

# Real men can do Valentines well

by K. Askin

**M**ANY men have difficulty meeting the challenge of Valentine's Day. How do I make a great impression? It's time open my heart? Men, we need to take a lead and turn a challenge into an opportunity to invest into our relationship.

Collin Mellors, a soldier in the Salvation Army, decided 10 years ago to take the commer-

cialised version of Valentine's Day and remake it on his own terms. He has since combed the internet and his imagination to come up with new and creative ways to celebrate his marriage with his wife.

His first idea? An elaborate surprise at her work.

Collin spent an evening decorating the morning tea room with chocolates, candles and a banner with a red heart saying "CLC"

— Collin loves Catherine — in the middle. Both Catherine and her female colleagues were deeply impacted by this impressive display.

Another year he purchased a single stem sterling silver rose holder, placed a beautiful red rose in it and then added a packet of chocolates.

His ideas range from a surprise ten day cruise to the heartfelt and simple — a handwritten love note.

Paul Subritzky, the national director for Promise Keepers, does not enjoy buying or receiving gifts. Yet he realises they are important to his wife - so because of that, he makes the effort to go shopping with her or leave handwritten notes around the house when he travels.

"It takes effort," he concedes. "But it deepens the marriage relationship by keeping it fresh, alive and vibrant — the way God intended. And it means you get a great welcome when you get home!"

To many, Valentine's Day has become just another commercialised occasion. Yet it can still act as a reminder to visibly demonstrate your love to your spouse in a way that suits you.

And if from time to time it means putting that extra bit of effort in, it is well worth the long-term rewards. ■

**TRUE LOVE:** Valentine's Day does not have to become just another commercialised occasion.



**WORTHY CAUSE:** Paul Richards (left) presenting the cheque to Stanley Ross of LIFE World Reach on February 3.

## Gym drive helps exploited women

**A**N Auckland gym has raised \$7195 for women in Phnom Penh, Cambodia trapped in a desperate situation.

It is common for girls in the Cambodian capital to be sold by relatives for just \$300.

From there-on they are exploited in various ways including being put with as many as 10 men a day. "Late November while attending LIFE church we received a plea for help from two Kiwi ladies living in Cambodia. The plea was heart-wrenching and the lady who spoke to us from a video used a sentence that I'll never forget," says Paul Richards, CEO of Club Physical.

"She told us why they needed to save these young girls, of a similar age to my own daughters, and said 'I hope, by watching this, you are compelled into action'. And we certainly were."

Aucklanders, Sue Taylor and another Kiwi, Sue Hanna are working in Phnom Penn to try and provide a safe and supportive haven for the young girls. They want to make a difference by

providing love, accommodation, support and education.

Club Physical organised a two-month drive that offered members and the community the chance to help the women by giving a friend 12 days use of any of the clubs, for 12 dollars.

The entire funds were given to this cause. The club was able to show a video filmed at Phnom Penh, which quickly convinced all the club's staff, franchisees and other viewers of the worthiness of the campaign. Five hundred and sixty people were involved and a \$500 donation was received from the Henderson Rotary Club.

"One of the keys was being able to show the video of the two Sue's on the job in Phnom Penh to our team. Everyone was moved to take action," said Mr Richards.

The cheque was presented to Stanley Ross of LIFE World Reach who will distribute the funds to the women.

Last year the group successfully raised \$8500 for World Vision to help the children orphaned by the Myanmar tsunami. ■

## Campers amped up for faith

**M**ORE than 100 young people from around New Zealand, Australia, and the United States were strengthened in their faith at an annual youth camp recently.

Twenty of the campgoers committed their lives to the Lord and 50 made recommitments at the Ignite Youth Camp, which is now into its third year.

Called Amp'd 09, the event was held from February 9 to 12 at the Christian Youth Camps Ngaruawahia near Hamilton.

Geoff Davies, national youth coordinator for the Wesleyan Methodist Church of New Zealand, which organised the get-together said the camp was designed to give young people the confidence to share their faith. "It's about living your life full for God. People will know who you are. Wherever you go, you are amplified to share your faith."

There was a wide range of activities at the camp, aimed at encouraging youth to make friends, overcome challenges, foster trust and develop a deeper relationship with God.

Mr Davies said the camp, which was open to people aged between 12 and 18, welcomed youth groups from all denominations or ministries.

"We are encouraging believers to bring their non-Christian friends as well, since the camp has an outreach evangelistic goal."

Community pastor Brent Dongell of Cession Community church in Pakuranga, Auckland delivered several messages to the campers.

"We discussed how equalising sound and using a mix-board requires limiting and saying no to some noise to make the best music. We must live our lives the same way, by not taking whatever the world give us. We talked about how to

turn up the volume loud enough for others to see and hear by the way we live our lives. And we discussed what it means to share our message with the world and to never underestimate sharing the message of life"

The worship service was led by Parachute Music Festival popular band The Ember Days. Saturday evening saw the arrival of hip hop band Unison, who thrilled their audience with a feet-stomping concert. On Sunday night, the campers showcased their talent through a range of drama, dance, singing and humour.

Joanne McKinnell programme director said the highlight was the foot washing as an act of reconciliation and service. One camper said, "I particularly like the foot washing time — it was quite powerful and it was so awesome to serve others that way ..." ■



**LIFE CHANGING:** Ignite Youth campgoers and staff at the Christian Youth Camps Ngaruawahia near Hamilton.

## Parachute, a blast

**T**HE US bands that performed at Parachute Music Festival 2009 agree that the event is one of the most organised festivals in the world.

Kutless from Oregon said Parachute was exceptional. "We had a blast. The standards of the festival were amazing." He added that it would be tough to enjoy music events in America from now on.

Casting Crowns from Georgia said they were amazed at the reception they received in New Zealand. The people were "sweet" and "it is not always that way in the music business." Band member Hector Cervantes said it was good to see Parachute also set aside a special time for praise and worship.

Another Georgia band, Family Force 5 found the festival "cool all around". Band member Solomon said the crowd was one

of the most receptive audiences they have played for. "We were just pumped." ■



**PUMPED:** Family Force 5 frontman Soul Glow Activatur. - Photo by Danelle Bohane

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