A start in life

A Brighter Future for Young Australians



This Christmas become an **Education Hope Hero**

Join the people who **back our students every month**, from first term to last.

"What Do You See" by Jamie (Acrylic on canvas) is just one of the paintings going under the hammer at our **Student Exhibition and Artwork Auction**, 19 November.

Jamie's Story of Confidence

For much of Year 6, Jamie went to school in uniforms that no amount of washing could return to their proper colour.

Her family was living in temporary accommodation on her grandfather's farm in regional NSW, where the washing machine ran on solar power and could only be used on a sunny day, and the water came from the farm dam. Jamie was bullied for being different and for smelling like a farm.

She finished primary school performing at the Schools Spectacular in late 2025. *"She's a phenomenal drawer,"* says a staff member from her primary school.

Before Year 7 began, the family secured a twelve-month rental and Jamie enrolled at a new high school. Through *A Start in Life*'s Education Essentials support, the family receives $1,200 across the school year for uniforms, stationery, equipment and technology, with the first payment arriving in January.

At Jamie's school, shirts cost $55 each and trousers $45. *"I'm not stressing about getting the stuff she needs, like I normally do,"* her mother says. *"She actually gets brand new."*

For Jamie, it meant starting high school *"where no one knew me as the dirty uniform kid"*.

The first weeks were not easy. Then things changed in one class, when Jamie sat beside a girl who had drawn a character from a game Jamie plays, and the two started talking. That conversation led to a new group of friends.

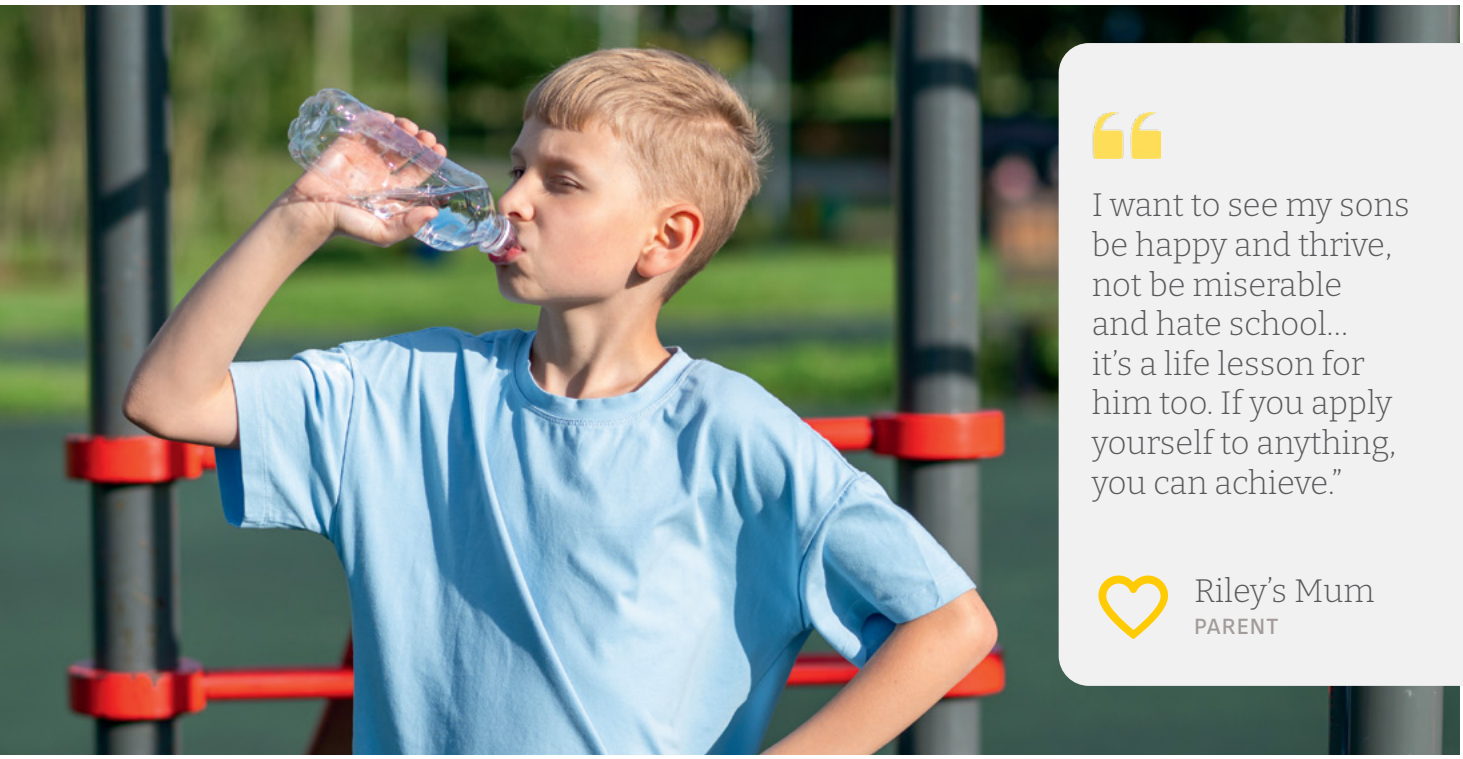
This year, *A Start in Life* is also funding something Jamie has never had the chance to try, and she has chosen guitar. She will be the first person in the family to play an instrument.

