

**PRESS RELEASE****24.04.2017****Businesses offer fatherless boy chance to grow confidence and independence**

STARTS



Hamilton lad Morgan Glover, 14, has been training hard to get match-fit for the Outward Bound course he's tackling this week. He was excited and a little nervous, but "I'll get through it" he said in the days before he set off.

In the name of character and resilience, Outward Bound puts hundreds of kids of Morgan's age through their paces every year but the circumstances of this teen's enrolment are rather novel; his placement came as a result of a little generosity at a long business lunch.

Last year John Osborne and James Dalglish of GO Rentals placed an auction bid for a fatherless boy to experience a week with Outward Bound, at a Barworks Big Buddy Long Lunch.

Morgan is part of the Big Buddy programme that mentors fatherless boys in Auckland, Wellington, Hamilton, and as of next year, Christchurch. Mum Melanie has been parenting Morgan alone since he was 8-years-old and explains that it was just as Morgan was turning 12 that their family doctor handed over a brochure describing a new organisation in Hamilton that could benefit her son. Big Buddy began taking shape 20 years ago in Auckland, and after help from Waikato GJ Gardner and ITM franchises, was able to open their third office late 2016.

In the Waikato, Morgan is one of about 900 boys whose fathers are absent from their lives; there are over 5000 single parent families in the region. Auckland has roughly 16,000 single parent families out of which an estimated 2500 boys have no contact with fathers. In Wellington, the statistics are similar to those in the Waikato.



#### FAST FACTS

+ For a boy, having a man who can be relied on to care about his well-being tells him he is worth caring about. Because he feels better about himself, he'll try new things and learn resilience through coping with failure and success.

+ Little Buddy demographics closely mirror the general population: we have approx. 60% European New Zealanders; 18% Maori; 8% Pacific Islanders, 6% Asian and 8% other, in our programme.

+ Big Buddy was first funded by the Crime Prevention Office in 1997, as a 'fence at the top of the cliff' solution to steering troubled, fatherless boys away from crime. We now create better outcomes for boys from all demographics.

+ It costs roughly \$8,000 to match a fatherless boy with a compatible male role model. The mentor screening process is rigorous, includes psychological assessment and takes roughly 2 months to complete.

Luckily, Morgan's Big Buddy Russell is one of 15 Waikato men who, out of a growing pool of monthly enquirers and applicants, proved they had what it takes to be a mentor. He's thrilled that the boy he's known for 7 months will get the chance to strengthen his character at Outward Bound.

"It will broaden his horizons hugely and provide invaluable experience interacting with his peers in new and challenging situations - not to mention the physical challenges," says Russell Walsh, a Genesis LPG Operations Manager in Hamilton. When he looks back on the reasons he wanted to be able to help instil confidence and, ultimately, happiness, in another young human being, they mostly come down to his own boyhood lessons.

"I come from a background of a family of six, not overly affluent, with my parents splitting when I was 12. It is nice to be able to pass on some of the coping mechanisms and hard won learnings I have picked up over the years and have some fun while doing it" he says.

Barworks were thrilled to see that buying a week at Outward Bound for an auction item was already looking so positive for a Little Buddy.

"Our customers encouraged us to purchase an Outward Bound course to auction off at our Sweat Shop Brew Kitchen Big Buddy Long Lunch. These courses are known for the valuable experiences they provide children with, and for us, being able to provide an experience like this to a Little Buddy is a joy the entire Barworks team share. Working alongside Big Buddy allows us the ability to not only generate donations toward a fantastic organisation, but to use our industry to build memories for these young boys and their wonderful mentors," says Managing Director John Hellebrekers.

Mum Melanie had no reserves about him travelling down country and taking part, save for the pressure for him to quickly get fit for the 3km run. She's keen to see him take up this chance for greater independence and confidence.

The latter are also qualities that boys get out of having a male mentor. Studies show that boys in female only households are more likely to miss opportunities to take risks; men tend to encourage boys to take risks in order to discover their own limits and then judge risk better in future. This leads to independence and trust in ability. This was also evident in a Horizon Research survey commissioned in 2013: 73% of Little Buddies reported feeling more confident to try new things since getting a mentor, and 79% of their carers said outcomes had improved in general, the most positive change being in their self-confidence.

**ENDS**

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