

Southern Volunteering Presents

VIBRANT VOLUNTEERS

YOUTH EDITION



Southern
Volunteering
(SA) Inc
EST. 1984

A collection of stories about the experiences of people aged 25 and under.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Southern Volunteering (SA) Inc. is one of two Volunteer Resource Centres given funding to run a Youth Into Volunteering pilot program in South Australia (from July 2021 – June 2022)

This booklet has been created to highlight the individual narratives of younger volunteers who have been involved with this pilot, or who have been interviewed on their previous experiences of volunteering.

Please note that in some cases, the names and details of young people have been changed to aliases to protect the privacy of the young people involved.





We have focused specifically on stories that are impactful, inspiring and represent a bigger picture emerging in the southern regions of SA.

The booklet also provides information about an innovative youth advisory group being run by Southern Volunteering (SA) Inc.

If you would like to know more about the Youth into Volunteering pilot program, please contact us via admin@svsa.org.au or call 08 8326 0020

IMPRESSIVE SOUTH AUSTRALIANS THAT MADE US SAY **WOW!**



A big thank you to Harlow for proving to everyone that when you care deeply about something and are **determined to make a positive contribution** - being young is no hindrance to making a big impact!

A few years ago, Harlow's dad received a cancer diagnosis...

Many of Harlow's peers at the time were **unaware that he was sick** until he started to lose his hair. Harlow thought that getting her hair cut to stand by dad during this hard time might help him feel less alone. Harlow's parents told us that **what she did next made them so proud!**

Harlow (somehow) discovered that you can donate hair to make real-hair wigs for kids who are in a similar position to her dad - she very quickly decided that this is what **she was going to do**. She also shared this awesome idea to work together to try and raise a couple of hundred dollars to donate for cancer research.

Fast forward some time, and Harlow donated 36 centimeters of hair to Variety Australia, along with **over \$3,500!!!** Wow! Amazing work Harlow!

IMPRESSIVE SOUTH AUSTRALIANS THAT MADE US SAY **WOW!**



Hi there, I'm Mitchell - I'm raising money to help relieve the financial burden from families that have a child being treated for a **cancer diagnosis**."

So far he has raised **\$800** towards his **\$1000** goal - the link is still active! Show Mitchell your support by donating today!

For 5 long years he grew his healthy thick hair with the intention to donate it to Wigs 4 Kids! Mitchell has a heart of gold - He can't wait to grow it out and do it all over again!

See online:

<https://fundraise.kidswithcancer.org.au/fundraisers/mitchellszabo/wigs-4-kids>

The greater majority of hair donations for kids wigs are given by young ladies. We are super proud to include the efforts of this young man who is proving that helping kids with cancer is for anyone!





These are listed as increasingly important and urgent issues to act on. When young people are directly asked - this cohort has repeatedly verbalised frustration from **"not being taken seriously"** and **"not seeing much - if anything being done"**.

Southern Volunteering wanted to provide young people an opportunity to work on some of these topics alongside a variety of organisations within the volunteer sector. We started by putting a call out to people aged 25 and under to join a Youth Advisory Group to discuss things further.

We started by soft launching the committee online (using Zoom) in November 2021. The first topic to discuss was how this group could empower the individuals involved to tackle important topics.

They strongly felt that young people are finding it harder and harder to get jobs, and as such - we should name the committee something that stands out on a resume!

Once we had decided on the name - **The League of**

Extraordinary Changemakers we then moved to discussing what we were going to work on together.

We asked what ideas did the youth committee have on connecting young people with the volunteer sector in a way that is mutually beneficial?

We discussed the need for widening the scope to recognise younger volunteers who are often engaged informally and "aren't counted" in addition to the possibility of collaborative short term projects.



We put a call out to young people and the volunteer sector for ideas of short-term flexible projects that could help young people gain much needed work experience. The program was launched (weekly) face to face in April 2022.

In total, the League has connected with 17 young people since its inception - working closely with 3-7 of those members every week.



Design by Stephen
Gregory (27yr old
Changemaker mentor)

During our catch-ups we listen to music, engage in leadership activities, play board games, test ideas, practice with technology, watch youtube videos and make/craft things - all whilst discussing various ideas and themes relevant to young people and the volunteer sector.

