



ADVENTURE
SPECIALTIES TRUST

EST. 1984

Social Impact Report

— 2019 —



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Opening Statement

Adventure Specialties Trust was founded on the philosophy that the outdoors offers a unique opportunity for impactful change.

The combination of being outside, experiencing an activity and being with others, offers a unique backdrop for the growth and development of people. With this in mind, Adventure Specialties Trust was established in 1984 and has since grown to the thriving organization that it is today.

When we first started, it was enough to know that what we did was good work. People came back with stories of how their time away with us had changed their perspectives on life. We have had many visitors into the office and chance meetings where we have met people who have been on our programmes and we have been privileged to hear some of their stories.

As times have changed, we have both been challenged, and challenged ourselves to look at the outcomes of our programmes in a more thorough and systematic way. Three years ago, we made a definitive move towards this area and tasked our Adventure Therapy manager with leading our 'Outcomes Project'. We have been glad to have the input, support and advice from many fabulous colleagues world-wide especially The Collaborative Trust Youth Health and Research team in Christchurch who have acted as consultants on this for us.

This Social Impact Report illustrates a small selection of the things we do at Adventure Specialties Trust 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, we see that we are moving positively towards our mission of 'growing great communities through outdoor adventure'.



"I truly can say that this Journey has taught me so many things I can apply to my life and that it has built me to become a more confident and a stronger leader for the future ..."

– Journey Participant

Word from the CEO

We know what we do makes a difference. We have heard many positive stories over the years, and it is heart-warming to know that Adventure Specialties Trust had a significant impact in many people's lives.

As we move to a new era it is exciting and rewarding that we will soon not just have anecdotal evidence from a few people, but we will have a systematic way of measuring outcomes for all of our participants. It therefore gives me great encouragement that our supporters have yet another way to see and understand the good work that we do.

Although this report looks at the many things that can be analysed, I believe that the outdoor environment, working hard in it, standing in awe of it and resting in it also does something to the soul that we can't give a measure to. I call this wairua.

There is just something good about being in the outdoors and Adventure Specialties Trust being a faith-based organisation also recognises the intangible and our spirituality.

Standing on top of a high point to be awestruck by an incredible vista; being mesmerized by the ocean crashing

onto the beach; staring into a campfire on a star-lit night; or to be deeply impacted by a stunning sunset provides an environment where it is possible to think beyond ourselves and to explore who we are in the vastness of humanity. We do touch on this in our outcomes but we also recognise that there are things that happen deep within a person's spirit that cannot be quantified.

As this is our first Social Impact Report I need to give credit and praise to the team that has put it together, especially to Amy Horn whose passion, commitment, drive and intellect has led the charge. Without Amy on the team this report, our outcomes our research and our position as being New Zealand leaders in the Adventure Therapy would look very different. So, thank you Amy, not just from Adventure Specialties Trust and our funders but from all the people we work with. We are now well and truly immersed in a journey that not only benefits our clients but also our communities. We are truly using outdoor adventure to grow great communities.



Tim Wills
CEO | Adventure Specialties Trust

Introduction

We believe evaluation of outcomes is an integral part of providing a programme.

We also consider robust evaluation of the outcomes to be part of ethical practice. We want to know that the money provided to us by both funders and fee for service clients is well spent on making a difference in the lives of our participants. We also want to know that the experience is a good use of the time and resources of our participants; that their investment into attending our programmes is worthwhile in their lives.

Because human life is diverse and complex we know that we will never fully understand exactly what part our programmes play in growth and change in our clients. However, outcomes evaluation gives us some understanding of how well we are achieving our outcomes. We can use this information to celebrate our successes; consider changes to improve our service; and better articulate what it is that we do on our programmes.

Adventure Specialties is a complicated organization and it is challenging to find a outcomes framework that suits all of our programmes. It is challenging in particular because:

- We work with partner organizations that often have their own outcome evaluation processes.
- The programmes vary in length from two hours through to 25 days.
- The intent of the programme varies between outdoor education, social development and adventure therapy and commercial.
- We often don't meet our clients until they turn up to do the activity and it is logistically challenging to fit any outcomes data gathering into the programme timeframe.

With consideration to these challenges and features of our organization we have been on a developmental journey with our outcomes evaluation. This report marks the end of one era, and our new data collection framework begins July 2019.

"Adventure Specialties are a trusted provider for our school and Board of Trustees. We engage with them because we have developed a level of professional trust in their organization and we hugely appreciate the level of support that they offer our staff and students. We would highly recommend them to any other organization with similar needs."

— Ohoka School, Deputy Principal.

Our Approach

Adventure Specialties Trust is committed to making a positive difference in our community through partnering with community agencies; investing in quality staff, contributing to the wider industries that we are a part of, and valuing spiritual health.

