

ON TRACK

JULY 2023



HELPING WOMEN HEAL FROM TRAUMA

REVIVE is a new Adventure Therapy day programme - one day a week over eight weeks - for clients who are being supported by ACC's Integrated Service for Sensitive Claims (ISSC) therapists.

[For privacy reasons, none of the photos in this newsletter are from the REVIVE programme.]

We have just completed our first REVIVE programme in Christchurch. Anneke (a qualified therapist and our Adventure Therapy Clinician) and Amy (a qualified counsellor and our Adventure Therapy Manager) met up with seven women who are clients of ACC's ISSC. The group spent eight Tuesdays adventuring together - walking, rafting, sea kayaking, surfing, rock climbing, on the high ropes course, and orienteering.

Anneke recounts, "We've laughed and cried together, reflected and shared together, eaten and celebrated birthdays together. We've taken brave steps to try new things and get to new heights. We've turned to the natural world as a resource for grounding and calming, tuned in to what our bodies need and taken rest when we've needed it. We've expressed ourselves creatively and acknowledged all that our bodies can do! Our women plan to continue to meet up socially which speaks so beautifully to our hope that people leave our programmes feeling 'woven into community'."

Adventure Specialties Trust has contracted an Independent

Researcher to evaluate this programme (and the next three), to ensure that we are adequately supporting these participants, and to demonstrate the benefits of this active therapeutic environment for participants who have experienced trauma and significant harm. We have a men's group in the pipeline too! Here are a couple of quotes from our women, about how this programme has made a difference to their lives:

"I'm wanting to be outside - to feel the air, have the air in my lungs and to know, even when it's raining and I am soaked through, that I am in my element and I love it."

"I had to learn to trust while on high ropes - this has helped me to trust someone outside and not to believe the world is such a scary place."

"My confidence has increased. My capabilities in what I can achieve has increased. My trust in myself and my body has increased. My self-esteem has increased."

"The connections made in this group are priceless. The group plan on staying in touch, continuing to support each other and grow. It can be hard to find like-minded people but this group rocked."





“HAPPY AND FULL OF LIFE”

“We would just like to say a big Thank You! This course has been amazing for [our daughter’s] confidence. She has come home every Thursday, happy and full of life! She has stepped out of her comfort zone many times over the weeks of this course and, for us to see this, as her parents, knowing the incredibly tough journey she has been on recently ... To say we are happy is an understatement.”

This is a comment from parents of a young woman who was part of a recent outdoor adventure programme called *Rangatahi Backyard Adventures*.

As the name implies, *Rangatahi Backyard Adventures* is designed to give rangatahi (young people) a taste of adventure and activity in their ‘backyard’ or local area. This programme was funded by Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa, which is an amazing resource that has been set up by Sport New Zealand to encourage young people to engage in outdoor activity, especially those groups who are typically less active, like young women, people with disabilities, and young people living in higher deprivation communities.

For our Backyard Adventures, Adventure Specialties Trust took students from several West Auckland schools on a series of day programmes - one day a week for eight weeks. The rangatahi had the chance to try an incredible variety of activities: sea kayaking, bush walks at Karamatura, indoor

rock climbing, surfing at Orewa, flat water kayaking at Lake Pupuke, disc golf (frisbee golf), cycling around the Henderson bike trails, exploring the North Head tunnels, fishing, abseiling, and coastering at Tawharanui Regional Park.

At the end of these adventures, Instructor Joe commented, “It was amazing seeing the kids try outdoor activities in their local area that they super enjoyed doing, and then hearing them say that they want to go back and do it again with their families.”

Instructor Caitlin added, “It was cool just seeing how much more comfortable the students felt each week. How much more engaged and chatty and excited they were.”

Thank you Sport New Zealand for funding such an amazing programme! We have seen firsthand the positive impact it has had on the young people that we work with.





FROM PARTICIPANT TO SOCIAL WORKER

We recently bumped into Jade (pictured above left), celebrating Pink Shirt Day at Kaipara College in Auckland. Turns out that Jade was a participant on a 10-day Kaipara Journey with us, back in 2014! And now she is in her third year of studying to become a social worker, doing her work placement at Kaipara College. Here are Jade's memories of her Journey, almost ten years ago ...

"My journey was hard! I had a knee injury two months prior to the Journey and I remember my physio telling me that this would be a good opportunity to strengthen my knee up, due to the huge amounts of cycling that were going to be done on the Journey.

"But keeping up with the other people on the Journey was difficult, as I was the slowest. But I remember everyone being so supportive and encouraging, which was nice as the team never made me feel like I was holding everyone up.

