



AUTUMN 2018

Brighter Futures

A start in life

a brighter future for young australians



Providing the Resources

We provide the resources, teachers provide the education, together – we ensure educational progression.

In providing the resources required by Australian students, *A Start in Life* seeks to overcome the barriers to education that may face students experiencing disadvantage.

As educational requirements evolve in curricula and focus, different resources need to be available. For those in necessitous circumstances, the absence of apt resources can result in a significant gap in opportunity for education. Over the past 95 years, we have continually adapted our support to ensure the appropriate resources are available, and have been delighted with the achievements and progress of our students.

During the latter part of last year, we took the opportunity to meet with some school principals and experienced educators with a view to enhancing our understanding of the tools they use to ensure the progress of their students. Valuable insights were gained and we have incorporated the relevant concepts into our formation of yearly student support plans.

As teachers informed us they develop current and future learning goals with their pupils, we asked our students to provide these to us. Sharing this information allows us to see their progress and ensure our support plans are directed towards these goals. Where these may not be available, Jason Chan, a qualified and experienced teacher who joined us in August last year, will help students and parents to develop learning goals. By involving students in establishing these goals, we can ensure students are highly engaged with their own education.

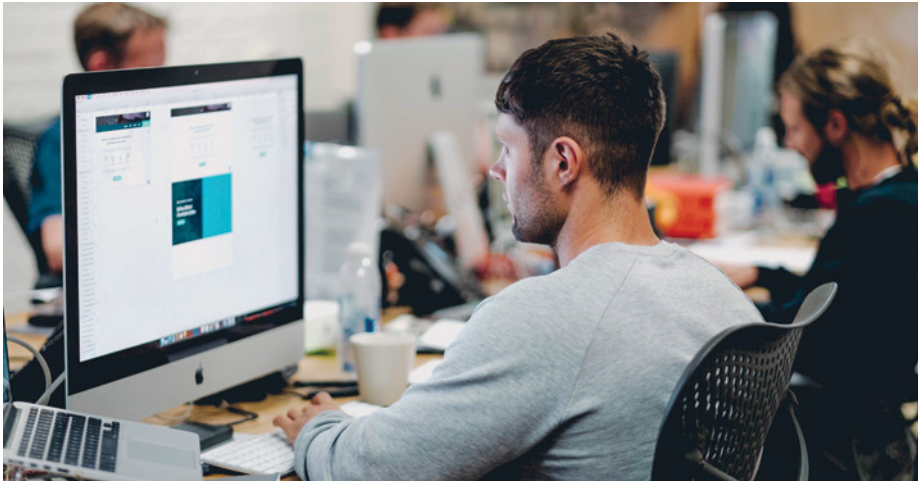
Our meeting with principals and educators reinforced what we have long known - that support at home was one of the most important foundations in creating the motivation to learn. Actively involving both students and parents in the development of goals ensures all are 'engaged' in the child's education.

With learning goals established, student and parental engagement developed, and utilising the care and skill of Australia's educators, we consider the foundations are in place for a child to progress and work toward reaching their full potential.



Technology Support

In accepting a report on the promotion of human rights, including the right to development, the United Nations Human Rights Council, in 2011, recognised the importance of ensuring universal access to the internet.



The report highlighted that access to information technology provided an opportunity to develop and was an important educational tool. Success in the modern world increasingly requires young people to not only source, but critically analyse information from online sources.

This action by the UN, reinforces the value of support initiated by *A Start in Life* to provide computers and internet access for students. Over many years this has enabled students to undertake research, complete assignments, follow and join in curriculum, and continue in motivated, flexible study. This access removes the barriers of transport and time needed to commute to a local library, provides better quality resources and the ability to communicate with peers and teachers outside of school.

In the past year, we were pleased to have provided support for IT equipment and expenses for well over 100 of our students. This included providing new computers and printers, as well as the majority

of scholarships including financial support for the cost of internet access and software. The financial burden involved in purchasing these educational tools would otherwise have been a substantial barrier to these individual students.

That this support was valuable was overwhelmingly reinforced by the results we witnessed in our annual survey of parents and students. Parents in particular had noticed this access meant an expanded reference bank, connectivity and access to supplementary materials. The grades achieved by students demonstrated the importance of these resources. We are determined to continue this.

UN Human Rights Council, Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to development: Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression, Frank La Rue, 16 May 2011, available at: http://www2.ohchr.org/english/bodies/hrcouncil/docs/17session/A.HRC.17.27_en.pdf [accessed 1 May 2018]

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PRIZE GIVING

We were thrilled to hold our Annual Prize Giving in April this year to celebrate the extraordinary achievements of our students in 2017.