In each session there are quests and side quests that Changemakers and invited guests can work on together - its incredibly flexible and adaptive to respond to emerging themes. Beyond the committee - our Changemakers have co-created an "ideal" youth volunteer role that may be beneficial to many Volunteer Involving Organisations to consider.

This role is being trialed at Southern Volunteering with several young people with an interest in media production and several other youth volunteers / volunteer mentors

Young people have indicated a strong interest in learning and applying skills in media production, social media, and game design. So we have been exploring how we can provide them with experience in these areas. We are prototyping this role with several young people who are involved with the Change makers group - and various Volunteer Involving Organisations in South Australia.

Sadly, Covid has impacted our group since its inception - it has caused delays for many of our ideas, but we are proud to

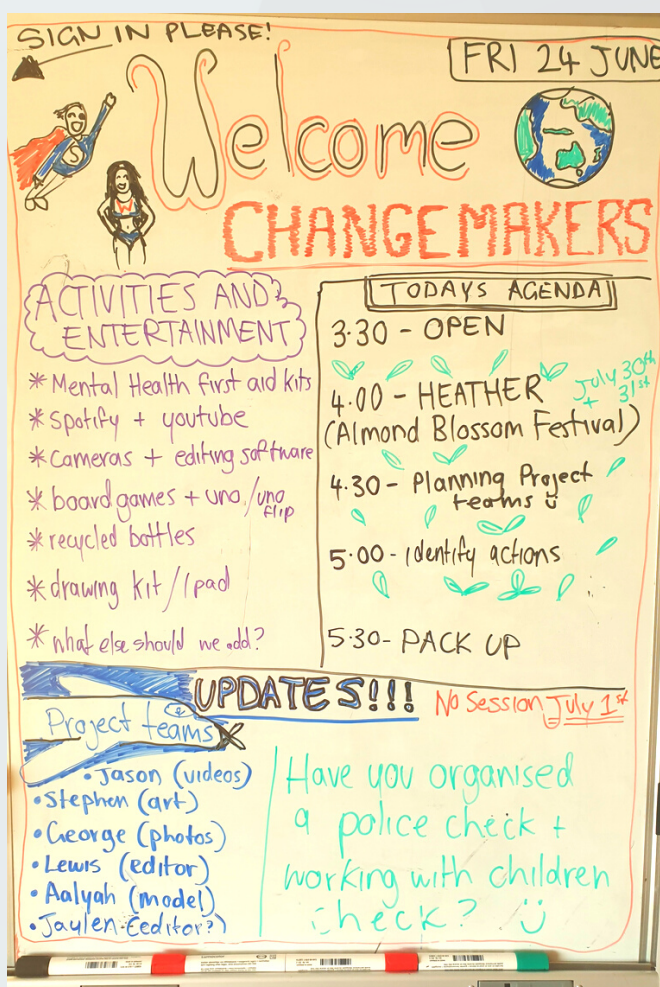
announce that our first quest using this new volunteer role is on track.

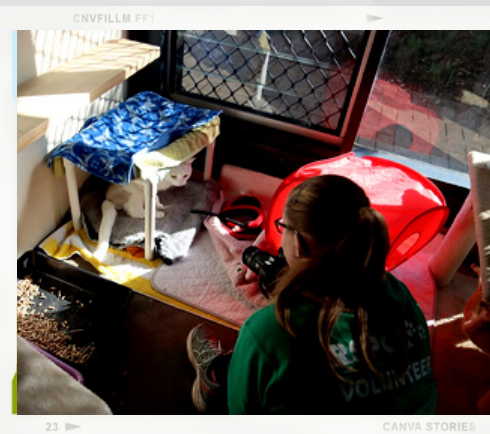
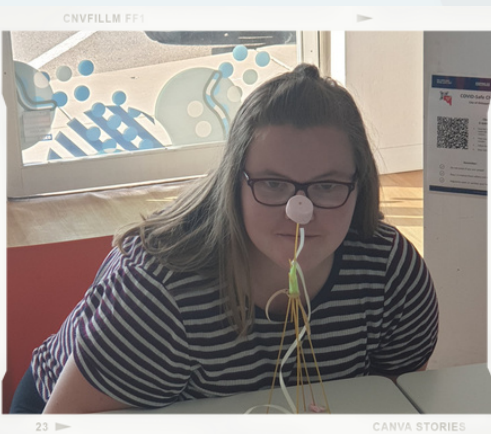
The group is lined to provide additional media support at the Willunga Almond Blossom Festival at the end of July 2022.

