



# Newsletter - Issue 24



**June 2008**

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## *Dreamers Camp at Camp Bentzon on Kawau Island*

The second week of the April school holidays saw 25 Dreamers and 12 adults return to Kawau Island for a great 4 day camp. Issue 18 of our newsletter described this fantastic school camp site, and these photos illustrate what an excellent opportunity these school camps are for Kiwi kids to experience the outdoors, build new skills, develop confidence, practice teamwork and have a heap of good old-fashioned fun.

But it's never ALL fun and games. Ant and Lynn organized three nights of inspirational speakers to address the Dreamers on the camp theme: "High School Lifesavers." The three issues that the Dreamers learned about were:

- Self-image and self-esteem
- Sex and relationships
- Drugs and alcohol

It's obvious that kids today face many temptations and are inundated with negative influences. So the speakers' goal was to equip the Dreamers with "life jackets" to help them survive High School, and know how to deal with difficult situations. The speakers had plenty of positive advice to pass on to the Dreamers including focusing on making good decisions, maintaining a commitment towards their dream, and choosing friends that support their dreams.



We want to express our appreciation to the great people who make these camps possible for the Dreamers:

- Ant & Lynn, for all their excellent planning
- Pete and Erin, the fantastic Camp Managers who instruct all the activities
- Steve and Heather, our Camp Cooks who keep our bodies going all week
- The Guest Speakers (Rongi & the Krash team, Dave Sipa and Toso Su'a)

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## *Dreamers Camp at Camp Bentzon on Kawau Island Continued....*

and we also want to thank the many generous volunteers:

- Kesaia's Mum, Sela
- Salote's Mum, Mele
- Robel's Mum, Assefu
- Jade's cousin, Apii
- Mentors, Natalie, Dave, Sam & Toso
- Tutor, Andrew (see the Volunteer Profile story on page 4)
- Scott's daughters, Annie & Bridget



The place also looked a bit like a Hollywood film set at times, with two different crews there during the week. We are having a second documentary made on our "I Have a Dream" project, following on from the "NZ On Air" funded programme that was shot in 2004 and often been screened on TV3. We hope that this will be the 2nd of four of these half-hour documentaries, tracking the Dreamers from the start of the project (2004), to the start of High School (2008), to the start of tertiary study (2013) and concluding some time after that with university graduation, employment and productive citizenship (20XX?). We also had a crew of students from AUT's film school, who are shooting a 10 minute doco on our mentoring programme.

## *Dreamer Tramping Club*

For many Kiwis – and visitors to NZ – tramping is the single best way to see our beautiful country. Spending from 2 – 7 days out in the bush, carrying all your supplies on your back, and getting well away from cars and cities, is to truly experience the grandeur (and silence!) of our mountainous countryside.

A number of the Dreamers have expressed interest in joining up for this new activity, so we have planned our first tramp. We will be spending two nights at a hut in the Waitakeres, near Auckland, in the first weekend of the September school holidays (Sept 26/27).



Accordingly, we need donations of backpacks, sleeping bags, boots, tramping clothes, etc. If you have any suitable equipment lying around the house, please drop it off at the Dreamer Centre or call us to pick it up.

## *Charities Commission Certificate of Registration*

We are pleased to report that the "I Have a Dream" Charitable Trust has been awarded a Certificate of Registration (# CC24136) by the Charities Commission. This means that any donations to the Trust are fully tax deductible. The recent changes to the tax laws, removing the cap on deductions for charitable donations, should result in an increase in giving. Next year the law will change further, allowing automatic payroll deductions which will immediately qualify for the deduction.

As we have mentioned in past issues of the newsletter, we have started a fund to raise money for a second project. This first project in Mt Roskill is fully funded, so any donations will go towards enabling dreams for another cohort of under-privileged children in NZ.

Please contact Scott at 09-486-1011 or 021-652-782 or [scott.gilmour@xtra.co.nz](mailto:scott.gilmour@xtra.co.nz) if you'd like to discuss this further.

## *"I Have a Dream" Research Reports*



We've mentioned (in Issues 2, 9, 12, 19 and 22 of our newsletter) the ongoing research that we have contracted to measure the progress and outcomes of this project. We had an interesting discussion last month with Jan Hill, the head researcher, about the various audiences and timeframes for our research.

There are three very distinct groups:

1. The "I Have a Dream" staff and volunteers, as well as teachers and parents, need very detailed information on each individual Dreamer, updated and analysed at least annually, so that they can tailor learning programmes according to each child's strengths and needs.
2. The staff also need aggregated data and anecdotal feedback to let them judge the effectiveness of the services being provided to the Dreamers, and to continue to tweak the programme to meet changing needs.
3. The media, politicians, schools and potential funders need more aggregated data, ideally over the project's lifespan of 15 years, so that conclusions can be drawn about the impact and cost-effectiveness of an "I Have a Dream" project.

