

Ajuga School Annual Report



2016



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Introduction

The Annual Report for 2016 is provided to the community of Ajuga School as an account of the school's operations and achievements throughout the year.

It provides a detailed account of the progress the school has made to provide high quality educational opportunities for all students, as set out in the school plan. It outlines the findings from self-assessment that reflect the impact of key school strategies for improved learning and the benefit to all students from the expenditure of resources, including equity funding.

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Message from the Principal

2016 saw another year of opportunities and challenges for the community of Ajuga School. It was a year to continue implementation, evaluate and fine tune all the great initiatives and practices introduced or developed over the past two years. These initiatives include Multi-Lit, Numeracy groups and Data Walls, Teacher Performance and Development Plans, Individual Learning Plans, Stephanie Alexander Kitchen and Garden classes, four whole school sporting events, integration and home school support, connect:ed parent group and Learning Management and Business Reform. The achievements of the students stem from their willingness and resilience to learn. These achievements often start with the commitment, creativity and persistence of the staff – staff able to patiently build respectful connections with students and able to work as a supportive team. Congratulations to our students, our staff and all the educators and teachers we have worked with in 2016. It was an amazing year.

School background

School vision statement

The purpose of Ajuga School is to provide an individualised approach so that each child can become independent, resilient and confident. On completion of the Ajuga program our aim is for students to successfully integrate into the most suitable environment, such as high school, primary school, an alternate educational setting, TAFE, university or the work force. Our shared vision is to offer a high quality educational program in a caring and safe environment. Using a range of quality student-centred teaching and learning programs we provide students with the opportunity to learn the skills and strategies to enable them to reach their full potential socially, emotionally, academically and physically.

School context

Ajuga School forms part of a complex of schools for specific purposes situated on approximately two hectares of land; ideally suited to providing a therapeutic setting for K–12 students with a severe emotional disturbance. Ajuga provides an integration program for up to 49 students. Currently there are 4 primary classes including a class for students with Autism and an emotional disturbance and 3 high school classes. Our classes are predominantly organised according to stage groups. The school is staffed by a highly dedicated and experienced staff working in a team environment. Each class has a Teacher and a School Learning Support Officer. Our school community consists of parents and carers, referring home schools, Sydney Distance Education, TAFEs, local businesses, health services and our neighbouring schools. The school and its community have high expectations and value the provision of a variety of learning experiences including: Music Therapy, Counselling, Environmental Education, Sport, Ajuga Reading Challenge, Social Skills, and an inclusive curriculum in all Key Learning Areas. Ajuga School is participating in the Empowering Local Schools reform and is part of the initial implementation of the Learning Management and Business Reform program. Ajuga School continues to receive a range of new processes and tools to support education and learning.

Self-assessment and school achievement

Self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework

This section of the Annual Report outlines the findings from self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework, school achievements and the next steps to be pursued.

This year, our school undertook self-assessment using the School Excellence Framework and participated in an external validation. The framework supports public schools throughout NSW in the pursuit of excellence by providing a clear description of high quality practice across the three domains of Learning, Teaching and Leading. During the external validation process, an independent panel of peer principals considered our evidence and assessment of the school's progress, aligned with the standards articulated in the School Excellence Framework.

School Excellence Framework domain of Learning...

The school's self-assessment is consistent with the evidence presented in four elements and is validated using the School Excellence Framework. In the element of;– Assessment and Reporting the evidence presented indicates the school is operating at the Sustaining and Growing stage. There is demonstrated commitment within the school to strengthen and deliver on school learning priorities.

School Excellence Framework domain of Teaching...

In the domain of Teaching the school's self-assessment is consistent with the evidence presented in four elements and is validated using the School Excellence Framework. In the element of;– Effective Classroom Practice the evidence presented indicates the school is operating at the Sustaining and Growing stage. Teachers work together to improve teaching and learning to support to support the growth of student learning and welfare.

School Excellence Framework domain of Leading...

In the domain of Leading the school's self-assessment is consistent with the evidence presented in four elements and is validated using the School Excellence Framework. In the element of;– Leadership the evidence presented indicates the school is operating at the Sustaining and Growing stage. There is a broad understanding of, and support for school expectations and aspirations for improving students learning across the school community.

