

29th April, 2009.

Dear School Counselor/Team Coordinator.

I am writing to seek your support in assisting the Foundation to be able to provide our program to as many young people as possible.

Over the past three years we have found that we have had to turn away an increasing number of teams from schools and institutions as we have not had enough places to handle the increase. We have been unable to increase the number of places for young people for a number of reasons. The two primary reasons have been a lack of funds and the other a lack of team leaders. We have over the past three years increased our sponsor support base and so have now more funding to enable us to increase the program. We have increased our recruitment of team leaders also and so this year took the decision to increase the number of teams from 36 per year to 40. This has enabled us to fill some of the increase in demand but we still have had to turn a number of teams away. We will review the position towards the end of 2009 to develop a course of action for 2010 and beyond. You will appreciate that this is great news and indicates that the agencies who refer young people to our program believe that it serves a useful purpose in resolving issues with the young people at risk.

Unfortunately there has been a number of occasions recently where teams having booked a position on the program, pull out generally with three weeks or less notice. There have been genuine reasons involving sickness and illness however we are often told that "We can't make this one but put us down for the next trip." Some Team Coordinators are then somewhat taken aback when they are told that it is not that easy and that they won't be on the next exercise.

The actual cost of sending a team of 10 young people on an exercise is \$15,000 or \$1500 per participant. When a team pulls out and we can't find a team to fill in, it means that it not only costs the Foundation \$15,000 but also means that 10 young people who would benefit from the program miss out. Those of you who have raised money for a cause will know it is becoming increasingly difficult to raise charity funds and for us to raise \$15,000 and then see it wasted is very frustrating. It is often argued that if we don't have a team then it doesn't cost us anything. This isn't correct as we contract our staff usually 6 months in advance so that they can take leave and our rations are ordered at least 6 weeks before each exercise and can't be sent back.

I am therefore seeking your support in this matter. If you don't have the resources to provide two counselors for a team of 10 or one counselor for a team of 5 young people then don't apply. From a risk management point of view we can't take teams who can't supply the required number of counsellors. If you have applied and the situation at your organisation has changed either with sickness, illness or transfers please talk with us as soon as you become aware of the situation, don't leave it to the last minute so that we can't find a replacement team. If having applied for a position on an Exercise and you see an issue looming please speak to our Operations and Logistics Manager on 82424688 and discuss the matter please.

We really appreciate the support we get from our schools and supporting organisations and understand the enormous amount of effort that our team coordinators have to put into getting a team up to the Flinders Ranges. We would however, seek your assistance if you could help us in saving money but also ensuring that as many young people as possible fill the available places each year.

We would appreciate any feedback on this issue and I am sure you will give us your support in this matter.

Kind Regards

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Executive Director

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