For the first group, Jan and her team collect a huge amount of data, e.g.,

- from Ant and Lynn about each Dreamer's participation in the programme, known issues and needs, special considerations, etc.
- from the schools about each Dreamer's academic progress, attendance, etc.
- from the tutors, mentors and parents about each Dreamer's attitudes and behaviour
- from the Dreamers themselves, about their perceptions and needs

This data is analysed extensively and used to plan strategies to nurture and develop each Dreamer.

For the second group, all of this detailed data on each individual is then aggregated, compared to the Control Group, considered over time, and then used to ensure that the programme's services are evolving to meet the changing needs of the Dreamers.

For these first two groups, we've had to deal with a major problem, namely the paucity of consistency and comparability between the academic measuring systems employed by schools. Given that our Dreamers have moved from Primary to Intermediate and now to High School, and given that they have attended over 15 schools during the time, we have drawn data from many different databases (e.g., PAT, STAR, ASSTLE, etc.). Even within each of these systems, schools can implement them differently, measure different aspects .... and have different levels of record-keeping accuracy and completeness .... ☺

While we can still use this mass of data to help each individual child, it is difficult to draw any statistically valid conclusions about the programme overall. This is why, for the third group, we also look to measure macro outcomes, such as rates of High School graduation, tertiary study, teenage pregnancy, gang affiliation, etc.

In the meantime, we take what we can from the data that is available to us.....

2008 data "Hot off the Press" (based on 2007 testing) indicates that our Dreamer's reading scores are finally starting to see some real signs of improvement!!

Here's some quotes directly from the 2008 report:

*"The data show that fewer students are achieving at the very lowest end of the scale: 5 students compared with 14 in the previous year. These results indicate that the 'tail' is not as long as in the past". (Comments based on 2007 STAR Reading tests)*

*"The data show that over half the students (54%) improved their reading results over the year in relation to their chronological age. This is very encouraging. The 39% of students whose results stayed the same have improved their performance but not over and above their increase in age. Only 2 students' scores (7%) indicate that no gain was made". (Comments based on 2007 STAR Reading tests)*



## *Volunteer Profile - Andrew Patterson*

"He's so cool." "He gets on well with all of the Dreamers." "He's a good helper." "He's very entertaining."

These were some of the enthusiastic responses when I asked the Dreamers to describe Andrew Patterson, one of our many great volunteers. But it was this response that best captured why he captivates them: "He tells such interesting stories – he's not boring, like most adults." ☺

Andrew works as a business journalist for RadioLIVE, and hosts a very popular news and talk show on Sunday mornings. After interviewing Scott on the show in March last year, Andrew started turning up at the After School Programme to help tutor the Dreamers. He has proceeded to define a new volunteer role in our project, as a sort of "Super Tutor," where he engages with individual Dreamers to identify and encourage their dreams. So recently he's helped coach Mosa for his debating sessions - including videoing a few of his recent performances, taken Kenese to visit an architect (as described in our previous newsletter), and introduced Robert to Bluff Oysters ... something he now regrets given that Robert's new found love of the delicacy is proving to be expensive!

Andrew joined us for the excellent Dreamer Camp at Camp Bentzon, and thoroughly enjoyed the chance to build even closer relationships with the Dreamers. It was a treat to see him engaged in intense 1:1 discussions with so many of the Dreamers, and to see them light up as he used his encyclopedic knowledge and entertaining delivery to discuss ideas and explain things to them.

After talking with Andrew non-stop for an hour and a half during the hike back from Vivian Bay to the Camp, Jade is now considering journalism as a career option herself!

Andrew's latest initiative is to start a "Saturday Study Hall" at the Dreamer Centre, allowing the Dreamers to come in and spend some time preparing for the upcoming mid-term exams. It is this kind of energy and dedication that exemplifies all of our volunteers, and which enables us to ensure that each of our Dreamers is reaching for the stars.

## *Developing Tomorrow's Leaders*

At the start of 2008 the Dreamers were asked to apply if they were interested in being part of a TOP TEN Dreamers Leadership team we were developing this year. A whopping 22 Dreamers put their names in the running. After a series of tests, challenges and interviews were conducted on them over a 4 month period, the TOP TEN were finally decided. Congratulations goes out to all who participated in the process (as all 22 were such great leaders and the decision process was so hard), but a special congratulations for our TOP TEN - Anoovi, Mosa'ati, May, Anna, Kenese, Jade, Mini, Sonay, Dwayne and Salote.

These ten Dreamers enjoyed a leadership initiation retreat evening over dinner at Coach Ant's house where they covered some important leadership material on "Integrity" then later that week they attended the Halogen Foundations 2008 National Young Leaders Day.

## *Quote of The Day*

**Learn from the past. Use well the present. Improve the future.**

- Inscription by Sir George Grey, Governor of NZ, in the library of Mansion House, his home on Kawau Island

"The "I Have a Dream"® Programme helps children from low-income areas reach their education and career goals by providing a long-term program of mentoring, tutoring, and enrichment, with an assured opportunity for higher education."