Our self-assessment and the external validation process will assist the school to refine the strategic priorities in our

School Plan, leading to further improvements in the delivery of education to our students.

For more information about the School Excellence Framework:

<http://www.dec.nsw.gov.au/about-the-department/our-reforms/school-excellence-framework>

Strategic Direction 1

Excellence in Learning

Purpose

To deliver an integrated approach to quality curriculum planning that meet the needs of all students. To enable students to flourish by developing their cognitive, emotional, social, physical and spiritual strengths through engaging learning experiences.

Overall summary of progress

Ajuga School has a positive learning culture where respectful relationships are nurtured between students, staff and the community. This culture is underpinned with policies that ensure student attendance is analysed and appropriate action is taken to best support students and families. Student success, learning and behaviours are discussed daily with all staff during a debrief meeting. Whole school communication develops a holistic approach that supports the emotional and learning needs of our students. The school is beginning to utilise data to track student learning to inform future directions. Students are taught to accept responsibility for their choices through daily reflection. This gives peers and teaching staff the opportunity to address both successes and areas for student improvement. In addition, every student works towards behaviour goals underpinned by the SMART principle. Students are active participants and are key contributors to the planning and execution of various fundraising initiatives and contribute to the wider community. The school's Welfare and Discipline Policy ensures that a fair and consistent approach to behaviour support is provided for students with appropriate consequences for positive and negative behaviours. The policy clearly defines behavioural expectations that are of a high standard. Improved student wellbeing is evidenced by a reduction of suspension days by 27% compared to 2015 data.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
Each term there will be improvement for 100% of students using the numeracy continuum learning descriptors.	Formative assessment strategies were used to collect data that allowed staff to differentiate learning programs the year to differentiate learning programs to support the learning growth of each child. The work done this year is helping staff to cater for the individual learning needs of our students. Maths groups were formed to differentiate the learning for every child.	Mathletics \$835 Teacher relief \$1000 Learning support officer \$580
An increased percentage of students are reaching level 2 through self regulating their behaviour and achieving their learning goals.	Data indicates a reduction in suspensions and improvement in attendance levels and an increase in students achieving level 2 this year. There has been a focus on wellbeing through Pos education, music therapy and maintaining high expectations of student behaviour in all classrooms. We have used the flexible wellbeing funding to support this.	Level excursions \$500 Prizes and trophies \$100 Music therapist \$20,000
Increase percentage of positive responses from students and parent/carers via the Tell Them From Me survey	The TTFM survey indicated students were engaged and enjoying their experiences at Ajuga. Increased communication via social media has improved whole school partnerships.	

Next Steps

- Further develop student engagement through a Tech Ed, Attendance and Positive Education programs
- Further develop student wellbeing through Art and Music Therapy, Shine 4 Girls Program and Ambassador Program
- Further develop staff capacity in Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting using Spirals of Inquiry and Formative Assessment
- Further development of the SRC is needed to enhance greater student representation

Strategic Direction 2

Excellence in Teaching

Purpose

To inspire and create excellence in teaching and learning through positive personalised and differentiated experiences driven by focused professional development. Joint collaboration between the school and community lead to improved student outcomes and a deeper sense of pride within the school community. Partnerships with all stakeholders both within and beyond the school are encouraged and sustained through high quality communication and shared professional practice.

