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Rites of Passage for Girls

Tides is part of the Rites of Passage foundation - a registered charitable trust. We run community led, nature based camps, designed as a powerful rite of passage for 13-16 year old girls and their families. They are also lots of fun! Our focus is on assisting young women to make the fundamental, emotional and psychological shift from child to young adult.

Tides is not affiliated with any particular faith or culture, but aims to provide a balanced, multi-generational community where young people can learn. We believe in supporting young people to stand tall, vibrant and full of hope for their future. Through this, we open the door on a healthy path to womanhood, nourishing relationships with family and the wider community.

Rites of passage: Acknowledging where we are on the path of life.

The concept and practice of rites of passage is very old and takes many forms depending on the culture and life phase. By definition a rite of passage is a ceremony, ritual or practice that marks important transitional times in a person's life. It usually involves activities designed to prepare an individual for a new role or life stage. Acknowledgement and celebration are a big part of the rite too.

When communities create a conscious 'Rite of Passage' for young people, they tend to realise more clearly how their strengths and qualities contribute to the well being of their community and individual future. This not only helps them and to lead happy, stable and positive fulfilling lives but the potential for social improvement is huge.

A Tides event involves camping together for 4 nights and 5 days on the edge of the Able Tasman National Park. The basis of our time together is to encourage a sense of community, personal empowerment, and leadership development. The program is full with outdoor activities, creative arts, games, talking, mystery, fun, friendship and ritual. We look at the inner and outer changes of adolescence, and celebrate the journey into womanhood.

In its simplest format a Tides rite of passage involves:

1. **A separation** from your day-to-day life
2. **A challenge** or initiation that introduces and celebrates girls as adult members of the community
3. **A return** to the wider world that acknowledges the new young women.

Before the camp we suggest taking the opportunity to celebrate the childhood that has been. This could be a special family meal, looking through old photos, telling stories, and referencing the coming Tides event. We encourage parents to talk about what the Rite of Passage means for them. This helps one prepare for leaving childhood behind. It also makes space for new relationships - with the father and the masculine, with the mother and the feminine. This could also be the start of working towards a new set of agreements to take effect after Tides. This assists in understanding the new responsibilities and freedoms that come with being a young woman.

Participants - Tides rites of passage are open to 13 to 16 year-old girls. The event is primarily about the girl yet everyone around her is affected, directly or indirectly by the changes taking place. For this reason it is important that family and community understand and support what is happening. **A Tides rite of passage is more powerful if a girl's mother (or another significant woman) can accompa-**

ny her. Another way to offer support is for family and friends to attend the opening and completion ceremonies.

WE ASK GIRLS to bring along an object that represents her childhood - a symbol of the childhood she is leaving behind.

WE ASK FATHERS (or another significant man) to find a symbolic gift to mark this time for his daughter, which will be presented at the opening day.

WE ASK THE MOTHERS (or another significant woman) to find a symbolic gift to give to the girl on her day of transition during the event.

If the girl is unaccompanied we ask that a short letter be written to the girl - this will then be presented on your behalf.

Tides Crew - Each event has a group of carefully considered women to lead the rite of passage. This team consists of: 2 directors, several facilitators in their 20's - 40's, trainee women, and a group of young leaders - teens who have been through their rite of passage and return to support the new girls. We also acknowledge the importance of elders or senior facilitators some of who are in their 50's and 60's and are treasured for their experience. Including new girls and mothers we create a multi-generation community of approximately 25 - 40 people.

The Program

Two days before the girls and mothers arrive the team of facilitators, trainees and young leaders prepare for the week ahead. We build a strong container and talk about how we will support you.

Day 1 - 'Separation'

This is about symbolically and physically separating the girls from their everyday world; their childhood, family, friends, community, media and modern technology. We share lunch together before the women of the Tides community take the girls away to begin their rite of passage.

DAY 2 - 'Building Community'

This day is about getting to know and trust each other. Within the whole group we spend time in and sleep in smaller teams called 'home groups' each in their own Tipi. We play games, tell stories, eat good food together and sit around the fire.

DAY 3 - 'Transition'

The big day - recognition of the change from girl to woman, we set the task for the major challenge.

DAY 4 - 'Assimilation'

Acknowledgment and celebration - We are now all considered women! We recognise the gifts and strengths of the younger women and take time to reflect upon the achievements of the previous day. We talk about how things may change when the new young women go home and return to their lives.

DAY 5 - 'Return'

The girls return to their families and wider community. Formalised by a 'threshold', the girls step across a line between the outside community and those on the event. Each new young woman takes her turn to step over and be received by her family. This is an important opportunity for people from both sides of the threshold to speak to each other. A feast follows and then it's time for us all to say goodbye.

After Tides - Becoming a woman does not happen over night! Once the event is over you can begin exploring and re-negotiating a new phase in the family relationship. At Tides we talk about responsibilities and freedoms that come with womanhood. Together you may want to discuss how to incorporate these and make changes.

We encourage you to take your time with this process and make space to reconnect as a family. Creating a special occasion is a nice way to celebrate the event's completion and give your daughter the opportunity to share about her experience. This helps build on the confidence and new foundation she touched on through her rite of passage and reinforces the fact that she is now a young woman.

A few weeks after the event we post out a package that includes; a collage of photos, a contact sheet, a follow up letter, and info about upcoming events.

Once a girl has completed her rite of passage she may be invited to return as a young leader. We strongly recommend that you see Tides as a 2 phase process, the second being learning about the qualities of leadership and service. Stepping into this role adds significantly to the experience of Tides and the transition of girl to young woman.

Confidentiality - Everyone at Tides agrees to keep some things confidential. This enables people to talk about their lives without fear of disclosure. It also helps to maintain a sense of 'mystery' for the new people coming through!

Useful Information

- **Upcoming Event dates: January 19 -23 and April 19 - 23 2016.** We start at 11:30am on day 1. The completion ceremony is from 2-4pm on day 5.
- **Cost: New girl \$850 Mothers \$650** (Partial scholarship & payment plans are available - see info below).
- **Early bird discount** of \$50 per person (i.e. \$100 mother & daughter) if registration is completed 1 month prior to event start date.
- **Registration requires** a phone conversation with girls and care givers - from there we send you the necessary forms. Once the phone call is complete and your forms and deposit are in your place is confirmed.
- **Contact gabby@tides.net.nz or 0272754327** to arrange a call time.
- All events are based at the Tui Events Park - a mainly camping and fully functional facility.
- All events are catered.
- Coordination of transport can be arranged.

We hope this letter has answered some of your questions. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any more queries.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Ka kite,
Tides

Scholarships

Our philosophy is that no one should be excluded from participating in our programs due to financial reasons. If you are in need of assistance please talk to us, as we may be able to offer partial sponsorship. Any remaining funds can be paid over time. We also welcome AP set up prior to the event. Start a piggy bank now! ☺

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