

**ACTIVATE**  
**C H U R C H**

**2015/2016 ANNUAL REPORT**

## Lead Pastor's Report

Ps Brad Chilcott

*July 2015 - June 2016*

It feels like it's every year that I say that a ridiculous amount of things happened. Maybe it's that a year's worth of things happen every year and so it's a redundant statement. Or maybe there's some kind of parabolic graph in play in which each year is destined to have vastly more happenstances than the previous year.

Either way, I'm feeling it. For our family, 6 months of dialysis for Harrison led into a kidney transplant which led into moving house, followed by another 6 months of more than regular hospital stays, follow-up operations and procedures, viruses, infections and more.

So the first thing I'd like to report on is the amazing amount of love, support and encouragement we've received from the Activate community. From emergency babysitting, to helping us move house, to simply understanding the unusual shape of our lives and ministry you've been incredible. For me, personally, it's been a real source of strength and motivation seeing our community grow in love, inclusion and confidence in our character and values. I love it that even though there have been many challenges we've continued to thrive, to serve, to listen and to take risks. It's an honour to be a part of the Activate family.

As you'll read in this report, there are so many good stories to tell - and no where near all of them are recorded here - as we've collectively and individually tried to learn how to do all of life from Jesus. The focus of the last 18 months on "The Marks of a Disciple" has been fantastic and I can really see how many people have allowed the Holy Spirit to shape their character and lives. We try to build a community that's united around a way of being rather than around "religion" and I think we're getting closer.

I'm really proud of what's happening at NCOH Youth, Food for Education (Kenya), in Cambodia and at Bowden Brompton Community School. It's been great to see the improvements made to our property and our relationship with The Welcome Centre. Our worship team continues to grow in both excellence and creativity. October Camp, the Lad's Weekends and the Women's Retreat have been wonderful experiences of community, deepening spirituality and really well organised by the various teams. I could go on listing all the goodness - I love this stuff. But what I've probably been most moved by over these 12 months has been the individual stories of people finding a community in which they feel they can belong, contribute and thrive - one that they feel looks and feels like Jesus. It's been more than once this year that I've heard phrases like, "I've never felt accepted like I am here."

It's beyond beautiful to know that Activate is a community where all person - regardless of culture, background, gender, sexuality or race - are equally welcomed and valued.

Andrew Foster, (Community Pastor), Rachael Foster (Administration and Communications) and Jude Thomas (Finance Administrator) have been an

extremely hard-working staff team that have added so much to our community this year. They're great stewards of the money our community gives to make all things Activate happen and I wouldn't have made it through these 12 months without them. Thanks to each of you.

The Pastoral Executive team, and the Activate community more broadly, said a very sad farewell to Pete and Sally Haskard, and their girls, and they continue to be missed. Their contribution to Activate - since before its first official day of existence - can't be underestimated.

I'd like to thank our current Executive - myself, Andrew and Rachael Foster, Kerrie Polkinghorne, Simmo and Louise Heinrich - for your diligent, thoughtful and wise leadership of Activate through many challenging times.

The Core Leadership team of Activate - including all preachers and worship, catalyst and department leaders - is the engine room of our activity. This crew - and the teams they lead - are the ones that make our Sunday gatherings happen, activate us out in the community, welcome new people, give life to our catalysts and much more. Thanks for all you do.

I also oversee the teaching team and I've been really excited to see new people adding their voice to our Sunday gatherings in a range of ways. I love the diversity of perspectives present in our community and the opportunity to be challenged and inspired by them. Preparing a message for a Sunday morning takes many hours of work and is a fairly daunting prospect - even when you do it a lot. To those of you who have been willing to take a risk, be generous with your time and share your wisdom - thanks. And to Andrew Foster and Louise Heinrich who we are privileged to hear from most often, I am indebted to your passion and willingness to pour yourselves out for our community and the cause of Christ.

There's an almost unlimited amount of things I could reflect on in this report. I love our community, its people and its purposes. I love the way we chase after the heart of God together. I'm energised by the way we bear with one another in love. I'm strengthened by our willingness to walk down the hard paths that Jesus has walked before us, even when we're unsure what lies at the end.

These have been 12 months full of challenge and change and I'm so glad you're part of this adventure with me.

## **Community**

### **Ps Andrew Foster**

Over the past year, the Activate community overall has seen some changes.

In the past year, we've said goodbye to some very cherished and strong contributors who through work, marriage and adventure have moved interstate or overseas. Each of these individuals are missed but always will remain a part of our community no matter where they are in the world.