Overall summary of progress

Ajuga School provides opportunities for all staff to undertake leadership roles within the school that move beyond the classroom. Project teams plan and execute whole school events that give students the opportunity to showcase their talents to the wider school community. These events are well attended by parents and are highlights of the Ajuga School calendar. Further, opportunities for classroom teachers to relieve in executive roles are facilitated to support aspiring leaders. Collaboration is the pivotal component that enables teachers to establish classrooms that are well managed so students access the curriculum equitably. Primary Mathematics is an outstanding example of collaborative planning that meets the learning needs of individual students. A clear demonstration of this is evident from the Tell Them From Me surveys that indicated Mathematics was the best part of the daily student experience at Ajuga School. An evidence based lesson format is delivered in all classrooms. This involves explicit instruction complimented with a Learning Intention and Success Criteria. Through this format, students are able to assess their own learning and have a clear understanding of the educational purpose of the lesson. Timely feedback that focuses on the next step in student learning is evident in classrooms and student feedback is gained through exit slips. As a result students are at the centre of the learning process and have an understanding and input into curriculum delivery.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
All staff receive feedback against their PDP's to evaluate their practice in order to direct the next steps to improve their professional knowledge to address student's learning needs.	PDP's implemented and working well for staff to support both their professional growth and development goals, the school vision and support the individual learning and welfare needs of each child. Further professional learning about how to write Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely (SMART) goals is planned for 2017.	
All staff collaboratively design learning programs with students using learning intentions and success criteria.	Learning intentions and success criteria are used for each learning task. Staff see the benefit of collaboration within and outside of the school. Staff use student data to plan learning programs. Staff have been given the opportunity to engage in professional learning which has had a positive impact on student learning. Further opportunity for collaboration will be sought in 2017	\$15,500 was expended supporting the professional learning of staff.
100% of students have been benchmarked using Multilit	Each student's reading skills are supported daily using the Multilit literacy program. All students reading competency will be further assessed in 2017 using the PM benchmarking kit.	Extra SLSO support of the Multilit program

Next Steps

- Performance & Development practices and procedures will be further refined using SMART goals
- Collective efficacy and collaboration will be enhanced through Spirals of Inquiry and the development of a whole school Mentoring program.
- Further staff development in pedagogies relating to assessment moderation and feedback and wider use of instructional leadership

- A greater focus on systematic and regular collection of data

Strategic Direction 3

Excellence in Leading

Purpose

To support the efficiency of Ajuga School operations and strengthen innovative practices in a framework of continuous change and dynamic student population. Capacity building and reform management are driven by strong leadership, planning and evaluation. To ensure that the Ajuga School community including parents, carers, mainstream schools and external agencies form an integral part of the decision making process.

Overall summary of progress

Ajuga School adopts a holistic approach to leadership whereby students, parents/carers and staff have opportunities to make positive contributions. The school has an active SRC that take on personal responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner that sets an example to peers. The social and emotional development of students is targeted through students taking responsibility to lead assemblies and take on individual responsibilities around the school. We are developing an active parent community who attend whole school events and have contributed to school planning through surveys. The parent community provide peer support at our weekly parent group – connect.ed. Ajuga School requires all staff to connect to external schools and agencies to best support our students. Classroom teachers establish clear communication links with mainstream schools to enable successful integration of students. SLSO staff support the dynamic needs of students in mainstream schools on integration days. The executive team is well respected and provides support for staff across all levels of school functioning as evident in survey data. School facilities have been upgraded to meet the broad range of students at Ajuga School. Classrooms and common areas have been repainted and learning walls have been installed. The Flexible Learning Space has been designed to give students the opportunity to learn in an environment that is conducive to their own style of learning. The Orchard and Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden receives modifications as per need and produces seasonal produce used regularly in the school. Fresh eggs are obtained from our upgraded chicken coop and the students in our Tech Ed classes maintain the coop. Upgrades to facilities have contributed to learning spaces being organised, in good condition and aesthetically pleasing thus contributing to a welcoming and supportive environment for all.

Progress towards achieving improvement measures

Improvement measures (to be achieved over 3 years)	Progress achieved this year	Funds Expended (Resources)
An increased number of staff are leading projects designed to improve professional knowledge and practice to better meet the learning needs of students.	Staff were identified to lead projects to support the validation process and growth in student learning. This has helped to initiate and engage professional discussion with colleagues to improve the individual and collective skills of our staff. Further work is planned in 2017 to provide authentic opportunities for aspiring leaders and classroom teachers.	\$5000 for teacher release
Increase in the percentage of parent/carers contributing to the development of their child's learning and wellbeing.	There has been significant community engagement through Connect:Ed and social media. Both Facebook and Twitter accounts are used regularly by staff and accessed by parents and carers. In 2017 we will be build on the opportunities to engage parents/carers in the progress of their child's learning and wellbeing.	\$12, 500

Next Steps

- Further development of management practices, school policies and School Planning & Evaluation strategies
- Greater focus on systems leadership and mentoring practices
- Greater Community Engagement through Connect:Ed, and social media
- Additional leadership opportunities for aspiring leaders and classroom teachers.
- Further opportunities for parents/carers to engage in their child's learning and wellbeing.

Key Initiatives	Impact achieved this year	Resources (annual)
Aboriginal background loading	All Aboriginal students have Personalised Learning Pathways (PLP) and are demonstrating progress across the literacy and numeracy continuums. Once the yarning circle was built a program of learning was facilitated to train staff in the implementation of best practices for children with Aboriginal background and the inclusion of Aboriginal perspectives into all teaching programs.	\$5,338
Socio-economic background	Additional training and implementation of maths program including data walls and maths groups. Establishment and teacher release to set up and program for the 2017 Multilit implementation.	\$74,241 for teacher release and employment of additional SLSO
Support for beginning teachers	Early Career teachers have been supported by receiving additional teacher release time, individualised professional development, mentoring and coaching sessions. Beginning teachers are highly supported by the Assistant Principals to deliver excellent curriculum and focus on improving student learning outcomes. Teachers actively participated in stage and whole school planning and reporting. Teachers feel supported in the development of their knowledge and skills and are valued members of the school community.	\$28, 205

Student information

Ajuga School.

Student enrolment profile

Students	Enrolments			
	2013	2014	2015	2016
Boys	29	32	31	30
Girls	10	11	15	10

Since 2011 Ajuga has been staffed to enrol 49 students across K–12. Ajuga has been at full capacity since 2000 however this is not accurately reflected in the graph below as it only shows recorded student numbers at a certain census point in 2016. Student enrolment constantly fluctuates due to the integration model at Ajuga, which sees students exit and enter at various times throughout the school year.

Students are referred to Ajuga from their mainstream school. Applications are considered by a regional panel at an intake meeting held in Week 8 each term. The panel consists of welfare personnel as well as principal's representing schools for specific purposes, primary schools and high schools. Recommendations for placements are made by the panel and students enrol into Ajuga within the first few weeks of the following term.

Workforce information

Workforce composition

Position	FTE*
Principal	1
Assistant Principal(s)	2
Head Teacher(s)	1
Classroom Teacher(s)	5.59
Teacher Librarian	0.2
School Administration & Support Staff	9.82
Other Positions	0

*Full Time Equivalent

Ajuga had 9.788 teaching positions allocated in 2016. This included staffing allocated to the Glenfield Return to School Program and a regional Student Welfare position. Our teaching staff are supported by 8 School Learning Support Officers including 1 at the Glenfield Return to School Program, a full time School Administration Manager, a School Administration Officer and a General Assistant.

During 2016 there were no indigenous staff members at

Teacher qualifications

All teaching staff meet the professional requirements for teaching in NSW public schools.

Teacher qualifications

Qualifications	% of staff
Undergraduate degree or diploma	100
Postgraduate degree	50

Professional learning and teacher accreditation

Significant amounts of professional learning were undertaken by Ajuga School staff in 2016. All staff participated in weekly professional learning sessions on a vast variety of topics relating to our context. These topics ranged from Child Protection to Effective iPad Use, Autism, Challenging Behaviours and Individual Learning Plans. Teachers participated in external professional development in the areas of Mental Health First Aid, Literacy and Numeracy Continuums, Growth Coaching, Classroom management through effective teaching, Building resilience, Leading change with a growth mindset at a total cost of approximately \$15500. In 2016, we had four teachers working towards Board of Studies Teaching and Education Standards (BoSTES) accreditation and two maintaining accreditation at Proficient level.

Financial information (for schools fully deployed to SAP/SALM)

Financial summary

The information provided in the financial summary includes reporting from 1 January 2016 to 31 December 2016. As shown in our annual financial report.