Partnerships

Our main model of service delivery is through working with partner organizations. These organizations are typically schools, community groups, social service agencies, or government departments. We partner with them to enhance the work that they are doing within their agency and enhance the outcomes they are working towards. This allows the organization to use adventure activities as part of their service, where otherwise they would not be able to. They hold the ongoing relationships with the participants and the bigger picture aims and objectives for the service.

Skilled Quality Staff

One feature of our organization is that we are fully committed to employing quality full time staff and have a long history in doing so. This job is not easy. We support our staff to deliver a wide range of outdoor activities. We work in a variety of environments around the country. The programmes often offer a full service of catering, transportation and activities.

On top of all this, we ask Staff to facilitate every programme in a way that promotes learning, growth and development for the participants, meeting both our outcomes and the goals of the partnering organization. Again, while we cannot quantify the amount of impact this has on our outcomes we do know that having full time staff does make a difference. If we were to employ contract instructors (a cheaper financial option) they would be less skilled, less consistent and therefore unable to achieve the outcomes we get.

Contribution to the wider industry

One way we make a difference is through our contribution to the wider industries we are a part of. Our CEO Tim Wills is on the Board of for NZOIA (New Zealand Outdoor Instructors Association), Mark Johnston is on the outdoor sector advisory sub-committee to the Board of Recreation Aotearoa; Amy Horn is the Chair Person of Adventure Therapy Aotearoa and a co-chair of the International Adventure Therapy Committee; Andy Balcar is a SCOPE assessor – partnering with youth development agencies to improve the quality of their services.

We also have staff who are assessors for both NZOIA and Skills Active and often provide training to other organizations. We consistently have staff present workshops at relevant conferences, and write articles for the various newsletters. While any outcomes of these contributions are impossible to measure, we know that this work, which is usually for no financial compensation for the Trust, is contributing to a stronger, better skilled workforce in the outdoor and adventure therapy industries.

Spiritual health

One of the underpinning beliefs of Adventure Specialties Trust is that there is a spiritual component to life that brings health, wellbeing and hope. Much like the model of health by Mason Durie, Te Whare Tapa Wha (The House of four sides), we believe spiritual health is integral to the well-being of a person. We know that that spiritual component of life looks different for different people.

Though it is not often a structured part of our programmes, nor have we attempted to evaluate outcomes in this area – we make space for this on our programmes: space for people to connect with the land, with that which is intangible, with that which brings hope and life. We don't know the outcomes, but our sense is that this is an important part of being in the outdoors with people.



Our Vision

Using Outdoor Adventure to Grow Great Communities

Our Mission

To respond to the needs in our community by providing outdoor adventure programmes that facilitate the holistic development of individuals, families and communities.

Our Values

FAITH – We are guided and motivated by our Christian faith which shapes how we work alongside people.

HOPE – We believe that there is hope for all people and that positive life choices can bring about change.

COMMUNITY – We collaborate with community partners to enhance their good work and to achieve shared outcomes.