Young volunteers will have an opportunity to use professional photography and videography equipment and software - empowering them to learn skills that support their capacity development at the same time as raising awareness for this annual community event and youth-participation in the volunteer sector.

Our main quests are designed to create **relevant and engaging work experience opportunities** through projects that support Volunteer Involving Organisations, we also have side quests that are drop-in volunteer tasks that anyone of any skill level can come and engage in.

This two prong approach is intended to cater to the various commitment levels that young people can offer.





CAITLIN'S JOURNEY

At a young age, Caitlin wanted to help animals and the environment. With courage and determination she approached the RSPCA - sadly, they were unable to truly benefit from her passion and enthusiasm until she was recognised as an adult.

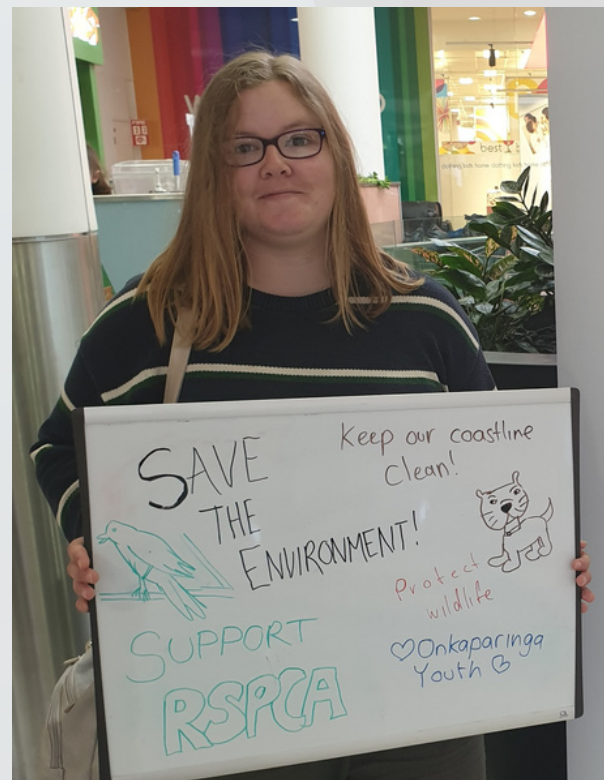
Caitlin said - "I wasn't allowed to volunteer there until I was 18 - I had been a regular visitor for years prior and wanted an excuse to spend more time there, but they just said I couldn't be cause I wasn't old enough"

In 2016 she finally turned 18 and applied to be a Dog Care Volunteer, walking the dogs at the Lonsdale site and helping to clean cages (among other things).

We explored her motivations, she proudly stated "I love animals and nature, it came naturally that I wanted to care for them", and when asked the best part about her first volunteer experience, she said - "You get to give the doggos lots of cuddles, it's really great for animal lovers!"

Now almost 24 years old, she has had a variety of volunteer experiences, including volunteering at a local Residential Aged Care Facility, with Onkaparinga Youth at a youth hub called OYEH, and at Aberfoyle Park Baptist Church (to name a few).

She is a little disappointed that she didn't get to explore the world of volunteering when she was under 18, but she has made the best

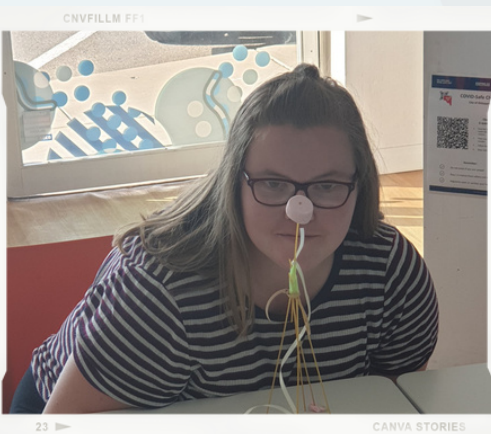


of her situation and is a lot happier now that she isn't in a bracket that is effected by this age-related barrier.

Caitlin is truly an inspirational young lady. She continues to volunteer at RSPCA, using her talents as a photographer to help find homes for the animals residing in the shelter (see above).

