

ON TRACK

JUNE 2020



ADVENTURE
SPECIALTIES TRUST

EST. 1984

WORD FROM THE CEO

This year has proved to be a different kind of adventure than we were expecting. We entered 2020 in one of the strongest positions in our 36-year history. We had the dream staff team, full calendars of rewarding work and even some reserves in the bank!

Then along came COVID! Like an unexpected wave we were surprised by the speed and force that the changes hit.

Like so many others in New Zealand and throughout the world, lockdown for us meant no service delivery. Almost overnight all programmes were cancelled or postponed, all staff sent home and all our outdoor equipment put away. We went from our strong position to one of vulnerability. I will admit to losing much sleep over it.

Credit goes to our strong staff team, and dedicated Trustees, who by nature are innovative problem solvers and solution finders. We pulled together like never before. Just like we teach our clients on our adventure programmes, we had to dig deep through teamwork, learning new communication techniques (Zoom! Gah) and how to think outside the box to overcome our fears. Figuratively speaking there have been some mountains to climb, some big swell pushing us around, some dark caves to navigate and many ever-changing winds to watch. Luckily, we are adventurers and this is our terrain.

Credit to our many wonderful supporters who stood by our sides cheering us on with prayers, words and financial support.

2020 has been a year of unexpected changes and challenges for many. We understand the feeling of vulnerability this has brought many communities and that this will be an amplified experience for some time yet. We also know of the life changing impact of our outdoor programmes and the outcomes they achieve of increased wellbeing, social skills, character, participation and manaakitanga, which are needed now more than ever.

In this issue of On Track we are highlighting a leadership programme we ran with Aorere College, updates on our staff team and some upcoming programmes. This year's adventures are not over (we are only half way!) and while we still have some challenges to overcome, we are united in our goal of seeing Adventure Specialties Trust impacting communities for a long time yet.

Cheers!



Tim Wills
CEO



SOCIAL IMPACT

Do you know young people that have been significantly affected by the impact of COVID-19? Numbers of youth suffering from anxiety or poor mental wellbeing is on the rise. Many will have missed out on school camps, outdoor experiences and outdoor education opportunities. Most simply need some fresh air and a digital detox. We are here to support school and community groups post-COVID programme needs! Check out these programmes:

INSPIRE



A direct response to students being negatively affected by COVID-19. This is an Adventure Therapy programme designed to benefit struggling and vulnerable students affected by the pandemic. The programme facilitator is trained in using the activities as a therapeutic tool to improve wellbeing. This programme works best when run in support and conjunction with the school's counselling and student support team.

OUT AND ABOUT



A youth development programme designed for the general school population. EOTC experiences have huge benefits in holistically developing students. The focus is on trying new activities and being outside while developing skills in leadership, teamwork and resilience. Each activity will have a theme and a discussion element to it that will help the students process recent events.

So, if you think your school or community group could benefit from this, get in touch with us today. Contact:

Jeff in Auckland at Jeff@adventurespecialties.co.nz
or Andy in Christchurch at Chch@adventurespecialties.co.nz.

DID YOU SEE OUR SOCIAL MEDIA DURING #LOCKDOWN?

Thanks to our "stuck at home but still working hard" Instructors we stepped up our social media game with some fun content (we think so anyway!). We even got the big gun CEO himself talking in front of a camera (and in a bush no less).

Thank you to everyone who liked, shared, commented and even supported us through these avenues. If you didn't catch them yet - check us out on **Facebook** and **Instagram**.

facebook.com/adventurespecialtiestrust/
instagram.com/adventurespecialtiestrust/





STAFF UPDATE

One of the hardest challenges of COVID-19 was the realisation that like many organisations we would need to restructure our staffing team. At AST our staff are so much more than a team - we are a whānau and we collectively carry the vision of AST.

