

# ON TRACK MERI KIRIHIMETE! DECEMBER 2022



## WORD FROM THE CEO

*I say this every year and this is no exception ... “Wow, this year has gone fast.”*

I guess that it is no surprise, with a year full of challenges, that time certainly didn't stand still! As I look back at the year nearly gone by, I am very proud of our mahi and proud of the staff team that delivered some outstanding programmes. It has been no easy task working in this covid environment and it hasn't been easy juggling all the intricacies that the disruptions brought, and we now look forward to a well-deserved Christmas break .

On that note, I was reading a few of Lyndsay's Essays (Lyndsay was the founder of Adventure Specialties Trust) and came across this writing which is a good reminder in all this busyness. “If you ask most people, they will say Christmas is about giving. And it is. But it's more. **The Christmas message is also about reconnecting and restoration.** It starts with a baby not a revolution and the gift is offered not imposed. It reminds me that change can start from small beginnings (like getting

out of bed and doing some exercise!) and has to be desired. The Christmas story, of course, is just part of a much bigger story. A story which has brought radical change to the lives of many people – a radical reconnection with our potential and a restoration of a relationship with the Creator and our relationships with each other and the environments around us” I trust that this can also be a time of restoration and reconnections for you. Thank you for your support over this difficult year and I wish you a very Meri Kirihimete!

Ngā mihi

Tim Wills , CEO





## ADVENTURE WITH PURPOSE

*Our 'Adventure with Purpose' programmes use outdoor adventure activities combined with purposeful discussion and group activities to encourage participants to become more self-aware, socially aware, culturally aware, environmentally aware and motivated to be active.*

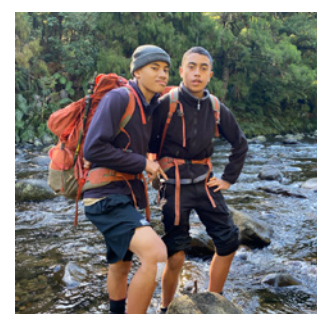
One of our programmes this year, funded by Tū Manawa Active Aotearoa, saw a group of students go caving at Whatipu Caves in the Waitākere Ranges of Auckland. The instructors started the day with a story called "Angus the Mucker", which is a story about a Scottish soldier in a prisoner of war camp who took the buddy system so seriously that he sacrificed his own health and ultimately his life, in order to protect his mucker (buddy). When his buddy had his blanket stolen or didn't have enough food to eat or fell sick, Angus had quietly given the man his own blanket and food rations, and nursed him back to health. When Angus died due to exhaustion and lack of food, the reason for his death surfaced and began to circulate through the prison camp. The other prisoners were stunned. They started to change their own behaviour and look after each other.

Instructor Caitlin says, "So the theme for our programme's participants was to think about their classmates rather than just themselves, and to think of ways that we could look after and help our buddies out when inside the cave.

"Once we entered the caves, there was one boy who blatantly

refused to go through the first squeeze. He didn't want to join in at all. When we got to the second set of caves, we challenged the students to make their way back out using only candlelight. This is when this boy (who refused to go through the first section) managed to find an alternate route out to avoid the tight spaces without anyone seeing. But, instead of heading back to the vans, he raced around to the front of the group and he actually started helping the other students get through another spot. He got one of the other guys to pass him the candle so he could hold it in one hand and give everyone else a hand through in support.

"At the end of the day, when we had our debrief, it turned out there were several other students who also weren't so keen on the tight spaces. When we did our "shout outs" (saying a few words of thanks to another participant), this one particular lad got several from different people in the group, for helping them get through the caves. He embraced the mucker story and saw everyone in his class as his buddies. He figured out that even though he wasn't so keen and didn't want to get fully involved, he didn't want to stop his mates from giving it a go and so he gave them all a hand!"





## ADVENTURE THERAPY

*Our 'Adventure Therapy' programmes combine the healing power of nature with fun and challenging outdoor adventure activities, supported by a therapeutic framework. Our aim is to support participants on their journey towards self-worth, hauora (wellbeing), whanaungatanga (community), taha wairua (spiritual wellness) and hope for a future with purpose.*

One of the Adventure Therapy programmes from this year was a youth camp for teenagers struggling with mental health challenges. The camp was held at Whananaki, Northland, spanning five days. The activities included caving, abseiling, fishing, kayaking, snorkeling, campfires, tenting and of course some bombs from the wharf. We had eight participants, one instructor, one Adventure Therapy facilitator and a qualified therapist.

One of the participants that stood out to me was a young man who had a rather colourful background. This background was evident from the start of camp, when he refused to let his bag be checked to make sure he had adequate gear for the week. He was on edge and taking on a 'tough guy' attitude.

After a few days of the staff and other participants helping him to feel safe, these walls started to come down and we got to see the real nature of this young man.

During our end-of-camp reflection time, he reflected this: "Because of camp, I have rethought what I want to be. I did think before camp that I wanted to be in a gang, but realise now that, in the long term, it's not going to be good for my life. I would like to work towards opportunities to become a builder. I never thought I would have any other dreams."

Huge success! Also, it's awesome that we could encourage him to reconnect with family, get mentoring in his hometown, and continue to choose good people to get around him in his life.

Dave Moss  
Adventure Therapy facilitator



# JOB VACANCIES

[adventurespecialties.co.nz/vacancies](http://adventurespecialties.co.nz/vacancies)



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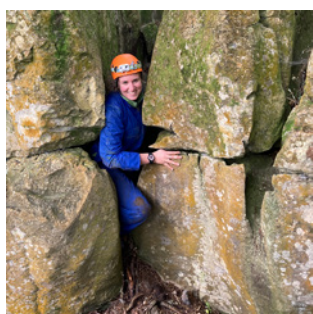
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## SOCIAL MEDIA HIGHLIGHTS

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## DONATIONS

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

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