She has had difficulty at different times in maintaining her volunteer roles due to a neurological condition that has resulted in a few periods of time where she was deemed medically unable to drive.

We discussed how much transport has been a barrier for Caitlin as a volunteer. "Tourette's syndrome makes it hard at times, but I keep going and hope for the best"



CAITLIN'S VISION

Caitlin wants to see a future where taking care of the environment is a higher priority. She is involved with the League of Extraordinary Changemakers with the hopes that we can make a difference for the environment.

She believes if we continue the way we are going - that we won't have a sustainable planet for future generations of humans, animals and plants.

She has a vision for clean coastlines and healthy waterways. She wants to see large areas easily accessible to the public filled with native trees and plants as well as lots of safe places for our koalas and kangaroos to call home (to just name a few animals needing protection).

She wants to see our natural landscapes filled with healthy native wildlife - protected by our communities. Not simply ear-marked for further construction sites.

Caitlin is very concerned about the pollution being created by single-use plastics - she is glad to see some bans in South Australia have come into effect. She is also worried about the pollution created by large companies that have huge amounts of waste.

"I wish there was more being done", she explains "I know that we need sustainable housing and products that serve human-kind but there has got to be a better way!"



When we asked Caitlin what's next for her, she said she's applying for jobs and looking for somewhere that she is appreciated and valued.

She can foresee continued involvement in the volunteer sector - particularly with a focus on animals.

She also explained how much she loves photography and how she will continue to grow Eyes of Greatness Photography (Her small business).

Her dream job is to work for somewhere like National Geographic - helping to advocate for nature through her talents with a camera.



In collaboration with the City of Marion Y20 program, and with recognition to the City of Onkaparinga Grant that helped the RSPCA purchase a mini bus - the RSPCA is now offering transport to and from half-term programs for groups of up to 8 high-school students at a time. This applies within a reasonable distance of the animal shelter based in Lonsdale.

By removing the barrier of transport and trialing school programs, the RSPCA hopes to become more inclusive of working with younger volunteers without putting too much strain on the animal shelters resources.

The RSPCA also will continue to make space for mature and reliable under 18yr olds completing animal related topics through tertiary education (e.g. TAFE pathways)

UPDATE ON THE RSPCA



ANONYMOUS STORY #1

Hey there! You can call me "Bella" (16yr old)

Can you tell us why you wanted to volunteer Bella?

I wanted to contribute to health care and get real world experience to pave the way for a potential career working in and around hospitals for when I leave school.

Can you tell us what happened next?

I applied online and followed the prompts but I had a bit of a rough time trying to volunteer with [anonymous organisation]. I was pretty upset to be initially denied due to being a student, which they explained as students 'aren't reliable'. It felt like age discrimination.

Can you tell us how that made you feel?

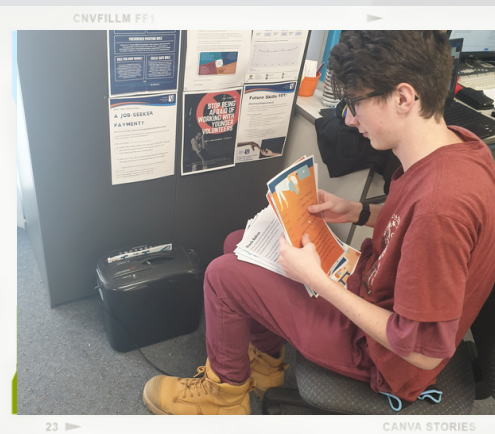
I feel patronised or not trusted. Young people can be just as reliable as anyone, and bridging the generational gap needs to go both ways!

Was your application to become a volunteer successful?

They initially denied it just because I was a student - I don't think they trusted young people at all. I had to fight for it but I managed to convince them to give me a shot. It should not have been that difficult. If I were someone else - I probably would have given up.

Anything else you would like to add?

Thanks for caring about young volunteers :)



JASON'S JOURNEY

Jason has recently re-entered the world of volunteering within an innovative group of younger volunteers that call themselves the League of Extraordinary Changemakers, but this isn't his first time volunteering - he was lucky enough to attend a school that incorporated volunteering opportunities on site. This is his story.

