

My Leadership Great South Coast Story

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Scholarship Sponsor: South West Community Foundation

THE BEGINNING



Photo 1: Buddies - me and Daniel

From the time of application, through the interview process, into the first retreat and program days, Leadership Great South Coast has been about getting comfortable with the uncomfortable, pushing personal boundaries and making new connections. For the previous 18 months, my life had revolved around creating a business that supports healthy, active and empowered members of our community. The business was at a point where I could start to step away from the day to day running and to now take what I'd created on an individual level and start to approach change on a community level. Great idea and passion behind it, but with not much idea or confidence in how I could do that.

With thanks to the South West Community Foundation for their generous sponsorship, I was successful in my application and now ready to learn all things Leadership.

Photo 1 was taken at opening retreat and is myself and my newly appointed buddy, Daniel. As you can see, we matched right from the start. This was the first connection I made through this leadership course and outside of the health and fitness space in a long time. It has also been one of the most important. Through making this new connection via carpooling and lunch time catchups outside of course hours we've been able to debrief, think tank and help each other in the process of getting comfortable with the uncomfortable.

Photo 2 was taken at the second program day - the power of project management. Where, unbeknown to us, was our first community project team collaboration into project management. Strong connections were formed and learnings about each other as team members and project leaders were made on this day and our team walked away with the confidence to construct and run a community project moving forward.



Photo 2: My Project Team

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THE MIDDLE



Photo 3: Participants at Tae Rak

Getting outside of my health and fitness bubble, creating new connections and getting comfortable with the uncomfortable were main drivers in taking on this opportunity. Now mid-way through this course these learning priorities are definitely in play. Program days have been significant in exploring new and previously unknown opportunities in our region and pushing the boundaries of my current views. The beauty of taking part in this program is being able to see and hear from such a diverse range of individuals and

backgrounds, and knowing that each of us feels supported to share their views and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. This fosters the environment to trial the learned leadership skills of the course without fear of retribution. Photos 3 and 4 show how relaxed, comfortable and supportive the group is with each other.

Our project team has decided to take on a project that is working to enhance volunteering rates within the Great South Coast Communities. The provision of a Volunteer Experience Day linking prospective volunteers and community groups aims to break down the barriers and fear many experience, in taking on volunteer roles.



Photo 4: Raymon, Jennifer and me

The skills learned from the course so far and the personal growth experienced has led to an opportunity I had not even thought of at the beginning of this course. A personal learning goal I noted at the beginning was to form a collaboration with an external organisation, bigger than my own to foster and promote healthy and empowered living in our community. I'm happy to say that I have been able to connect with National Centre for Farmer Health to create a six blog series relating to whole agricultural health that has been promoted on their social media and website, both of which have national coverage.

The second learning action was to read through the Health and Wellbeing Plan for Southern Grampians Shire Council. Having read through and liked the way the plan read and future actions noted, I also spied an employment opportunity for a Recreation Support Officer to work within the Recreation team. Going back to the question of how do I take what I'd been doing on an individual level to a community level? Well, maybe this is it. So here I am. I now find myself employed part-time with Southern Grampians Shire and continuing to run my original business. This course has built the skills to place confidence within my private business team to step up and take on opportunities created by my stepping out into the wider world. The juggle is real and continuing and, at the moment, I wouldn't have it any other way.