

# Annual Report

## MOUNTAINS YOUTH SERVICES TEAM

2008 - 2009



Incorporating

Blue Mountains Family & Adolescent Counselling Service  
Mountains Youth Support Project  
Lower Mountains Youth Project  
Upper Mountains Youth Project  
Mountains Youth Recreation Project  
Better Futures: Pathways



# Contents

<b>Summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Chairperson’s Report</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Manager’s Report</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Family &amp; Adolescent Counselling</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Youth Support Service</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Lower Mountains Youth Project</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Youth Recreation Service</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Upper Mountains Youth Project</b>	<b>19</b>

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## Our Vision:

To support the development of young people with special emphasis on those at risk and disadvantaged by providing opportunities to grow intellectually, emotionally, physically and spiritually.

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## Our Purpose:

To actively respond to the identified needs of young people through relevant and dynamic programs by working with young people in an open and empowering way.

# Summary

This report outlines the achievements and highlights of the projects of Mountains Youth Services Team throughout July 2008 – June 2009

Mountains Youth Services Team (MYST) is a community organisation consisting of five youth projects supported by a management and administration team. A Management Committee of elected volunteers from the community governs MYST. Projects are largely funded through the NSW Department of Community Services, Community Services Grants Program and the Western Sydney Area Assistance Scheme. We operate from three buildings with our administrative office in Springwood.

## **COUNSELLING**

The Family & Adolescent Counselling Service covers the whole of the Blue Mountains with offices in Winmalee and Katoomba. The Family & Adolescent Counselling Service is for young people and their parents who are having conflict or other issues at home and young people who are experiencing difficulties in their life.

## **YOUTH CENTRES**

Our Youth Centres in Katoomba, Winmalee and the shop front on Springwood provide information, recreation and referral services for young people aged from 12-24 years. Centres provide places for young people to congregate and socialise, as well as take part in innovative programs, which are both educational and recreational.

## **PERSONAL SUPPORT**

The Support Service uses community development strategies to work one-on-one with at-risk young people and their families. The service provides support, referrals, information, advocacy and a small brokerage service.

## **RECREATION**

The youth recreation service provides personal development and outdoor recreation opportunities to young people. They regularly run programs with schools, youth accommodation services, youth centres and the local aboriginal community. The programs have a personal development focus, particularly on issues such as drug and alcohol, family relationships, schooling and dealing with emotions.

# Acknowledgements

Generous support by both government funding bodies and commercial organisations and business enables MYST to carry out its work in supporting the development of disadvantaged and at-risk young people.

MYST is very pleased to give warm thanks to all its sponsors for their valuable support.

Thanks also go to the volunteer members of the associations Management Committee who give freely of their time to ensure the ongoing sound governance of the organisation.

## **FUNDING BODIES:**

The Department of Community Services  
Mental Health Council of Australia  
Family Planning NSW  
Music NSW

## **MAJOR PARTNERS:**

Blue Mountains City Council  
The AWARE Project  
Springwood Rotary Club  
Upper Blue Sunrise Rotary Club  
Sydney Cove Rotary Club  
ACON

## **BUSINESS DONORS:**

Bike Minded  
Dextralog Computers  
LTD Truck and Bus Rental  
Blue Mountains Adventure Company  
Wilson Web Studio  
Katoomba RSL

# Chairperson's Report

“An organisation is only as good as the people that work and drive it; MYST has both a great work force and a cohesive management committee.”

Dear members

It gives me great pleasure to present to you this report on the activities of MYST over the last 12 months.

Firstly I would like to express the management committee's appreciation of the zeal and dedication that the MYST team brings to the youth services in the Blue Mountains, this passion has allowed MYST to grasp new opportunities and build on the existing strengths.

As I have said on many times, an organisation is only as good as the people that work and drive it; MYST has both a great work force and a cohesive management committee, who are firmly focused producing the best possible outcomes for our clients.

The new kitchen facilities and renovated yard in Katoomba along with other outreach equipment will able MYST to offer new programs to the youth of the Mountains.

Despite the world economic crises we are in a sound financial position. With due diligence and sound planning we will continue to keep pace with the changing environment.

The New Year will present new challengers for us and I am superbly confident that we will overcome all hurdles and take advantage of all opportunities.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish you all the very best for your end of year celebrations.