So, although necessary, this was a very difficult process. In saying that we are blessed with remarkable people. Everyone involved approached this challenge with openness, humility and with a shared vision of seeing AST be in the best position possible to serve the community as we all recover from the effects of COVID-19. We also have two of our staff moving on to new study and work. **So it is with sadness and best wishes that we farewell Tom Batts, Josh Geddes, Katie Gray, James McMillan and Dale Shore.** We thank you for all your hard work and fun and wish you all the best for the future.

Here's a reflection from Tom during his time with Adventure Specialties:

"The last three and half years working at Adventure Specialties Trust as a field instructor has been some of the most significant growth I have experienced in my life. Fresh out of completing a Diploma in Outdoor Recreation and Leadership I cold-called Adventure Specialties office in Auckland. Knowing that they had no full time positions available, I asked if I could come in and just talk to someone to get some direction about working in the outdoors. I had heard of the Trust's Christian backbone and hoped to find some like-minded people who could impart some wisdom. After a happy and insightful chat with our operations manager, Jeff, I was offered some contracting work and the following year began a full time role on the instructing team.

I have had my faith and understanding of the world challenged in really interesting and positive ways through conversations with staff and also interacting with people we work with from so many different walks of life. I have been given responsibilities over complex tasks like organising and facilitating some of our core programmes, which have forced me to learn and adapt quickly in those dynamic environments. I have had some spectacular failures that I have been supported in and also challenged on so that I can take the fullest learning. AST really has had all the necessary components for me to thrive. I have been trained, encouraged, tested and ultimately given trust and responsibility to do my best.

I now leave Adventure Specialties able to communicate better than I did before I began here, manage my time better, have a better understanding of myself and what I can do, and I also understand so much more about the variety of communities that we work with.

To have walked alongside so many people in the outdoors, to have watched them grow in confidence in these new and unfamiliar environments we take them into, and see many of them move from views about themselves as somehow unable or unworthy to somehow capable and loved. This is the funny and beautiful truth of the gospel that I have been able to be a part of delivering. I know now more than ever that there must be no greater joy than to be involved, even in small ways, in another human being's slow and hopeful transformation."





PROGRAMME UPDATES

We were excited to be able to partner with Auckland Airport Community Trust early this year, to provide a leadership adventure camp for 12 Aorere College Prefects.

These students were a brave, fun, friendly, hardworking bunch who grew so much from the opportunity. We love investing in young lives and when the students didn't want to get off the bus at the end, we were pretty sure they all loved it to. Here is an extract about the programme from their Instructors Laura and Kyle:

“ In this journey-based week many students experienced something they have never experienced before which created opportunity for them to step outside of their comfort zone and to be vulnerable with one another. Activities consisted of Mountain Biking, Abseiling, Swimming, Tramping/Camping, Cooking, Teambuilding and ABL (Adventure Based Learning) activities.

The students started out with their first lunch all sitting separately in silence while they ate, and admitted they were not all in the same friend groups at school. After a week of being in a space of vulnerability, challenge and having to ask each other for help, each student admitted an incredible growth and connectedness with one another. One student admitting to the group, “I started this journey with friends but through it I gained family”. Arriving back at school at the end of the week, students wouldn't get off the bus as they shed tears of the journey being life changing, asking for the instructors to “come back again!!” and “the journey can't be finished yet!!” ”



Below are some of the students comments:

“It (the programme) exposed aspects of leadership that I didn't know I was capable of and motivated me to become a better person for my family, friends and school”.

“Resilience, when my peers are at their most vulnerable to use manaakitanga”.

“I learnt how to be positive during hard times”.

“Being uplifted by others around me makes me want to treat others the same”.

“I felt calmer being in the outdoors with my friends”.

“To be able to ask for help has changed our connections”.



Donations

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DIRECT CREDIT

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

POST

to Adventure Specialties Trust, Freepost 125380, PO Box 45 152, Te Atatu Peninsula, Auckland 0651
N.B. Tax deductible receipts will be issued for all donations.