



5 November 2012  
Bob Davis  
Operation "Hard Yakka" Program  
Oz Adventures  
Susan River, Hervey Bay

B. SOC. SCI

PIPPA MCFALL

85 ALAMEDA WAY  
WARRIEWOOD, NSW 2102  
T 0412355296  
0421729275  
EMAIL: 167021@mp.acap.edu.au

Dear Bob,

I am most happy to be providing a testimony for the Operation "Hard Yakka" Program.

My son Jake attended the Operation "Hard Yakka" Program for 18 days in August 2012. I believe that this camp has saved my son and my family from a rather bleak future.

Prior to attending the camp my son was not attending school on a regular basis and when he did go he would get into fights and intimidate teachers. He was always suspended and he hadn't really learnt anything academic since early primary school. He was disengaged from school, family and was falling into associations with some pretty shifty types, abandoning his primary school mates. He was staying out at night and not answering his phone, shoplifting, drinking, drug taking and being general anti social, at times he seemed so different from the boy I had raised.

I was petrified and nothing I tried had any lasting effect. Jake has ADD along with a mild anxiety condition diagnosed when he was quite young. Whilst he was younger we were managing with diet, counseling and medication but as he entered adolescence he began to resent and eventually refused medication, isolated himself from his family friends and anyone looking out for him. I contacted every youth organisation under the Australian sun and found no help. Some organisation had residential services and camps but all said that Jake was "not bad enough, he might make a friend and go and start robbing banks if he comes here"! We were beginning to look at youth refuges (a heartbreaking decision) for him to stay in as his behavior at home especially around his 5 yr old brother was out of control and I simply couldn't cope.

That was when we found Operation "Hard Yakka" Bob Davis and the team at Hervey Bay.

I cannot thank these guys enough. My son has returned half the beautiful boy I raised and half the man I wanted to see him grow into. I immediately noticed his calmness, gentleness and self pride. A calm, secure and confident pride, I believe this was brought about by the recognition that he can do some pretty "Hard Yakka", do it well and feel great (even if he needed a little encouragement from the team). Whilst at camp Jake got over a fear of heights and although didn't the first time they went, he did abseil twice after that and was immensely proud (and a little surprised).

The change is amazing to say the least. He attends school daily, has just got his first job at KFC after school. He has a goal in life, to own a fishing charter business. He washes my car for some extra cash but he does it the first time he is asked. He takes the bins up our 45 degree driveway every week and has only forgotten twice (we reminded him and he did it straight away) only gripe is he still tends to be a bit hard to get up in the morning but what 14 yr old boy isn't? Truly amazing. The ADD management has been fine without the need for medication, we now manage with diet, exercise and regular chats about the experience of the "Hard Yakka" program.

I'm still pinching myself and must admit that there is much I have learnt too. I'm always recommending the program and have had meetings with my local Police Youth Liaison Officers as well as some local community groups, schools and even a shopping centre manager were Jake offended at who have all pledged their support of the program in suggesting it to parents.

It seems apparent to me that Bob has come up with a real winner in his program and its delivery to these boys who so desperately need to be pulled back from the brink, and can be with the right approach. This problem with youth is rampant in Australian societies and world wide. I'm aware of similar military style camps in the US which have had great success, saving lives, mending families and saving the community a packet.

Bob you are an inspiration, you have taken on hero status in our house and many others I'm sure. I will be forever grateful as will Jake. More power to you mate.

Sincerely yours,

Pippa Mcfall

B.Soc.Sci (Couns)