The Student and Family Management Team chose 25 students who excelled to join us in Sydney at the Grace Hotel. Students and their families travelled to the event from all over Australia to join with our team and a few of our generous sponsors.

Every year, this event is an opportunity to celebrate students like Merwan who received a 98.85 ATAR in the 2017 HSC, and students as young as five who, with their family, were actively involved in supporting other members of their community.

We were delighted to award five students with our newest award section, the Beryl Rudd Humanitarian Awareness Prizes. All scholarship recipients demonstrated a commitment to their education and community. To celebrate these



achievements with supporters who make it all possible was a joy for students, parents and our team alike.

Thank you to everyone who organised, joined, celebrated and enjoyed the 2018 Prize Giving!



© The key to success at home

Parent Engagement

Our path to support has always been guided by the insights and observations we receive from parents, students and teachers.

Recently we saw a shining example of the importance and value of engagement in education extending beyond the classroom. As the mother of one of our students, Melissa, noted – while teachers hold the balance in class, parents have the power after the bell.

A single mother of two, with her eldest starting at a new school, Melissa demonstrated the value in our focus on parental engagement. By working closely alongside her two teenage boys she ensured their commitment to education. Checking an online portal daily and establishing a good study routine allowed for some calm in the relative chaos of high school. In a time of rapid curricula change, online portals are the go to for parents looking to engage with the day to day expectations from school for their children.

Finding a way to actively support and encourage any student is

no small feat. When setting up a routine with teenagers, however, parents face a whole different challenge. Melissa's task was to establish the set up that became unshakeable: time to relax and kick the soccer ball around after school, study before tea, and time set aside every night for reading for fun. Despite the challenge, we can safely say Melissa has struck the right balance between being involved and encouraging independent study.

Her sons continued improvements in literacy and numeracy are a reward for her commitment to their education. School reports speak of their "confidence and enjoyment" in the classroom, demonstrating that Melissa's enthusiasm and appreciation of education is clearly shared.

We look forward to supporting their continued achievements and watching this family progress as they work together.



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Thank You



Our students' achievements would not have been possible without the ongoing support of generous donors.

We equip young Australians with the resources they need to achieve educational progress and we are pleased to find many in our community are willing to help us in this way. This year started with a contribution from Universities Australia; a peak body working to advance and promote the benefits of Australian Universities.

Given their involvement in the development of higher education policy, the promotion of student welfare and academic achievement, we were honoured to be chosen as their community partner for the 2018 Higher Education Conference.

We want to thank them for the generous decision to replace speaker gifts this year with a donation to *A Start in Life*. This contribution from Universities Australian bolsters our belief in the path we are taking and will play a part in ensuring a brighter future for the young Australians taking up our scholarships.



2017 Report Card



We have previously spoken of ability, stability and continuity as supporting pillars in the educational progress of students.

While report cards, numbers and grades are one measure of this progress, there are many other measures, which inform us the assistance is supportive of these pillars and allows students to thrive.

The results we've included below are a snippet of our insights from the 2017 student and parent survey.

Ability

Each year our students demonstrate they have the ability and last year was no exception.

86 % of primary/secondary students stated they understood school work better.

85 % of parents saw improvements in their child's education.

90 % of Tertiary students recognised help provided for improved results in course work.

"It has allowed her to be more confident, and her self-esteem has improved. She is now starting to keep up in class, which is a great improvement."

"Our son started the school year very well and has really enjoyed learning. He excels at maths, likes science and completes his homework every week. He is developing independent learning now in year three."

Stability

A key factor in any education, stability can be hard to come by for students in difficult financial circumstances. We provide this by ensuring students have the resources to utilise their abilities.

90 % students indicated they had everything they needed for school.

85 % of children felt more motivated to go to school.

88 % of parents saw their child's health and well-being improve.

"It is so good to see how far he has come since he has started to enjoy going to school, he takes pride in how he looks always, every day he comes home wipes his school shoes over to keep them looking new"

"Knowing there are people supporting me is an awesome fact. It keeps me motivated whenever I feel the load is too much."

Continuity

The ongoing support of donors allows us to create continuity in the educational progress of students for many years to come.

72 % developed a study routine.

63 % couldn't wait to get back to school.

92 % of tertiary students felt closer to their career goals.

"I am proud of her attitude, resilience and the way she keeps trying despite the hardships she has faced."

"In a nutshell, I'd say that the support gives me extra peace of mind. This is absolutely important for me as I am always looking to top all my subjects. It helps me concentrate so I can do my best."

"It has allowed me to continue study towards my dream career and not only get the most out of my study by accessing more resources but be able to carry out compulsory placements."