Sincerely yours  
Noel Hiffernan  
Chair

# Manager's Report

2008-2009 was always going to be a challenge for MYST as we attempted to find our feet amidst significant change. In particular I refer to the projects of Upper Mountains Youth Services Inc and Mountains Youth Resource Organisation joining MYST. These additions included a significant increase in funding and service delivery for MYST, new staff and opportunities to trial new ways of providing services. I am very pleased to say that by any measure the year has been a resounding success.

I would like to specifically acknowledge the staff who join us from Upper Mountains Youth Services Inc, Wendy and Jarrod at the Youth Centre and Annette at the Adolescent and Family Counselling Service. Despite the need for some significant adjustments on their parts as they each responded to the changes that came with joining a new organisation they have demonstrated professionalism and excellence in their continued service delivery. Thank you for adding to the success of Mountains Youth Services Team.

It was not without serious consideration and forethought that the Committee elected to vacate the Mt Riverview Youth Centre in favour of trialing a new 'out reach' model of youth service delivery in the Lower Mountains. This ambitious decision has ultimately been rewarded. The work of the Lower Mountain Youth Project team lead by Anna and Nick has seen client contact in the Lower Mountains increased by seven fold. Exemplary.

I am rightly proud of all the projects and staff at MYST and while I could easily detail the independent success of each of them, such as; the first ever cross-country snow camp, the development of the Blue Mountains Street Art Collaborative, the constant stream of community respect and admiration I receive for the work of Jim and Maggie, the transition to high school program, and the list goes on, I simply don't have time to acknowledge them all adequately.

I would like to thank the members of the Management Committee for their commitment, guidance, wisdom and for giving so freely of their time. I would like to thank our principle fund partner the Department of Community Services and specifically Deb Dare and Robynne Cole for their unwavering support of MYST. And lastly I would like to give a special thank you and acknowledgement of the truly outstanding work done by Michelle Griffiths our Finance Coordinator. Michelle, without your relentless commitment and professionalism MYST could never have achieved such success - thank you.

It is with great confidence that I face the challenges of 2009-2010.

Damian M Cooper  
Manager

# Family & Adolescent Counselling

## Lower Mountains Family and Adolescent Counselling

This has been a very fulfilling and productive year. I continued to run the counselling and group-work programs from Winmalee Youth Centre. The target group remains families with young people twelve to eighteen, facing homelessness or in some way experiencing problems that were destructive of family cohesion and good relationships, or impacted negatively on the young persons and their families. The counselling programs were run from the Youth Centre at Winmalee, with an outreach to Blaxland Neighbourhood Centre and East Blaxland Family Support. The group-work programs which can be run anywhere in the Lower Mountains, were held in partnership with Lower Mountains Family Support at East Blaxland through Anne Howes' Family Links Program. She would organise the funding and administration, and I run the Parenting Adolescent workshops.

During 2008 - 2009 seventy-one families were counselled, with fifty-two new families seen. Families and individual young people came with problems ranging from family breakdown, homelessness, separation and relationship difficulties, serious abuse, neglect and homelessness, domestic violence, difficult and aggressive behaviour, drug and alcohol abuse, communication difficulties, sexuality and pregnancy, school attendance and poor motivation, effects of separation and divorce, depression, self harm and attempted suicide, bereavement, grief and loss, running away, coping as a step parent, poor self esteem, employment and unemployment difficulties, juvenile

criminal offending behaviour, physical and sexual assault, stress, coping with anger and learning to express feelings appropriately, developing parenting skills and just not being able to cope. The problems ranged from the extraordinary to the everyday challenges of loving and caring for teenage children – of giving love, support and affection while also giving guidance and placing appropriate boundaries on them. People also came with a wide range of skills, strengths and good parenting and living skills. Often they just needed support, encouragement and affirmation that what they were doing was right.

Clients were counselled on 533 occasions, with 450 occasions of service at the centres, (Winmalee, Blaxland and East Blaxland) and 83 clients seen at their home or residence (such as refuge or hospital). In terms of outcomes - in 90 per cent of cases there was clearly improved functioning, or the risk of crisis was prevented or reduced, with 7% of cases, the outcomes were not known, (either the clients left the refuge or area, or did not follow up after initial contact). There was much improved functioning in terms of skills, safety or self esteem and functioning. Indeed, people came to counselling with many skills, strengths, and goodwill. They often just needed support, encouragement and affirmation that what they were doing was right, appropriate, or the best they could do in the circumstances to develop those skills, apply them better or use strengths and skills in themselves or their children that they had overlooked.