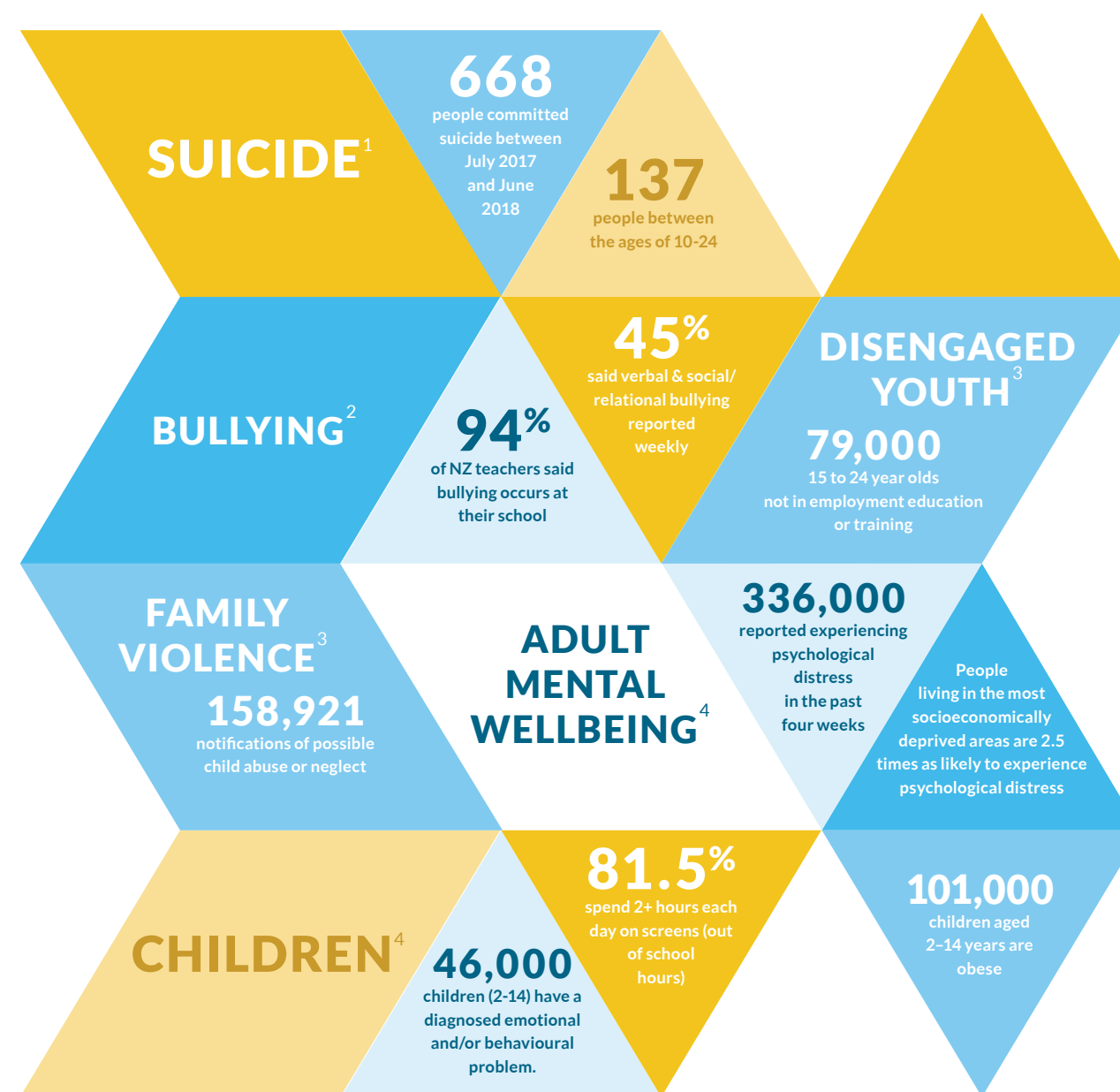
EXCELLENCE – We strive to deliver high quality, exciting and safe programmes.

ADVENTURE – We believe healthy and positive learning can come out of well facilitated adventurous activities.

Our Context in New Zealand

New Zealand is a great place to live in many respects. We have a beautiful country, and a state funded health, education and social welfare system. We enjoy all the luxuries of a developed country.

However, there are also areas in which we, as a country, are struggling. At Adventure Specialties Trust we find some of these statistics heart-breaking and they form our motivation to do the work that we are doing. These statistics give a snapshot of some of our greatest concerns, as this is what we see in our clients. We also know that what we do can help change these concerning statistics for the better.



1/ <https://coronialservices.justice.govt.nz/assets/Documents/Publications/20180824-Provisional-suicide-statistics-2017-18-media-release.pdf>

2/ Adolescent Health Research Group – Youth 12' overview

3/ Kei a Tātou (It is Us) - State of The Nation Report. Salvation Army Social Policy & Parliamentary Unity – Feb 2018

4/ Ministry of Health Survey – www.nimhealthnz 2017-2018

Theory of Change



INPUTS

The ingredients to make this work

What we invest in

- Amazing, passionate, capable staff
- A fully registered and audited Safety Management System
- Safe outdoor equipment
- Quality partnerships with community agencies

Willing participants from

- Schools
- Community groups
- Therapeutic intervention services
- Social Service Agencies
- Social development programmes
- People visiting New Zealand with an educational focus

What we actually do out there

- **Learning** — Social and outdoor skills
- **Experience** — Fun, Connection with nature, work-ing in a group, outdoor activities, 1-25 days in length
- **Transfer** learning into life through doing it on pro-gramme and facilitated conversations about life.



MOST ACTIVE AGENTS OF CHANGE

Supported by research

Being in nature is good for us.

Having relationships with others is a major protective factor against negative life outcomes.

Approaching health and wellbeing as holistic is essential.

Experiencing success and mastery is a key contributor to positive personal growth.

Experiencing challenging outdoor activities promotes personal growth through the experiential learning cycle.

Adventure Therapy is an evidenced form of therapeutic value and change



INTENDED OUTCOMES

Indicated by the evidence

Wellbeing

As a result of participating in our programmes people have an increased sense of wellbeing. This may have physical, mental, emotional, social or spiritual components.

Social Skills

As a result of participating in our programmes people are able to work better with others. They will have increased social skills to develop strong relationships in their every-day lives.

Character

As a result of participating in our programmes people both develop, and have a better sense of, their inbuilt character strengths – the qualities and skills that help them through life.

Ongoing Participation

As a result of being on our programmes people have the motivation and ability to recreate some form of outdoor experience in their own lives, independently of programme support.

