



Hope, Learning Club participant

Real People, Real Stories

Thank you for changing lives.

Autumn 2020



everyone's family

Your gift has a greater impact than you realise

Can you imagine what it feels like to always be on the outside? We often hear from our students that, before taking part in our learning programs, they were teased because they couldn't keep up in class. But supporters like you help change that.

I can't thank you enough. You give disadvantaged students the chance to catch up and succeed at school. This builds their self-worth and they grow up feeling that they are part of something. As they go on to achieve great things, it inspires all around them.

There are many stories inside and I hope you enjoy them all. On page 8, 12-year-old Hope shares how encouragement from our tutors has

inspired her goal to help others. And on page 4, you'll hear why Nathan has no fear about his future.

Thank you for helping students in need to do their best at school. The ripples of your support extend further than you know.



Dr Lisa O'Brien
Chief Executive Officer



Our Commitment to Child Protection

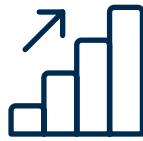
The Smith Family is committed to always acting in the best interests of children, providing safe environments and acting to protect them and other vulnerable people from abuse and neglect. For more information, visit our website at thesmithfamily.com.au/child-protection



THANK YOU!

Our supporters donated \$4.4 million to our Christmas Appeal, which will provide 10,476 children with the vital help they need in 2020.

What you helped us achieve in 2018 – 2019



168,404

children and young people
participating in our programs

17% growth on the previous year

Including supporting

22,640

Aboriginal and
Torres Strait Islander
program participants



90%

of students agreed
student2student made
it easier to do their
schoolwork



85%

of our students
said going to *Learning
Clubs* made them
try harder at school



Four in five

students who left
in Years 10 to 12
were working and/or
studying 12 months after
leaving the program

These programs are helping students build the skills and confidence to attend school more regularly, stay at school longer and go on to further study or employment. Together we are changing the lives of children living in poverty.

Nathan used his mentor's advice to spark his academic goals

“In Year 10, I took every opportunity that was presented to me. I saw the *iTrack* online mentoring program as a window into the world of academic study. The experience did not disappoint!” said Nathan.

Throughout high school, Nathan was a star student. Yet he wasn't sure where that could take him after graduation. Thanks to supporters like you, Nathan was able to take part in our 18-week *iTrack* program. Being connected to a mentor from a professional background opened a world of possibilities for his future.

“Due to coming from a low socio-economic background, I knew very little about university. Through *iTrack*, the mentor communicates their life experience and guides the student towards their aspirations,” said Nathan.

“In terms of my interests (academics and philanthropy), none of my family or teachers could advise me regarding my future. My mentor patiently answered my questions about life after school.

“It was fantastic to talk to someone I didn't know, because she didn't have a predetermined pathway in mind for me.”

Advice from his mentor helped Nathan get the most out of his senior years and form a clear plan for his career path.

“At the time, I had no idea what I wanted to do. My mentor was very skilled at talking me through my own thoughts. It was less a case of her telling me what to do, and more a case of helping me to realise what I wanted to do,” said Nathan.

“Through my mentor's guidance, I got involved with philosophy. That was definitely the best experience of Years 11 and 12. It taught me to think more openly about a wide range of issues and even just general life.

“Currently I am in my first year of a Bachelor of Science. I intend to complete a Master of Pure Mathematics, followed by a Doctorate. Then I'm likely to move into a mathematician/researcher role.”

Last year, **85%** of student respondents agreed their *iTrack* mentor helped them understand more about how they could reach their career goals.

Nathan, iTrack participant with his mother (right), and Dr Lisa O'Brien (left)



“I attribute much of my success in school to the support of The Smith Family. And when I envisage my future, it is without struggle and adversity,” he said.

Your support fills the gaps so students can flourish

“For a lot of these children, life is already hard. It is an enormous thing for families to know that there are people who care and want their children to have the best education that they possibly can,” said The Smith Family **Learning for Life Coordinator, Trish.**

“It’s nice to be able to give families that extra bit of a helping hand. When you first meet some of the children, they are really shy and not that engaged at school. Then you see them after they’ve participated in one of our learning programs and you see the confidence in them from having that support.