	2016 Actual (\$)
Opening Balance	409 580.41
Revenue	2 063 529.22
(2a) Appropriation	2 044 973.65
(2b) Sale of Goods and Services	1 279.98
(2c) Grants and Contributions	12 893.90
(2e) Gain and Loss	0.00
(2f) Other Revenue	0.00
(2d) Investment Income	4 381.69
Expenses	-1 912 953.71
Recurrent Expenses	-1 912 953.71
(3a) Employee Related	-1 764 470.87
(3b) Operating Expenses	-148 482.84
Capital Expenses	0.00
(3c) Employee Related	0.00
(3d) Operating Expenses	0.00
SURPLUS / DEFICIT FOR THE YEAR	150 575.51
Balance Carried Forward	560 155.92

Our school's financial management processes and governance structures meet financial policy requirements. There was no unusual spending patterns or substantial underspending/overspending

Financial summary equity funding

The equity funding data is the main component of the 'Appropriation' section of the financial summary above.

	2016 Actual (\$)
Base Total	379 550.39
Base Per Capita	4 682.88
Base Location	0.00
Other Base	374 867.51
Equity Total	79 579.11
Equity Aboriginal	5 338.35
Equity Socio economic	74 240.77
Equity Language	0.00
Equity Disability	0.00
Targeted Total	1 386 938.60
Other Total	102 020.88
Grand Total	1 948 088.99

A full copy of the school's financial statement is tabled at the annual general meetings of the parent and/or community groups. Further details concerning the statement can be obtained by contacting the school.

Parent/caregiver, student, teacher satisfaction

The Tell Them From Me survey was again used to gather feedback from the community on their satisfaction of school. The information collected is used to support decision making for school improvement. The feedback we received from students, parents and carers demonstrated strong support and relationships. Our school's Facebook and Twitter page also endorses this strong partnership.

Policy requirements

Aboriginal education

In 2016 we continued to acknowledge students who have shown the capacity to respect themselves, their peers and staff with our weekly Aboriginal Respect Award. All students contribute to our Sorry Day, NAIDOC and Reconciliation Week assembly items to show respect and acknowledgment of the Indigenous people of this land. We have also continued our breakfast program and provided fresh fruit at recess and lunch.

We officially opened our outdoor yarning circle. The purpose of the outdoor flexible learning space is to educate our indigenous students about their heritage with the assistance of our local elders.

Multicultural and anti-racism education

In 2016 we continued to promote differing cultural beliefs and customs by promoting cultural

understandings and acceptance in the classroom, school and community. All of our students participated in Harmony Day activities that recognise and celebrate Australia's diverse multicultural population.

The Anti-Racism Contact Officer (ARCO) is the contact person for any students, staff, parents/carers and community members with any questions regarding racism. In 2016 our ARCO again delivered pamphlets and posters to school community members who originated from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. This strengthened communication links with the wider school community.

Other school programs

Glenfield Return to School Program

The Glenfield Suspension Centre changed its name in 2016 to the Glenfield Return to School Program. The program has enjoyed another successful year serving students and schools across South Western Sydney. 112 enquiries were made to the centre resulting in 80 student referrals received over the course of 2016. 15 of those students were repeat referrals meaning the student had attended the centre previously. Twenty seven different high schools and 6 different primary schools were supported. 33% of referrals were students in year 9 and 30% from year 8. Interestingly, 8% of referrals were from years 4 & 5 in 2016. The largest category for suspensions was for persistent disobedience, representing 44% of referrals, with the next largest category being 21% for physical violence. Staff at the centre supported the successful resolution of suspensions, with 97% of the students attending returning to their mainstream school.

The Glenfield RTSP website continues to provide an additional point for contact with the program and access to additional resources for both schools and the wider community. 1,199 visitors were logged accessing the website with 3,263 unique page views throughout 2016.

Students attending the centre have benefited from assistance in completing their study program, which keeps them up to date with what is happening in their mainstream class. Exit slips introduced this year have allowed students to indicate that the quiet environment at the program contributes to improved work habits and work completion and the social skill support assists them in being more resilient and better prepared to return to school. Students also use internet access at the centre to research information, which assists them to complete assignments or assessment tasks. This is particularly important in terms 3 & 4 when some senior students have outstanding N awards to clear.

Students continue to benefit from discreet lessons and activities which have explored anger management, attitudes towards school and relationships towards peers and staff. Schools have indicated that students are returning to school calmer and more reflective of their behaviour and choices and are benefiting from follow up support from the program.

The centre also supports professional learning in the area by hosting various meetings and small conferences for our educational services team, while also operating as the hub for Hilltop community of schools HSC program. The Glenfield RTSP supported 2 other programs this year in developing websites to promote their support for schools in other NSW locations.