Manaakitanga

As a result of participating in our programmes people have more kindness, empathy, respect, generosity and a desire to uplift others.

The Literature Behind Our Theory Of Change

Researchers worldwide are on a continual mission to find the things that bring about positive change in people's lives.

We have read a wide range of this research and have found that the findings of researchers aligns with our own anecdotal experiences of what it is that brings about change in people's lives.

In particular we have found the following points to be the most active agents of change documented in literature that applies to our clients.

*For full references please refer to the Reference List on pg 23.

Being in nature is good for us.

Perhaps we have always known that being outside is good for us. However, it is only now in our increasing urbanisation that researchers are examining the important role that nature plays in our health.

The neuro-science research is quickly seeing how the brain is affected by being in nature. It lowers our stress hormones (cortisol and adrenaline); it increases our calming hormones (oxytocin and dopamine); it increases our 'happy hormone' (serotonin); it lowers our blood pressure and heart rate (Ewert & Chang, 2018). With our sympathetic nervous system relaxed we experience an increase in the feeling of wellness. It is also in this state that we are able to learn – something that is restricted when in a constant state of stress.

Having relationships with others is a major protective factor against negative life outcomes.

Strong relationships are fundamental protective factors that decrease the chance of negative life outcomes. The resiliency literature presents sound evidence that having a relationship with caring adults is one of the fundamental protective factors for young people (Barnes, 2013). In addition, positive peer relationships also serve as a protective factor. The development of social skills and conflict resolution skills with peers increases the likelihood of a positive life trajectory (Litschge et al., 2010). The development of these skills and relationships is enhanced through working with others on a task and having shared memorable experiences (Laursen and Birmingham, 2003).

Approaching health and wellbeing as holistic is essential.

It has been many years now since the New Zealand Ministry of Health has recognized that health and wellbeing must be considered as bigger than just physical health. This is captured well by the model of Te Whare Tapa Wha by Mason Durie. The four walls of the house are recognized as all necessary to achieve positive health outcomes. For some people certain areas need more attention than others. It is important to us that we recognize all areas – physical, social, mental, emotional and spiritual, and allow for our clients to focus on any of those areas in order to achieve wellbeing (Ministry of Health, 2017).

Experiencing success and mastery is a key contributor to positive personal growth.

Experiencing ourselves at our best is one of the experiences in life that helps us move towards achievement of further goals. In the Solution Focused counselling model these are called 'instances of success' or 'exceptions to the problem' (Hanton, 2011). In the Circle of Courage model of positive youth development it is described as mastery (Brendtro et al., 2005). The commonality is that it indicates that something in us shifts when we experience the satisfaction of doing something well, of achieving a goal – no matter how big or small that is. That experience helps us see ourselves as someone who is competent and able to achieve our goals, making us aware of our strengths – giving us the motivation and awareness of our abilities to achieve more.

Experiencing challenging outdoor activities promotes personal growth through the experiential learning cycle.

The field of positive psychology has highlighted to us the benefits of finding a state of 'Flow' where a particular challenge meets our skills level in a way that means we

are absorbed and engaged with that activity. We see people all around the world seeking this, choosing to take on a challenge, signing up for an event – to push, grow, stretch, and develop themselves to achieve a goal. The Kurt Hahn philosophy of developing character and strength within people through taking on challenging experiences has multiplied around the world in the many courses that provide challenging experiences to develop personal character (Association of Experiential Education, 2019). We understand from Kolb's model of the experiential learning cycle that it is the combination of an appropriately pitched challenge and the processing of that experience that results in powerful learning and growth for participants.

Adventure Therapy is an evidenced form of therapeutic value and change

Many studies have shown the effectiveness of Adventure Therapy in improving the overall functioning of people, specifically in reducing symptoms of distress connected to mental health and interpersonal challenges (Norton, Tucker et al. 2014).

Bowen and Neill (2013) conducted a Meta-Analysis of 197 studies that have measured the outcomes of a variety of Adventure Therapy programmes around the world. They found Adventure Therapy programmes had significant impact on participants with an effect size similar to or greater than that of traditional psychotherapies with youth (Litschge, Vaughn et al. 2010, Weisz, Kuppens et al. 2013). The effects of Adventure Therapy were found to be gained over the period of the programme and long lasting over time (Bowen and Neill 2013).



Our Outcomes

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Character

As a result of participating in our programmes people both develop, and have a better sense of, their inbuilt character strengths – the qualities and skills that help them through life.

Ongoing Participation

As a result of being on our programmes people have the motivation and ability to recreate some form of outdoor experience in their own lives, independently of programme support.

Manaakitanga

As a result of participating in our programmes people have more kindness, empathy, respect, generosity and a desire to uplift others.

A look at our programmes ...

