2019 Summer Newsletter

Cottage by the Sea
Queenscliff
inspiration · fun · opportunity

Back to Camp Moulamein

There are particular camps that standout for our young people and the Moulamein camp is just one. Situated in New South Wales along the Edward River, Moulamein is a small rural town where our friends and longtime donors, the Anderson family (owners of APCO Service Station), own a large property and let us, with their support, run a five-day camping experience for our Mentor participants. This being our sixth year running the camp, you would be right to assume that we knew what to expect. But the one amazing thing about Moulamein, is that no two years are ever the same!

Leaving bright and early, we picked up the eager Mentors from Leopold and Kings Park ready for the five hour journey ahead. Arriving at the Anderson property, we were greeted by our hosts for the week - Peter, Mary-Anne and Damien. After setting up camp and finishing a sausage sizzle in record time, the Mentors sat down around the camp fire for circle time. This is where we discuss our goals for the week, the challenges we might face and how we will achieve our goals. The goals for this particular camp were to build resilience and promote teamwork.

The activities planned for the week allowed the Mentors to achieve these goals above and beyond! There were many firsts. Activities such as ferreting and yabbying really tested the young peoples patience and focus under the hot country sun and others such as canoeing upstream as a team and forming rafts to assist one another exposed the mateship that our Mentors share. Aside from these challenging activities there was plenty of time for fun with swinging for the tire-swing into the river beside camp being one of them!

By the end of the week both the Mentors and camp leaders were exhausted, but our goals set at the beginning of the week had been achieved. We would again like to say thank you and recognise the amazing support of the Anderson family, not just on the particular camp, but throughout each and every year. We're already planning for next year!

Conquering our Fears Together

Each week at Cottage by the Sea is unique. There are new challenges, new achievements and most importantly, new memories. A Take a Break camp with Tate Street Primary School from Geelong was one such unique week.

Being on the coast certainly has its perks. On warm summer days we can go for a swim to cool off, enjoy a walk along the beach on balmy evenings and enjoy all sorts of outdoor activities. But the ocean can be a daunting place for a ten year old, especially if they haven't had the opportunity to swim in it from a young age. It is especially daunting when the waves are crashing, it is a little cold and you are surfing for the first time!

After carrying our surfboards from the bus to the beach and quick surf lesson on the sand at Ocean Grove beach, it was time to hit the water, but ten year old Lia was less than confident in her ability to enter the surf. "I don't want to. It's cold, the waves are scary and I can't do it!" She said to one of the camp leaders. She was mostly right, it was cold and the waves can be scary if you aren't accustomed to the beach, but she was wrong about being able to do it.

Helping her carry her surfboard into the water, camp leader Natalie assured her that she was in safe hands and that if she put her mind to it, that she CAN do it. After a few hesitations, Lia jumped on her surfboard slightly unsure about what to expect. "Here comes the wave", camp leader Natalie called out and with a gentle push of the board Lia was away.

What were nerves, slowly turned to confidence as a smile broadened across Lia's face. The hoots of encouragement from the fellow camp leaders and kids as Lia glided towards the beach created a magical experience.

As the wave began to dissipate, Lia jumped of the surfboard and with the smile still on her face turned back to Natalie and asked, "did you see me do it? Did you?". Lia instantly grabbed her surfboard and headed back to catch wave after wave.

Sometimes it is these little moments on a camp that make all the difference to a young person. What often seems like a small and insignificant experience to some, can be a life changing experience for others.

Fun with the Freeman Foundation

We love being part of the Cathy Freeman Horizons Program and the places it takes us. Our most recent camp was in Darwin. The grade 5/6 Horizon students had travelled by plane, an 81.4km from Wurrumiyanga Bathurst Island and a huge 515kms from Galiwin'ku. A daunting week away from family, friends and their communities exploring all that Darwin had to offer staying at the Michael Long Learning and Leadership Centre. The 15 students were selected for, leadership, to build confidence, for educational reasons, for role modelling positive behaviours, and cultural pride and exchange of stories and language. We were greeted by bright eyes and smiling faces, a great start to camp.

While in Darwin, we explored the city. We travelled by buses to many cultural and educational attractions. Some of the activities included basket weaving for the girls by Norma from Starwin Social Enterprise. While Locky and Troy took the boys to Austin Lane to see a huge painting of the late Dr G Yunupingu on the side of Carpentaria House painted by artists Andrew J Bourke and local indigenous artist Jesse Bell.

