

FINAL REPORT

Two Years of Helping Youth At-Risk

GETTING READY FOR TAKE OFF - PROJECT 2019-2021



JUNE 2021

As at time of this report, 48 participants gained employment, 72 were job ready, with 28 engaged in continuing education.



September 2019: Senator Anne Ruston, Minister for Families and Social Services (centre), and a group of participants officially launched *Getting Ready for Take Off*, a project designed to improve the employment opportunities of young people affected by parental imprisonment.

***“We are funding a range of initiatives
to get Australians back on track
with their education or work goals.”***

Senator Anne Ruston

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PROJECT MANAGER REPORT

In the spirit of Test, Try and Learn we tested, tried and learnt so much about motivating disadvantaged young people affected by parental incarceration, by providing vocational, career and life planning resources. This has kept them from entering the criminal justice system.

When we first embarked on this project, we thought we had considered every possible eventuality, but as we progressed through our formative months, we realised there was so much more to learn about the way youth-at-risk thought and behaved regarding their life and future. We soon learnt more about additional support they needed to overcome their barriers.

At every stage of their journey there were significant lessons and transformation as evidenced at the Awards Night May 14 when more than 40 youth received their Certificates of Achievement.

This report documents the key practical lessons learnt through each of the five stages, participants navigated through to their ultimate goal of job readiness and employment.

We saw dramatic changes in their attitude, behaviour and self-belief as they took each new step. We know hundreds of youth can gain from the long term benefits of this program, keeping them safe and engaged in positive change for the rest of their lives.

At every key stage of the project, we learnt valuable lessons which informed our practice and can be adapted and applied to all future projects aimed at keeping at-risk-youth engaged in the workforce, vocational skill development and giving them opportunities to participate in sport and recreational activities.

***“There is nothing more rewarding
than to empower and support
a young person in finding their purpose
and direction in life.”***

Kim Pienaar, Project Manager



March 2020: An intrepid group of *Getting Ready for Take Off* participants gathered at Woodhouse Activity Centre, Piccadilly, for an outdoor confidence-building retreat.

PROJECT SNAPSHOT

Project: *Getting Ready for Take Off (GRFTO)*

Service Provider: Second Chances SA (SCSA)

Trial Period: April 2019 to June 2021

Project Cohort: Youth and young adults from 13-25 years who have a parent in prison and/or who have been impacted by parental imprisonment, of whom 25% identify as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander.

Project Purpose: To break the generational cycle of welfare dependence and improve the employment opportunities of youth and young adults up to 25 years affected by parental imprisonment.

