



# **GOOD SHEPHERD OUTDOOR EDUCATION PROJECT**

## **2009**

TABLE FARM

2ND—5TH SEPTEMBER 2009

This project was funded by the Harry Birrell Scholarship Trust

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## PLANNING AND PREPERATION

This project has been successfully running since 2006. The format for the experience has been well established, however there are always slightly different dynamics and slight refinements that take place each year.

One of the most important aspects of the project is the involvement of the St Andrew's College boys in terms of the planning and preparation for the camp. Although the 'formula' is in place, each year a different group of boys takes the reins and hence new ideas and slight changes are brought in to play.

This year was our best ever. Some of the St Andrew's College boys who were doing the project as part of their Gold Award Residential Project have been involved in the camp for a number of years. As a result, their planning and organization was excellent. The rest of the College boys who participated in the project were drawn from President's Award boys who are currently doing their Silver Award.

The boys were divided into the following groups:

- FOOD - Menus and supplies for the four days of the project
- EQUIPMENT - Camping equipment, equipment for the activities and transport logistics
- SHOES - Provision of suitable walking shoes for the Good Shepherd learners
- PREPERATION - Activities arranged to prepare the Good Shepherd learners for the camp
- CAMP ACTIVITIES - Activities including talks during the hike and the Saturday programme.

The boys in each group take complete responsibility for the successful preparation of the camp although they do have a staff member available to guide them. Apart from the initial meetings to set up the groups, the boys had to organize and arrange the entire camp before they left for their school holidays as the camp took place the first week-end that they returned.

A change from previous years was that we did not meet up with the Good Shepherd learners before our holiday break. Instead the groups were formed at our first get-together on Wednesday afternoon.

On Wednesday 2nd September, the day the College boys returned to school, the Good Shepherd learners were bussed to the College campus for the start of the preparations. This included placing everyone in groups, learning each others names, talks and discussions on appropriate behavior, camp etiquette, safety and litter, as well as setting up tents and camping equipment.

On Thursday 3rd, the Good Shepherd learners received their new shoes, played some soccer in their groups and final arrangements were concluded for the hike the next day.



## THE HIKE

Friday 04 September 2009

The day started early for the College boys. The trailers and busses needed to be packed with equipment and food by 07h30. Needless to say, the boys were incredibly keen and tackled the task with enthusiasm.



Twenty five College boys and three staff walked down to the Good Shepherd School at approximately 08h30 on Friday morning where twenty nine excited Good Shepherd children were waiting for us. The children walked up to College where snack and lunch packs were handed out. Five Good Shepherd staff members accompanied us on the hike and it was really good to have their support and input. The 20km hike started in earnest from outside College at about 09h30.

The route was the same one we have used since the inception of the project and took us up to the Golf Course and across the road through to the Industrial Site and on to the gravel road to Strowan Farm. The visit to the shearing shed of well known wool producer Mike Palmer has been a worthwhile addition to the hike. He was able to provide the groups with an interesting look into the process of shearing sheep and marketing wool.



Two College boys had prepared a talk on snakes with some rather graphic pictures as aids. Although it is extremely dry, the walk was handled easily by all and everyone arrived at camp at approximately 13h45. In time to set up camp, take in another walk up to the top of Table Hill, and prepare fireplaces for cooking supper.



The hike offers everyone the opportunity to enjoy the outdoor experience, but there is also lots of time for some fun and plenty of chatting takes place along the way.



After supper, groups went out into a beautiful evening on a night walk. The stars were magnificent, and the sounds of the night enhanced by the rule to walk in absolute silence.

It was a fitting end to a wonderful day, and by 10.00pm most people were in bed and sleeping comfortably.

It didn't last long, a huge wind got up, and so did a couple of children!! However it wasn't long before calm was restored and a good night's rest was had by all.



## ACTIVITIES

**Saturday 05th September**

The day began relatively early, some of the groups were up and about by 06h30. Breakfast was over by 08h00 and the programme of activities began at 08h30.

Once again it was really inspiring to see the interaction between the College boys and the Good Shepherd children. Each group was involved in a rotating programme of team building activities and although there is no competition involved, everyone participates with great determination and commitment. There are always lots of laughs and this year was no exception.



Once again, the whole exercise was a great success. Many of the Good Shepherd children expressed a desire to stay longer or do it again. We definitely seem to have hit on a winning formula for both schools.

Our thanks to the Harry Birrell Scholarship Trust for the opportunity they have provided with their financial support of the project.