This has changed the dynamic of the community and seen some programs change too, as our community is a reflection of those who are able to contribute to it.

We've also sadly said goodbye to Nicole Senter and Paul Coutts who both suddenly passed away earlier this year. The community of Activate felt their passing deeply and were strongly present and involved in both of the funerals.

In the past year, there have been many visitors and new friends join our community too. Each of our Causes, Catalysts and Sunday gatherings have seen many new faces contributing and having a positive impact.

New people have joined each of the teams on Sundays, especially in Kids Church which has brought new energy and fresh ideas.

Open House has continued strongly and seen us welcomed into greater variety of homes all around Adelaide from those who are part of our community.

The past year has seen a stronger emphasis on connecting deeper with The Welcome Centre and for the first time, Activate and The Welcome Centre had their Christmas celebration together.

The Activate Camp, Women's Retreat, Women's Prayer Gatherings and Lad's weekends plus many other events have deepened relationships and spiritual connection between our ever changing community.

## **Catalysts**

### **Ps Andrew Foster**

Catalysts continue to remain an essential part of what it is to be in the Activate Community.

Catalysts are the small communities within the larger community where people connect, feel encouraged, feel welcomed and feel connected.

As the community has undergone some change this year, this too has reflected itself in the Catalysts.

Edwardstown and Belair (now Blackwood) have remained, however Hillcrest closed down with the departure of the Haskard family as well as Bowden daytime as the dynamics and availability of the community changed.

Catawest under the leadership of Joel and Kerrie Polkinghorne has been a shining light and has continued to grow and connect many who are new or who weren't previously connected.

Blackwood Catalyst has undergone some significant changes as many who moved interstate or overseas came from that small community. However, others have

joined the catalyst and it has undergone a renewal that is still finding its new rhythm.

There is now a need for at least one new catalyst in the east/north east of the city and discussions are underway to make that become a reality in the next couple of months.

The past year has seen new ways of connecting as smaller groups have arisen organically, with prayer, retreats, common interests and games nights becoming a part of who we are.

## **Activate Kids            Ps Andrew Foster**

Activate Kids has undergone some structural changes in the past 6 months.

We are so thankful for the tireless efforts of the Haskard family over the past few years to lead and make sure the Sprouts and Buds groups have been an excellent space for our kids to grow, connect and learn together.

With the Haskard's move interstate, Rachel Chilcott has taken over as the leader for Buds and Andrew Foster for Sprouts in a temporary role.

There have been many new volunteers in both programs, however the need for Sprouts leaders continues to be an issue and there is a great need for more volunteers to join in this program.

Many thanks to those who have joined or have continued to serve our young people.

Due to the growth in visitors there have been many weeks where the spaces have felt tight, especially in Sprouts for games and other activities. Now that there have been some renovations externally, there is some scope for some of these activities to move outside in the warmer months.

Curriculum for both programs has changed too, Rachel Chilcott has taken the lead in this area for Buds while Sprouts is now exploring the 'Jesus Storybook Bible' program after the successful "What's in the Bible" video based program concluded.

In the past few months we have been trialling Activate Youth (10-14 years) once a month during our gatherings with varied success under the leadership of Bekk Sellars and Dan Thompson. Initially visited by some of the NCOH youth group, this has become more centred around those who come with their parents to our morning gatherings.

As the young people continue to grow up, the need for this program will continue to grow, so it's important that we continue to pursue this program into the future.

## **2015 Activate Camp & Retreats**

**Ps Andrew Foster**

In 2015 we had our first Activate camp for a few years and it was great!

El-Shaddai Campsite was the venue and it didn't disappoint, with great facilities, outdoor spaces, good food and multiple halls.

Josh Downton from World Vision was our guest speaker, sharing around themes of authenticity that really spoke to the approximately 70 who attended.

This camp we also had a few sessions focusing on Indigenous issues and Christian Feminism which really opened the minds and hearts of our community and have continued to influence us.

Worship, Kids meetings and recreational activities were all exceptional and well lead.

Helen King (now Blakey), created a prayer room to support and cover in prayer each of the programs during the camp which really built the community atmosphere and expectation.

It is our hope to hold camps every second year, with the next one likely in October 2017.

The past year has seen some other retreats too, the Women's retreat with guest speaker Ps Sharon Wright from Hope Church Condoblin was a beautiful weekend in June 2016. Over 20 women gathered together down in two homes at the beach in Carrackalinga to deeply connect with God, each other and to have some time out too. The success of the weekend was due in part to the Women's Prayer Gatherings that have been happening every month for the previous 18 months which has built a strong connection between a core group of women.