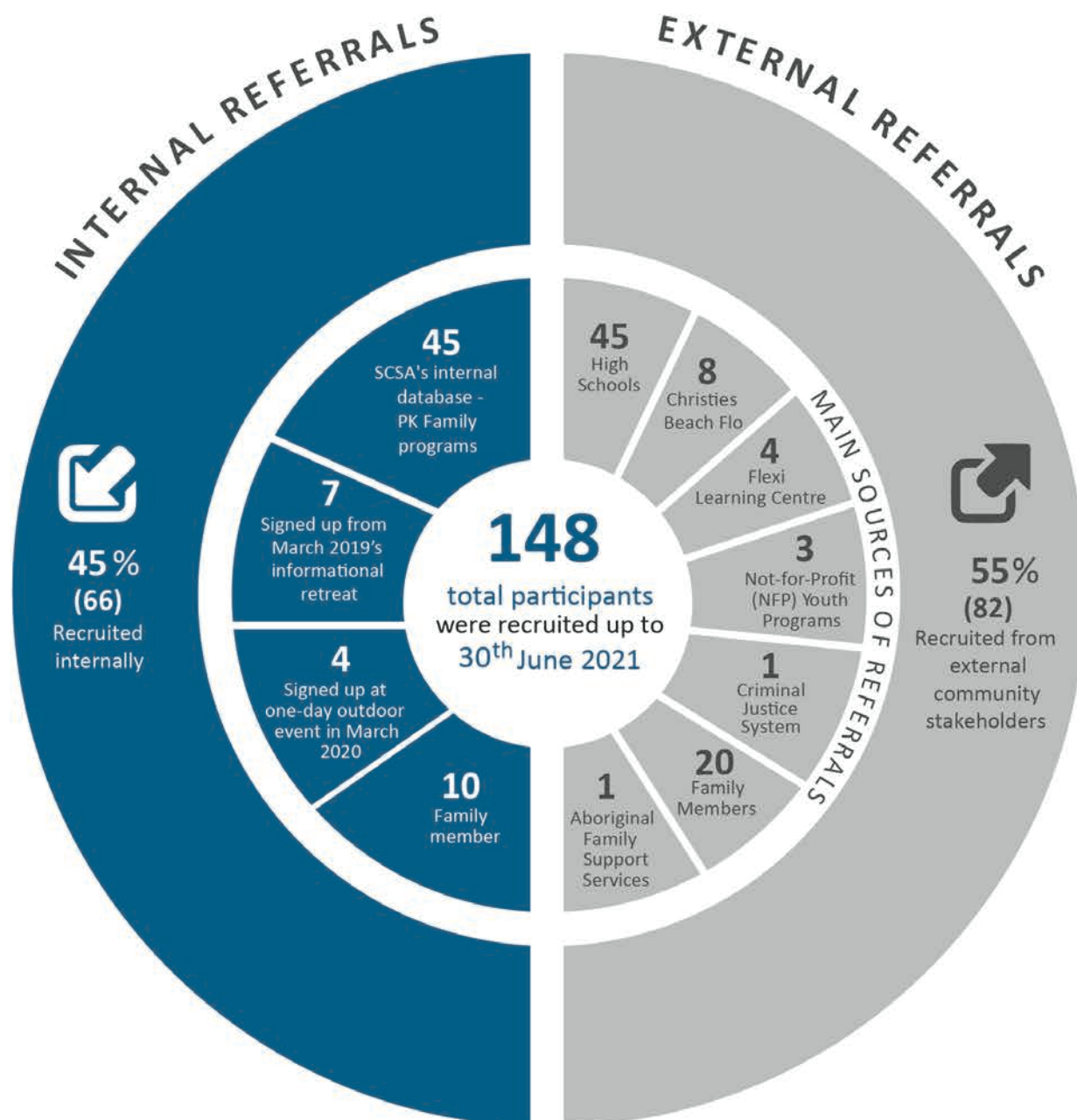
Funded by: Try, Test and Learn Fund (Australian Government Department of Social Services)

Independent Evaluators: Nova Smart Solutions and University of Queensland

PROJECT OUTCOMES SNAPSHOT

48 EMPLOYED	72 JOB READY	28 REMAINED ENGAGED IN SCHOOL
51 Client Support	148 JOINED THE PROGRAM	40 Engaged in sport and recreation
181 CERTIFICATE/ DIPLOMA/UNI ENROLMENTS	38 Workshops day events & camps	45 LEARNER PERMITS/ FULL LICENSE

ENGAGEMENT AND RECRUITMENT SNAPSHOT



As at 30 June 2021

PROJECT OVERVIEW

WHAT THE EVIDENCE TELLS US?

- There are an estimated 44,000 Australian children with a parent in prison.
- In 2018, the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare reported 38% of prisoners have children who depend on them for their basic needs, and 18% of prisoners reported when they were children, one or more parent or carer had been imprisoned.
- Young people whose parent or guardian is in prison or is has been in prison face social stigma and can experience emotional, social and behavioural problems leading to anti-social and criminal behaviour. They often have untreated health issues and may perform poorly at school. Over their lifetime, these youth are more likely to incur high social welfare, justice and health costs.

WHAT WERE WE TRYING TO ACHIEVE?

This project aimed to break the inter-generational cycle of welfare dependency for young people, aged up to 25 years, who have or have had a parent or guardian in prison. We supported participants to develop a vision of their future, including a pathway to employment.

WHAT IS GETTING READY FOR TAKE OFF?

Through *Getting Ready for Take Off*, we sought to improve participants' employability by addressing their barriers to education and employment. The project established two hubs, one in the north and one in the south of Adelaide, where Life Coaches, worked one-on-one with each participant to develop an individualised vocational plan based on their personal ambitions and strengths.

Working with their Life Coach, each participant was encouraged to reach their goals. They were supported to enrol in vocational training with financial assistance, First Aid training, and/or receive literacy and numeracy support at the hub. Each young person participated in group workshops to help develop their self-esteem, problem-solving and decision-making skills. They were also given access to transport to get to the hubs, and training courses, job service providers and training courses.

HOW IS THIS INITIATIVE NEW AND INNOVATIVE?

This project provided valuable evidence about the effectiveness of interventions designed to support a particularly vulnerable group of young people. The project aimed at improving engagement in education, work ready programs and community engagement. It focussed on addressing anti-social behaviour.

The Try, Test and Learn Fund has achieved the objectives of welfare reform—that is, to develop a modern welfare system which increases the capacity of individuals, reduces the risk of welfare dependency and maintains a strong welfare safety net.











PROJECT DELIVERY GEO LOCATION

Two offices have been strategically located, one in the City of Playford (North) and another one in the City of Onkaparinga (South), to fully cover the targeted geographical areas as can be seen in the map below.



NETWORKING RECRUITMENT AND AWARENESS STRATEGY

To raise awareness of the project, SCSA has been implementing a networking strategy to recruit participants within the targeted cohort. This action plan is comprised of ten strategies.

Nº	STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	STATUS	PROGRESS UPDATE
1	 List from Co-development Workshop	List of stakeholders who attend the TTL information retreat from both the North and South	Achieved	Completed by March 2019 with one weekend information workshop held
2	 Government/ NGO Stakeholders	Announce the project via media	Achieved	Completed by September 2019 with an official launch event at SCSA Fullarton office
3	 Social media Messenger	Accessing old stakeholder CRM data	Ongoing	Regular recruitment activity using a Private Facebook Page and Messenger
4	 Current Database	Pre-existing Data over 10 years	Ongoing	73 participants from current database
5	 Workshops	Hold information retreat/workshops	Ongoing	Zoom sessions took place during Covid-19
6	 External	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Network with Flo Program • Flexi Learning Centre • Streetlight Community • Wellbeing Officers 	Ongoing	6 participants from Flo Program 2 from Flexi Learning Centre 5 referred by Wellbeing Officers
7	 Prison Ministry Networking	Network with Chaplaincy, Edge and Kairos	Ongoing	On hold until further notice due to Covid-19 restrictions
8	 Public Speaking Appointments	Invited by Members of Parliament (MP)	Ongoing	The strategy will focus on this for the 6 th and 7 th Quarter
9	 Commissioner for Children SA	Network with Helen Connolly, South Australia's first Commissioner for Children and Young People.	Not started	Starting on 6 th Quarter onwards
10	 Spire Coaching	Invite to facilitate a small team project, to assist in solving work experience as a barrier to employment.	Not started	6 th Quarter and 7 th Quarter

STAGE ONE: ENGAGEMENT AND RECRUITMENT

INTERNAL REFERRALS

1. **Engaging Second Chances Family Care staff** has provided a source of eligible participant referrals to the project. The team has a long and trusted history working with this cohort.
2. **Sourcing internal referrals** from Second Chances SA's database consistently provided the main source of referrals for recruitment.
3. **Connecting with family referrals** increased awareness and engagement of the project within the key focus group, thus strengthening family support structures.

EXTERNAL REFERRALS

1. **Connecting with high schools and Flexi Learning Centres** harvested referrals of participants aged 13 to 17 years.
2. **Running practical workshops and motivational retreats** were key to promoting awareness of the project, building rapport with participants and recruiting.
3. **Identifying barriers** empowered the team to proactively respond with creative and participant-informed solutions for their individual barriers.
4. **Updating the referral forms**, as we received feedback from our referring partners, simplified the forms and improved efficiency.

***“Getting Ready for Take Off
is a really good opportunity...
it’s really opened a lot of pathways to
ensure we better our lives.”***

Jess, participant

STAGE TWO: REGISTRATION

1. **Ongoing modification** of internal forms and documents created a tangible improvement in the efficiency of the registration process.
2. **Redefining selection criteria** for hiring Life Coaches improved the recruitment process, with a greater focus on career and employment coaching skills.
3. **Communicating through social media** was an important awareness and engagement tool especially during the height of COVID-19 restrictions in South Australia.
4. **Refocussing on the specific target group** (aged 16 and over) improved participant registration and engagement. This key target group was found to be better prepared, motivated and willing to explore employment options.
5. **Building speedy rapport and trust** between the Life Coaches and participants was a vital element to the success of the registration process.



Participants at the South Hub complete online strengths assessments.

STAGE THREE: CAREER AND VISION PLANNING

1. **Employing the Life Coach SMART approach** contributed to maintaining trust and rapport between project staff and participants.
2. **Implementing face to face life coaching sessions** were key to encouraging participants follow through on their job-ready and career goals.
3. **Establishing regular encouragement and motivation** by Life Coaches and support staff played a pivotal role in building confidence and self-determination within participants.
4. **Identifying barriers to employment** in the early stages assisted Life Coaches in supporting participants to overcome and pre-empt their challenges.
5. **Applying the Career Action Plan template** was a valuable resource for participants, equipping them with a visual and achievable plan for their future.
6. **Sourcing and obtaining personal ID documents** for participants has been an essential support service, allowing participants to access training and employment and to qualify for their driver's licences and tax file numbers.
7. **Building confidence in participants** through employment workshops, events, retreats, and life coaching sessions has improved engagement and job-readiness.
8. **Employing project support staff** (Life Coach Assistant, Community Engagement Officer) empowered participants in building resilience and demonstrating accountability as they encountered and push through challenges. This also enabled the Life Coaches to focus on life coaching.
9. **Creating a private Facebook group** was an important tool for keeping participants informed of project events, employment opportunities and staying connected.
10. **Connecting participants** with partner agencies, organisations and employment networks empowered them with the confidence and independence to maximise their opportunities and build their own networks.

STAGE FOUR: COURSE ENGAGEMENT AND MENTORING

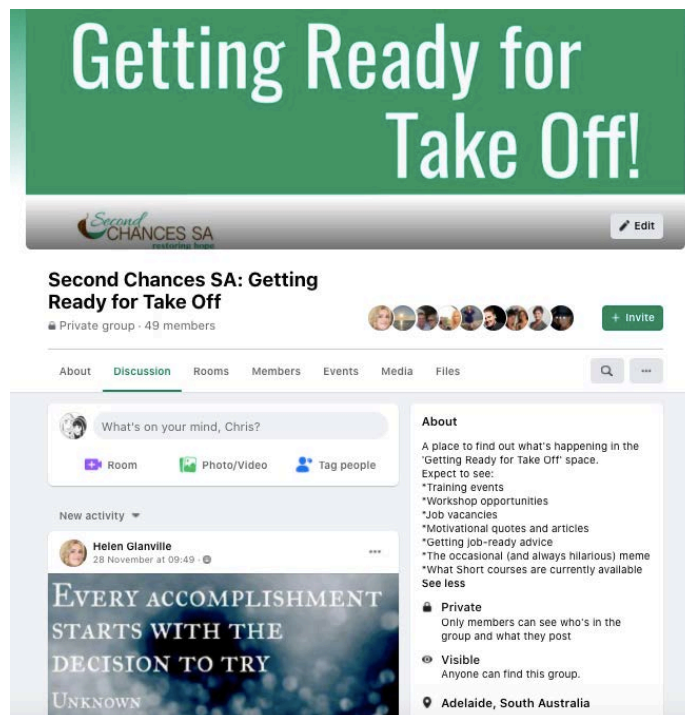
1. **Encouraging participants to complete basic short courses** (First Aid, Barista, RSA, White Card) facilitated self-confidence and fast-tracked job readiness.
2. **Supporting participants with various transport options** (taxi, Uber, public transport cards, staff pick up/drop off) has improved their commitment to training courses, life coaching sessions, and other opportunities offered.
3. **Providing education-related financial assistance** reduced financial anxiety and enabled participants to engage in training they would not have previously attempted.
4. **Arranging Zoom life coaching sessions and workshops** (at the height of social distancing restrictions) proved to be an integral resource for keeping participants connected and informed.
5. **Building strong long-term relationships** with service support providers (Services SA, RAA, St John Ambulance, First Aid Pro) streamlined and fast-tracked bookings.
6. **Sustaining ongoing business partnerships** with service providers empowered and prepared their training staff in meeting the unique needs of our participants.
7. **Minimising the time delay** from registration stage to career goal setting and vision planning stage, improved participant engagement and maximised their commitment.
8. **Improving the timing and matching of goals** to align with courses and opportunities available at the time improved engagement and built momentum.

