scriptureunion
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THE ADVENTURE

YOUR SCRIPTURE UNION MAGAZINE
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INSIDE:

SUPAkidz - connecting kids to Christ in our schools

SUPA kidz
Scripture Union Primary Adventures

OUR VISION:

SEEING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TRANSFORMED BY JESUS

"Break Open Your Words, Let The Light Shine Out" Psalm 119:130 The Message

EDITORIAL FEBRUARY 2012

Let's face it, the statistics and stories about child abuse and neglect in New Zealand are appalling. For a country that is part of the developed world we are not doing well in caring for some of our most vulnerable. Homes and families that ought to provide sanctuary and safety too often become dangerous places lacking security.

But that is not the whole picture. Most of the people I see around the local school and taking their kids to swimming pools and the beach this summer, the ones I encounter in the library, the dairy and on bike trails, obviously care about their children deeply. The reality is that the majority of our children are in safe and healthy environments.

On a beach in Wales towards the end of the 19th century Josiah Spiers and his university student friends did something quite radical for their day. They gathered children together and told them the good news of the gospel, in ways and words that they would understand. What is more they believed that children could actually make a genuine and personal response to that message. The prevailing wisdom of the time was that only when a person reached adulthood could they make any sort of serious faith commitment. In this way Josiah and others who shared this conviction gave dignity to children and challenged others to show them respect and value too. We are committed continuing that attitude, advocating for children in churches where faith is informed, and in families and on school grounds where faith is formed and tested.

As a team we have a vision. We believe Scripture Union has a unique opportunity to travel with a young person through the stages of their faith from primary age through secondary years and onto leadership opportunities. Faith is a journey, a series of decisions and experiences that lead steadily to transformation and maturity. Whether we are working with children from home environments that put them at risk, or that big group of families who are just doing their best, an encounter with Jesus makes a difference.

In the pages of this Adventure you will read stories and see examples of how we are working out our vision and convictions. Our team is working with churches, in training events, in schools and on camps, and young people are discovering and following Jesus, lives are being transformed. Schools are open and the opportunities are only limited by the teams of people from local churches that we can equip and encourage to be involved in mission in their own communities. Join with us on the journey.

Wayne Fraser
National Director

Photos from the Wellington SUPAkidz "Going Bananas" Camp Summer 2012

A Strange Land

Daily I become more aware of the need to "sing the Lord's song in a strange land."

The opportunities and challenges for mission in New Zealand are huge. Most people know little of Jesus' love in our land.

When "How shall we sing the Lord's song?" was first asked 2500 years ago it was a lament. The question implied it was too hard! It is still relevant. So what was the Lord's song?

Deuteronomy 6:4-7 NIrV says "Israel, listen to me. The LORD is our God. The LORD is the one and only God. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. Love him with all your strength. The commandments I give you today must be in your hearts. Make sure your children learn them..."

Many of us have prayed and lamented over the question of how to reach the children and families in our communities or singing the Lord's song in our strange land, yet we ignore the place where the majority of our community's children are – the schools.

It is an absolute pleasure to start up a new SUPAkidz Club and walk alongside a leadership team as they take up the challenge and step out in faith.

The bright sparkle in the eyes of children and leaders as we worked together receiving and sharing the Lord's Song in our 'strange land' will be my lasting impression of 2011.

Raewyn Rowney
Children and Families Worker (Wellington)

Children in Society

Here in New Zealand there are many children are living sad lives shaped by poverty and abuse. We have seen this in the series of terrible statistics that have come out in the last few years. We have heard it in news articles about the deprivation and damage individual children have faced. We have felt it in many of the children we meet in SUPAkidz.

We can debate what needs to be done at a structural and political level; we can talk about approaches to parenting. The issues are complex and it is right to discuss them deeply and carefully. But these ongoing discussions must not distance us from the problem - there are a group of vulnerable children who are caught up in circumstances beyond their control and who are suffering. And many of these children know little or nothing about how much God loves them.