"Hey there, I'm Jason, I was born in Adelaide and have been here all my life. As of June 2022, I'm 21 years old and I currently work for Savers. I feel like I probably wouldn't be fortunate enough to have my current job if it weren't for volunteering when I was younger. I really believe it helped me get short-listed for the job interview, and it gave me experience I was able to highlight during it - which is really helpful if you aren't old enough to have lots of experience!

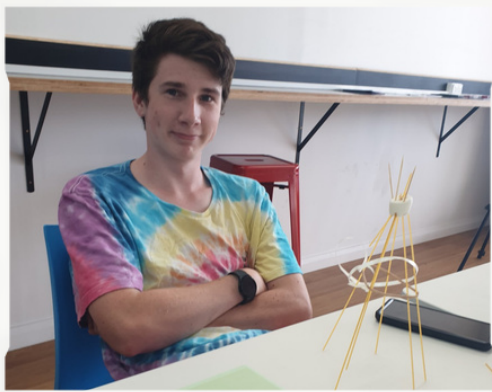
This is how it happened: A few years ago I was a student at Cardign College, during year 10 an opportunity to volunteer with Vinnies came to me via a good friend - I was invited to join in and the warm welcome made it easy to become a part of. I wasn't really thinking about the bigger picture at the time, I just saw an opportunity to hang out with some nice people whilst sorting and packing toys, books, non-perishable foods, hygiene products etc. to give to families in need around Christmas.

This continued until I completed Year 12 and



my Cert IV in photography - I left school (I had out grown that volunteer opportunity) and the responsibilities of being a young adult slowly crept in. Fast forward to more recent times, I think the experience I gained helped me to demonstrate (to my current employer) that I could stick at something and overcome nerves once I am familiar with what I am doing - because to be honest, it was really obvious I was nervous during the job interview. I think my previous experience listed spoke louder than my interview skills did!

Earlier this year Southern Volunteering invited me to be a part of a Youth Advisory Group that I later learned is called the League of Extraordinary Changemakers. Now that I've secured baseline employment,



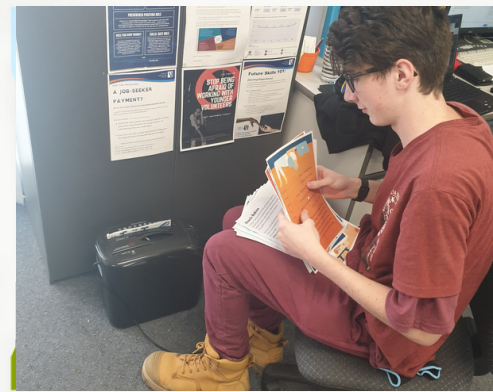
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CANVA STORIES



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CANVA STORIES



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CANVA STORIES

JASON'S VISION

"I'm finding myself drawn to giving back again. I'm excited to be volunteering again! Especially with a group of people who are so creative and diverse."

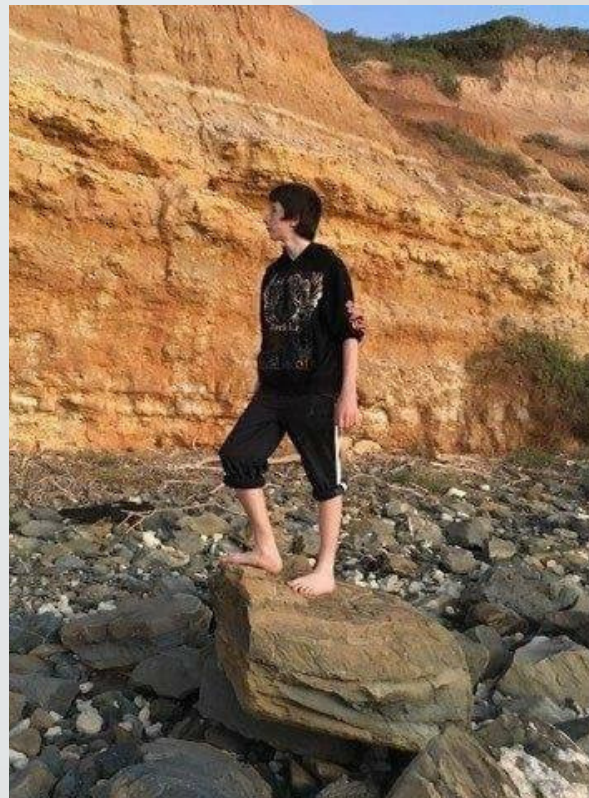
Jason has his eyes set on a few goals - he's keen to get his full drivers license, he wants to continue learning more about photography and videography - and in the more long term he can see himself living with friends whilst working towards developing further independence. He likes the idea of travelling but isn't 100% sure where he wants to go, but he does know he wants to go camping and be surrounded by good people.