Referrals came from, and referrals were given to, many other organisations. It was often partnerships in group-work, client support activities or referral that strengthened and supported the individual work I did as a Family Therapist. These included referrals from DOCS, Health, ministers of religion, Family Support, Youth Services, Juvenile Justice, Youth Refuges, Schools and many former clients. These partnerships with external agencies and government departments complemented the internal partnerships that have developed within MYST, and of the development of our identity as a multi-skilled and multi-programmed organisation, and not just as individual workers in separate programs. 51 referrals were received from agencies, and 53 referrals were made to other agencies or programs during the year.

A three page spreadsheet which gives a detailed statistical profile of the services and activities, outputs and outcomes of Lower Mountains Family and Adolescent Counselling during the year is available. The document Service Specs Statistics 2008/2009 details information regarding client profiles of New Referrals, including location, ethnicity, gender; Referrals to other Agencies (total); Referrals Received by Agency (source of

referrals; Referrals Received by Service Type (presenting probs); Clients counselled at Home or Centre (total clients); Agencies Liaised with; Networks/Interagency Meetings Attended; Outcome Measures (For families, filed-down cases); Client Functioning-Outcomes (clients, filed-down cases); Groupwork Program - Outcomes; and Client Support (instances of C/S financial, advocacy, and transport).

I would like to thank Damian Cooper the Manager of MYST, Gillian Smith-Cameron my Clinical Supervisor, and all the members of the Management Committee, especially Dr. Susan Barnes and Noel Hiffernan - for their time, support, hard work and incredible dedication during the year. I would also like to thank Emma Jordan who has been my committee liaison person, for some years, for the and support she has given me over those years, and Tiff Stonestreet who has also worked tirelessly for many years on the Committee. Emma and Tiff, you will be sadly missed. Peter Hurley B.A. (Psych), M. Couns. Family & Adolescent Counsellor

Peter Hurley  
Co-ordinator and Family Counsellor

## Upper Mountains Family and Adolescent Counselling Service

### General Information

From 1 July 2008, the Mountains Youth Services Team, (MYST), took over management of all Upper Mountains Youth Services projects, including the Upper Mountains Adolescent and Family Counselling Service.

The Katoomba Adolescent and Family Counselling Service provides counselling and therapy to young people and their families who reside between Woodford and Mount Victoria. Informal collaborative service provision to young people and their families of community practice with the Lower Mountains Family and Adolescent Counselling Service, is now more formalised because both projects are now auspiced by MYST. The Adolescent and Family Counselling Service, Katoomba, is funded by the NSW Department of Community Services, (DoCS), under the Community Services Grants Programme, (C.S.G.P.). The Katoomba Adolescent and Family Counsellor is a full-time position, supported by the MYST Management Committee.

### Achievements for the Upper Blue Mountains AFC Service

For July 2008 – June 2009 a total of 78 young people and/or their families were referred to the Adolescent and Family Counselling Service.

Of the 78 referrals, from July 2008–June 2009, 52 were female and 26 were male. The trend for a significant increase in the number of males accessing the service decreased significantly from the previous year, where there had been a trend of more young men accessing the service, (41 males to 43 female).

### Referral Sources

41 Self-Referrals  
 10 Schools  
 06 Youth Refuge  
 04 DoCS  
 04 Community Health  
 03 General Practitioners  
 03 Youth Services  
 03 Family Support  
 02 Juvenile Justice  
 02 Women's Refuge

### Age Range

20yrs = 01  
 19yrs = 00  
 18yrs = 08  
 17yrs = 13  
 16yrs = 13  
 15yrs = 07  
 14yrs = 15  
 13yrs = 11  
 12yrs = 07  
 11yrs = 03  
 Total 78

### Problems Presented:

Family Breakdown and Family Conflict (15);  
 Suicidal Ideation and Self Harm (10);  
 Depression (9); Behaviour Problems (6);  
 Physical/Sexual Abuse (5); Anger Management (5); School Problems (5);  
 Anxiety/Adjustment Disorder (4); Peer Relationship Problems (3); Parenting Difficulties (3); Mental Illness: Phobia & Mood Disorder (3); Drug/Alcohol Problems (2); Youth Homelessness (2); Intellectual/Physical Disability (2); Unplanned Pregnancy (1); Domestic Violence (1); Speech Difficulties (1); Degenerative Disease (1).

### Number of Sessions

The total number of face-to-face counselling sessions was 510 counselling sessions and the number of client contact hours, which includes phone support and case planning, was 622 hours.