Adventure Specialties Trust offers a wide range of programmes in terms of duration, activities provided, the client group and the focus of the programme. This creates a challenging environment within which to collect outcomes data!

The following pages highlight the outcomes of the programmes we consider to be 'our programmes'. That is, they have been designed and delivered by a kaupapa (purpose) that we have created. The data in this report is from the period July 2017- July 2019.

As we have developed our systems for collecting data on these it is worth noting that the outcome wording has changed over time, as have the tools we have used to collect our data. We have also used a variety of different tools on the different programmes appropriate to the programme type and length.

The questions asked of clients were aimed at understanding the participants' experiences of the sessions, and what they felt they learnt from the programme. There are a couple of programmes where an adult in the life of the participant was also asked to complete a survey or comment on their observations of change in the participants.

The behaviour and attitude change that we have seen in the clients is referring to immediate changes. Unfortunately, we have not had capacity to follow up long term with our clients to evaluate their longer-term behaviour and attitude change. This is a goal of Adventure Specialties Trust but at this stage this is aspirational, and we would need more resources to measure this in the future.

As we move forward to our next era of data collection, we have created a system where all programmes will collect a sample of data. The following pages describes our outputs, and the outcomes in a selection of programmes.

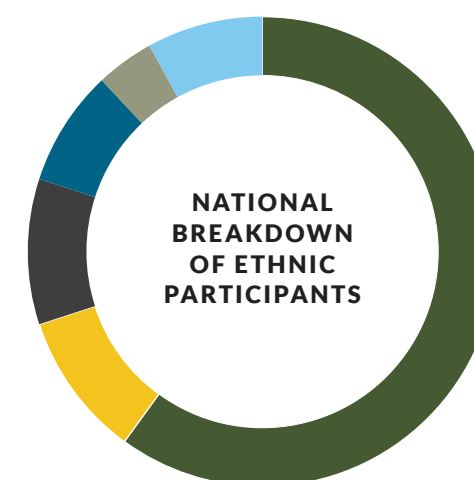
2018 outputs in numbers

6,699
participants

26
Full-time staff
members

63
New
programmes

329
Programmes
delivered

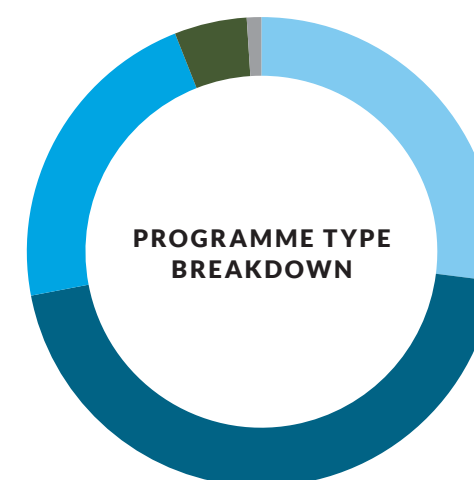


Auckland 3,945

- 50% Kiwi/European
- 10% Asian
- 15% Maori
- 14% Pacific Island
- 4% Indian
- 7% Others

Christchurch 2,754

- 68% Kiwi/European
- 12% Maori
- 9% Asian
- 5% Pacific Island
- 3% Other European
- 3% Others



- 18% Outdoor Education:** outcome is to further the participants knowledge in a specific skill or where academic achievement is the key focus.
- 59% Social Development:** outcome is holistic development of the participants
- 20% Adventure Therapy:** clearly defined individual needs and desired outcomes identified.
- 2% Commercial:** a service provided in order to return significant profit.
- 1% Other**

Auckland: Total programmes delivered 205

Outdoor Education	16%
Social Development	57%
Adventure Therapy	24%
Commercial	2%
Other	1%

Christchurch: Total programmes delivered 124

Outdoor Education	21%
Social Development	60%
Adventure Therapy	14%
Commercial	3%
Other	2%



Outcomes in a snap shot

The main themes of change across our surveyed programmes during the period July 2017 – July 2019 were an improvement in strengths, wellbeing and connection.



79%
Strengths growth

Strengths

Of those surveyed specifically about strengths most people (38/45) indicated that the programme had helped them grow in the area of strengths.

Themes from the comments:

- Confidence
- Trying new things
- Doing things participants had never thought were possible for them to do.

Comments:

- 'I'm being myself',
- 'I'm mentally stronger than I thought I was!'
- 'I have a positive attitude'
- 'this programme helped me grow in confidence in doing things that I have never done before'
- 'It gave me a belief that I can do it!'



100%
Improved sense of wellbeing

Wellbeing

Of those surveyed specifically about wellbeing all people (28/28) indicated that the programme had improved their sense of wellbeing.

Themes:

- feeling happy, satisfied, motivated, enjoyment and 'feeling physically well'.
- Nature helps wellbeing.
- Wanting to do more.