God has been speaking to me about these children. He's pointed out the story of the Good Samaritan in Luke 10:2-37, and he's been asking me if I will care for them in the same way that the Good Samaritan cared for his neighbour. -The Good Samaritan who crossed the road to see what had happened and picked the man up, dressed his wounds and took him to a safe place; the Good Samaritan who showed a deep and counter-cultural commitment that cost him time and energy and money.

And God has also reminded me that as I care for these children, Christ is present in them. As Mother Teresa said "Christ is hidden under the suffering appearance of anyone who is hungry, naked, homeless, or dying."

So what will I do to help these children?

To be honest I'm not entirely sure yet. But I do know I need to do something and soon.

Is there something you could do too? How could God use you to extend love to the children around you? How can you show his love to children who are living difficult and unhappy lives - children who know little or nothing about him?

I'd like to ask you to pray with me and actively seek for a God-centred and compassionate response for these children. God has a special place in his heart for them.

Hilary Hague

Support Our SUPAkidz Field Workers

Paul Dadd

Paul is a key worker training and resourcing the many volunteers who run SUPAkidz clubs in Auckland. He first came to New Zealand from his home in Deal, UK as an Action Abroad intern. He so impressed senior staff that he was invited back to come and work with us.

Paul's main role is to help train, resource and support the many volunteers who run SUPAkidz clubs in Auckland. Paul is passionate in helping churches get involved in their local primary schools, and to share God's love with children, many of whom may never walk through the doors of our church buildings. As well as clubs, Paul is involved in running Scripture Union's children's ministry training conferences, WAY2GO, and our more local, tailored training days called WAY2GO Focused. He also works with individual churches to support them in running high quality children's activities. This year Paul is adding the SURGE Intermediate ministry to his role. He is excited to commence ministry with this crucial age group.

Paul, having come from the UK, does not have the natural support base of many of our workers. **We need another $12,500 per annum (24 people giving $10 per week) to balance the books.** Please fill in the form in the covering letter to help with this need.

Raewyn Rowney

Raewyn is one of our star field workers. Raewyn provides input into the lives of 750 Children's Leaders, 50 school club volunteers and 370 primary aged children every year. Yet through all of this her relational heartbeat is for the children one at a time. She is truly committed to transforming lives.

There are now 11 SUPAkidz clubs in the Wellington area attended by about 370 children. Raewyn works with more than 50 voluntary leaders as they work with children in their local communities. Raewyn regularly trains many new volunteers and is working intentionally to develop new clubs in the Wellington region. She also helps organise and run the WAY2GO conferences.

A volunteer reported "Raewyn has been instrumental in enabling us to set up, and maintain a children's program at our local school. Raewyn has proven to be a source of inspiration, never failing to find us more helpers, and helping us to continue to improve our content. I am pleased to say, our program is one of the most popular offered at our school."

We are seeking financial support to cover the ongoing salary and costs for Raewyn. **We need 45 people giving $10 a week. It is a real team effort. Will you be part of the team?** Please fill in the form in the covering letter to help with this need.

By supporting this position, you will be partnering with us to see children in the Wellington region transformed by Jesus.

Paul Martell - Relationship Manager

Is It True?

What an incredible privilege it has been over the past month to share the Christmas story, as we find it in the Bible, at various venues. "God has a plan" was the theme. I began by asking where they thought Christmas began (3 choices). Most chose Bethlehem, a few didn't know, a few chose Heaven. I wanted children to see that God's plan started way before Jesus being born in Bethlehem and that it continues today in people's homes and lives. Then we looked at how God used angels and a star to communicate this wonderful news with the world. God's plan is for everyone, everywhere and the star and angel remind us of that.

I ended my assemblies by saying that there are some people who think that Christmas is just a made up story, but that I knew it was true. How? Well every time I write the date on a letter it reminds me that time is divided between before Christmas and after Christmas.