### Referral Geographic Location

03 x Mt Victoria  
 06 x Blackheath  
 36 x Katoomba;  
 07 x Leura;  
 06 x Wentworth Falls;  
 00 x Bullaburra  
 04 x Lawson  
 05 x Hazelbrook;  
 03 x Woodford  
 08 x Out of Area (3 x Lithgow; 2 x Blaxland; 1 x Oberon; 1 x Buckwadey; 1 x Springwood)

### Clinical Supervision & Staff Appraisal

Brian Cade provided monthly clinical supervision up until May 2009. His ongoing assistance with the successful outcome of challenging case assessment, planning and management is greatly missed since his return to the United Kingdom. Nine two hour sessions of clinical supervision with Brian Cade took place July 2008-May 2009. My new Clinical Supervisor is Peter Blake, Registered Psychologist and Director of the Institute of Child and Adolescent Psychoanalytic Psychotherapy. I studied with Peter Blake when I did my child and adolescent psychotherapy training (1998-2005). He is Tavistock-trained and has recently published a book about his work titled *Child and Adolescent Psychotherapy*, (2009).

### Presentations

- 04 September 2008: Family Therapy Conference, *Experiential Interventions with Couples*.

- 04 November 2008: Mental Health Forum, *Gender Issues for Young Men and Young Women*
- 12 May 2009: Mental Health Forum, *Art Therapy with Adolescents and Families*
- 07 August 2009: Redbank House Lecture Series, Westmead Hospital, *When Words Are Not Enough: Art Therapy with Children, Adolescents and Families*.

### Publications

I have authored two publications in edited books this year. In July 2008, 'Came Back - Didn't Come Home: Returning from a War Zone', was published in Marian Liebmann (ed), *Art Therapy and Anger*, London: Jessica Kingsley Publications, 2008. This is about post-traumatic disorder with a Vietnam veteran and his work with issues of anger during the first three months of our contact.

There is another chapter, more relevant to my work with young people, that is in press with a Canadian publisher, titled 'On the Edge: Contemporary Art Therapy with Transient Youth' in Helene Burt (ed), *Current Trends and New Research in Art Therapy: A Postmodern Perspective*, 2008, WLU Press (Canadian). This chapter addresses the integration of two family therapy models, solution-focused brief therapy and narrative therapy, in my work with young people.

I have also reviewed three books for *Psychotherapy in Australia Journal*, all published by Jessica Kingsley Publishers: *Art Therapy and Clinical Neuroscience* co-edited by Noah Hass-Cohen and Richard Carr (2008); *Art Therapy and Anger* edited by Marian Liebmann, (2008); *Art Therapy Techniques and Application* by Susan Buchalter (2009).

### **Acknowledgements**

It has been a successful merge with Mountains Youth Services Team (MYST), on 1 July 2008. The Adolescent and Family Counselling Service is grateful to MYST Management Committee and the Manager, Damian Cooper, for a smooth transition of service provision, for their time and commitment, and for their support for the project for the last year. The AFC Service wishes to particularly acknowledge the time and commitment of Damian Cooper and Peter Hurley throughout this year.

We thank the Department of Community Services for their support, particularly Deb Dare, Community Programme Officers and Robyn Cole, Director for Partnerships and Planning.

Finally, it is important to mention the clients of the AFC Service. The young people and their families who have accessed the service this year have worked hard to effect change and struggled with difficult issues and challenges in their personal lives. Each year, young people and their families continue to educate and stimulate service provision through service evaluation and verbal feedback.

Annette Coulter  
Adolescent and Family Counsellor  
Clinical Family Therapist and Registered  
Art Psychotherapist

# Youth Support Service

## Introduction

This year has been a very busy year, however always very rewarding. In the last year it has been continuation and strengthening of the existing programs as well as the individual and family work. This year has seen new programs such as 'Rock & Water', 'Drumbeat', year 12 'Stressless' and 'Understanding Anger' at Blacktown College Lawson and 'Friends For Life' or year 6 students at NKP. There have been some unexpected outcomes as well as some highlights, which will be discussed in the following report.

There has been some challenges regards high risk Young People and their needs through the Blacktown College, Families and individual referrals from DoCS. Also, challenges have included work ranging from Blaxland to Blackheath involving lots of kilometres and the time involved to meet the demand and the pressures of juggling group work in schools and Family work scattered throughout the Mountains.

