

The UR Retreat Reaches It's 15th year and over 700 young women

For the past 14 years, Bridge Builders Youth Charity has been deliberate in changing the lives of Young Women through their four-day camp program the 'UR Retreat for Young Women'. Every year, a team of 15 leaders volunteer their time to bring together the best motivational workshops and guest speakers they can find, to create a life-changing experience for those who attend.

In 2006, the first ever 'UR Retreat' was designed and delivered for 50 young women of the Shire of Yarra Ranges. The response was an overwhelming success for Bridge Builders, the community and for the young women who experienced something truly unique. Over the years, we've had numerous guest speakers come along, just to name a few; Layne Beachley AO; Australian Champion Surfer, Gillian Franklin; Managing Director of the Heat Group, Sharon Witt; Author and TV presenter, Ginna Lucas; Co-Founder of Happow and Beck Mitchell who represented Australia in the 2020 World Marathon Challenge.

50 Young women are specifically selected by well-being teams from local high schools and agencies in the outer Easter Region of Melbourne and surrounds. The 15th Annual 'UR Retreat for Young Women' will be held from Monday 19th until Thursday 22nd September 2022 in Toolangi. Although this year, we have increased to 70 young women on the camp, due to the growing demand after the Covid-19 pandemic.

The 'UR Retreat' provides an environment to create, immerse, empower, and celebrate young women through the various workshops, activities, and guest speakers. The retreat encourages young women to discover their value, their worth and to begin a journey to not settle for less.

On the 'UR Retreat', four words are used to create the theme of each day. Day one, **Create**, is all about creating a safe environment for the young women, and an environment they feel like they can be open to be their true selves. Day two, **Immerse**, is about diving deeper into the participants' worlds and the challenges they may be facing or dealing with. Day three, **Empower**, is all about encouraging the girls to take everything they are learning, and choose to create more for their lives. Day four, **Celebrate**, is a big party reflecting on previous four days of journey the participants have spent together and taking the time to be grateful for what the participants have gained so far from this experience.

"I was a participant in 2018. I struggled reaching out to other people and wasn't the best at making friends. Throughout the four days, I found a new group of people I could call my friends, some of those people I still have contact with today. It gave me a safe place to be myself, loud and proud. With workshops and guest speakers that offered their time to come talk with us about their experiences and how we could learn from them. And now in 2022, I am volunteering for the second year as a leader on the retreat, to give back the knowledge I was given to other young women who are looking to grow." - Genevieve

This testimonial is just one of over 700 participants to choose from. The retreat has had a huge impact on so many young women's lives and in many cases some of the participants that have gone through this incredible journey decide to come on board and volunteer their time to help change the lives of other young women, due to their experience of how the retreat helped them.

This is what the UR Retreat team aim for. Helping young women to grow and find their strengths, and where they might fit in the world. After the Retreat, the girls can then go back into their world and see great changes in their lives and feel the transformational shift within themselves.

You have the opportunity to help change the lives of these young women; and can do so in the following ways: becoming a sponsor; nominating a young woman to attend; becoming a volunteer leader.

The UR Retreat Team is excited to change another 70 lives for the 15th year in a row, and would love for you to be involved!

(Image below: From our 10 year UR Retreat for Young Women Reunion)