When interacting with Jason, it is easy to feel at ease - he is the sort of person that engages in the verb volunteer in his everyday life.

He doesn't hesitate to run to a strangers aid if they are in need, he is always the first to offer a hand if someone is setting things up or packing things away. He frequently asks his peers if there is anything he can do to help.

He has definitely been a local change maker longer than he has been a part of Southern Volunteering's Youth Advisory Group.

When discussing with Jason what he feels would help people his age and younger through the Changemakers program, he provided suggestions like:



"We could explore basic life skills and find ways to create video resources to support younger people with things like cooking, how to do their tax, how to write about volunteer experience in a resume and cover letter, how to find volunteer experience whilst people are still in school etc."

He wants to see a future where young people are taken more seriously when they provide their ideas and suggestions. He feels that they (young people) for the most part aren't listened to and aren't supported to make change.

"I want to see a future where young people are considered as much a part of the solution as older people are - we have a lot to offer if only we could be supported, guided and mentored in the process".

IMPRESSIVE SOUTH AUSTRALIANS THAT MADE US SAY **WOW!**



Mr J is leading the way for kindy kids to engage in play!!! This creative project will encourage other young people work together and develop hand-eye coordination skills!

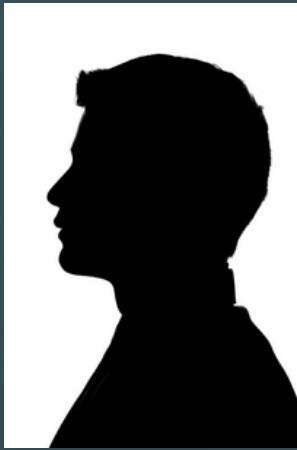
Jozef - Aged 10 has been learning about play at Port Elliot Primary School. He was asked to create something for kindy aged kids to encourage them to play - He chose to make a Cornhole!

Jozef's mum told us "we have had absolutely no part in this, he just wanted to do it and brought it home with him! He did have a little help from his teacher and Mr P to source the board and make the hole in it, but otherwise he deserves all the credit!"

The idea is that the the kindy kids will be able to throw little bean bags into the hole. His mum commented "its been lovely to be able to see his enthusiasm for this!

Well done Jozef! We are certain that the kindy kids will appreciate your efforts!!





ANONYMOUS STORY #2

Hey there! You can call me "Jacob" (19 yr old)

Can you tell us why you wanted to volunteer Jacob?

Because I wanted to help the community as well as gain experience. I also looked for a volunteering role as I wanted to see what different roles would be like and to improve my skills

Can you tell us what happened next?

I applied online to [anonymous organisation] and followed it up in person when I didn't hear back from them, but I wasn't able to volunteer as I was under the required age limit (not specified in the online application)

Can you tell us how that made you feel?

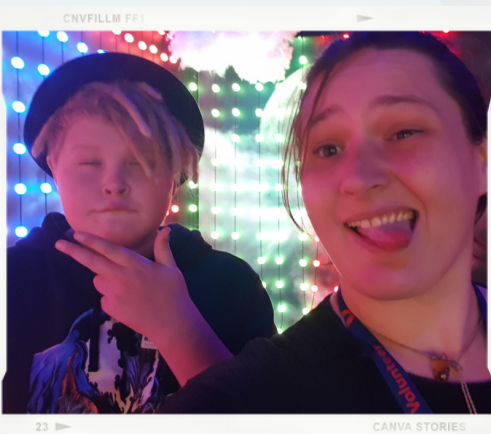
I felt a little disappointed and like I had wasted my time, it would probably help if we had a separate website that is dedicated to people under the age of 25

Was your application to become a volunteer successful?

No, and I haven't applied for another role since.

Anything else you would like to add?

Advertise youth friendly roles better?



LEWIS'S JOURNEY

Lewis is Southern Volunteering's youngest volunteer - at only 14 years of age he is offering up to 15 hours a week supporting the Youth into Volunteering pilot program at the Christies Beach office. We are honoured to give him his first experience volunteering!

