



Youth Insearch – keeping kids alive

Approximately 2400 Australians commit suicide each year according to the Australian Bureau of Statistics and suicide is now the leading cause of death among young people under the age of 30.

Youth Insearch (www.youthinsearch.org), a unique, non-religious charity, is one organisation which is making a real and tangible difference to the lives of more than 1000 Australian kids each year, many of whom have attempted or contemplated suicide. The organisation has helped more than 27,000 kids find a path forward since it was formed 21 years ago.

“Youth Insearch was founded 21 years ago to tackle some of the biggest problems confronting our young people, including drug and alcohol addiction, emotional and physical abuse, bullying and low self esteem,” Founder Ron Barr OAM said.

“We know from the young people we work with that as many as 60% have thought about suicide while 30% have actually attempted it and that’s something we, as a community, have to work together to change.”

19-year-old Sam Jenkins first became involved with Youth Insearch when she was 15

“My parents divorced when I was 11 and I went and lived with my Mum. She got remarried to this lovely man and we got along really well. He then passed away on the 23rd of December six years ago from cancer.”

“I was at TAFE by that stage and some of the teachers were involved with Youth Insearch and recommended that I go on one of the camps so I did. My mum then met this new guy, and he was, well, not nice. He played mind games. I was already involved in Youth Insearch by that stage and that helped a lot”

“My Mum then passed away two years ago and, without Youth Insearch, I wouldn’t have coped. If I hadn’t had the support, the love, the caring of the Youth Insearch team to deal with that, I don’t think I would have been here today.”

15-year-old Henry Barker is another Youth Insearch success story. He and his younger brother became involved with Youth Insearch after being subjected to an extremely horrific and abusive childhood totally beyond their mother’s control.

“I’d be dead without Youth Insearch. Youth Insearch turns your life around. It gives you opportunity but you have to know how to use that opportunity. Everyone who goes to Youth Insearch has an opportunity. Some let it slip, others take it up and become leaders. I now have this great opportunity in front of me and I know that I can do anything now.”

Former elite swimmer and Paralympian, Nicole Davey, has a similar story.

“I came back home having to deal with the depression of finishing off a swimming career, school problems and also my parents separating. Without Youth Insearch, I don’t know if I’d be alive to be honest. It came along at a time when I was very

suicidal. I had attempted it a few times. But Youth Insearch helped me get back on track. I've now finished my uni degree and am currently on a grad program so hopefully in the next few years I'll start developing a career for myself."

Youth Insearch is holding its first ever Gala Fundraising Dinner on September 22 under the BigTop at Sydney's Luna Park to generate funds to allow even more kids to be helped.

Singing sensation Tom Burlinson will provide a touch of Ole Blue Eyes for the Dinner while Youth Insearch has also secured a major coup with the theatrical preview of the \$6million stage musical adaptation of *Priscilla, Queen of the Desert* ahead of its world premiere at the Lyric Theatre, Star City on Saturday 7 October.

And Bert Newton has kindly agreed to takeover as Master of Ceremonies, a role which was originally to be fulfilled by long-time Youth Insearch supporter, Alan Jones, who is now unable to attend.

Tickets to the Dinner are selling quickly but a limited number are still available by calling **Paul Simpson** at Youth Insearch on **02 9659 6122** or **Jane Ferguson** on **02 9326 1498**

About Youth Insearch

Youth Insearch was founded 21 years ago by a most remarkable Australian, Ron Barr OAM, who has dedicated himself to caring for children who have been dealt an unfair hand in life. In those 21 years, Ron and his wife Judith OAM have provided the opportunity for over 27,000 young Australians to empower their lives and this year, it will assist more than 1000 kids throughout Australia.

The unique Youth Insearch approach allows young people to actually address the real reason of why, they are either experimenting or abusing drugs and/or alcohol, why they are partaking in anti-social behaviour, turning to crime or just lack any motivation to obtain employment or continue with their education. Through Weekend Camps and follow up Support, young people establish new goals and directions in their lives.

Interviews with Ron Barr and Youth Insearch Leaders and participants are available

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