***“The Life Coaches are always there to talk to;
providing support and encouraging us
with reaching our goals.”***

Sophie, participant

STAGE FIVE: PROJECT EXIT

1. **Working with participants 15 and under** was challenging and demanding as some were not prepared or motivated to receive life coaching.
2. **Losing contact** after Stage Four and completion of the core components made it difficult to properly exit participants out of the project and obtain their feedback.
3. **Losing communication** made it frustrating and disappointing for staff, as disinterested and disengaged participants, often do not return phone calls or text messages.
4. **Disconnecting from disengaged participants** meant some left the project prematurely. Overall, 10% of those who started, left before they took advantage of this opportunity to maximise their potential.
5. **Exiting participants** from the project with a graduation ceremony provided closure, boosted self-confidence and reinforced the value of completion.



Participants are kept updated of employment opportunities through a private Facebook group.

COMMON PARTICIPANT BARRIERS

1. Obstructive and uncooperative parents.
2. Drug and alcohol abuse.
3. Lack of financial capacity.
4. Apathy and lack of motivation.
5. No previous positive mentor or encouragement.
6. Never before thought about or planned a future vision.
7. Social anxiety.
 - a. Fear of people.
 - b. Fear of being judged.
 - c. Fear of feeling silly.
 - d. Fear of not being good enough.
8. Lack of confidence and trust due to past disappointment.
9. Embarrassed by imprisoned parent's status.
10. Fear of future for themselves and family.



March 2019: Participants and facilitators at the inaugural *Getting Ready for Take Off* weekend development retreat.

PROJECT CHALLENGES

1. **Finding Life Coaches** best suited for the culture and purpose of the project.
2. **Understanding the language and communication preferences** of the cohort (Generation Z) who prefer non-verbal communication methods (eg. text messages and social media).
3. **Motivating participants** to learn good self-care habits (ie. sleep, diet, hygiene).
4. **Instilling tenacity** when some participants are all too often willing to give up.
5. **Overcoming the frustration** of some participants making progress then falling back.
6. **Assigning appropriate caseloads** so Life Coaches can to give effective attention to get best outcomes.
7. **Renewing out of date contact details** within the ten-year-old SCSA database hampered efforts to recruit participants from previous SCSA programs.
8. **Reassessing and responding** to the needs of the ongoing and emerging stages of the project (eg. increasing staff hours and adding dedicated staff functions).

***“What lies behind us
and what lies ahead of us
are tiny matters compared
to what lies within us.”***

Ralph Waldo Emerson

ESSENTIAL CORE COMPONENTS

- Life Coaching Sessions
- Workshops
- Short Courses (Barista, First Aid, driving lessons)
- Career Action Planning
- Professional Development Plans
- Career profiling
- Gallup Strength Assessments
- Assisting with securing employment
- Assisting with professional resumes and cover letters
- Connection Retreats
- Outdoor Adventure
- Community Sport and Recreation
- Mental Health support
- Provision of transportation
- Mobile and laptop provision
- Birth certificate and ID applications
- Learner's and provisional licenses (RAA)
- Referrals to professional support services
- School engagement
- Employment

SPECIALISED SERVICES

- Counsellors/psychologists
- Junction Australia (Housing)
- Baptist Care SA
- Threads Together (Clothing)
- Headspace
- Foodbank

PRIMARY EDUCATION SERVICES

- University of Adelaide
- Flinders University
- TAFE SA
- Wesley College
- Access Training Centre
- Youth Education Centre
- HG Coffee
- La Crema
- Promind (Career profiling)

COMMUNITY SPORT & RECREATION

- Health and fitness centres (Gym)
- Soccer clubs
- Rugby clubs
- Taekwondo
- Boxing
- Ice skating
- Cheerleading
- Netball
- Dance
- Music
- Golf



Engaging with local community through team sports.