“There’s a family that I work with. Three of the children come along to our *Learning Club* and they’ve recently completed *student2student*. Their mum told me that *Learning Club* is their favourite time of the week. That’s amazing to hear!



Trish, Learning for Life coordinator

“More than that, the mum said that she and her husband didn’t finish high school. As their kids are getting older, it’s really hard for them to help their kids with their homework.

“But with the support of the *Learning Club* tutors, the children are flourishing at school. They are building confidence and know that when they go to school, they can succeed.

“Without this support, a lot of these children wouldn’t have a great schooling experience. In all likelihood, they probably wouldn’t complete their education. And this is an example of how the support helps to break the cycle of disadvantage.”

What do *Learning for Life* Coordinators do?

Our *Learning for Life* Coordinators are based in the communities where we work. They work with schools who identify students in need of extra support. They build a long-term partnership with families to support students throughout their education. This includes connecting them with learning and mentoring programs and other local supports.

Abdelmasih grabs every opportunity to help him catch up

“I came to Australia in 2009 as a refugee. I remember it was hard. I didn’t know how to communicate well because I didn’t know the language much,” said Abdelmasih, aged 15.

Starting school already behind can leave a student struggling for the rest of their education. Often they lose motivation and drop out early. But supporters like you made sure that didn’t become Abdelmasih’s future.

For three years, Abdelmasih took part in our 18-week *student2student* reading program. Reading over the phone to an older student buddy helped him to master core comprehension skills.

“My buddy gave me so much support. I felt good, like I could start reading and not be afraid of someone judging me,” said Abdelmasih.

“At the start, I couldn’t read great or talk that much. Because of *student2student*, I do so much better now. I find it easy to keep up in class. I’m now confident to read out loud in front of the whole class.”

When Abdelmasih was in Year 9, he also participated in our online mentoring program *iTrack*. His parents were not familiar with post-school options in Australia. So Abdelmasih jumped at the chance to speak to an adult from a professional background. It helped him to build exciting aspirations.

“I didn’t know what uni was like. But my mentor explained it to me,” he said.

“When I leave school, I really want to go to university. Because of *iTrack*, this is now my goal. My advice to younger people would be to try your best at school. Never give up – nothing is impossible!”



Abdelmasih, *Learning for Life* student

97% of *student2student* participants improved their reading skill.

Hope went from avoiding school to wanting to teach

“Because of the help from the tutors at *Learning Club*, I understand things a lot better. Now I always get my homework done on time instead of being late,” said Hope, aged 12.

Being singled out for living in poverty had taken a toll on Hope’s confidence. And it had made her disengage from her schooling.

“I used to be really afraid to go to school. I faked being sick a lot. I didn’t want to go and be bullied because I didn’t have as much as everyone else,” said Hope.

With support from our sponsors, Hope was able to fit in at school. But she was behind in class and needed help to catch up. Your generosity gives students like Hope access to our out-of-school programs such as *Learning Club*.

Last year, 87% of students said going to *Learning Club* helped them do better in class. Hope loves receiving homework support from our volunteer tutors. She has discovered she is able to learn at new levels. Now she wants to help others in a similar way.

“I enjoy maths. But I didn’t used to be very good at it. At *Learning Club*, the tutors explain maths to me not just using facts, but with theory,” said Hope.



Hope, *Learning Club* participant

“I don’t like to think inside of the box. The tutors help me in a way I can understand. Now I am doing Year 8 maths and I am only in Year 6! When I leave school, I want to be a maths teacher.”

These students take action to create change



“When we researched disadvantage in Australia, we were all shocked at the reality that some families face. The idea of not having a uniform that fits or books for class was something the boys had never really thought about before,” said high school teacher, Mr O’Kane.

Disadvantaged students face many challenges at school. Your donations help us provide vital learning program support. We combine this with sponsorship from our sponsors, so students have the essentials they need for school.