## Highlights

Introducing 'Drumbeat' a to the North Katoomba year 7 boys and 'Friends for Life'

for the year 6 girls they have responded enthusiastically and have been keen to learn and keen to play in the Transition to High School Drama Program at Katoomba High. The introduction of a mentoring aspect to the 'Little Saints' involving year 9 boys from Katoomba High has been a positive experience for both groups of boys. The experience has prepared the Year 6 boys well for High School as concerns such as bullying; getting lost at

school and how they would be treated by teachers, could be aired and addressed and they got to meet 9 Year 9 boys and play some games with them. The whole program at North Katoomba has benefitted from extra training from Dan and I building on from our experiences from last year. We followed last years' boys from the Transition to High School program and looked at areas that the boys needed to develop such as relationships and working with others.



Some comments from these years' boys about the program have included that they have learnt to:

- Have discussions
- Follow rules
- Be open with people
- Get along with others
- Solve problems

- Deal with conflict better
- Control my anger better
- Express myself through music
- Make friends
- Keep friends

As well as, seeing the huge smile on the face of one of the boys in the group being complimented for his role in the production says a lot. He is a boy from a very dysfunctional family and that experience affects his self esteem enormously, to the point that he had shared with the school counsellor that he didn't want to be a part of it at all. But because of the strong working relationship built up at the school over a number of years (lots of respect to Maggie) we worked together with this young man and he now has the role of beginning the whole show with his call.

Other highlights for me have included developing a strong working relationship at the Blacktown Youth College Lawson where I have been running weekly groups on issues such as self esteem, understanding anger, drugs and alcohol and

sexual health. There has also been the opportunity for some other ongoing support outside of the classroom, to a group of young people very at risk of missing out on any education and getting caught up in the legal system.

My work with young people and their families has also developed through offering some ongoing support that can take place in their homes, sometimes involving some straight forward needs being sorted out such as helping a parent

and teenager to understand each other more or more complex issues that require more support such as helping a young person find some ways to deal with a drug or alcohol abusing parent or carer.

It has been a challenging year but one where I feel I have further developed some skills and learnt some new ones, the learning part is sure to continue for some time yet, and I have appreciated the on going support of my supervisor Rolf Reed, who set up the AFC position in the upper mountains and knows the territory well

I cannot under estimate the family and individual work that I do. To simply buy a pair of shoes for a young indigenous boy or send YP who were at-risk to a leadership conference means so much to me in terms of the work I do, little thing seem to make a big difference.



One of the highlight for Maggie this year is again the THS program (Now in its fifth year) has gone from strength to strength, this year having an enhancement to the program, this being a THS Community Art Exhibition which was well received from

the larger community. However, the importance of this is yet another teacher (Art teacher), creating more familiarity and sense of belonging to their high school before they start. This year has also given the year 6 students extra time at Katoomba High to rehearse their Drama piece with the year 9 students which again gives them extra familiarisation to the students already their. Also this year the students had solid lessons at their school with their year advisor for next year and music lessons at their school with the high school

Music Teacher. The 'Friends for Life' program was introduced to the year 6 girls at KNP in third term, the focus was about looking forward and dealing with their current issues again building their confidence for their future goals in life. This year has seen a very comprehensive program for the students making their THS.

I have attended TAFE one day a week this year as part of the crisis support I give to the students there. There are a considerable number of at-risk young people at TAFE, these are the YP that have dropped out of school. This year I was asked by TAFE to organise visits from various services to attend the year 10 class to introduce themselves and to talk about what their services do. This not only informed the students of what services are

available to them, it also served as a learning tool as part of an assignment towards their education. Anna and I also ran a young woman's pregnancy support group, bringing in relevant services that gave information and services they may need to attend post baby.

Anna and I were asked to run a 'Stressless' group for yr12 students (a first for MYST) at Blaxland High, the idea behind the program was concerns that some of the students may drop out. I was actually surprised at how at-risk these students were, some having huge issues at home, dealing with impending homelessness and so on.

Thanks  
Jim & Maggie

# Lower Mountains Youth Project

We must be doing something right since our occasions of service have doubled since last year's RoA. I would put it down to a more mobile team of workers and more varied programs and activities. In short, I think we're attracting a more diverse range of young people to the service than last year by focusing on promotion and community involvement more than case work - there is still however an ever increasing need for case workers we can refer our young people to.

## Ski Trip

4 young people from the Lower Mountains Youth Project attended the 2009 Ski Trip along with 16 other young people from the Mountains. Participants reported that the ski trip 'was awesome' and were eager to attend next year if places were available.

