



**PRESS RELEASE:** 23 November 2022

## West Christchurch teen pushes through to win top award

“To go against myself, even though times were tough, and pushing through, even though I was tired, sore or fatigued” comments West Christchurch teenager Jaedyn Smith (16) from St Thomas of Canterbury College as he reflects on his experience at Blue Light’s Life Skills programme held recently at Burnham Military camp from 14-18 November. On winning the Overall Excellence award Jaedyn comments, “it was meaningful because I set a goal to myself which was to give everything a go have a confident mindset even though I was put into a test against myself and have the willing to push past my limits”.

Blue Light’s Southern Life Skills Coordinator Nicola Patterson, who was at the camp, notes on Jaedyn’s win “Jaedyn was awarded the Overall Excellence Award through demonstrating the qualities of maturity, respect, intuition and through building individual and group mana”.

Megan Heather, Dean of Rice House at St Thomas of Canterbury College who referred Jaedyn, comments “The Bluelight camp provides an opportunity for students in an unfamiliar platform to gain Life Skills that support personal growth. The challenges, relationships and mindset required to achieve at your highest level is always tested and to be able to work alone and or as a team towards a common goal that is outside your comfort zone tests each individual, highlighting one’s weaknesses and strengths and how you can work to overcome barriers put in front of you to achieve”.

The camp in Burnham offered Jaedyn the ability to learn life skills such as cleaning, rising early, making his bed, and cleaning his room by 6am for morning inspection. Jaedyn also took part in experiential learning activities such as the high wire course, mountain biking, swimming, learnt parade ground drills, took part in leadership, teamwork, and physical activities. Jaedyn also visited the International Antarctic Centre where he got to meet the huskies and learn the history of military working dogs.

This highly successful programme has been run by New Zealand Blue Light in partnership with NZ Defence Force for the past 12 years and has adventure-based experiential learning as a key part of the programme. The programme provides 14-17-year olds’ critical life skills such as self-development, self-control, and teamwork that will enable young people to be successful at home, school, communities, and employment.

Up to 12 courses are held each year in Auckland, Central North Island and Burnham locations.

For more information about the Blue Light Life Skills camps visit [www.bluelight.co.nz](http://www.bluelight.co.nz).

Blue Light is grateful for the support of the sponsorship of the Lion Foundation and community supporters.

See [www.bluelight.co.nz](http://www.bluelight.co.nz) or visit [www.facebook.com/nzbluelight](https://www.facebook.com/nzbluelight)

### **New Zealand Blue Light**

Blue Light is a not-for-profit charity that works in partnership with the Police to create positive connections between young people and Police, helping young people find direction, fun, and sense of belonging within their communities, enabling young people to develop life skills, leadership skills and find employment opportunities.

Blue Light believes that it is through the empowerment of disadvantaged youth to reach their full potential that their overall wellbeing can be improved and in turn the wellbeing of their communities.

Blue Light achieves this through removing the barriers for disadvantaged youth to participate positively in the community, through both its national and locally- based programmes, activities, and events.

Blue Light's work in the community is unique – it is not a one size fits all approach. We have 68 local branches working with NZ Police to create meaningful experiences for young people in their regions, including cultural, sporting, and educational activities that are alcohol, drug, and violence free.

Although Blue Light is supported by Police, the two operate totally independently.

For many participants, the programmes decrease the risk of youth offending and becoming victims of crime through access to positive role models, time with other young people away and the opportunity to see the world outside their current environment.

Blue Light originally began in Australia as a community policing initiative and remains strong in all states. As well as in New Zealand, it is now active in the Solomon Islands, East Timor, Cook Islands, and Scotland.

See [www.bluelight.co.nz](http://www.bluelight.co.nz) or visit [www.facebook.com/nzbluelight](https://www.facebook.com/nzbluelight)



**PHOTO ABOVE:** L to R: Inspector Peter Cooper, NZ Police Canterbury Rural Area Commander, and Overall Excellence Award Winner Jaedyn Smith.



**PHOTO ABOVE:** New Zealand Blue Light Life Skills Graduation photo 14-18 November 2022





**PHOTO ABOVE:** Blue Light Life Skills' camp in Burnham 14-18 November, gave participants the chance to visit the International Antarctic Centre, learn the history of military working dogs, and interact with huskies.