

Chelsea: Good morning members of the Surfers Sunrise Rotary Club! I am Chelsea, and this is Zahra, and we were fortunate enough to have attended RYTS earlier this year, through the sponsorship of this club.

Zahra: RYTS stands for the Rotary Youth Transitional Seminar, and it has the aim of aiding in the transition from one area of study to the next period of one's life. It has had such a large impact on our lives, and we would love to share our favourite experiences with you this morning.

Chelsea: Personally, I enjoyed the challenges and personal growth I underwent during this week-long camp. An activity which I found the most challenging was the army style boot camp. We were woken up at 4.30am to the sound of our camp leaders screaming various commands, including to rush outside and do a wall sit... in our pyjamas! It then went on to challenge both our physical and mental strength for the next TWO HOURS. Whilst it was challenging, this event truly bonded our entire camp, as we all lived through a challenging event in which we had to work together to overcome our own perceived personal limits. The support of everyone who was there was so valuable and I know that this will be an experience that I will never forget.

Zahra: In my opinion, my favourite component of this camp was the people. I have met so many amazing friends and mentors from this camp, all of which I am still in contact with currently. Going into this camp we were told that a day at RYTS was a years' worth of friendship, and I did not truly comprehend this until I experienced it myself. I wholeheartedly believe that RYTS is a beneficial experience in which I would recommend for all teenagers to attend. My camp leader from RYTS, Dan, also happened to be the same camp leader I had when I went to RYPEN last year. I was very fortunate to see a familiar face which truly allowed me to come out of my shell sooner on this camp and to also to continue our companionship.

During this camp, we were also fortunate enough to meet many people who promoted mental health and discussed their own personal battles with these issues. We had visits from many different people, all from different walks of life. The people who we found presented the most moving stories were those from Mirikai.

Chelsea: Mirikai aims at creating a safe environment, separated from the real world, in order to help young people struggling with alcohol and/or drug abuse, whilst also improving their mental health. We got to listen to people who have previously struggled with substance abuse and are currently in recovery. I found their perspectives on life particularly moving as they truly valued being able to live substance free. They were all quite inspirational and showed us that with determination and perseverance, it is possible to achieve your goals. Overall, the RYTS experience was truly amazing, and I am very glad that I had the opportunity to participate in the event. Thank you all so much for your support!

Zahra: Thank you so much for your sponsorship throughout this process. We both truly believe that the lessons we learnt throughout this camp will positively impact our futures. We cannot express our gratitude enough! Thank you for having us here today and thanks again for your support.