The men this year have had some time away together too at 'Lads Weekends', tenting down at the Coorong in March and Kuito Forest in June. It's been great to get away to get to know each other better and numbers have grown for each weekend. A big sincere thanks must go to Ben Trewren for all the work he has put into each weekend.

## **Worship Team**

**Simon Heinrich**

This past year, especially the beginning of 2016 I have been somewhat forced to re-evaluate how we function as a worship team. The losses of a number of consistent and talented team members through leaving our congregation to pursue their calling interstate and overseas had created a void in our team structure. Thankfully I've also seen supremely gifted team members step up their involvement and leadership, and some welcome new additions to our team ensuring we continued to see the realisation of our vision – that we would join together to create opportunities for our community to intimately connect with God, and that we would witness acts of the Holy Spirit in our times of worship.

Across the new year we raised \$1850 within the worship team to fund the purchase of some new equipment. The wider church also raised an additional \$200 to contribute to this. This money allowed us to retire three worn out microphones with high quality replacements, totalling \$435. Additionally, we were able to purchase a full set of drum cymbals more suited to the chapel for \$1415, eliminating our need to use any more borrowed equipment. We still have \$200 remaining to contribute to our next purchase.

I have felt strongly the need to redefine our worship language as a community, into an expression that that reflects not only our unique culture, but also our theological beliefs and our heart. Our worship leaders and the community as a whole have eagerly embraced this as we have searched for the means in which to genuinely worship God in a way that feels like a natural response to his reality in our lives.

The Activate camp, women's retreat, women's prayer and catalysts have all been times of spiritual growth and deepening intimacy with God, with worship at the heart of these gatherings. I look forward to seeing the ongoing effects of our desire for deep spirituality through these communal times. I also look forward to seeing where our searching leads us in worship as we continue to gather as a whole church on Sundays.

## **Welcome Team**

## **Amy Bradshaw**

Over the past year the welcome team have really set their own culture of welcome, encouragement and helpfulness and taken incredible ownership over a Sunday morning gatherings.

Treating Sunday mornings is as if they were hosting a party in the home has been the theme, and an intentional focus on building relationships outside of Sunday mornings. On top of that, making sure that all people, particularly those visiting Activate are comfortable and happy when gathering with our family on a Sunday morning and have every opportunity to link into community rhythms that prioritise authentic community.

I'm very grateful for everyone on the team and for allowing God to stretch them out of their comfort zone to ensure that those around them enjoy gathering, worshipping and building new friendships at Activate. I am mostly excited about how the team have taken on the role of a welcomer and all that it encompasses. Growing from a few core people, and expanding into a team of 10 diverse individuals that extend their spirit of welcome and generosity beyond just a Sunday morning, the welcome team adds so much value to the community and vision of Activate.

I hope we can continue to be a family that accommodates, welcomes and stretches ourselves to be as hospitable and generous as Jesus' example.

## Causes Rachael Foster

The Causes department of Activate exists to champion the heart for social justice within our community and beyond, and help people in our community to connect in meaningful ways with organisations and causes who share their passion or turn their passions into a cause.

We also endeavour to champion and encourage parts of everyday life that look like the kingdom as people work, volunteer, study etc. One way we have done this is through our Sunday Interviews, these happen regularly as a way to build community and provide opportunities for people to get to know each other more, but also to affirm and celebrate aspects of daily life that look like the kingdom. The Sunday interviews were hugely popular during 2014/2015 and we have recently begun them again. The 'This is Activate' column in the newsletter also aims to do this, by celebrating both Causes that are linked with Activate and aspects of life of individuals.

It has been exciting to see different causes grow and develop, both those within initiated and managed by the Activate community as a whole and also by individuals within the community. We are excited to partner with Bekk Sellars as she runs NCOH Youth, and it has been great to see the support she has received from people within our community, many of whom are now just as invested as Bekk is. The breakfast program at Bowden Brompton Community School has now been running for several years and it has been exciting to see new team members take ownership of this and run with it at different stages. Thanks to Amy Bradshaw for her ongoing commitment to the school over the whole life of the program. Wawira Njiru is running Food for Education in Kenya. Wawira began FFE while studying here in Adelaide, before moving back home to Kenya expand and develop the program. It's great that we can still support Wawira from afar. Our relationships in Cambodia continue to grow and it the future possibilities are exciting. Our Reconciliation Action Plan group paused in the beginning half of this year with the departure of Josh and Nicole Honey. While caring for Indigenous Australians is still a huge concern of our community, we currently don't have a dedicated group for this.