Comments:

- 'I enjoyed all the views and the time in nature'
- 'I loved being in the outdoors'
- 'it helped me to realize that I do enjoy outdoor activities, I just need to get fit. (I feel) hopeful about the future. The good scenery and environment is good for my depression.'
- 'it was about finding joy in doing activities outside as a family'.



81%
Improved Connection

Connection

Of those surveyed specifically about connection most people (35/43) indicated that they felt they had improved their relationship with those in their lives.

Themes:

- Great to have time without distractions.
- Able to work out differences with others.

Comments:

- 'we interacted a lot with few distractions'
- being able to do fun activities as a family and bond with my children'
- 'working more together as a family... making great memories'
- 'being able to be positive and work through things when time gets hard between everyone'.
- 'my attitude towards others that are closest to me has changed – I need to be kind and caring'.

The Journey

The Journey is a long standing programme of ours that offers many young people an opportunity to learn and grow through adventure, helping them overcome barriers to participation in school or family life.

Young people who are disengaged from school are often written off as rebellious. Adventure Specialties Trust understands that for most of these young people there are barriers to their engagement at school which means they act out in a way that gives them a bad reputation! The outcomes over the years have seen young people re-engage with school where previously they had disengaged, choose great friends and become active members of the community.

On The Journey, a group of up to 10 young people and two instructors and often one youth worker from their agency or school complete a 10 day expedition programme. The expedition will be a journey that uses a mixture of outdoor activities like tramping, biking, sea kayaking or rafting to get from Point A to B. Each young person gets to have a turn at being leader of the group. Every day the group has a theme or discussion about life, and some of the tricky topics that can form barriers to them participating in life fully. On this programme young people filled out a before and after survey, and where available a school staff member also completed the before and after survey. The students also completed a survey that asked for comments.

Results:

Strengths

Young people growing in what they are good at is a constant theme across the data, particularly in the comments at the end of survey forms. 17/24 people commented about some aspect of developing as a person. For example, young people commented 'I'm being myself', 'I'm mentally stronger than I thought I was!', 'I have a positive attitude, I can be resilient with support from others', 'never give up' and 'I can always encourage myself'.

There were many other comments of how the participants have developed their character including 'I'm now going to school on time and respecting the teachers', 'I've stopped smoking and stopped making the wrong decisions'. All of these show that in their own way young people have developed as individuals.

Skills

Developing skills so that they can experience success and also re-create similar experiences is evident in the comments. They talked about the practical skills of cooking, tramping, packing and looking after themselves in the bush. They also commented on the skills required for leadership, choosing attitudes, setting goals and solving problems as a group. The survey results also show that the area of most overall growth was the skill of 'I think about the consequences of my behaviour' (18/26 people). The survey also showed growth in the area of 'I can recognize the emotions I'm feeling' (16/26 people). These are both skills that help young people succeed in life.

Connection

Both the qualitative and quantitative data indicate that as a result of this programme young people are able to build better relationships. The survey showed that the second biggest area of growth was on the point 'people can trust me' where 18/26 people saw positive movement in this area. In the qualitative data 15/24 people made comments about working with others such as 'being able to be positive and work through things when time gets hard between everyone'.

This is consistent with the survey that showed the fourth biggest area of growth was 'When I have problems, I can talk to others' (18/26). This indicates the strengthened relationships allow people to talk to others about their problems. When asked about what they learnt one young person commented 'My attitude towards others that are closest to me has changed – I need to be kind and caring'.

Wellbeing

Again, nature is repeatedly commented on in the comments sections. They 'enjoyed all the views', 'the time in nature', they 'loved being in the outdoors' and 'had a lot of laughs'. Someone also commented on how The Journey had felt them strengthen their faith, contributing to their sense of wellbeing.

"They say life in an adventure but this adventure was life in 10 days"

– SOUTHERN CROSS JOURNEY STUDENTS

"For all the girls, I have noticed a lift in motivation for schooling, and a desire to make a change. Students have been able to expand and widen their perspective on life.

One student was able to address her addiction to substance use and has been able to become several weeks clean. The student's addictive behaviour was directly challenged by attending the 10-day Journey Programme and had to make some hard decisions regarding her addictive behaviour upon completing the Journey Programme.

One student had a major turnaround in her attitude and perspective. This student was able to gain more respect for her mum, be more accepting of her family. She was able to leave her boyfriend after evaluating the quality and importance of the relationship. She also has changed her circle of friends, as far as leaving the gang that she was involved in. She also had a spiritual enlightenment, commenting that 'God is everywhere' and has been enjoying her attendance at church and in the church band instead of seeing it as a mundane routine."

