

FROM: Parent of a Youth

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing this letter to support a funding application for Marlborough Youth Trust to have clinician support for mental health available at MYSPACE through partnering with Whanake Youth in Nelson

I am writing as a parent and guardian of youth that use the services of the Marlborough Youth Trust

Marlborough Youth Trust staff are a fabulous bunch of people, they are in tune with the needs of youth and are well liked by the youth and their families.

In order to fully explain how the Youth Trust operates and the holistic view they take, I feel like I should share my personal experiences with them.

My family has been using the services of the Marlborough Youth trust for several years now.

I am the Parent of 2 children, stepmother of 2 children and guardian of an extended family member who is in their teens.

A teen in our home, has had several family issues that have led to them entering into my care. Their Mother and Father are both P addicts, with their early years living in a home where domestic violence was a regular occurrence. The teen was absent from school for most of an 18-month period when the mother's P use was so intense, the teen suffered fear to leave their mum. The father has only ever had sporadic involvement in this teen's life, the struggle through school with an undiagnosed learning disability and in the last 2 years has had to adjust to the changes of entering a large blended family.

I do not know what I would have done without the support of the staff at the Marlborough Youth Trust. They engaged this fantastic teen and made them feel safe in a world where each day was a struggle. This teen has been involved in the Seddon Youth Group for several years, which is affiliated to the Youth Trust. The Youth Trust provided opportunities for the teen to be involved in camps (the southern Easter camp) they encouraged the teen to engage in the expression's sessions for NZ Youth Week.

The Youth trust recognised that there were several children within the youth group that had experienced significant trauma and started a group on a Tuesday evening for these youth. This group was a safe space for these youth to talk and discuss things going on in their lives. They initially cooked and ate dinner together while doing this. This has since evolved and grown, and they now also incorporate Meditation into this. My teen was not keen to do counselling with someone they did not know, so engaging in this group has been hugely helpful to both the teen and me. I am so indebted to this group and its Youth workers; they have helped me keep my family member's, mental health well.

The Youth trust made us aware early last year that they believed that our teen would be a great fit and should apply for a position on MYTAGS, (Marlborough Youth Advisory Group) they were accepted. MYTAGS has kept the teen engaged with the community and has provided opportunities in ways that school has never been able to. Through MYTAGS my teen was encouraged and supported to make a speech at a meeting in front of the Mayor. They were petrified of speaking in public but with the support of the peers and the youth workers, they were able to do this, they were so proud of themselves. I was extremely proud of my teen as well

The teen has also had the opportunity to be involved with the organisation of a couple of large youth gatherings arranged by the youth trust. At these gatherings they were offered the opportunity to assist security, help with set up and pack down, engage with suppliers all these things are helping to think about the different things that they might like to do with their life. After one event my teen talked to me about how much they enjoyed security and could see themselves doing that in the future as a job.

My teen, drops into the Youth Centre on a regular basis and uses the facility services often.

My two children and teen are now a part of the boot camp sessions offered to improve the health of youth and my dependant has also started using the facility to meet with friends and play pool and table tennis, my stepson is also considering joining us at boot camp each week.

I am so proud of the Marlborough Youth Trust and all it has to offer our Youth. The staff are incredible. I often tell people that I wouldn't be surprised if Marlborough didn't have the best Youth Trust in the country and I honestly stand by that statement.

I do not know how I would have supported my family through the last few years without the support and services available through this amazing place. I happily support any funding to continue to allow this space to grow. How lucky, am I as a parent and caregiver to have these wonderful services available to me and my children?

Kind regards

A happy parents and care giver