The only constant in life is ... change!

When we commenced as a School Business Community partnership broker in March, we hardly envisaged the incredible range of change that we’ve seen through this year. Everywhere we turn, people are experiencing unexpected and unprecedented change. Budget cuts have led to adult re-entry program cuts (some later reversed) or consideration of campus closures or mergers of primary and secondary schools on top of the normal issue of SACE and national curriculum. Some of our Hills Communities are grappling with the impact of the Inverbrackie facility on education and other services. We wish all of you in schools the strength and good humour to cope!

Geoff Ewens, Managing Director

Partnering In Action

Adelaide Hills Youth Mental Health Partnership

Education is crucial to finding a job and a place in society. However, according to a Sane Australia research bulletin, 54% of respondents to their “Social Inclusion and Mental Illness” survey reported that mental illness had cut short their education and they had not been offered support to continue this later.

Particularly in the Adelaide Hills (AH) region, youth mental health referral rates are disproportionately high relative to communities of similar socio economic status and this fact is inversely correlated with successful attainment of Year 12 or equivalent.

Based on strategic research about this challenge, AITEC started to develop a partnership in the Hills to:

1. increase understanding of the centrality of mental health to student well-being and learning/academic outcomes and
2. support the resumption of education and training as a routine part of the intervention for mental health issues.

Currently, a working group comprising AH Community Health Services, AH Division of General Practice, CAMHS, Country Health SA, DECS, Flinders University and AITEC is collaborating to explore different strategies to address the youth mental health issues using a holistic approach. This approach recognises the inter-connectedness of the physical, spiritual, emotional and psychological, as well as the social environments of school, family and community.

Geoff Ewens’s profile

Geoff has 26 years’ experience working at all levels of education and training. This has included primary, secondary and higher education institutions, with activity spanning everything from program design through delivery and evaluation. He has 15 years’ commercial experience working across a range of business and industry sectors including innovation, manufacturing and export as well as service sectors. As AITEC’s Managing Director, Geoff has established numerous effective partnerships locally, nationally and internationally to deliver shared outcomes through collaboration and liaison with senior levels of industry, education and government.

Meet AITEC’s team

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Addressing the partnering needs of schools, parents & families, business and community

Work placements. A quality experience. (Part 2)

Differences among working experience and work placements were described in InterAct’s past issue, now it is time to explore some tips for making them a total success...

1. Develop a clear reason for hosting a young person
2. Have a plan or schedule organised for the week or two and distribute the load over the team
3. Make sure everyone is on the same page and supportive in your workplace to have a young person on work experience/placement
4. Get the skills to engage and teach young people
5. Find interesting jobs suitable for the age of the student
6. Make them feel welcome.

Benefits for Students

• Builds students’ confidence and gives them an understanding of industry and the working environment
• Students gain employability and life skills that will increase their future employment opportunities
• Students can demonstrate that they are becoming work ready, mature, responsible and skilled to the industry’s entry level

Benefits to Businesses

• Good PR for businesses
• Identifies and retains local talent
• Develops awareness between local businesses and young people
• Broadens the skills base for industry
• Influence
• Creates opportunities for staff to develop leadership, management and mentoring skills
• Previews potential new recruits

Work experience programs available for secondary school students (YRs 10 - 12)


Adelaide Festival Centre

Royal Adelaide Hospital

Adelaide Zoo

Dept Transport, Energy and Infrastructure

Redarc Electronics

CSIRO

DISCLAIMER.

This list is intended to disseminate general information regarding organisations providing work experience programs and its purpose is to provide an initial guide - not a comprehensive list - for the benefit of students. It is recommended for the student to speak to his/her counsellor or teacher at school and/or parents about school work experience programs in the first instance. Links to other websites are inserted hereby for convenience and do not constitute endorsement of material at those sites, or any associated organisation, product or service.
Addressing the partnering needs of schools, parents & families, business and community

AITEC

Out And About

Nikki Lual, Sudanese student graduated from Mary MacKillop College, receiving the AITEC Youth Attainment Award from Geoff Ewens during the Annual Awards Assembly

AHYSN
(Adelaide Hills Youth Sector Network)

The Adelaide Hills Youth Sector Network is a regional network comprised of professionals addressing and responding to youth issues for the larger Adelaide Hills region. This region encompasses the Adelaide Hills Council (AHC) and District Council of Mount Barker (DCMB) local government areas.