I received this email from a SUPAkidz club leader who was at an assembly. "One small girl came to me later and asked "Was it true? Was the story the man told actually true?" and I was able to assure her that the wonderful Christmas story was completely true."

Andrew Ramsbottom
Auckland Children & Families Worker

Wakari School SUPAkidz club

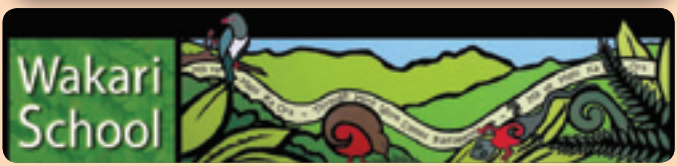
We have just finished our 6 week programme 'Connect Up' at Wakari school Dunedin and our FIRST whole year! Yay! It has been a great privilege to be in the school with a keen team of leaders and 35 children enrolled with an average of 22 each week.

Children come with their lunches to the hall where we supervise them and chat before starting the programme. We have 15 minutes to chat about how the children's day is going, news etc before starting a game. 30 minutes is SOOO fast so 'Keep it simple' and 'Remember it's about relationships' are 2 key things we tell ourselves often. We try to have a game, song, Bible story, prayer and craft each week.

We will never shorten or compromise the Bible story sharing time. Also we are trying some more creative prayer ideas. We have divided the children into 4 colour groups and they sit with those leaders for lunch, often for games and for the crafts. This emphasis on groups also helps us get to know each other better in such a short time.

One of the thrills on the last week was to hear one boy pray: 'Thank you God for the community of SUPAkidz that we are part of!' It was worth the wrestle! Lives are being changed!

Nigel Winder
Southland/Otago Children & Family Director



Northern News

Summer Thanksgiving Barbeque

People Make It Happen

Summer Camps Thanksgiving Barbecue

Meet Wayne Goodchild,
(North Island Camps Facilitator)
and the many people who 'make camps happen'
cooks, secretaries, team members, donors,
prayer partners – and campers!

17 February 2012, 6.30-9pm
Greyfriars Presbyterian Church
544 Mt Eden Rd, Mt Eden

Suggested donation - $10 for the meal

Please RSVP your attendance to
Scripture Union Auckland
by Wednesday 15 February
Phone 397 9363 (ext#0) or email
info.auckland@scriptureunion.org.nz

Sylvia Coulter
Auckland Regional Director

Southern News

2011 - Massive!
Quakes, floods, snow, drought… "Mother Nature" has thrown everything at the south in 2011, yet "Father God" has remained in control and faithful. Volunteers, supporters and staff have endured tough economic times, uncertainty, changes, sadness, loss, sickness and exhaustion, yet have remained faithful and dedicated to their calling of making God known.

Through Scripture Union ministries in 2011…
We celebrate God's hand in all the people trained, resourced and encouraged.
We thank God for children and young people choosing to follow Him and change the way they live for Him.
We thank God for the hope and love he gives us to share.
May 2012 be even more MASSIVE!

It was a thrill to have a camper from the first SUPAkidz Camp in Southland 2.5 years ago come into the Southern Office this week with his mum and 2 friends to register for a summer camp. As they spread themselves around the small space to fill in forms these young people were like a breath of fresh air with their unmasked excitement, exuberant chatter and eager anticipation of going on camp. Buried in administration at the time we were humbly reminded that this is what it is all about. If they were to walk through our door in another 2.5 years, we wonder how they will be different as a result of being on camp? WATCH THIS SPACE!!!

Nigel Winder
Southern Regional Director

Waikato News

Waikato Supporters Appreciation Dinner
Early in December 60 people from around Hamilton and the Waikato were hosted by Graham Fullerton for the Annual Supporters Appreciation Dinner. Jeanette and Noel Houghton and their team provided a great meal and during which we heard reports from students from the Christian Groups in Hamilton Schools, and Campers who had attended some of our Winter and Spring Camps.