— SOUTHERN CROSS JOURNEY REPORT FROM SCHOOL

Inspire

Young people who are highly energetic, impulsive and high-risk takers are often labelled as rebellious. However, we see these young people are full of energy, keen to make the most of life, and often coping with significant challenges in their lives.

Through our Inspire programme these young people (aged 11-16) have an opportunity to use their strengths in a positive manner. They learn how to have fun in a healthy way, in a safe and supportive environment, while developing pro-social and self-management skills along the way. One of our clients described this programme as 'Improving yourself and others while having a blast!'

On this programme up to eight young people and any professionals accompanying them participate in a different day-long adventure activity each week for an eight week period in a school term. Each day is accompanied by a discussion topic – this is decided based on the needs of the group but covers things like positive risk taking, respecting others, trustworthiness, managing emotions and hopes for the future. We have had nearly 100 young people participate in the Inspire programme over the past two years, although not all of them complete the full eight weeks due to a variety of circumstances out of our and their control. The data collection on this programme was through reports written by the facilitators and feedback from staff.

Results:

The biggest outcome of this programme is indicated by the repeated feedback that we get from the social workers, youth workers and teachers, that they see positive attitudes and behaviours from these young people on our programme that do not usually occur in their every-day lives. It is so helpful for them to understand what some of the strengths of the young people are, so they can help them build on that in other contexts of their lives.

Each day the facilitator will identify the outcomes for each young person. At the end of the day the facilitator writes the participant a letter saying things like 'It was really good to see you interact well with the other students on inspire today. You were really helpful and caring guiding **** through the cave, well done!'

Participants consistently show Manakaakitanga on our programmes. A facilitator writes to a client 'I really appreciated how you helped people in the more difficult sections today'. The participants also notice it, with one client writing in their feedback form 'everyone was kind to each other'.

A young person also identifies their own strengths with one commenting 'I could get a job doing this stuff' (participant journal TPW).

There are many comments that indicate that wellbeing is improved by being on this programme. One journal says, 'I like being outside, I felt like a kid playing in the waterfall'. We see that often, a reconnection with positive play and childlikeness. Another client's comments included 'I feel fit, and proud of myself....' and another realized 'I need to prioritize fun activities.'

"Adventure Specialties Trust is professional and skilled in their delivery of the Adventure Therapy Inspire programme. They make therapeutic models practical and approachable for our participants to engage in and have success with."

— PARTNERSHIP AGENCY

Mums on the Move

Being a Mum in the teenage years is usually seen as an issue, but we see it as an opportunity to engage energetic, creative young people in raising great kids.

Since the 1980's Adventure Specialties Trust has been supporting young families through building confidence in parents to be active and fun with their kids; sharing a way of improving the wellbeing of everyone in the family through being active outside; and improving quality relationships through improved care and connection with one another.

On 'Mum's on the Move' a group of eight from a local community 'young mums' course participate in four single day programmes over a four month period. Each day has a different adventure and a theme that goes with it. Themes include building community, following our dreams, character under pressure, and looking at life like a journey. From July 2017 - July 2019 we have had 32 participants on this programme. We have had 21 completed the survey, which is our primary data collection tool for this programme.

Results:

Wellbeing

All of the clients (21/21) felt this programme grew their sense of wellbeing, with the majority (15/21) indicated significant growth in this area (a score of 4/5 or 5/5). The comments repeatedly mention feeling happy, satisfied, motivated, enjoyment and 'feeling physically well'. One client captured it by saying this programme 'helped me to realize that I do enjoy outdoor activities, I just need to get fit. (I feel) hopeful about the future. The good scenery and environment is good for my depression.' There were multiple comments about the connection with nature, and a desire to get fitter to be able to do more.

Strengths / Hopes and Dreams

All of the clients (21/21) felt this programme grew their sense of strengths, with the majority (15/21) indicated significant growth in this area (4/5 or 5/5). Comments indicated the clients found that 'this programme helped me grow in confidence in doing things that I have never done before' and 'feeling like I'm able to do more than I thought. It gave me a belief that I can do it!' There were common themes in the comments of confidence, trying new things, and doing things they had never thought were possible to them to do. One client said 'I loved the adventures and the outdoor moments as I don't get much time out of the house. I was inspired by the bravery...gained so much determination.'

Other outcomes

It was evident that many of the participants enjoyed being in nature. Nature or the outdoors was mentioned by just over half of the participants without any questions specifically around nature.

The Classic Kiwi Adventure

The Classic Kiwi Adventure is another family programme that is targeted at one young person and the significant adult in their life, whether that be a parent, grandparent or caregiver.

The pair join with other pairs and participate in an overnight tramp, sleeping in tents, having a camp-fire and cooking together as a pair. The focus is on the two working together and building their relationship. The data collection tool here were a survey of participants and interviews with staff from the partnering agencies.