"There were some moments that I wanted to give up and I got quite upset. I even remember telling one of the instructors, on the Maunganui Bluff track, that when we got to Kai Iwi Lakes I was going to steal a phone and ring the police and tell them I got kidnapped! (By the time we got to Kai Iwi Lakes, I had calmed down and we had a nice dinner and I felt fine again).

"I remember, on the last day, we pulled into school on our bikes, and - oh! The amount of joy I felt at finally being home. I remember feeling so proud of completing the 10-day Journey, as I had never had the opportunity to do anything like that in my life!

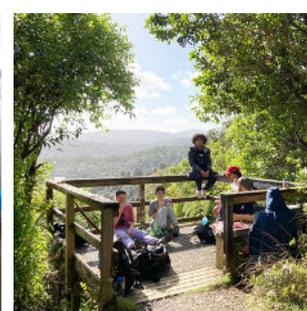
"Did the Journey change me? Yes, but not straight away. I remember the transition back into school was difficult, and I was a little disruptive in class. It felt strange having so much

independence on the Journey and then being chucked back into school life. I didn't notice straight away but the Journey helped build my mental strength, and, to this day, if something difficult arises in my life I think to myself, 'I did the Journey. If I can complete that, then I can complete this!' It also gave me a love and appreciation for the outdoors, and how good getting out in nature is for not just my physical health but my spiritual, emotional and mental wellbeing.

"The Journey was an amazing opportunity, it changed my life. I am so glad that it is still happening in schools and I only wish that all young people got to experience this amazing programme! Thank you so much Adventure Specialties Trust for giving young people the opportunity to participate in this amazing Journey.

"I decided to go into Social Work so I could give back to communities and advocate for social justice and change. My life is quite busy now, as I work part-time and study full-time. I am now halfway through my third year of a Bachelor of Social Practice at Unitec and I love it!"

Thank you for sharing your memories, Jade! We are so pleased to have bumped into you again and we wish you all the best for the rest of your studies and your career as a social worker.



WORD FROM THE CEO

Tim Wills

It was so encouraging to hear from Jade (story on page three). It really speaks to the long-term impact that Adventure Specialties Trust has had, over our 40 years of operation, providing outdoor adventure programmes to well over 100,000 participants. Imagine how many more stories like Jade's must be out there!

Nearly a decade after Jade's Journey with Kaipara College, there are so many people facing mental health challenges, so it is a privilege that we are now able to offer more of our programmes to individuals (rather than just prearranged groups, like Kaipara College).

There has been a lot of demand for our Adventure Therapy programmes over the last few years and, as a direct result of this, we are now offering a youth camp called IGNITE. There are several camps scheduled throughout the year, during the school holidays. These 'wellbeing' camps are facilitated by our qualified therapists and skilled outdoor instructors. Young people who are struggling with mental health challenges are able to sign up to these and the aim of the camps is to help participants work towards increased self-worth and wellbeing.

Please check out our website for more details about IGNITE and our other Adventure Therapy programmes: www.AdventureSpecialties.co.nz/adventure-therapy.

Of course, funding these programmes and meeting our overall operational costs is extremely challenging. In these difficult times, with so many rising costs, it is not cheap to run this organisation and we do have our financial challenges. If you are supportive of our mahi, I encourage you to help us

meet our costs and in turn, make a difference. As Jade said, getting out in nature is good for our spiritual, emotional and mental wellbeing!

CAN YOU SUPPORT US? If you are able to support us financially, please see the Donations section below for options.

Welcome to Emily, our new therapist

With the increase in our Adventure Therapy programmes, we have been fortunate to hire Emily Murray Barrett as our new Auckland-based Adventure Therapy Clinician.

Emily is a highly qualified therapist, with a Masters in Adolescent Psychotherapy, plus qualifications in Child Psychotherapy, Occupational Therapy, Sport and Recreation, and Fitness Training.

Emily's training has given her the skills and knowledge to work with individuals experiencing a variety of complex issues, including anxiety, depression, emotional dysregulation, loneliness, trauma, loss and despair, self-harm, social anxiety, self-esteem issues, and more.

We are incredibly lucky to have such an experienced therapist join our Adventure Therapy team. Welcome, Emily!

Cheers,
Tim Wills
CEO



SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

@adventurespecialtiestrust



DONATIONS

We appreciate your generous support! Your donation will go towards supporting a person struggling with mental health challenges to attend one of our Adventure Therapy programmes.

DEBIT OR CREDIT CARD: On our website www.adventurespecialties.co.nz/donate

INTERNET BANKING: Adventure Specialties Trust / account 06-0153-0109509-00 / please email office@adventurespecialties.co.nz to let us know of your donation, so that we can allocate it appropriately and send you a receipt.