PARTICIPANT BENEFITS

Through *Getting Ready for Take Off* participants gained:

1. Gallup Strengths assessment
2. Career Profiling assessment
3. Legal identification
4. Benefits of work ethic
5. Hope for the future
6. Confidence to succeed
7. Employment and job readiness, including professional resume
8. Improved social networks and new contacts
9. Personalised Professional Development Plan
10. Completed core competent courses (Barista, First Aid, driver's licence)
11. Custom-designed Career Action Plan
12. Graduation Certificate

PARTICIPANT SURVEY RESULTS

1. 93% said they feel they have hope for their future.
2. 93% said that their Life Coach is assisting them to achieve their Career Goals.
3. 86% stated that their work ethic has improved since being in the program.
4. 96% Stated that their Life Coach has assisted them in overcoming barriers.
5. 97% stated that they have developed new skills for their future.
6. 83% stated that the program has improved their employment opportunities.
7. 87% stated that they are now employable.
8. 79% stated that receive support from family or carer.
9. 48% stated they are currently looking for work as some are already employed or studying.
10. 96% stated that they are becoming good role models for their family members.
11. 82% stated that they have experienced a 3 Star rating on their overall experience.
(They had a choice of 1- 3 stars, 3 being the best experience).
12. 100% stated that they would like to see the program continue.

BENEFITS OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community Engagement component includes joining sporting clubs and participating in a range of recreational activities in the community including Adventure Camps and Day events teaching them new life skills.

Through the *Getting Ready for Take Off* community engagement program, participants:

1. Prevent anti-social behaviour.
2. Develop a sense of belonging.
3. Become accepted into a group with common goals.
4. Gain value and self-worth through connectedness.
5. Learn team work.
6. Make new friends.
7. Develop social skills.
8. Become less isolated.
9. Build and improve fitness.
10. Learn new sporting and recreational skills.
11. Improve well-being and mental health.
12. Build resilience.
13. Create lifelong networks for their future.
14. Foster positive community connections.
15. Minimise social anxiety.
16. Reduce fear of failure.
17. Meet potential employers.
18. Create opportunities for volunteering.
19. Have hope for a future.
20. Feel they're making a difference for their development.
21. Become more independent; less reliant on family.
22. Mature into responsible, tax paying adults.
23. Make a contribution to the overall team culture.
24. Feel they are more confident to overcome life's setbacks.
25. Improve work/life balance.

ESSENTIAL PROJECT STAFF

CEO

Support and empower the Project Manager.
Monitor internal communications.
Maintain staff morale and lead staff training.

PROJECT MANAGER

Manage overall operations across all project staff and locations.
Report to DSS, DEX, NOVA.
Maintain and ensure the accuracy and currency of CRM.
Plan and facilitate workshops, retreats, and day events.

LIFE COACHES (2)

One on one sessions, phone calls, emails, Messenger, Zoom.
Goal setting and career planning.
Daily CRM journaling and time management.
Workshops, sessions and course enrolments.

LIFE COACH ASSISTANT

Assist Life Coaches with administrative work (booking driving lessons, First Aid, etc).
Capture new client information; CRM journaling and time management.
OHS checklist each month, at each project location.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

One-on-one goal-planning sessions, phone calls, emails.
Gym and club registrations, memberships and evaluations.
Purchase gear and equipment, as needed.

COMMUNICATIONS MANAGER

Manage social media and content.
Storytelling and newsletters.
Daily CRM journaling and time management.



June 2020: Shiloh Hills Retreat

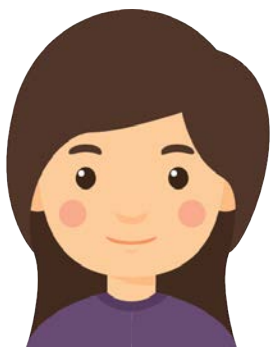


Getting participants road-ready.



Equipping participants for employment.

GOOD NEWS STORIES



KELLY, 19

"Since joining Getting Ready for Take Off, I've noticed I've become more driven. I've always wanted to do things but I've never really had the fire to finish things, but with the program, I've been able to finish everything I start. I'm really excited about life and the future!"