Results:

Connection

All (8/8) of the clients felt this programme helped them grow in the area of connection, with half (4/8) indicating a significant growth. Comments indicated that the clients found that 'we interacted a lot with few distractions' and that the one rule of the camp proved to be a helpful rule for life, 'the one and only rule - stick together'. People identified that the camping overnight, remembering how much they liked the outdoors and exercise and having fun together contributed to connection. The staff member noted 'I believe the programme helped our carers and children to connect on a level they wouldn't of been able to in placement. I saw multiple occasions where the children showed behaviours that were desired, that they don't show in their day to day lives.'

Family Camps

Family relationships in our society are struggling, but we know that quality time spent with family members in the outdoors builds strong, respectful, healthy relationships.

Not only are incidents of domestic violence disturbingly high; young people feel like they don't get enough time with their parents. This is concerning because a safe relationship with an adult is one of the consistent protective factors across negative life outcomes. We have been running strengthening family programmes since 1984 and have seen outcomes of improved relationships, young people staying at home longer and foster care family placements being strengthened.

Just like families, our family programmes range in size and structure. These outcomes are for our four day multi-family camps. On each programme there is a range of activities with a focus on the family working together, discovering each-other's strengths and sharing a fun experience. We had nine families complete the four day family camp between Jan 2018 and Jan 2019. We have completed surveys from 6/9 participating families.

Results:

Some of the results are hard to read because the ID's were not completed and therefore results cannot be matched up from start to finish. There is also some significant discrepancy where one family member has completed the survey at the start, and another has completed it at the end, and that has represented quite different views on the family. Therefore, it is fair to say that this tool has not given us reliable data. We can however see trends emerge from the comments sections of the surveys.

Connection

All (9/9) clients mentioned in the comments that the simple aspect of 'having time together without distractions from work and family' was a powerful thing. 'Being able to do fun activities as a family and bond with my children', 'working more together as a family' and 'making great memories'. This simple act of having committed time to connect was highly valued.

Skills

A number of clients mentioned that they now feel they have the skills to go and re-create some of the quality time experiences they had with their kids. 'It's removed some of the anxiety towards organizing our own camping trips together and highlighted some of the things we would need to organize to make it possible'. There were multiple comments about enjoying doing new things and wanting to re-create those. One client described the experience as 'learning how to have a holiday...'

There were also comments about developing skills within their family for living a good life such as 'having a calm voice towards the kids..' and realizing 'we are not different from other families, that our struggles unite us all.' They felt encouraged that they are doing well despite the struggles all families face.

Wellbeing

The other theme that emerged was around wellbeing. There are many comments of enjoyment, trying new things, the particular activities that they enjoyed the most and 'finding joy in doing activities outside as a family'. They had a great time, and that alone has increased a sense of wellbeing.

"Adventure Specialties Trust have facilitated exciting and challenging adventures which we would not have been able to do without them. I am always comfortable knowing that our tangata whiaora are in safe hands with the team at AST."

— ZEN DETOX LIMITED, PROGRAMME MANAGER

Conclusion

Our data indicates that we are achieving positive results in our intended outcomes. We have seen evidence of increased wellbeing, a recognition and development of people's strengths, development of people skills, and improved ability of people to connect in a healthy manner with others.

We also see our theory of change in action with people commenting on the power of nature and the environment in the programmes, the value of the challenges they faced, the special experience of being with their team mates on an adventure, and the joy and exhilaration of being successful in their activities. These are encouraging to us as we continue to invest in delivering programmes to our communities.

We recognize that we are on a journey, learning how to conduct effective outcomes evaluation. Throughout these last few years we have had various ideas that have worked well, and others that have left us with the task of working harder to develop an approach that is ethical, genuine and appropriate to our clients and programmes. This has been a very valuable time, and as a result we have a well-developed theory of change and way of collecting authentic data that meets both our needs and the needs of our external reporting.

Part of this journey has been to review our outcome descriptions based on the feedback from our clients. It has also involved trialling a variety of established tools along with our own tools and changing the combination until we have found something that works.

This report leaves us with further questions – are our clients learning enough skills to re-create these experiences for themselves in their own time? In what ways are our clients understanding themselves better? What are the longer term changes in our clients' attitudes and behaviours as a result of our programmes?

It is with anticipation that we look ahead to the next couple of years of implementing the newly revised intended outcomes and data collection tools that we have developed. We move into a new era of collecting more data on the experiences of our clients, and their perceptions of what they have learnt to tell our story better.

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— KAIPARA JOURNEY LETTER OF SUPPORT

Creating Everyday Heroes

"We have seen the students stay longer at school than we may have otherwise thought and noticed that they are prepared to keep persevering. The experience of the Journey has been a mechanism we have noticed that they draw on, especially if they have faced tough times afterwards."

— Kaipara Journey letter of support



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