She has several unfinished stories and plans to finish one this year. Asked whether she might publish one day, she doubted anyone would buy her books, then reconsidered. *"There's eight billion people in the world,"* she says. *"At least one of them would look at it."*

Become Jamie's Education Hope Hero

Scan the QR Code DONATE MONTHLY TODAY

All donations are tax deductible



> I want to see my sons be happy and thrive, not be miserable and hate school... it's a life lesson for him too. If you apply yourself to anything, you can achieve."
>
> Riley's Mum
> PARENT

Riley's change for the better

How Riley is tracking in school: A Principal's Award, a soccer team, and a mum who says he's a different kid.

Riley is ten years old, in Year 5, and until this year, he was the class clown.

He had good reason to be looking for the laugh. Riley has autism and ADHD, and as his mum puts it: *"He's got some barriers straight up... it's a bit harder for him to regulate and stay focused."*

He's an identical twin, so everything at home comes with *"a lot of competitiveness"*. His dad *"just sort of disappeared for a while"*, and family life was complicated. School had become something he endured, and his report card started to reflect it, which hurt him.

"He used to be miserable at school," his mum told us. *"His results reflected the class clown and the funny guy, and he was really upset by his results."*

What changed was partly a decision Riley made, and partly the removal of the things that were quietly standing in his way. A payment from *A Start in Life* covered his place at the Year 5 camp in Canberra, including the sleeping bag and gear he didn't have. The same payment cleared the school fees his mum had fallen behind on, dance class included.

His mum said: *"Having to pay for two is a lot of money... it helped relieve a bit of pressure off me, which probably relieves some stress at home as well. And it also cleared what I was behind on with some school fees... so we're all clear for school."*

Since then, Riley's year has looked completely different. He made the school soccer team, a goal he'd set himself with his Student Assistance Coordinator at an earlier check-in, and the rugby league team for Gala Day.

He also got up on stage for NAIDOC Week and performed an Aboriginal dance, solo, in front of the whole school. He hadn't even told his mum he'd learned it.

Last month, Riley collected his Principal's Award, earned through fifteen merit awards, one at a time.

Perhaps the clearest sign came on the soccer field the morning of our last mentorship call. When another child hit him in the ear, Riley stayed calm and didn't retaliate.

"The old Riley would have just started swinging," his mum said. *"The school is very, very proud of him."*

His mum's summary is shorter still. *"He's just a happier, happier guy... he's just a new kid now."*



What an **Education Hope Hero** makes possible

An Education Hope Hero is a monthly donor whose gift joins others in a shared fund, and every time it reaches $1,200, another student starts the school year with their Education Essentials covered.

Every stage of a student's education brings different challenges and costs. We tailor our financial support based on each student's individual needs so they are equipped, feel confident, and ready to focus in class.

The figures below show what it takes to support a young person from their first year at school through to tertiary study.

First-year
Education Essentials

Uniforms, equipment, technology

$1,200 */year*

Ongoing
Scholarship recipient

Kindy to Year 12

$3,460 */year*

Full support
for a tertiary student

University or TAFE

$5,920 */year*

How it works

1 **Step one**

Join as an Education Hope Hero.

Choose a monthly gift of $25, $50 or $100. Your gift joins those of every other Education Hope Hero in one shared community fund.

2 **Step two**

As the Hope Hero Fund grows, more students can start school knowing they have the essentials.

The more Hope Heroes give, the more students we can say yes to. The cost of supporting each new student may vary, and the fund may also support ongoing or tertiary students.

3 **Step three**

We keep you updated throughout the year.

You'll hear from us across the year with news from the students the fund supports, from the first day of school to the end of the year.

Gift	Outcome
$25 *per month*	**Four Hope Heroes** cover one student's first year education essentials *$25 x 4 Hope Heroes x 12 months = $1,200*
$50 *per month*	**Two Hope Heroes** cover one student's first year education essentials *$50 x 2 Hope Heroes x 12 months = $1,200*
$100 *per month*	**One Hope Hero** covers one student's first year education essentials *$100 x 12 months = $1,200*
$100 *per month*	**Five Hope Heroes** together cover a university student at full support for a year. *$100 x 5 Hope Heroes x 12 months = $6,000*

Join us and become an Education Hope Hero today

Scan the QR Code DONATE TODAY

Account: 424978 BSB: 032 006
ABN: 21 871 881 074
All donations are tax deductible



> She just needed to feel supported. To feel like she could do it."
>
> Ella's Mum
> PARENT

Ella wants to be an artist

This Christmas, Ella wants to be in an art class: How Interests funding is helping a Year 3 student rebuild her confidence.

Ella is nine, and her mother describes her as a worker: a kid who tries hard even when it costs her, who wants to get things right.

The past couple of years have not made that easy. Her mother has been seriously ill, and money ran out before Ella's school essentials could be covered.

Over the following year, her mother watched Ella's confidence thin. Ella started to doubt she was capable.

"*She's a hardworking student,*" her mother says. "*She just needed to feel supported. To feel like she could do it.*"

Through *A Start in Life*'s Education Essentials program, the family receives $1,200 across the school year for uniforms, stationery and the internet connection Ella needs for homework. The first payment arrives in January, when back-to-school costs are at their highest.

The program also sets money aside for each student to follow something they love. For Ella, that is art. A class that had been sitting at the bottom of the family's list has moved back within reach.



Ella — the artist

Her mother is still unwell, but Ella will start next year with her uniform sorted, her basics covered, and a place in an art class she dreamed of.

For Ella's mother, the support means one less worry about her daughter's future.

Student names have been changed to protect their family's privacy.

Help more students like Ella feel supported in school

Scan the QR Code DONATE TODAY

Account: 424978 BSB: 032 006
ABN: 21 871 881 074
All donations are tax deductible