## Blaxland High School young women's group

The Better Choices Program has been progressing well over the past 12 months with 2 groups being facilitated at Blaxland High. Many participants reported an increased capacity to make better decisions in their lives in relation to anger management, conflict resolution and many other areas covered in the program.

## Blaxland High School young men's group (Anger management)

Despite constantly fluctuating participation in this group, we can really see a difference in the behaviour and attitudes of the young men who have been a part of it. Several of these young men are now also connected with other services as a result of being referred from this group.

## Sexual Health Week

Although controversial, the 8-foot, blue condom our young people built out of chicken wire and papier mache in the park on the main street of Springwood during this year's sexual health week celebration was a great success. With more than 100 young people from the local area passing through speaking with sexual health service workers from The Warehouse and the local newspaper The Blue Mountains Gazette publishing an interview with Nick, we couldn't have had a better day for promoting sexual health awareness.



## Cirquinox

The local circus festival asked us to run a BBQ which was a good chance to meet a lot of young people we don't usually get the chance to connect with. We also had a few young people come along with us to help run the BBQ so they had a chance to make some new friends and get involved in an unfamiliar scene.

## BMSAC Big Day Out Artworks

Blue Mountains Street Art Collaborative really gained momentum after our first major commissioned work for LoveWorks, an organisation who run the 'chillout space' at the Sydney Big Day Out. 10 of our

young aerosol artists got to go to the Big Day Out for free thanks to their artistic contributions to the space and I think having their work really appreciated in a semi-professional context has greatly improved their own sense of the legitimacy of their work.

### **2 New 'Youth Outreach' Workers**

Using casual staff has allowed us to greatly increase the number of young people the service is connecting with as well as increasing the cross over between locations and services.

### **Conflict Resolution Forum & Stencil Art Workshops**

In collaboration with the Blue Mountains Women's Health Centre, we ran a series of stencil art workshops in Springwood which explored concepts of conflict resolution. The art works were then displayed at Katoomba Youth Centre during the Conflict Resolution forum which was a great success, with around 50-60 young people huddled into the centre all discussing issues of conflict in their communities. There were some great ideas and concerns which were then raised at a meeting with local police.



### **Winmalee Skate Park Opening**

The Winmalee Skate Park Opening was held with the support of BMCC and attracted large numbers of young people from all

over the Blue Mountains. A sausage sizzle was provided on behalf of MYST that was greatly appreciated by many young skaters, their families and members of the community. The event provided an opportunity for the Lower Mountains Youth Workers to familiarise themselves with young skaters from the Winmalee Community and beyond.

### **Winter Magic Youth Safe Space**

The youth safe space at this year's winter magic festival had around 30 young people come through but we were expecting more. Whilst our concern was being available for intoxicated or stranded young people more than as a side attraction, it was difficult to gauge how many of the young people at the festival knew about us. We hope that with momentum the youth safe space will become better known over time.

### **Youth Events Team**

This year proved difficult to get young people to commit to developing youth music events. Despite plenty of enthusiasm in the conceptual stages of managing events, most of the work came down to the commitment of youth workers and other members of the community. Next year we will need to put more effort into finding young people outside our core groups who are willing to commit to managing events.



Nick Margerison & Anna Williams  
Youth Development Workers

# Youth Recreation Service

2008-09 was another very fulfilling year at MYST. Thanks to all involved with MYST, especially my colleagues – who constantly teach and inspire me! And also to the Young People who inspired me to be doing what I do in the first place! The camps I will remember for a lifetime, the paperwork will be but momentarily painful!

Here is a summary of 2008/09:

## Outdoor Explore (OE):

OE has involved courses at Katoomba and Blaxland High Schools, and has continued to be a valuable service of the Youth Recreation Project. As well as the in term outdoor recreation days, it now includes the provision of a follow up Rock and Water Course and a three day adventure camp in term 4.

Interesting fact – Choosing a good quality Mayo has made 2 OE Sandwiches a week much more appetising!

## Transition to High School Programs:

MYRP has been involved in numerous transition programs at North Katoomba Public School (NKPS):

1. “Drama Transition Project” – Year 6 at NKPS: Partnership with MYSP and KHS.
2. “Little Saints” – Year 6 Boys Group at NKPS: A partnership program with MYSP – Jim Wood. The program has successfully incorporated the ‘Rock and Water’ program.
3. Transition to High School BBQ
4. Transition to HS Mural.

