed. I hope that our Instructors know that even if they've done a programme 100 times, that every single conversation or action with our participants has the opportunity to bring a sense of worth and feeling of being loved and valued".

Staff Highlights

Four of our Instructors share their highlights from the year:

Anna Cunningham, Outdoor Instructor, Auckland

Being up in the south crater for sunrise was one highlight but the biggest would have to be the most action-packed two-day breakaway program. We started in Waipu with the abseil, then got into all the caving gear where we spent the rest of the day finding 'new' routes as we squeezed through the cave. To finish, we turned our torches off and swam out in the dark.

The second day was spent coasteering at Tawharanui. Everyone was still fizzing. We found a cave, some mean jump spots, a fake gannet colony, and made it back to the van with little time to spare.

What made it a highlight for me was the kids. Two of them had been on super tough Journey programmes previously and I was pretty stoked to see they were still keen to enjoy the outdoors when their past experience had been so opposite to this, in terms of weather and activities.

Josh Geddes, Adventure Therapy Instructor, Christchurch

My highlight would be getting to spend time with clients that don't get outside but really appreciate being given the chance. They grow a lot from the experience. For some it's the catalyst that means they make some life-changing decisions.

Laura Vernon, Outdoor Instructor, Auckland

Too many highlights to count. Classic staff adventures have got to be a hook, being connected with a special community of staff adventurers.

Also, the St Kent's group of girls who came not wanting to be there. All 20 gave a 'thumbs down'. We put them thigh deep in the river straight away, which got them over-excited to all give a 'thumbs up'. We had a hilarious campfire acting night that went on non-stop for three hours, then hid from a thunderstorm for 45 minutes, which was a three-second count above us and highly entertaining the whole group!

Anna Squires, Outdoor Instructor, Christchurch

My highlight this year was a recent outdoor rock climbing trip with the climbing club that we run in Papanui. It was great to see how the students have grown in confidence and problem-solving skills throughout the year. We've had feedback from parents and teachers that climbing has given the students those same skills but in the classroom setting! I love to see how our programmes affect different areas of life.



Help us create everyday heroes

Did you know Adventure Specialties Trust is a not-for-profit organisation that relies on the generous support of our partners and donors “to do what we do”? Partner with us this holiday season in providing life changing adventures, and contribute to one of our programmes. Every dollar helps and all donations are tax deductible. Donate today and make a difference in the lives of our participants. See the impact our programmes have below.

Sharing the Love

Our programmes impact our participants in many different ways. Often the biggest fears our participants overcome do not relate to the adventure activities at all. Here is some of the feedback we've received from our 2019 programme participants, aka our 'everyday heroes':

Youth everyday heroes inspired to make changes in their life:

“I learnt how to not give up... I can apply this to school by finishing my tasks and participating in events, and at home by not losing faith in my family and friends.”

“The Journey really pushed me to a point where I had to dig deep. I dug deeper than I thought I could and now I know I can do a lot more things.”

“I now acknowledge that hanging around with the wrong crowd and making the wrong decisions has led to the unhealthy habit of smoking and I am now going to stop.”

“I learnt to never give up easily and to never think backwards but to always think forwards and to keep going forward.”

Young mums becoming everyday heroes:

“The activities gave me joyful moments that encouraged me to do the same for my son.”

“The fun, exciting and risky activities made me re-evaluate my attitude towards my life.”

“The safe space provided by AST allowed me to explore my capacity to step out of my comfort zone and gave me the experiences necessary to recognise my own strengths, and the weaknesses I need to develop on.”

JOEL'S SEA KAYAK CIRCUMNAVIGATION



Our Auckland Outdoor Instructor, Joel Buckley, is paddling his way around the **ENTIRE** North Island to raise money for a family who recently lost their father to cancer. He's documenting his adventure on **Instagram** and you can support his cause by visiting his **Give a Little** page.

[Instagram](#) | [Givealittle](#)

Donations

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to 06-0153-0109509-00. Reference “Donations” (please email the office so we can send a receipt - office@adventurespecialties.co.nz)

POST

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N.B. Tax deductible receipts will be issued for all donations.