



## Outcomes that Mean More than Numbers

At *A Start in Life*, we are often asked about the outcomes and benefits that flow from the assistance we make available. Not surprisingly, with articles recently appearing in the media debating the outcomes flowing from the introduction of some of the 'Gonski' funding reforms, the number of these enquiries is increasing. With that in mind, we wanted to continue sharing the outcomes we know flow from the assistance your support enables us to provide to those facing economic and social distress.

The focus within most of the recent news articles was that success is measured only by looking at academic results. *A Start in Life* is aware from its 90+ years of experience in working with students and families, there are many other outcomes which together or individually are just as important as academic results.

Measuring academic results alone ignores the important social and learning outcomes that flow from providing support. It also fails to acknowledge that by providing support each year it prevents problems from prior years being carried over into the future.

As we provide students from lower socio-economic backgrounds with the means to obtain the textbooks and learning resources they need, we know we are providing these students with an equal opportunity to learn.

Students regularly tell us we help reduce their stress and/or their family's stress. In fact, over 50% of our students told us this. Research out of the U.S. in 2001 & 2003, showed stress impaired attention and concentration, while reducing cognition, creativity and memory. All these are necessary components to learning. While an exact correlation may not apply in all circumstances, we can be reasonably certain when we see a Teachers comment noting the increase in a student's class engagement, *A Start in Life* and our supporters have contributed to this.

Emotionally healthy children need a reliable care giver - *A Start in Life* assists parents to reliably provide the school uniform, textbooks and other educational essentials. Children need predictable and stable environments - *A Start in Life* adds economic stability where it did not exist before and where food and living arrangements were not always consistent or adequate.

Our model of support sees us facilitate these outcomes for as long as the support is required - this maybe for just one year, or as is the case for 6% of the students we support, it maybe for more than 6 years.

### CONTINUED ENGAGEMENT

*Term of Support to Students at June 2016*



**18%**  
Less than 1 year

**37%**  
1-2 years

**14%**  
3-4 years

**25%**  
5-6 years

**6%**  
More than 6 years

We provide young Australians with the opportunity for enrichment through taking on personalised and increasingly complex activities. We encourage and then provide students with tuition to address areas of underdevelopment. Our advocacy and encouragement of participation in out of school activities such as music, sport, the arts and community involvement, also provides the personalised enrichment young people (...)

need. The enrichment comes as they develop emotionally and learn how to respond appropriately to others, as well as form positive relationships, both with peers and also those they may not ordinarily come in contact with. These outcomes arise, as children who are actively engaged are less likely to develop the wrong habits.

When children have the opportunity to gain a sense of mastering of their environment they are more likely to develop feelings of self-worth, confidence and independence. *A Start in Life* enables this by ensuring access to the relevant necessities such as IT and tutoring.

We all know how difficult it is to listen, concentrate and learn when we are impacted by ill health. When a medical issue is impacting a student, *A Start in Life* offers assistance designed to ensure the outcome is not increased absences from school, or added difficulty in learning.

We are delighted by the breadth of all these outcomes and also proud to share with you, the fact that the overwhelming majority (67%) of students you help us to support, either increased or maintained their grades between mid 2015 and mid 2016. **And every one of these students live in difficult circumstances.**

## Student Outcomes 2015/2016

### ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENTS



- 67% of primary and secondary students increased or maintained their average score across all subjects studied
- 100% of tertiary students increased or maintained their average score across all subjects studied
- 80% of students passed all of their subjects
- 37% achieved scores in all subjects placing them at the top of their year
- Students in Years 7-10 improved on their results from the previous year in Science, English and HSIE
- Students in Years 11-12 achieved average Maths scores of 70% or more

### SOCIAL OUTCOMES



- 71% were happier at home
- 68% were more motivated
- 50% worried less about the families financial circumstances
- 54% were able to explore a new hobby

### LEARNING OUTCOMES



- 71% enjoyed going to school more
- Over 85% won Awards-many for leadership, sport and community service
- 62% mastered new complex skills
- 67% found it easier to do school work in 2015

## Thank you

A heart-felt thanks to the girls at Meriden School for their creativity in fundraising for their school's service week. Service week is about giving back to the community and we were honoured that the girls chose to give to students in need through *A Start in Life*. The girls held a bake sale, sold succulent plants (donated from Flower Power Nursery) and had a wishing tree where students could write about what school means to them. Through their amazing efforts they raised more than \$2,000 for *A Start in Life*. Well done girls! Special thanks to Jade, Maryann and Hannah.

We also wish to thank the team at GrowBetter - Victoria for their recent donation to *A Start in Life*. GrowBetter were attracted to *A Start in Life*, and the growth opportunities we provide to students. A nice fit, we suggest, with the growth they provide for people's gardens.



*The Meriden students holding their fundraising plant sale.*





## Christmas Cards Growing Brighter Futures

Christmas cards are available now at your local Lowes store, with 100% of the proceeds going to *A Start in Life* to support students.