AHYSN members come from a wide range of disciplines including Health, Education, Governance, Community Services and Employment, with workers from both strategic and operational levels of service and program provision.

As a group for lobbying local youth issues, this network was established to exchange information and/or develop regional responses to youth issues.

Organisations collaborating in the AHYSN include: ac.care, AHC, AHCHS, AITEC, Centrelink, Commonwealth Respite & Carelink Centre, DCMB, DECS, Employment Options, RDA, SA Works, SAPOL, Workskil, and YACSA.

Examples of the AH’s young people issues being discussed as part of AHYSN’s agenda:

- Alternative or Flexible Learning Options
- Youth Housing
- Transport availability
- Activities and programs for young people ‘hanging around’
- Sexual Health
- Career Development course for young parents that have been out of work for a considerable period of time, to help them progress back to work.
- Sustained growth in the region and its impact in young people’s needs.

Left: Kerry May (Youth Office YAC-RAP) an AHYSN member wearing a condoms’ skirt to promote youth sexual health.
Right: Johanna Milbank (RDA), chair of AHYSN.

Left to right: Sasha Dragovich (AITEC) and Ivan Copley (Turkindi)

Mia Fantasia-Copley (left) and Ivan Copley (right) with other Turkindi members

Tandanya ATSI Arts Fair
Partnering In Action

Adelaide Hills Youth Mental Health (YMH) Partnership

Did you know?

- 94% of Australian principals considered mental health, and wellbeing, as very important in terms of student performance and academic achievement.
- Young people with mental disorder were more than 5 times as likely as those without mental disorders to use illicit drugs or misuse legal drugs.
- Young people with a severe level of impairment were more likely to use mental health services (51%) than those with milder levels of impairment (18%).

AITEC Objectives of a YMH Partnership in the Hills

- To align and bring together related stakeholders supporting youth with mental health issues to address the high incidence of mental health referrals in the Adelaide Hills region.
- To support and facilitate the establishment of a Headspace or similar focal point centre in collaboration with Adelaide Hills Mental Health Services.
- To facilitate a forum between and among mental health stakeholders in the area which will:
  - Raise awareness about the long term and unchanged nature of the mental health issue in the Hills;
  - Promote positive and informed attitudes towards mental health, preventing illness and early intervention;
  - Raise awareness of the correlation between school attainment and mental health issues in young people;
  - Strengthen and integrate the role of education as part of the process of addressing mental health issues in young people;
  - Collate possible actions, ideas and innovations in addressing these issues in the Hills;
  - Facilitate networking between attendees;
  - Inform stakeholders regarding the proposed Headspace or similar focal centre in the Adelaide Hills.

Education InterActs with Community

ASEC (Adolescent Services Enfield Campus) Model

In our visit and discussions with ASEC we found a great model where Teachers and Clinicians work side by side in the ‘classroom’ to support students to continue with their education as well as assist them with their mental health needs.

At the Enfield site there were classrooms with computers, a tech studies workshop, recreational areas and chill out spaces.

The students also had access to their own kitchen where they can prepare food. This is an example in that our young people, who experience mental health issues, need not choose between treatment and continuing with their studies. They should be able to have access to both.

ASEC is a partnership between Women and Children’s Hospital, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) and Department of Education and Children Services (DECS).

Of course the work of ASEC is much more detailed than can be covered in this article, including therapeutic treatment, behaviour management and crisis intervention. For more information about ASEC go to: www.wch.sa.gov.au/services/az/divisions/mentalhealth/asec