

RYLA 2017 - Bickley

RYLA 2017 began as usual with an early meeting at Kings Park where 26 eager participants met the leadership team, boarded the bus and made their way up to the Bickley DSR camp site.

After moving into the dorms, introductions and icebreakers, the group were thrown straight into learning with a session on self responsibility and the Tuckman stages of team formation. After lunch, the sessions continued with a workshop on learning styles and a game highlighting prejudice and discrimination. This "pushed a few buttons" and brought up some interesting discussions.

The daily tutorial groups met for the first time before dinner. These are small groups in which the daily activities are discussed, any issues are aired and further self discovery is made through group activities. These groups become very close during the week and friendships formed often last years.

Sunday's activities included orienteering in the morning which saw small teams brave the heat and natural bush to find 3 hidden plaques each. In the afternoon groups worked together in their first challenge to build a raft out of provided material and race them against another team. It highlighted strengths and weaknesses within the teams and provided welcome relief from the heat. There was also a workshop on maintaining positive energy.

Monday was a very big day with many fears being faced. Firstly the leap of faith (a jump off a very high platform to a trapeze a few meters away) challenged many participants. Another group challenge to build the highest crate tower improved communication amongst the team members. In the afternoon, a session on public speaking pushed more boundaries and the 2 minute presentation about their defining moment created a very special bonding amongst the group.

On Tuesday the groups set off on a hike through the bush to find 3 checkpoints which took most of the day. Teams worked together to navigate, support each other and stay positive on the journey. It was highlight of the camp for many and a turning point for most groups. A night under the stars completed the outdoor adventure.

Wednesday it was back to the "classroom" for goal setting, personal finance and vision boarding workshops. There was also a vertical challenge to give those scared of heights another chance to break through their fear.

On Thursday we headed to Lesmurdie Armana Village for community service. There was some clean up work done outside whilst others sat and chatted or played games with the residents. A morning tea complete with music and singing really made the day for both residents and the RYLA group. Then it was time to prepare for the Rotarian thank you cocktail party. Three teams worked to prepare food, entertainment and decorations for the night. A fourth team worked on a RYLA magazine, a take home reminder of the week.

The Rotary thank you evening went extremely well with the Rotarians being well fed and entertained; a testament to the skills learned during the week. It as a great chance for Rotarians to hear first hand the lessons learned and experiences had by their sponsored participants.

During the week there were also different activities in the evening ranging from salsa dancing on the basketball court to a games nights and a few guest speakers. Each added a different flavour to the camp.

Like all good things, the camp had to come to an end. However we have already seen many meetings taking place through the face book group and know that 26 lives have been touched by this camp.

We would like to thank you for your contribution to the RYLA 2017 camp as it would not take place without clubs such as yours who take the time to find applicants as well as fundraise the required funds.

Kind regards,

Tania and the RLYA team.