Student Representative Council (SRC)

Ajuga School Student Representative Council (SRC) is selected each year by a class election held by their peers. The SRC perform a variety of roles within our school and are expected to be role models to the other students. Some of their roles and responsibilities include Public Speaking, Fundraising and supporting each other. Our SRC communicate holds two meetings per term where they bring forward suggestions and points of consideration. Our SRC members this year demonstrated sportsmanship and encouragement during School sport and School of Origin. This year the SRC held a white ribbon fundraising event and Footy Friday fundraiser. The SRC inform students about events and activities during our fortnightly whole school assembly. We look forward to the collaboration between staff and our SRC for 2017.

Environmental Program

The Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden Program (SAKG) is continuing to flourish and develop each year. Our aim is to introduce pleasurable food education through gardening and gaining valuable skills whilst learning. The students learn about tool safety, wheelbarrow use, planting, environmental awareness, composting, maintaining the garden, team work, harvesting, cooking and learning through practical experience. The SAKG program allows creativity while incorporating literacy, numeracy, science and cultural studies with aspects of environmental sustainability. The students investigated how plants grow, studied factors that affect plants through drama, created Christmas trees from garden plants, played a teamwork and trust games. Our SAKG program will continue to enhance student experiences and develop knowledge whilst learning and having fun.

Connect:ed Parent Group

Our Connect:ed program was extremely successful as we continued our partnership with Campbell House and Glenfield Park Schools. Throughout the year we were able to offer a diverse range of activities that would benefit and engage our school community.

We started 2016 off with our Shine for Women program. Over 10 weeks we enjoyed pampering ourselves and discovering the importance of self-care,

self-respect and self-worth. All participants received Certificates of Participation and gained a new perspective of their role as women and carers who continue to evolve and have a positive impact on their lives.

Margie Braunstein from the Quest for Life Foundation ran a full day workshop on Self Care Matters. Margie spoke about the importance of making ourselves a priority when caring for others. Throughout the day our parents were engaged in learning new and different techniques to help them through difficult situations.

As White Ribbon schools we showcased the wonderful and engaging activities our students are participating in to raise awareness about domestic violence. The young men and women across our school community are standing up and making their voices heard in protest against violence on all levels. It is a credit to them and their willingness to help make a change in our school and wider community.

Parents and carers participated in a five week Tuning into Kids/Teens program which focuses on the importance of being emotionally intelligent. Simply by being aware of how we are feeling can influence the way we make choices and deal with situations. We looked at how to deal with our own emotions and how they affect our ability to deal effectively with difficult situations, how we can teach our children to be more aware of their own emotions, how we can self-regulate our feelings and the benefits of responding to situations rather than reacting.

We also had presentations about the drugs that are currently making headlines, the pros and cons of medications that are prescribed to our children, how our court system works as well as what we are achieving through our Positive Education program.

The later part of 2016 saw us getting out into the community. We participated in Pilate's classes, DIY classes at Bunning's, crafts, cooking, and a lovely walk and picnic at Chipping Norton Lakes.

Our Connect:ed program has continued to grow, not only in participants but most importantly as a positive support network for our parents/carers. We are looking forward to another fantastic year where strong community ties are formed between our schools and families.

Personal Development, Health & Physical Education

The Ajuga School PDHPE program is a fundamental part of the development of healthy and active lifestyles in our students and complements our healthy Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden program. Students have participated in weekly sport activities such as cricket, rugby league, iceskating, taekwondo and various indoor minor games. Our primary students have participated in the NSW Swim Scheme, where they learnt various

water safety skills, and in Dancing workshops where students learnt fundamental movement skills.

The PDHPE Project Team organised one whole school sporting event each term throughout 2016. Our students joined each other for a swimming carnival in term 1, they rallied together to continue their success in 'School of Origin' – our interschool modified league competition against Glenfield Park School in Term 2, tested their athletic abilities in Ajuga Games in term 3 and had a 'ball' in T-20 Cricket in term 4.

These activities encourage student engagement and teamwork whilst promoting healthy and active life choices. We look forward to participating in these events again in 2017.