He is the first to trial a new role (Program Support Officer) being offered at Southern Volunteering which has been co-designed by SVSA's Youth Advisory Group who come together to create change, and who want to make volunteering more relevant and engaging.

Having a young teen on the team has been a really insightful experience - Lewis is helping to break down stereotypes that organisations hold towards younger volunteers, and he demonstrates every day to other young people that your ability is really only limited by your imagination.

Lewis is currently home-schooled which provides him with the flexibility that enables him to volunteer in our office (on afternoons 4 days a week).

He has had to endure unfair treatment and bullying by people at his former school, he hasn't lost his shine though. He's an intelligent young man who simply didn't fit well within the traditional education system. Instead of giving up - he continues to persevere and find things of interest to keep learning about.

Amazingly, this 14 year old has a few years of retail experience under his belt - having

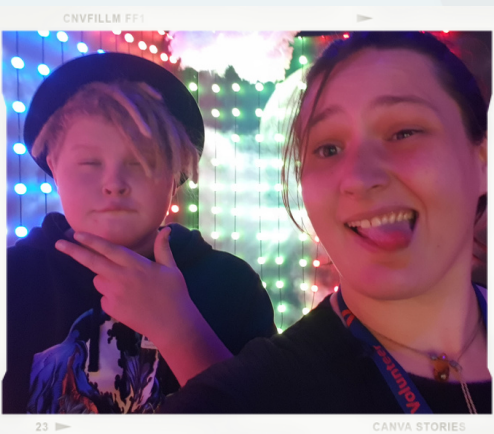


the opportunity to help his mum run a clothing alteration service in Norwood. He has provided customer service on site, and has experience working cash registers and POS (Point of Sales) systems.

In a volunteer office environment however, Lewis acknowledges that he is inexperienced - largely due to his age, but where he lacks experience he makes up for it with a cheery disposition, a good sense of humour and keen enthusiasm to learn new things.

Lewis has a keen interest in website development, graphic design and videography (among other things).

So far he has contributed his time towards updating the youth resources on new pages on our website, he has filmed and edited



LEWIS'S VISION

clips to raise awareness about our office and the services we offer.

When we interviewed Lewis about this role at Southern Volunteering, we asked him what his dream career would be - he told us that "One day, I'd love to be a flair bartender, travelling the world and meeting really interesting people along the way".

"It's a really clever and practical art form that allows you to easily connect with people, it's like watching a magician but it's even cooler! It's the entertainment before you get served a drink. Obviously this is a few years away because of my age, but you can never be too young to think about what you want to do".

He also commented "Gaming and streaming is one of my hobbies, I do it for fun but I see a lot of other people earning money through it. I feel like it might be a little out of my reach but it would be really cool if I could also earn money through gaming".

"I've enjoyed the challenge of updating a website and editing videos, we often discuss what else I could use these skill sets for. It's handy when you come from a background working in a small family business and are being mentored by a volunteer from an entrepreneurial youth hub who also happens to be the Youth Coordinator at Southern Volunteering!"



Lewis has become a member of and supports the League of Extraordinary Changemakers in a voluntary capacity.

He has provided his perspective and insights in regards to the work of the League of Extraordinary Changemakers.

Some of his contributions have been included in correspondence with the working groups that focus on young people under Volunteer Strategy for South Australia, contributing to quite a big picture in his own little way.

Lewis comments that he is open to what the future may hold and looks forward to being an adult already!



Introducing

Lani Paige Pollard

"Hi I'm Lani, I'm 13 years old and this is me with the Onkaparinga Youth Committee at Holey Moley. I'm currently a student at Aberfoyle Park High. I have 5 older brothers and a mum who is an inspiring interactive part of our community."

How did you find out about the OYC?

"I have been going to the youth centres at Christie's and reynella for programs since I was 8. I always look at the program for the term ahead and it had some information about joining OYC."

What is your vision for the future?

"The environment is very important to me and I would to see less fossil fuels, plastic and rubbish used. I would like the world to discover a material that is compostable that replaces plastic. Friendship is important to me. All people would be kind to each other. I like to say "It is easier to be nice to people than be rude."