We cruised the Corroboree Billabong with our guide who gave us so much detail on the area and enjoyed spotting a few crocodiles plus a huge array of birds and other local wildlife in their natural setting. The students shared language and translated different animals along the way.

The students also participated in a session with AMRRIC (Animal Management in Rural and Remote Indigenous Communities) and the Ark Vet and learnt about the links between human and animals. The AMIRRIC staff spoke about looking after a family pet and what exactly that entails. The students were introduced to 'Toby' the dog and they were able to help bath him.

By Friday, all students were not as eager to rise early out of bed as they were tired and keen to get some extra rest before the day's activities. There was still so much to do before they set off home. Shopping was a high priority for these 15 students but not before they made their families, their school and themselves very proud by standing up in front of the group and delivering speeches. The Principal from Galiwin'ku was extremely proud of the way his students spoke especially since some of them were so shy at the beginning of camp.

Our CBTS staff go into every camp with great enthusiasm and appreciation. We are thankful for the teaching staff and the dedication of the CFF who make the Horizon's Program what it is today!

Snow Camp

The snow camp has been the climax of our REEF program for a number of years now and every year we have the opportunity to reflect on how lucky we are to be able to provide our young people with such inspirational opportunities.

Heading up to Mt. Buller, our REEF kids were beyond excited. Being from Ballarat, all but two of the group of twenty were lucky to have had the opportunity to experience the magic of the snow. Arriving later in the day, we settled in to our accommodation before setting out on a little tour of Mt. Buller Village. The happiness of REEF kids for being at Mt. Buller was contagious as we built snow people and perfected our snowball making. Though it was an early night, as the next day we began our snowboard lessons.

The aim of this camp is to build resilience in the participants. Snowboarding can be a difficult and tiring activity to learn, you are going to fall over a lot of times and you will likely wake up the next day sore. But with the encouragement and professionalism of our camp leaders, we are able to assist the young people to achieve their goal of being able to snowboard and more importantly, have fun.

By the end of the camp, the REEF kids were scooting all over Mt. Buller and despite a few tears and some huffing and puffing early on, all had a smile from ear to ear! To be able to provide this amazing opportunity as part of our REEF program is inspiring and we thank all the donors in our community that continue to make it happen.

Staff Training

The staff and volunteers were treated to a two day professional development workshop which aimed to inspire and promote well-being and mental health. Project Thrive advocates the principal that organisations and individuals, provided with the right skills and knowledge, can create conditions for optimal flourishing. It was alarming to learn the latest research on child and adolescence mental health and the alarming rates of anxiety and depression among our young people.

Centring on the work of Martin Seligman, positive psychology approaches these issues from a proactive stance. Rather than aiming to fix issues once they arise, organisations should be focusing on creating the conditions which are most conducive to optimal functioning. Seligman has developed the PERMAH model of happiness which encompasses the six elements: Positive emotion, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishments, health. When each element is maximised, the individuals is most likely to flourish at an optimal level.

We learned methods for increasing awareness, techniques to practise mindfulness, as well as activities to promote positive feelings and increase engagement.

Collaboration, teamwork, communication and creativity were high on the agenda. Furthermore, we learned valuable lessons in developing positive mental states. Some important take-away messages included: *Mindset is paramount* and *Where your attention goes, your energy flows*.

We listened to anecdotal evidence that these principles work. AFL football clubs, sporting teams, schools and major organisations have adopted many ideologies with great success. Dustin Martin credits positive psychology for helping him to reach peak performance when playing with for the mighty Richmond Tigers.

Here at The Cottage, we hope to utilise our newly gained knowledge and appreciation of the science behind flourishing to create a setting conducive to optimal flourishing. We envisage the future of Cottage by the Sea to be an environment which empowers and positively connects all individuals who visit. We can look forward to exciting times ahead!

Hand in a New Bus

After 15 years of dedicated service one of Cottage's most loved staff members, Rosa, has retired. Rosa is our faithful bus that over the past 15 years has transported underprivileged youth from all over Victoria. Though we would not have been able to offer her retirement without the assistance of some special donors and very successful fundraiser at the Geelong Race Club in August.