KYLE, 15

Becoming a teenager was a turning point for Kyle. *"I started seeing my dad who I hadn't seen since I was a baby, and because he's a drug addict, I started drugs too."* Since joining GRFTO, Kyle has put in the hard work to turn his life around. With the support of his Life Coach, he's back at school and is making different choices for his future. *"I think the program has motivated me to be someone better than my dad."*



SARAH, 18

Struggling to finish Year 12, Sarah was anxious for her future and unsure of what to do next. After talking through her interests and skills with her Life Coach, she was encouraged and supported to enrol in a certified swimming instructor course. Sarah now teaches swimming on weekends, is on her P's, and is exploring pathways to university next semester.



DAN, 21

After dropping out of high school, Dan tried a range of jobs but struggled keeping them, eventually losing motivation. With support and accountability from his Life Coach, Dan has completed a traffic management course and also earned his White Card. He now utilises his skills in a new full-time job.

PHOTO GALLERY



Learning new skills and qualifications.



Building community through recreation.



January 2020: Mylor Retreat Adventure Camp.

CONCLUDING REMARKS AND RESULTS

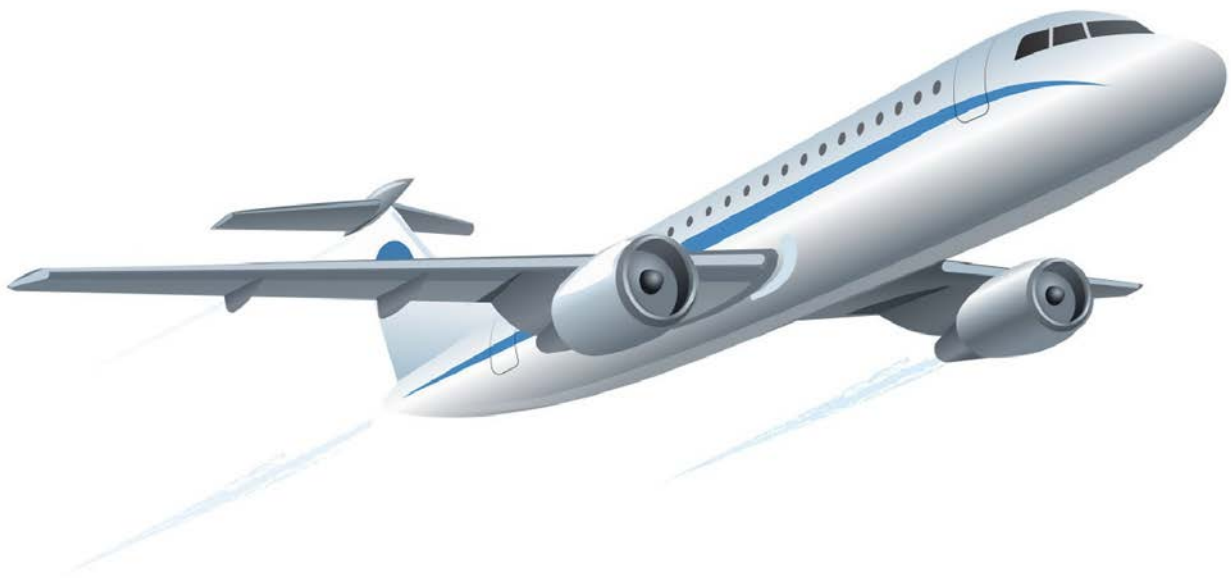
We are grateful for the opportunity to have had a major impact in the lives of youth-at-risk giving them hope and practical skills for their future.

Throughout the life of the *Getting Ready for Take Off* project, we made every effort to be adaptive along the way and learn from every challenge we encountered.

At every key stage of the project, we learnt valuable lessons which informed our practice and can be adapted and applied to all future projects aimed at keeping at-risk-youth engaged in the workforce, vocational skill development and giving them opportunities to participate in sport and recreational activities.



Getting Ready for Take Off team (L-R): Helen Glanville (CEO), Kim Pienaar (Project Manager), Alecia Pienaar (Community Engagement), Will Metzger (Life Coach), Teela Cumberworth (Life Coach), Fiona MacFadyen (Life Coach Assistant), Chris Bowman (Communications Manager)



***“This is a rewarding and
life changing program
with effective early intervention
- transforming lives.”***

Helen Glanville, Second Chances SA CEO