Waikato Members of Parliament, David Bennett and Tim McIndoe both briefly attended and Tim gave thanks for the meal, and in so doing he also led us in the Parliamentary Prayer. Thank you Tim.

Wayne Goodchild our North Island Camps Facilitator came with his wife Cheney and baby Flynn. It was great to meet them for the first time. Judy Bennett, Youth Worker for Hamilton and Waikato shared about her work and Ben Febery Camps Working Group Leader told us about the Summer Camps coming up. We learned that there were 15 Summer Camps planned and that 7 of these are to be held in the Waikato.

Guest Speaker for the evening was Neville Bartley Scripture Union's National Youth Ministry Leader. Neville shared some of his hopes and dreams for Scripture Union's ministry to the Children and Young People that we have in New Zealand today and challenged us to continue to be involved in seeing lives transformed by Jesus and that they become followers of Jesus.

Graham Fullerton
Waikato Regional Committee Chair

Staff and Volunteer News

Jenny Mackey

Scripture Union AGM last year, Youth Camps Team Leader Jenny Mackie was awarded the Edith Taylor award for service to Scripture Union. We asked her about her commitment and passion to the movement.

How did you get started with SU?
I was invited by a family friend to attend a Happy Valley Horse riding camp when I was 12. I discovered horses and I weren't compatible but still enjoyed the camp. The following year I went with a group of friends from church to a Ponui Girls Camp and the rest, they say, is history. (My very earliest memory is reading the Simon & Sarah books at family devotions, published by SU in the early 1970s).

How long have you been involved with SU camping and in what capacity?
For 30 years (gulp), as a camper, group leader, camp director and Camps Working Group member. Apart from that one horse riding camp, all my camp involvement has been on Ponui Island, although my CWOG role has seen me helping run training events at various locations in the North Island.

Why are you passionate about camping?
Because of the impact camps have had on my own life. It was at my first Ponui camp that I asked Jesus to be Lord of my life, and through serving on camps that I have grown in my faith and as a person. I've seen the same journey occurring in others' lives. Camps get teenagers away from the distractions of life into God's creation where God speaks into their lives. Some teenagers may hear all about God at church, but it's often at camps where the head knowledge hits the heart.

Heather Zwies – Camps Administrator Invercargill
On Tuesday 3rd January Heather's husband Ivan was involved in an accident on his quad bike. He is in serious condition at Southland hospital and has undertaken major surgery. Please pray for his recovery—which is expected to take some time.

Rebekah Smith – Field Staff - Nelson
Rebekah has had her angioplasty to the Jugular Veins in her neck. We will let you know the impact of this procedure on the symptoms of her MS in the next Adventure.

Jonathan Swan – Communications Manager - Wellington
Jonathan has resigned from his role from the 3rd February. We wish him God's blessing as he moves on and are thankful for his input into Scripture Union over the last two years.

You can make a secure online donation at
www.scriptureunion.org.nz or freephone **0508 423 836**.
Or respond on the enclosed form.

LIGHT FOR THE PATH

Guest Writer: **Annette Osborne**
Children and Families Worker

Jesus was relevant.

That might seem like an obvious statement, but it is profound in its simplicity. Recently, I sat on a rock on the shore of the Sea of Galilee. To my left lay the first century village of Capernaum with its black basalt rocks exposed to the harsh sun. Lying among these ruins were millstones, lots of them. Capernaum I discovered was a place where millstones were manufactured.

And Jesus sat there somewhere, maybe under the shade at the edge of the Sea. It was here he used a child to show the disciples what a member of the Kingdom of Heaven looks like. Relevance is using what is around us to make connections for people. So, there he sat, his disciples gathered around him and this precious child. Looking first to the millstones and second to the Sea of Galilee, he utters these words: "If anyone causes one of these little ones—those who believe in me—to stumble, it would be better for them to have a large millstone hung around their neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea" (Matt 18:6). I suspect the disciples remembered that child every time.