



Youth in Emergency Services

What is a YES Camp?

YES stands for Youth in Emergency Services and its a 5 day immersive programme across a broad range of emergency services, leading up to a full cross agency exercise on the last day. The attendees are then asked to select their preferred service and will commit to volunteer for 3 months.

Background

Funded by the Ministry of Youth Development the first camp, attended by 15 youth, was held in 2015 at Glentui Lodge and on the last day at Waipara Adventure Centre. It was repeated in 2016 and this time it was held at the Waipara Adventure Centre and Waimakariri youth were invited to attend also.

Because of a lack of funding and the pandemic there was a gap from 2017 until it was held again in 2023. The Hurunui Youth Council advocated for its return and committed funds to run it and thanks to new funding from The Rātā Foundation it returned for the July 2023 school holidays.

Camp Format

- A 5 day camp is held during school holidays. Emergency services run a 1/2 day session with participants, except for LSAR who ran an overnight exercise.
- At completion of the camp, each youth attendee volunteers for 3 months.
- Mid way catchup. Council staff will check in with youth and the chosen service to see how the volunteering is going. In the past this has been face-to-face, for 2023 this will be via phone and/or email.
- YES Camp Graduation. A celebration for all the YES participants, their families and the emergency services is held on completion of the youth volunteering.

Challenges



- 1 Recruiting enough youth of the right age to run the camp each year. This is why the camp has been opened to neighbouring regions.
- 2 Its a big week for council staff to be there 24 hours a day. There needs to be a couple of camp 'parents' available to assist staff.
- 3 2023 costs involved to run the camp. We were lucky to have external funding and Satisfy Food Rescue as a partner.

Council news story: [Next Gen volunteers take training to the top level.](#)





Outcomes

- Participants had a positive experience connecting with peers from across the district.
- Interactive sessions with various services were well-received.
- The large exercise on day five of the camp was a great success. Family and friends were able to observe the participants demonstrate the skills they had learnt over the week.
- Volunteering for their chosen emergency service.
- A strong partnership between youth and emergency services.
- Collaborative approach to youth development and community engagement.



The Future...

- With the success of 2023 YES camp, there looks to be a bright future for the upcoming years.
- Looking at a collaboration across districts – possibly inviting Kaikoura, Waimakariri and Selwyn youth to join.

“I found the week super interesting and really enjoyed being a part of it. It was really all good. The blindfolded playground obstacle course really showed how easy it was to get disoriented.”

Izzy from Hanmer Springs – July 23

“Overall, I learnt more about teamwork and the different roles needed within emergency services and how to get a big task done as quickly as possible to save lives.”

Grace from Amberley – July 23



Thanks to our funders and agency partners:

