



SU News

AUTUMN EDITION 2024



Empowering mission from the ground up

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Pointing people to *Jesus*

Throughout this past summer, at the SUFM and SUMmerlife programs, I witnessed many individuals – both young and not-so-young – testifying to Jesus in various ways. From songs and dances, shows, pantomimes, art classes, and games of all sorts, to one-on-one conversations, acts of kindness and hospitality over good food and coffee; the message of Jesus was shared in diverse and creative ways.

“This is the essence of the mission: to bear witness to Jesus and make His Good News known.”

During the transition from 2023 to 2024, 1,093 volunteers exemplified this mission by engaging with others and sharing the Gospel of Jesus. It was truly inspiring to witness this generation commit to spreading the message of Jesus.

“I was particularly moved by the challenge Peter Sherlock (Kiama Director) presented to his team: to view the 10 days of mission as a launchpad for the remaining 355 days of the year, to continue being witnesses for Jesus throughout the entire year, and to not limit their witness to just the mission season.”

How do you personally engage in witnessing to Jesus? Jesus Himself stated, “You will be my witnesses...” (Acts 1:8), addressing all of us. Witnessing was never intended to be optional or reserved for professionals or select individuals.

Scripture Union embraces the radical idea that anyone, regardless of age, can be a witness for Jesus; that young people can share the message of Jesus with their peers.

This idea remains at the core of our mission, and we are dedicated to empowering people of all ages to share the Good News of Jesus.

SU NSW empowers ordinary people to do extraordinary things, and it starts by simply asking, “Why not?”. So, while the summer season of mission may have concluded, there are countless opportunities for you to be a witness throughout the year.

Yours in Christ,



Ian Altman
NSW State Director



**Partner with us as we point
to Jesus in 2024**

1. Volunteer

sunsw.org.au/volunteer/opportunities

2. Pray

Join us: sunsw.org.au/pray

3. Donate

sunsw.org.au/give





Taking your family on *Mission*

Fiona Gentle and Naomi McGrath share the blessings and challenges of serving as a family on Scripture Union Family Missions.

** Excerpts taken from Growing Faith (a ministry of youthworks) – 12 January, 2024. Read full article: <https://growingfaith.com.au/articles/taking-your-family-on-mission>*

What inspired you to go on a Scripture Union Family Mission?

Fiona: My husband and I both had positive experiences of SUFMs in our younger days. We saw mission as an opportunity to serve God in a focused way.

What roles do you and your husband usually play on a team?

Fiona: Until very recently I served in the Pre-school to Year 2 section, allowing me to have my kids with me, but in the last two years I have moved to a more administrative role. We live and minister in the small town where the

mission takes place. I think it helps to have a local on the registration desk.

Naomi: After one year cooking for the Corrimal team, we joined the team responsible for running adult activities. My husband and another team member are artists and so they added art classes to the mission schedule. I joined in on the women's craft afternoons—I ran a clay bead making session, spoke to the women about their lives and shared my testimony with them.

What are some of the blessings?

Fiona: Being a part of a Christian community united in purpose. My girls have grown up watching young adults they admire read the Bible, pray, discuss how theology impacts their world, give up their time to serve God and have lots of fun doing it. There are lots of influences in our children's lives—the mission team is a group I can be confident will demonstrate values that align with our family's values.



Below: Fiona Gentle (pictured below) has served with her husband and three daughters (aged 14, 12 and 9) on Scripture Union Family Missions (SUFMs) since 2010, first at Tuggerah, then Tanilba Bay. Naomi McGrath (not pictured) has been on team for three years at Corrimal SUFM, alongside her husband and four children (aged 8, 11, 14, 15).



“I cannot quantify the blessing that it’s been in my children’s lives and the eternal impact of these relationships. We have been blessed with so many good summer memories. Our kids love the fun games, the sun and water, and the little pranks.”

Naomi: For my mother’s heart there is little that’s more joyful to me than seeing my children enjoying Christian community, which happens in a special way on SUFM. Especially seeing my teens being included and loved by the young adults on the team. The wider team also appreciates having families on mission because:

- It shows that mission is ‘safe’.
- Couples can demonstrate what a godly marriage looks like and provide role models of Christian parenting. Young adults get to see this ‘lived out’ for a whole week (the good bits and the less good bits!) and reflect on how they might want to live.

What have been some challenges you’ve faced?

Fiona: A big challenge is balancing the needs of the mission with your family’s needs. Sometimes, as a parent, you can feel like you’re missing out on bits. But, the biggest challenge for our family is not on mission but the decision to do mission. Sometimes giving up a week of annual leave from a stressful job to spend a very busy week doing mission seems like a terrible choice for my own work–life balance. But spiritually, it is a real kick-start to my year, which leaves me feeling energised and is a helpful ‘re-set’ to make sure I am focused on God’s priorities and not my own. It’s so worth it!

Do you have any final words for parents considering this kind of ministry?

Fiona: Definitely do it! If it’s your first year and you have younger children, find out if there are other families already serving on the mission and connect with them before you go. They can give you tips about equipment you might need to take with you, or ways they fit their family around the team schedule. Naomi: Like parenting in general, making mission work requires staying flexible and depending on God for energy and patience. The kids have pleaded with us to keep coming back—a request we are delighted to grant!

Find out more about SU NSW missions and opportunities to serve in 2024:
sunsw.org.au/volunteer-with-su
 (02) 9638 9000

Witnessing God at work in NSW



3,244

Community mission events



615

Adult attendees



1,931

Children involved in programs



900

Resources shared



Gerroa SUFM

“We praise God for a teenager at Gerrora SUFM who asked if she could have a Bible. Intrigued by their sibling’s newfound interest, her two sisters and friends also asked if they could have one so they could read together! These teenagers have been engaged in SU programs since childhood, so it’s awesome seeing fruit coming from the long-term investment into loving them. Pray for these teens – that the Holy Spirit would guide them as they explore Jesus.”



Corrimal SUFM



Bulli SUFM



Lake Tabourie SUFM





 **Kempsey Bible Club**

 **Stockton SUFM**



 **Huskisson SUFM**



 **Kiama Summerlife**

“A teenage girl, new to Kiama, was walking by and came across our SUMMERLIFE tent at the local park. Embraced by our loving crew, she continued to come every afternoon and night session for the rest of the week. ***On the second last evening session she gave her life to Christ.*** We gave her a Bible and helped her make a connection with a local church.”



 **Urunga SUFM**

“Praise God for a great development in our relationship with the caravan park – a huge answer to prayer! They even let us put signage up in the caravan park about our events and put flyers in their front office!”

Reflections from our Mission Leaders

 **Rachael and Andrew Dawson**

 **220 attending a program**

 **Corrimal SUFM**

Corrimal Beach Tourist Park



“This year, we were excited to see the growth in volunteers.”

“We’ve been part of the Corrimal team for over ten years. We really love the family nature of the ministry. This year, we were excited to see growth in volunteers. It was a big team with a lot of new team members, but God really brought us together in such a wonderful way. The team is amazing – so prayerful and faithful.

This summer, we camped at the caravan park, where there were three Afghani families. Remarkably, we also have a family experienced in Muslim ministry, which felt like a divine placement, and I really felt God’s grace in this. Their children came along to all of our activities, even our church service. Watching them dancing up the front to songs about Jesus was a mission highlight.”

 **Oscar Glass**

 **186 attending a program**

 **Huskisson SUFM**

Holiday Haven, Huskisson Beach



“What truly stands out for me are the conversations we have each year.”

“As a volunteer for six or seven years, I support Isaac and Rose in keeping things running, and nurturing the team – so they can serve Jesus and share His love with campers. We return each year driven by two reasons: Jesus’ command to share the Good News, and my deep love for what this team accomplishes together. Being part of a community comprised of individuals from different churches, all united in serving and loving Jesus in this way, is truly a privilege and blessing.

What truly stands out for me are the conversations we have each year. It’s a privilege to connect with people and hear their struggles. There have been years when we’ve returned to learn these very people have committed their lives to Jesus. This year, an encouraging moment was learning that a family we’ve engaged with over the years started attending a church regularly—a beautiful surprise indeed. And it’s these stories that make the hard work feel so worthwhile.”

 **Peter Sherlock**
 **100–200 attending a program**



 **SUmmerlife Kiama**
Coronation Park, Kiama



“It was encouraging to see people come back each day to our activities and sessions, drawn by the fact that they felt loved by us.”

“What sets SUmmerlife apart from other beach missions is the flexible approach. Instead of a set program or a predetermined number of kids in our tents, we simply engage with the community. This year we had an exceptional young team – predominately aged 18 to 24. Interestingly, 22 of them were first-timers. Despite being newcomers, their enthusiasm and readiness for God’s work were inspiring, actively engaging in heartfelt conversations with the community.

