



Go Ahead Holiday Camp Report- June 2016

Reporting Dates: 27th-30th June 2016

United Through Sport
57 King Edward Street
Newton Park
6045
Port Elizabeth
South Africa

Report Completed By: Spakes Xapile – General Manager

Summary

Over the first week of the Winter School Holiday, United Through Sport conducted a holiday programme for children to participate in. This has become quite a standard practice for UTS over the last years with the support of Go Ahead with a partnership that has been going since 2010. These holiday camps have become a vital part of organisational programming to ensure that children spend minimal idle time during the school break and avoid risky situations. Due to the lack of resources in the townships, most parents are unable to keep the children entertained in safe environments over holidays, and as a result the children can find other means of entertaining themselves. It is particularly over these school holiday periods that children, specifically teenagers, are exposed to at-risk behaviours and negative influences from peers, such as crime, drug and alcohol abuse and child abuse, hence the need to provide a safe environment for the children to play and learn.

From the 27th until the 30th June, UTS held a four day programme at the Lillian Ngoyi Indoor Sports Centre in Kwa-Zakhele. The programme was organised in partnership with three local primary schools in the area, where UTS invited each school to send 50 learners, with a 50/50 gender balance, aged 12-14 years to participate each day. The main factors for requesting this particular age were the life skills that would be given to the children during the camp, and the sport as it is important to get boys and girls that can participate in structured sports and follow instructions well. The targeted number of participants (150) was reached with the exact number of 154 children participating. The age range of participants was 8-15 years, meaning there were slightly younger and slightly older children than expected.

The different aspects of the holiday camp were sport (hockey, rugby, football and netball), life skills (a focus on promoting HIV and AIDS prevention and healthy living) as well as arts &



craft. Conducting the camp were 8 UTS staff members, 6 international volunteers and 5 Senior School of Excellence (SSE) beneficiaries. The children had an opportunity to rotate between all the different aspects and most of the children were trying out hockey for the first time. On the last day of the programme, there was a football and netball tournament where the winning teams received prizes, including t-shirts, soccer balls, skipping ropes, sports shoes and hula hoops. All prizes were intended to encourage an active and healthy lifestyle. Furthermore, all the children that partook in the life skills sessions received certificates of participation on the last day of the programme.

Challenges

This particular challenge has actually become an expected challenge on the first day, from previous experience. The numbers are always lowest on the first day of holiday camps. It is quite a challenge to plan a flexible programme for the first day as the uncertainty of the numbers is the biggest factor in planning. However, having a team that has experience in holiday camps and is quite good in communicating last minute changes with each other makes a big difference in how the challenge is managed. The team did a brilliant job in this regard.

The second challenge, also quite an expected one and easy to manage, is the children that are younger than the required age that come join the programme. In some cases, the 12-14 year olds have to look after their younger siblings over the holiday and therefore they bring them along to the camp. Fortunately, in the arts & craft aspect of the programme, it is very easy to accommodate the younger ones. For this camp, there were a handful of 3 and 4 year olds and they brought the cuteness element in the camp these children focussed on the arts and crafts and sports only as they were too young for the life skills!

Conclusion

The holiday programme was well planned and executed. It was great to have some of our SSE children taking part in the sports coaching and assisting the life skills coaches with ice-breakers and energisers. This forms an important part of them giving back to the programme they have come through and also provides positive role models for the younger participants. There was plenty of positive feedback from the international volunteers on working with the SSE guys, as they gave in fresh input in the coaching drills. The participants thoroughly enjoyed spending the four days with United Through Sport, and left inspired by the topics covered in the life skills that promote healthy living. From participant surveys



98% said they felt happier after the camp, 94% said they felt more confident and 92% said they would carry on with the healthy activities they had learned during the camp. There was also an average improvement of 28% in HIV and AIDS knowledge among participants. Overall this is a positive result for inspiring the young generation to lead a healthy lifestyle and improving their self confidence and self esteem.