These festive cards are not only a great way to support others who are less fortunate, they are also good for the environment. Every card has been imprinted with Australian native seeds that grow into beautiful Swan River daisy's.

Help disadvantaged Australian children to have a brighter future and brighten up someone's day by sending them one of these special Christmas cards.

Christmas cards are available throughout all Lowes stores nationally.

## A Race to the Top for Charity

On Sunday 31st July the Shangri-La Hotel, Sydney hosted the inaugural Climb 'n' Dine charity tower race to raise funds for its charity partners including *A Start in Life*.

Starting at 8am, 150 excited participants lined up outside the hotel, ready to race or walk up the 37 floors (630 steps) to the very top of the Hotel. Once at the top, all participants were treated to spectacular views over Sydney city and the harbour beyond, while enjoying the reward of a sumptuous buffet breakfast at Altitude restaurant.

Some participants ran in a group with family and friends, whilst others ran as an individual and focused on getting to the top in a fast time. A few keen runners took the opportunity to run the 630 stairs multiple times and get in some training for other stair challenge events. The event was a great success and everyone enjoyed getting to know their fellow participants over a delicious and well deserved breakfast, once they'd crossed the finish line on the 37th floor. A big thankyou to the Shangri-La Hotel for hosting the event and all participants for your kind donations, that will create a brighter future for disadvantaged Australian students.

Follow *A Start in Life* on Facebook to find out more about next year's event and how you can get involved.

If you have an event that you're participating in and would like to fundraise to support young Australians in need through *A Start in Life*, please visit [everydayhero.com.au](http://everydayhero.com.au) or [gofundraise.com.au](http://gofundraise.com.au) to set up a page. It takes a couple of minutes to receive a unique page link to send to friends and family.



*L – R Runners warming up at the start line. Spectacular view from the finish line at the top of the Shangri-La Hotel.*

### Through your support, *A Start in Life* in 2015/16 was able to provide:



**31 students**  
benefited from remedial  
after-school tuition



**146 students**  
received new  
school uniforms



**60 students**  
were assisted to play a  
weekend sport



**135 students**  
received new school  
and sports shoes



**19 students**  
were able to learn a  
musical instrument



**63 students**  
were able to attend  
school camps and  
excursions



**31 students**  
were given an  
opportunity to be  
involved in the arts



**83 families**  
were given access to a  
home computer and  
internet



**165 students**  
were provided with  
stationary and  
textbooks



**89 families**  
were granted assistance  
towards basic living  
expenses

## The Connolly Family

David and Michelle Connolly were in desperate need of help when they contacted *A Start in Life*. David has a degenerative spinal condition and suffers with chronic back pain. His medical condition combined with other health problems make it impossible for him to work in his profession as a mechanic and exclude him from working in many other jobs. He is currently looking for work but is finding it hard.

Michelle is a busy stay-at-home mum looking after their 5 children, the three eldest attend primary school and they have a 4 year old and 2 year old.

David heard about *A Start in Life* through a support group aware of the unique work we do - providing tailored assistance and a depth of support to students and families for as long as they face financial and social distress. He contacted our Student and Family Management team and described his family's situation - that they could not afford even the basics for their three school aged children's education. The second hand uniforms they had were falling apart and he didn't know where else to turn to for help.

After completing the application process, the family was approved for support and our Student and Family Management team worked quickly with David and Michelle to develop a plan that addressed the barriers they were facing with their children's education.

The support they received through the plan included covering the public school fees, new school uniforms and shoes, required textbooks and food vouchers to cover the children's school lunches. Through providing a home computer, printer and internet connection, Jacob, Charlie and Zoe were able to complete their school

assignments and homework. Prior to this, all three were falling behind with their school work as they had no access to a computer after school hours. For the first time since starting school, all three children were able to attend school excursions along with their classmates.

Over the ensuing year, we were delighted to witness substantial progress being made by the three children. This meant we could, when developing our support plan for the following year, focus on then providing support which enabled Jacob and Zoe to participate in swimming lessons and for Charlie to play cricket.

David said *"The kids are so happy. To have the things they need for school and to be able to participate in activities, it has really boosted their self-confidence. These are things that we just couldn't afford... We appreciate the help so much. It has given us hope, to know that people care."*



**I would like to help young Australians in need by making a gift of \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

☐ Monthly

☐ Once

☐ Visa

☐ Mastercard

☐ Amex

☐ Cheque / money order payable to *A Start in Life*, PO Box 20606, World Square NSW 2002

**Cardholder name:** \_\_\_\_\_

Card number: \_ \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_ / \_ \_ \_ \_

Expiry: \_ \_ / \_ \_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

**Contact Details** (remain confidential and used only in accordance with our privacy policy)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me information about:

☐ Regular giving ☐ Giving through my workplace ☐ Leaving a gift in my Will ☐ Student Sponsorship

All donations over \$2 are tax deductible. DGR 62593. NL1116P

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