IMPRESSIVE SOUTH AUSTRALIANS
THAT MADE US SAY **WOW!**





Lani Paige Pollard

How would you describe yourself and your interests?

"I like roller skating. My favourite colour is green. I don't like cheese. I love all animals and love being in nature. I am kind, funny and generous, inclusive and supportive. I love my family very much. I have made lots of friends at school and OYC."

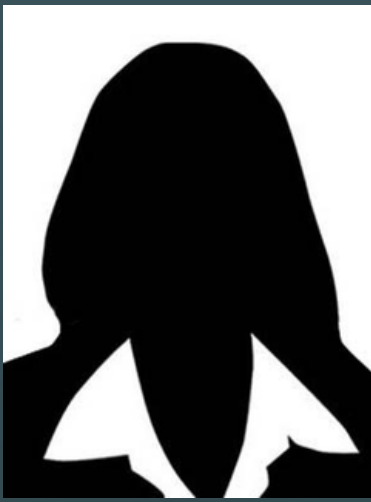
Besides the OYC, what else have you gotten involved in?

"I've always helped at community events, doing things like making craft and doing glitter tattoos for kids whose parents were collecting Christmas hampers."

Not long ago, I wrote a letter to Katrine Hildyard about my concerns regarding climate change - she responded! I even got a tour of Parliament House! When I was there I talked to Katrina about how young people can play a part in looking after the environment. I also got to speak to my whole school about climate change and convinced my class to come to a climate change rally in town (Adelaide CBD)."



**IMPRESSIVE SOUTH AUSTRALIANS
THAT MADE US SAY WOW!**



ANONYMOUS STORY #3

Hey there! You can call me "Suki" (23yr old)

Can you tell us why you wanted to volunteer Suki?

For my future career - I am an international student at Flinders University

Can you tell us what happened next?

Internet and teachers showed me where to apply for volunteering. I filled in forms given by primary schools - I am studying to become a high school educator

Can you tell us how that made you feel?

I had help and felt supported by the teachers

Was your application to become a volunteer successful?

I think so. I hope my applications were accepted, I am still studying so not sure yet but I will find out soon

Anything else you would like to add?

If students like me have access to easy contacts like email, that would be wonderful.

Do you know of a young person doing awesome things for the common good without financial gain?

We urge you to contact our office or email us via youthvol@svsa.org.au and let us know what they are up to!

Southern Volunteering wishes to recognise more young people for their voluntary efforts - no matter how big or small they may be.

We want all young people to feel appreciated for the effort, time and energy that they contribute to the things they care about!



Are you someone who wants to support people aged 25 and under? or do you know a young person who might be interested in joining the League of Extraordinary Changemakers?

Come down to OYEH on a Friday between 3.30-5.30pm and check it out! Guests welcome!



For the foreseeable future, OYEH (The Onkaparinga Youth Enterprise Hub) is the home of our Changemakers. **Shop 2 24-28 Beach Road, Christies Beach, SA 5165**

SO WHAT NEXT?

We are still seeking change makers to join our League, in addition to seeking volunteer involving organisations to collaborate with for new projects between now and June 2023.

We are particularly interested in working with organisations that want to work with young people, but may have difficulty due to the legal requirements of engaging youth in a safe manner.

If you'd like to find out more about the League of Extraordinary Changemakers - look us up on Seek Volunteer! or head straight to:

www.volunteer.com.au/volunteering/178089/hang-out-with-the-league-of-extraordinary-changemakers-

League Highlights

- Developed a concept and is creating prototypes for hand made "Mental Health First Aid Kits" to be distributed to Not-For-Profits as a means of acting on their concerns about peoples Mental Health.
- Created pot planters out of coke bottles to demonstrate an upcycled solution to raise awareness of reusing, reducing and recycling - whilst increasing the amount of green in office spaces.
- Learning about artistic freedom verses the need for planning permissions and approval processes.

A big thankyou for the partnership with the City of Onkaparinga (Onkaparinga Youth) which makes it possible for us to work on a variety of ideas within a space that has been created to be youth friendly and enhance a sense of innovation and belonging.

The resources within the space help participants to become passively aware of Onkaparinga Youth's programs and networks - which is invaluable for local young people to build capacity in a highly competitive employment market.

Additional thanks to the Volunteer Strategy for South Australia and the Department of Human services for making this pilot program possible.

