

My boys and myself had the pleasure of being guests at the Edmund Rice Camp this year and we are eternally grateful. For me it will be one of the most memorable experiences of my life. I have suffered from depression for most of my life and the camp really helped me in my recovery. I don't think I have ever been in a more joyful and relaxing environment. There were so many good caring people and I was overwhelmed. I will never forget the kindness shown to me and the children, it is in my heart forever.

I have vowed to find a way to give back to the joy that has been given to me and I see my future with hope now. Your camp changed my perspective and hence my life. My boys were so wonderfully taken care of and are still singing camp songs. We are a happier family. I wish that every family could attend the Edmund Rice Camp. I think we would have a lot more happy families if they did.

*Lots of love
(Name withheld)*

*Bless our wonderful leaders
bless one, bless all
Who have helped us stand
and feel so very tall*

*Who smile and laugh
and chat with all 'we'
While making us all feel
the world belongs to each 'me'*

*No job has been too big
no job has been too small
Together they have stopped
many an emotional fall*

They showed me my strength

*and made me feel - 'WOW'
I wanted to thank them all
but could not think how*

*So here today I have sat
at the piano, pool table and floor
Writing some of these feelings
though I have so many more*

*'Thank you' I say
for EVERYTHING you have done
Some names may escape me
but I will remember everyone.*

*Though leaving you all (undoubtedly)
will make our eyes damp
Our lives were forever changed
at our Eddie Rice Camp!!"*

By Angela

*To all at Edmund Rice Camps,
I'm not very good at expressing my feelings, especially in words,
but for the sake of all those wonderful young adults that were on
camp, I will try my best. This has been the best experience of my
life. Not only were all the buddies great mentors for my children,
the other mums were just the people I needed to meet.*

*After spending the last 12 years feeling weak and worthless, I now
have a sense of strength that I hope will only get stronger. To meet
women who had been through similar and seeing how strong they
had come out the other side, I knew there was hope for me.*

*It was great for the kids as they go to do things that I can't do with
them on my own. For example swimming, my kids all got to swim
and I didn't even get wet. With 3 young ones that is an impossible*

task for me. Bowling was the best as I got to play with the older kids and enjoy it, because the baby was with her buddy. No stress is a great way to enjoy time with your children and for this I will be eternally grateful.

Just before I end I would like to thank all the young adults who gave up their holidays to put a smile on the faces of everyone in my family including me. I have come away with more hope for the future.

*Thankyou (doesn't seem enough)
(Name Withheld)*

We are a family of eight and like most families we've had our fair share of struggles both medically and financially. We were referred to Edmund Rice Camps through St Vincent De Paul and truly its one of the best things that has happened to our family.

When you arrive to an Eddie Rice Camp you are welcomed by many caring, enthusiastic and committed people. Within hours you can see the children forgetting the stresses and troubles of home life, ready and eager to enjoy the Eddie Rice Camp experience.

The week is full of activities and outings many of which we couldn't provide for our children for one reason or another. The amazing thing is when you ask our children what was the best thing about the camp, the general consensus is the fun times they had with the leaders. Its wonderful to see what an effect these young positive role models have on the children, building their confidence and self esteem.

By the end of the week it is no longer just a camp, it's a community, a family.

All our children hope to be an Eddie Rice leader one day and that makes us very happy and very proud.

(Name Withheld)