It is exciting to be a part of a community where people act on issues they are passionate about; this has been evident in various ways throughout the year, particularly through the use of social media. It has been inspiring to see the way people have become involved with different campaigns or issues throughout the year. The daily conversation around buying fair trade, care for the environment, ethical shopping, people being involved in individual fundraising or awareness raising projects about issues they are passionate about, all of these things are so inspiring and I feel so privileged to be part of a community that is so actively involved in deliberately bringing about His kingdom.

## **Breakfast Program**

**Amy Bradshaw**

The Bowden Brompton Community School breakfast program continues to be a tangible way that Activate engages with and connects to the local community in Bowden. Since spending some time there on my placement I have realised that both staff and teachers alike are very grateful for the program that has now been running for four years.

Serving up to 40 breakfasts on a Friday morning, our volunteers work hard and there is always an energetic, fun vibe in the kitchen as we work alongside the senior students to get breakfast made and served for the staff and students in the school. The students learn new cooking skills which will benefit them in their life, good communication skills and how to work in a team.

The program has now been added in to the school curriculum as a community engagement topic and students can actually gain SACE points which is a really excellent achievement. This year, I would like to acknowledge Joel Polkinghorne and Natalie Simpkin who have stepped up all semester and run the program, and worked wholeheartedly alongside the staff to keep the program going. In addition, Bekk Sellars, Andrew Foster and a few others have invested their time over years.

Thank you to all the volunteers who have chipped in. I hope the partnership between BBCS and Activate will continue to grow, as we support the school in their vision and stand alongside them through the trials and triumphs they face.

## **Food For Education**

**Wawira Njiru**

Food for Education in the past year began and completed the construction of our first centralised school based kitchen. This has the capacity to provide lunch to over 1500 students.

We are currently providing subsidised lunch to 300 students a day and plan on increasing this to 1500 over the next year. This is a huge step for us because exactly a year ago we were feeding 40 kids a day and are now feeding 300, working to feed 1500 exactly a year from now.

Our year has been full of lots of tests and lessons. We launched a crowdfunding campaign with which we raised \$1340 (special thanks to Hoop Stars for generously giving \$700) and also had a crowdfunding campaign specifically targeted for Kenya and we raised \$9000. All this went towards the construction of our kitchen.

We won a challenge with [IDEO.org](https://www.ideo.org/), the biggest design thinking company in the world. We are working with them over the next 12 months to develop our restaurant and generate more profits that subsidise more school meals. IDEO uses human centred design in innovation and problem solving and so we have been working with them to apply this to our business. Along with design thinking support, we also receive up to \$200,000 funding to scale our business. Yay!

We have also partnered with World Vision Kenya under their HungerFree campaign for the next 2 years and I became an official HungerFree ambassador. HungerFree

is a campaign by World Vision International and is a great opportunity for us because it gives us a more global platform and also an opportunity to work with World Vision and other partners to create a world without hunger, We launched our partnership on the 13th of July with a cook out for 800 kids with renowned Canadian chef Dennis Prescott. We have also been contacted by Jamie Oliver's food revolution team to share our work on their platform. This will be published on their news hub in the coming weeks. Very exciting!!

It's been a crazy year and thank you so much to all who have supported our work. Excited for an even crazier year!

## **Cambodia**

## **Rachael Foster**

This year was the 7th year Activate has sent a team to Cambodia to further build relationships and explore new opportunities. A team of 6 people travelled in January this year, including three people who had not previously spent time in Cambodia.

A highlight of the trip was attending the wedding of our good friends Sopheak and Srey Pich who we have built a relationship with over several years. Andrew Foster had the privilege of being able to conduct a Christian wedding ceremony at their request on the back of their traditional Cambodian ceremony.

We are proud to work with a number of groups already active in Cambodia who we believe share our same heart.

Of significance this year, we were able to strengthen relationships with Joko and Karen Kristiono, a couple with an exciting organic ministry to university students including residential care, employment and leadership training, English classes and Futsal. We are excited by what Joko and Karen are doing and look forward to more opportunities to work with them and support them.

We also had the opportunity to be able to build on a relationship with a woman named Sokenthea, who is a leader of the women in her community and provides many valuable services including a child care centre and domestic violence/crisis care. The women in the team were able to spend time with many women from Sokenthea's community, including time in prayer and sharing. We look forward to new opportunities with the women in this community over the coming years, including a potential upcoming women's retreat at the request of the women from the community.