## Camps:

4 camps or extended trips have been organised by the MYRP in 08/09, in partnership with other organisations.



1. Snow Camp: - To Selwyn Snow Fields. 20 Young people attended. 3 nights, 4 days. 7 services represented by workers and Young People. (Full report/evaluation completed)
2. BHS Outdoor Explore Camp - Wollemi National Park. Including Hiking, canoeing and team building activities. This was a partnership in planning and organization between MYRP and TAFE Outdoor Recreation Department Students. (Stats – 3 Days, 2 nights. 4 Young People).
3. KHS Outdoor Explore Camp – Wollemi National Park. Jarrod and I led 7 OE participants on a three day adventure, sleeping in caves and walking into some wild off track areas.
4. Surf Trip: - To Warri Beach, Gerringong and Seven Mile Beach. 16 Young People Attended. 4 services represented by young people and workers.



**Other Programs facilitated/supported:**

1. Support Better Choices Program:  
Multiple day outings and referrals for my camps.
2. Blue Mountains City Council's Holiday Programs Grant: It was a very successful year with all funds being well used over 13 different programs. I wrote to BMCC to request more funding but unfortunately the request was denied.
3. Winter Magic Youth Event:
4. Rock and Water Group at Hazelbrook Public School (after hours)
5. Sexual Health Week Sleepover at UMYC
6. Staff Canoe day

**Equipment:**

1. Removed lift from van and install tow ball.
2. UHF radios

**Training Attended:**

1. Mountain Bike Guide Qual.
2. Remote Area First Aid Qual
3. 'Suicide Intervention assistance' Course
4. Rock and Water Course

Kind Regards,  
Daniel Lyons

# Upper Mountains Youth Project

## **Better Choices**

The Better Choices continues to be a strong and rewarding program for both participants and facilitators Wendy Brown and Maggie Kuypers. This year has seen over 30 young women participate in the Better Choices group. Some of the outcomes where; a 15 year old who learnt to control her anger and stop storming out of class. A 16 year old transition from engaging in serious risk taking behaviour to getting a job and saving up money to buy her self a new phone and new clothing.

## **Little Angels**

This year saw the start of a new collaborative group between Wendy and Maggie at North Katoomba Primary School. The group is 10 young girls from year 5-6 who have been identified by the school as needing extra support with their schooling. We are running the friends for life program with this group which equips the young women with skills for dealing with many aspects of their personal and school lives. This group has been a great success and a delight to run.

## **Outdoor Explore**

During the 2008-2009 year Out Door Explore program has remained both cohesive and productive. The program was run in term 3 of 2008 and terms 1 and 2 of 2009 as well as the Camp in term 4 2008. The term 4 camp through the Wollimi National park was a clear highlight. The 3 day hike took in many

beautiful sites including Gooches Canyon and the Dunbarro River and all overnight camps took place in caves. Despite unreliable numbers during term 1 2009 due to external circumstances Out Door Explore has continued to facilitate meaningful change in the participants lives.

## **BMSAC**

Blue Mountains Street Art Collaborative (BMSAC) is a collective of young Blue Mountains artists led by MYST staff (Jarrod Wheatley and Nick Margerison) with the primary aim of coordinating large scale, legal public and private art works. BMSAC is a new program running since January 2009. During that time BMSAC has completed a number of projects including murals for Blue Mountains City Council, The Rural Fire Brigade and the Big Day Out festival. This program has a bright future and hopes that through development of legal avenues for aerosol art BMSAC will help validate the place of young people in our community foster a healthy creative outlet for youth and build positive relationships between young people and the greater community.

## **BMJET**

To Open Youth Week on the 28th of March the Upper Mountains BMJET team successfully ran the "Youth Rock Gig" at the Baroque Bar (Carrington Hotel Katoomba). Approximately 100 young people and volunteers attended the event. It was a highly rewarding and

successful gig with massive amounts of positive feedback been given from both Carrington staff and young people alike.

### **Home-work program**

This year we started a Homework program facilitated by Julia Strykowski. This program offers free homework support weekly to our clients by a qualified high school teacher. Julia is proving to be excellent at working with clients who in the past have had very little positive support in their schooling. Moreover the project is proving to be highly valuable to the youth of UMYP.