It was encouraging to see people come back each day to our activities and sessions, drawn by the fact that they felt loved by us as a crew. It meant that we had the chance to form genuine connections and share more of the Good News of Jesus with them. The most uplifting aspect was witnessing just how many people were open to hearing the Gospel. Whether it was planting seeds in conversation or sharing the Gospel for the first time, it was such an opportunity to really bless this community.”

 **Lauren Dandie and Jason Maxworthy**
 **196+ attending a program**

 **Evans Head SUFM**
Stan Payne Memorial Oval



“Pray that Gospel seeds keep growing in the hearts of those we reached.”

“Our time at Evans Head SUFM was a great experience. We were a diverse bunch, ranging from 16 to 72 years old, representing 32 different churches! Wrangling such a big team (100+ people) wasn’t always easy, but we managed to foster a strong sense of unity thanks to the unwavering support of our key leaders.

This year saw a deeper connection with Evans Head Presbyterian Church—thanks to the Minister and his family joining us on-site. Thank God for a huge celebration event (around 400 people) on the last night – with a Gospel message, games, music and dessert. It was a great atmosphere!

This SUFM has been running since 1955. The legacy is huge, and local people value our presence so much. Pray that Gospel seeds keep growing in the hearts of those we reached.”



Daring to be Different



Joy Allen shares her experience at Dare 2B Different Camp.

When my husband and I first arrived in Australia from England in 2009, we noticed a lack of inclusive camps, which motivated us to start one. So, we approached SU, who took a chance on us.

As an Occupational Therapist, I'm accustomed to helping people see beyond their disability, focusing instead on what they 'can' do. I firmly believe in not separating people with disabilities.

“Teenagers, regardless of disability, have hopes, dreams, ambitions, and goals. And they all need Jesus.”

Dare to be Different offers activities like archery and rock climbing, with adaptations for all abilities. It's encouraging to see apprehensions about 'being with people that are different' disappear over the week as they engage in fun activities together.



In the Kingdom of God, people should be loved, welcomed, and included. My dream for Dare to be Different Camp is to see it grow. I want more people to know and love Jesus. Like with all missions, that's the main goal.

Even though my role as director concluded five years ago, my family and I continue to visit annually, treasuring our time, particularly the worship sessions, which hold a special place in our hearts.

Unlike other camps where teenagers may hesitate to sing unless confident, here, we embrace making a joyful noise, praising and worshipping authentically. The expressions of worship, though perhaps not always polished, are genuine and beautiful.

Register for upcoming Autumn camps! Places filling fast.
sunsw.org.au/camps



Empowering students to be a *Christian presence* in State High schools



David Krebs, Sydney Metro Worker, shares his experience at Train and Plan Day.

Before the start of each term, student leaders from ISCF groups across Sydney gather for an event called Train and Plan (T&P), which provides training in the morning and time for planning the term ahead in the afternoon.

On January 23rd, we ran our first-ever pre-term 1 T&P. At the event, 43 students from 12 different schools across Sydney attended. Each one of these students is currently involved in running their lunchtime group to some degree.

“Most who attend are in Year 12 and have such deep care for the students they lead, that they love taking time out of study to come and think about how they can be better equipped to share the Good News of the Gospel with others in their school.”



Prayer

1. Please pray for these students as they start their lunchtime groups this year, that God will continue to help them grow in their enjoyment of Him each day as they navigate living out Christ's love at school.
2. Pray for the next Train and Plan event, that many more students will come along and continue to be encouraged, equipped, and empowered to lead their groups.



How *it* started – How *it's* going.

LAKE TABOURIE 1955



SUFM LAKE TABOURIE 2024

*thanks to you,
Scripture Union continues on.*

Together, for 150 years, we have taken the Gospel to children, young people and families across NSW.

Right now we're facing a challenge to fund our ministries. Can you support us?

Help us keep sharing the Good News around NSW.



sunsw.org.au/donate
(02) 9638 9000



HAVE A
CHAT
THAT MATTERS

Share hope this Easter.

The first step to sharing your faith can be daunting, but SU NSW is here to help get the conversation started.

1. Follow us on  
2. Share 'what matters' to you via our fun Instagram quiz filter.
3. Access great resources to help get the conversation started.



Scan QR code to find out more and go in the draw to WIN a set of printed Chat-a-Box cards.

sunsw.org.au/chatthatmatter