Mal Campbell and David Langley thoughtfully hosted a fundraising Race Day for Cottage by the Sea, pouring hours upon hours of dedicated work to ensure its success.

The day, which is now destined to become an annual event, was attended by new and existing Cottage supporters who gave generously in support of the day's goal. Events such as this also provide us with the opportunity to educate the community on the important work that Cottage by the Sea provides.

Thank you to Mal, David and all who assisted in the organisation, those who donated auction items and importantly, those who came along on the day. You all played a helping hand in the future of Cottage by the Sea.

Welcome to our newest staff members!

Sam Edwards

We welcome Sam Edwards to the newly created role of Program Planner – Services Crew. Sam will oversee the maintenance, chef, housekeeping and guest services roles and reports to the Program Director. Sam is a highly experienced outdoor educator having previously co-owned an outdoor adventure company for the last nine years. He is an avid surfer, lives in Anglesea and is dad to two young daughters.

Christine Fagan

We welcome Christine Fagan (affectionately known as Chook) to the role of fulltime Camp Leader. Christine knows the Cottage very well as for the past number of years she has brought students from Matthew Flinders Girls College to the Cottage to volunteer. She is an experienced outdoor education teacher having worked in Geelong, abroad in Canada at a Summer Camp and also in an indigenous community in remote Western Australia.

128th Annual General Meeting

The Annual General Meeting is always a significant on the Cottage by the Sea Calendar. For our 128th AGM we were thankful for our guest speaker Matthew Heard. Matthew attended Cottage as part of our Take a Break program YEARS ago and had a powerful story about the difference it made to his outlook on like to share with the audience.

We were also again made proud by our Mentors who spoke with confidence and bravado on the day, giving personal accounts of the opportunities they have been offered over the past year at the Cottage, all while being humble and thankful for the experiences.

It was also an honour to award a Cottage by the Sea Life Membership to Sue Armstrong. Sue, a member of the Bellarine Fundraising Branch, has been a dedicated supporter and ambassador in public for Cottage by the Sea and is very deserving of this honour.

Thank you to everyone who attended the meeting. It is a pleasure to be able to meet and talk with our inspirational community.

A Message from our CEO

As the end of the year and Christmas is now upon us it's an opportune time to reflect on our achievements, challenges and the exciting times ahead. Our programs and camps have never been utilised to a greater extent than during the past year, with more than1,200 children attending. The Riptide Cottage facility has allowed us to increase the annual number of camps to 54. This venue has also allowed many parents, grandparents or families as a whole to enjoy a 'much needed' holiday,

What we are most proud of during such a challenging year, is our Cottage community for taking the children's holiday experience, and our fundraising efforts to yet another level. As a result, plans are now in place for our facility redevelopment to occur in 2019.

In this our 128th year, we would like to express our appreciation for the valued relationships we have formed with our donors and supporters. Their contributions have enabled the Cottage board, staff and volunteers to expand our programs, services and facilities for the children.

Someone once said 'that organisations/communities only really fail when good people choose to do nothing'. How fortunate is the Cottage community – we have so many good people doing great things! A dedicated team of staff, volunteers, donors and supporters contribute towards the activities of the organisation, not only week in and week out but also year in and year out.

We hope you will enjoy reading some of the stories in this newsletter as much as we enjoy sharing them with you.

Finally, we sincerely wish all donors, both financial and in kind, our branches, ambassadors, staff and volunteers a very happy Christmas and a safe New Year.

Tony Featherston, CEO

"I'm truly grateful for all the nice staff. You guys always had a positive attitude and enjoyed a good laugh. This camp is easily the best camp of my life" - Take a Break Program Camper

Melbourne News

A fantastically busy six months covering inner and outer regions of Melbourne, guest speaking, visiting dedicated supporters whilst imparting the Cottage story to many new supporters. It is a privilege to convey the message of how so many children are provided with inspiration, fun and opportunity by our dedicated camp leaders. I am thrilled to speak about the success of our Mentors and the amazing things they are doing in the community. 2019 promises to be an exciting year with our 80 year old building being totally renovated for future generations of children and the formation of our Bequest Plan to secure our future.

I was delighted to attend the Applewood Craft Group's afternoon tea where leader Diana Lambley once again presented the Cottage with a very generous cheque from the Ladies' Craft Group sales, along with many other donations.

