



Edmund Rice Camps Western Australia by Andrew Rich

During the second week of the holidays from the 12th-17th July, a number of Year 11 and 12 Aquinas students volunteered their holiday time to participate in their first Edmund Rice Camp for Kids. The camp consisted of about 28 volunteers and one staff member from Edmund Rice Camps WA. The camps take children from ages 8 to 16 who come from disadvantaged backgrounds and aims to give both these children and their guardians a break from their normal lives. Because of our young age, we were assigned to two camps at Dwellingup and Moore River that were for the much younger children so that there was bigger age gap between us. Basically, the goal for each leader is to make sure that all the children have the most fun possible for the entire camp. After meeting the majority of the leaders on the first day and forming quick and lasting friendships, our focus moved to the Monday when we picked up the kids. After three incredible days with some remarkable children and countless, singing, dancing, laughing and general banter we felt that both the children and the leaders had come away with a different outlook on life.

"The camp was a spectacular journey of personal enlightenment and growth. I felt as though it not only was a fun experience but it enabled me to further appreciate and understand the world around me. It was such a pleasure and joy getting to know all the kids and people on the camp who are all fantastic!"

Jordan Lee

The most important lesson I learned from the camp is that there are no 'bad' children, only challenging behaviours. Although it was only a short time as a leader, I felt we made a difference to each of the kid's lives and in doing so I believe the volunteers also gained a fair bit. It was an experience like no other and it will be etched into my memory for a long time. I am already looking forward to the January camps!

Andrew Rich

We spent three days with an awesome group of kids who, despite their possible disadvantaged backgrounds, had a great time and I really felt I built a positive relationship with them all. For them, it gave them a chance to relax and have fun, as I felt they all enjoyed the experience. For me, it changed my attitude to become more passionate and it was the self-satisfaction of seeing them smile that made me smile as well. I had a great time and I want to continue to be a part of more of them.

Thomas Daniels

As our camp manager, Emma Thompson, famously says "We don't have naughty kids, just good kids who can display naughty behaviours" and by the end of the camp all the leaders knew that this was so true. It was amazing how we got to get to know all 25 of the kids and they were all incredible young people. Some behaviours were challenging but it made it all the more rewarding. I believe that the camp has changed me to be a better person and I will most definitely be signing up for the mega camps in January.

Xavier Mitchell

Myself and the other leaders came back with rewards that we never thought we could attain. Not only did we get the satisfaction of putting a smile on the faces of these wonderful kids and knowing they had such a great time away from their troubles, but we also developed a strong set of values and bonds. I have walked away from this Eddie Rice Camp with new life-long friends, confidence within myself and the knowledge that I should never judge someone until I have walked a thousand miles in their shoes. I would recommend this camp to anyone, knowing that they also will walk away with an abundance of happiness.

Julian Cox

For me, the camp gave me the opportunity to help and learn from each other, from great leadership from my peers. But to the kids, the camp was a wonderland where they were free from their day-to-day situations at home - a place to escape.

Tai Herrington