### **Job search program**

IN 08/09 UMYP ran a trial of a 'job search' program. This project offered free job search guidance and support for young people between 15-25 years, was running on a Thursday afternoons from 1-3pm. This was a partnership project with Campbell Page employment. Wendy and her co facilitator Graham Rand from Campbell Page employment, were running the program to meet individual clients needs. This project started well in the first few weeks but interest seemed to dwindle after this despite on going advertising.

### **WSASS**

Jarrold and I would like to formally thank Damian for all his hard work in securing us the WSASS funding for our new kitchen. We cannot begin to express the difference this is going to make to not only the centre, but to the lives of our young people. One of the core principles we try to instil in our clients is the importance of good nutrition. Being able to have a work space that is more cohesive with this message and allow us

to run nutrition work shops is mind blowing. So thanks again Boss Man.

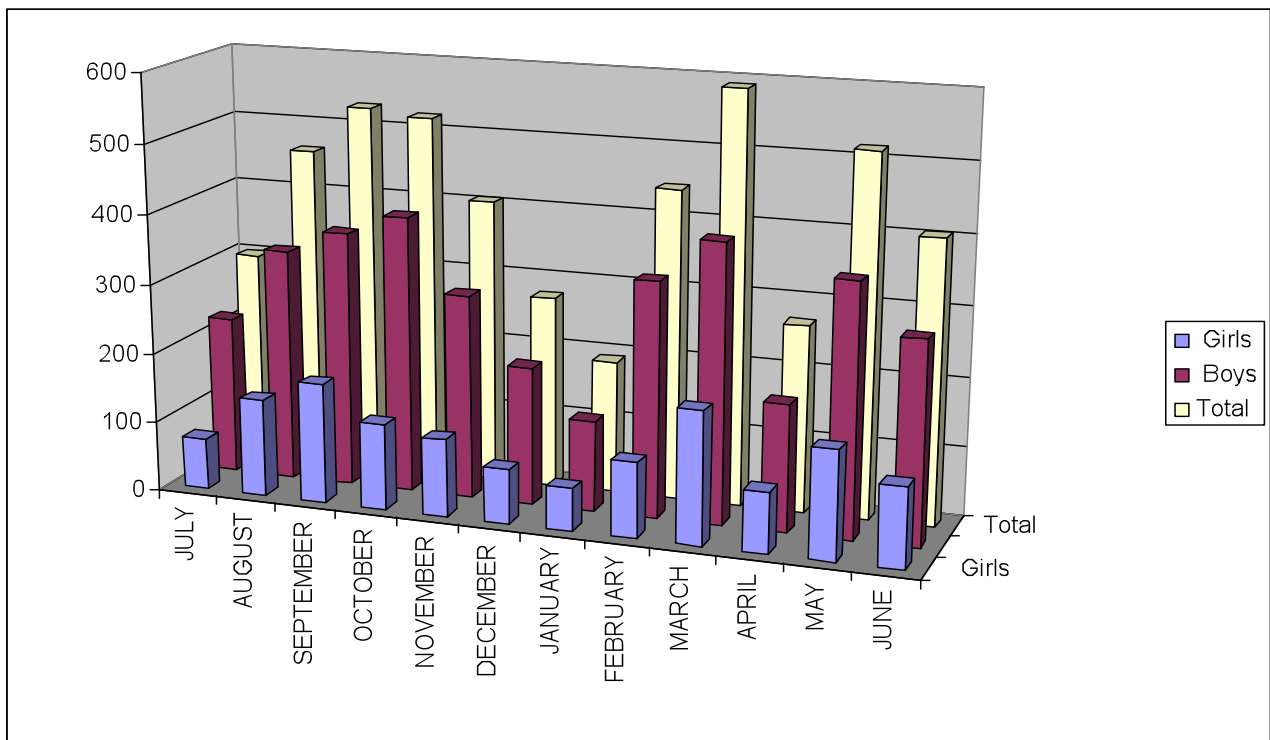
### **Tree removal**

As a direct result of a culmination of networking and co-operation UMYP now has a blank canvas on which it can build a backyard. With BMCC removing over 40 trees and bushes from our block we now have a space that we can work with. This is a source of much excitement to our clients and staff.

Continued ...

**Drop-in**

Drop-in continues to act as a vital first contact point for youth at risk within our community. The long-term worker combination of Jarrod and Wendy is continuing to offer a stable environment for the clients at UMYP. We feel that this is reflected in not only the number of clients accessing the centre, but in the level of support and relevant referrals we provide.



Wendy Blanchard and Jarrod Wheatley  
 Youth Development Workers