I dropped in to visit Charles Adams, who attended the Cottage following the 1939 Fires, and who has generously allowed us to use his photo and story in our new Bequest Booklet. Charles regularly visits the Cottage on Fair days and promotes our message in his Retirement Village and to family and friends.

There are just too many donors and supporters to mention but they know they are valued and how grateful we are. Thank you to all for being a part of the Cottage community.

Anne Catchpole, Community Relations Melbourne.

Our Volunteers

The Bellarine Branch held their luncheon at the Cottage in October and our chef Marc prepared lunch for over 100 ladies. He was ably assisted by some of our amazing volunteers and staff who worked tirelessly all day helping with preparations and serving.

The Cottage appreciates and thanks all of our wonderful volunteers that work alongside staff to make each day here a happy one.

Building Update

Cottage by the Sea was excited to accept a $1.5 million grant in July from the federal government as part of the Building Better Regions Fund to assist Cottage by the Sea's $3 million Major Capital Works project. The funding was announced by Federal MP Sarah Henderson at Cottage by the Sea. The works will assist us to provide an even greater experience for the young people who attend our programs and allow people of all abilities and ages to access Cottage by the Sea.

The $1.5 million is a one-time grant that will only be directed to the Major Capital Works project and will not assist the funding of any programs. The remainder of the project funding has been raised over the past 24 months and has come from philanthropic trusts, foundations, major events (i.e. Annual Fair and the Ambassadors Race Day) and individuals who have stated they would like to make a contribution to the project.

A significant amount of pro-bono labour from architects, designers, builders and Deakin University Students has and will continue to assist the project. The works are due to start in mid

2019 and we endeavour to continue to run programs during this time with minimal interruption.

Major capital works are essential for meeting compliance in terms of building safety, equal access and fire safety. The result will be a more vibrant, fun and colourful Cottage that is ready to help children for many years to come!

Updated Donated Goods Policy

As you will be aware, our first priority is always to pass on your donated goods directly to the children and families with whom we work. However, should there be an excess to requirements, we would value being able to use some of these items for Cottage fundraising purposes, such as our Annual Fair or occasionally pass on to other charities who also work with children and families. Thank you for your support.

Bequest Program

Leaving a gift in your Will is a unique way of supporting a cause you are passionate about without impacting on your present income or bank balance. It's a common misconception that only wealthy people leave money to charity when they die. In fact, most bequests are made by ordinary, hard-working people, who want to make a positive difference. The amount you decide to leave can be as much or as little as you want but the difference you can make will be forever.

The Cottage has established a Society to honour the generosity of those who have notified us of their intention to pledge a Gift in their Will to the Cottage. By letting us know that you have included Cottage by the Sea in your Will, you will join a very special group of people who have also chosen to support us in this significant way.

The launch of this new Society will take place in coming months and as a member of this friendly Cottage Society you will be helping us plan our future with confidence and security.

We invite you to consider a bequest to the Cottage but encourage you to talk to your family first about your decision and consider their needs before talking to your solicitor.

For a confidential discussion about leaving a Bequest to Cottage by the Sea we encourage you to talk to us about the difference your gift will make - Contact Cottage by the Sea's CEO Tony Featherston.

Guest Speakers

We love to spread the word about the Cottage and are happy to have your group visit the Cottage for a Devonshire Tea, talk and tour. We can also come to you!

Please contact:

Carol on 5258 1663 (Queenscliff/Geelong)

Anne on 0412 431 233 (Melbourne)

Branches

BELLARINE Sandy Cunningham Tel: 0438 582 388

GEELONG Rhonda Rotherham Tel: 5250 1026

QUEENSCLIFF Bev Davies Tel: 5241 2520

HIGHTON CERES ACORN Ros Leigh Tel: 5259 1380

In Memory

We pay tribute to the lives of these valued Cottage by the Sea friends and supporters

Margaret Beasant
Sacha Collins
Kate Frost
Ron Ick
Patricia MacDonald
Maureen Mill
Darryl Morrison
Percy Parks

Wish List

New Items	**Food Items**
Toiletry bags	Primas
Pencil cases & stationary	Muesli bars
Girls clothes: size 8-10	Sultana Bran
Boys clothes: sizes 8-10	Soy/Asian sauce
Underwear	Biscuits (no nuts)
SPF lip balm	Cocoa
Beach towels	Beef or Chicken Real Stock

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