

## RYPEN 2015

### **“Effective leaders treat individuals differently but equally”**

John Adair

On the weekend of the 12th of June I went away to a RYPEN camp through the support of Rotary. This camp was designed to reveal leadership in those who are not always standout leaders and to develop the skills necessary to manage a team as a leader. I personally benefited greatly from this camp as I learnt much about leadership and how to use it through a range of seminars, guidance from our mentors and practical activities in which leadership was a necessity for success.

Throughout the camp we were presented with a number of seminars most notably ones on motivation, consequences and seeing the positive in a negative situation. On the first day of



camp we were confronted with the life story of Nick Vujicic who was born without arms and legs. Through his TED talks he revealed with the mental and physical strains that his condition put on him and how a single change in mindset turned his impediment into an advantage. On the second day of camp a seminar on consequences was held where our team mentor Ben Clark told us his story and how it affected his outlook on life. He told us of a near-fatal accident he had when he got into a fight and how his near death experience changed him from someone who thought he was invincible to a person who considers his actions and their possible impacts before taking them. On our last day we learnt about motivation and how it was found within. We were taught about the interrelationship between attitude and results. The presenter, Linton Chalmers, demonstrated the effect of motivation on success by allowing some of our fellow campers to attempt to break boards (karate style). These presentations have helped to develop my understanding of leadership in ways that will allow me to make better judgments, motivate the people around me and look for the positives in negative situations.



During the camp some of the people who had the biggest effect on me were the mentors. Each team was assigned a mentor to lead them through the various challenges that they were confronted with. Two mentors who lead me through my journey were my team leader Ben and the white team's leader Marina. Ben was a great role model for

leadership as he never made us do anything that he wouldn't do himself. He was always prepared to put the team first and help out where it was needed. This made Ben, not only a great person to turn to for help but also a shining example of the leaders this camp was steering us to be. Marina was also a good example to strive for in terms of leadership as she could regularly be found conversing with the campers whom she led. In this camp Marina personified John C. Maxwell's quote; "Leaders must be close enough to relate to others, but far enough ahead to motivate them" through her interaction with me and my peers and ability to inspire us to improve and try harder. This has had a great effect on my understanding of leadership as it has taught me that a good leader needs to be able to understand the needs and experiences of their team.

Throughout the camp my team, the orange team, was quite successful in their endeavors. We won every event, breaking multiple camp records along the way. In my belief, this was a result of good leadership from our mentor Ben and a friendly, hardworking team who were always striving to do their best. Our team was one of the only teams to build up such relationships that we sat together for lunch



rather than dispersing to our other friends. This had a major impact on our performance as a contingent as it enabled us to communicate our ideas to each other and understand each other's perspectives more wholly. This has shown me the importance of a positive environment within a team.

The RYPEN winter camp of 2015 was a great experience as it has allowed me to develop my leadership skills through a range of activities practical and theoretical. I have made many friends through this camp and this has improved my social capabilities. This camp has opened my eyes to a whole new side of leadership and shown me good examples of leaders to follow. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at RYPEN and would gladly recommend it to others.

Daniel Butler