The Church of the True Saviour in Kandal Province in partnership with Activate, has set up the Vietnamese Love School which provides education for stateless Vietnamese children who otherwise wouldn't have access to formal education.

During this year's trip in January, the church asked Elise and Rachael, both teachers, to conduct some teacher training with the teachers from the school as well as local kids church and youth group leaders. This was a great opportunity and we are continuing conversation with the church and school to help to find additional ways to ensure the school is well equipped and resourced.

We have pledged to support the basic running costs of the school through sponsorships from people in the community and beyond. We also endeavour to cover additional expenses when we can to allow the school to grow and be able to assist more children. Additional donations from people in our community this year have contributed to enabling the school to purchase school uniforms, backpacks, school books and build lockers. We are continually looking for more people to partner with us in supporting the school in order to enable them to grow and will also be holding some fundraising events during the second half of the year to raise both funds and awareness of the school in the wider community.

The Church of the True Saviour runs another project which supports orphans in their community by placing them with extended family and providing support for their new family to be able to care for them. We hope to be able to begin supporting this project and are planning some fundraising before the end of the year.

## **Northern Communities of Hope (NCOH)**

**Bekk Sellars**

NCOH youth is a community that was established just over a year ago with the support of Activate church and Northern Communities of Hope in Davoren Park. Its goal is to create a safe space for young people, build positive relationships and allow young people to learn life skills and explore faith in Jesus. The particular focus being on the at risk young people in the community.

It has seen a drop in centre start once a week on a Wednesday and a Sunday night program which is essentially 'youth church' where we worship, share and eat dinner together. Both of these programs are run out of a community centre in the heart of Davoren Park. We had an incredible camp in April where we took 25 young people to the river to go kayaking, hiking and learning more about who Jesus is together. On this camp many of the young people who came encountered Jesus and have come to know Him in a real and tangible way - a number of them want to get baptised. We also have started a care group (Catalyst) and follow up and care for kids who are unable to attend the programs for various reasons.

We have an amazing growing team of now 20 volunteers from various faith communities around Adelaide. Although it's still early days, things have been unfolding incredibly. The number of kids coming is growing weekly but the challenges they face in life are also growing. It's had a lot of ups and downs that come with working in communities with a lot of heart ache but we are looking forward to the future and seeking Gods agenda for this community to see what's next.

Things that are on the horizon are a girls and boys mentoring camp, finding a new space (as we are out-growing ours), proper training for volunteers, developing the drop in centre, exploring partnerships with other organisations regarding the needs of the community and getting a bus. Our needs are prayer for wisdom in our next steps as well as for our young people, some strong male volunteers (we have 4/20) and resources for the things that we need like a bus.

We are very thankful for the Activate community backing this - in particular Dan Thompson and Amy Bradshaw who have been in it from the beginning and are a key part of this community. Also Helen King, Will Menzies, Natalie Simpkin, Kelly Nesbitt, Joel Polkinghorne and Andrew Foster have come out and supported the programs as well as everyone who has donated and been praying for it.

This is what has helped make this happen and what will make it continue into the future.

## **Building Projects**

### **Ps Andrew Foster**

This past year has seen many different improvements to the facilities we have at Drayton Street. Through the State Government grant (\$100,000) for The Welcome Centre, we now have access to a new large (plumbed) kitchen, air-conditioning for the second hall, upgraded electrics and paving between the two halls from the entry through to the toilets inclusive of better stormwater drainage.

The Welcome Centre has also upgraded security to the second hall, with new doors, increased sensor lighting, an alarm system and CCTV monitoring all with the aim to make the premises safer, especially at night.

Other building projects have included:

- A mounted projector in the 'Sprouts' room,
- Painting in the 'Buds' Room
- New child friendly fencing and gate between the buildings and the carpark.
- Removal of the internal (ancient/fuse) meter box and a new external meter box.

In 2016 we entered into a new more official lease arrangement with the new owners Anglicare, to replace the existing arrangement with the Anglican Church.

In this new arrangement, Welcome to Australia become the primary lessee to allow Anglicare to continue a lower lease arrangement, not possible with a church organisation.

The new landlords have already begun some external building management works at the request of Activate as per our new agreement, such as gutter maintenance/ replacement and restoration of the crumbling window arches.

There are more projects planned in the coming year which include further renovation/upgrades to the 'Buds' room, a facelift to the entry of the chapel plus other minor improvements.

We are continually on the lookout for future funding to improve the lighting in the chapel.