At Mr O’Kane’s school, tutor groups bring together boys in Years 7 to 12. The groups are encouraged to give for the benefit of others. So the boys came up with a plan to raise the money to sponsor a student in need.

“They raised the money themselves at school. It was easy and the boys enjoyed it. They sold chocolates and held a barbecue in the playground,” said Mr O’Kane.

The sponsorship has been a wonderful way to connect students from different backgrounds. And the boys get a real buzz out of exchanging letters with their sponsored student.

“We have written to him a few times, especially on certain events like his birthday and Christmas. We just like to let him know that there are other people that are looking out for him and trying to help him. We just try to be friendly and write about things we are interested in like school and footy,” the students shared.

“As a group, they are definitely more aware of how lucky they are with their own lives and education. It’s good as well for their self-esteem – to know that they are doing a good thing. It’s really rewarding!” said Mr O’Kane.

If you would like to find out more about sponsorship, visit thesmithfamily.com.au/sponsor-a-child

Volunteers like Rosemary make your donations go further

Thousands of dedicated volunteers make our work possible. Last year, their time added up to 362,450 hours of donated service, equivalent to almost \$10.7 million. And volunteers like Rosemary love knowing their efforts have real purpose.



Rosemary, The Smith Family volunteer

Rosemary first connected with The Smith Family in 1981 as a VIEW Club member. Now she has a permanent volunteer role assisting with recruiting other volunteers.

“This is a fabulous place. The Smith Family cares for the volunteers. And the reason we are here is tangible. I think education for children is just so important,” said Rosemary.

“I do reference checks for volunteer applicants. I’ve got the skills because I used to be a registered nurse in a managerial position. So that was part of my job.

“I hear about some really interesting people who are wanting to be volunteers and I think, ‘Wow, what experience they will bring to The Smith Family!’”

VIEW Club events provide the opportunity to hear from sponsored students first hand. “It really brings to life the impact of your support,” said Rosemary. “It’s quite emotional to talk to some of the students. I met a young woman. She and her sister are both studying law. Their mum has decided to further her own education too, so she’s doing a course at TAFE,” said Rosemary.

We are so grateful for every one of our volunteers who make our work possible.



VIEW stands for the Voice, Interests and Education of Women.

They are The Smith Family’s largest community sponsor of *Learning for Life* students, supporting the educational outcomes of 1,400 disadvantaged children and young people. Through this powerful longstanding connection, VIEW is proud to help change the lives of young Australians.

This year VIEW celebrates its 60th Anniversary. Congratulations on 60 years of strength and support!

There are more than 300 VIEW Clubs around Australia, open to women of all ages. To find out more or enquire about joining your local VIEW Club, go to **view.org.au**

You help creative students to paint a brighter future

Research shows that students who take part in creative enrichment programs have improved confidence and engagement in learning. They also perform better academically.¹ Our SmArts programs foster students' talents and skills.

Through SmArts, sponsored students in Years 8 to 11 who have shown an interest in or talent for creative arts, can take part in creative practice in the programs. It is an opportunity they might otherwise never receive. Close to half of all children living in the most disadvantaged communities do not participate in cultural or sports activities.²

Each creative program we offer includes hands-on workshops and a site visit, such as to a university. Students hear from industry professionals. And we connect them to related organisations within their community.

Momentum is one of our SmArts programs. It is a four-day art workshop at the Museum of Contemporary Art. The program enabled sponsored student, Lorelei, to further develop her artistic skills. She suffers post-traumatic stress disorder after an incident when she was younger. Creating art helps her escape from worry and stress.

"I use art to talk to people. I find it easier. It's exciting to see what I can draw and what my brain comes up with when I step outside my comfort zone," said Lorelei.

SmArts increases students' creative skills, self-confidence and knowledge of post-school options. It is a great way for students to see how their creative talents could translate into a career. This could be anything from performance, to sound engineering, graphic design and more.

How SmArts helps students



91% reported that they had increased their creative skills.



90% said they had increased enjoyment of working with others to get things done.



82% reported an increased level of confidence in achieving their career goals.

1. Annear, K. (2010) *Music, dance, drama: The Benefits of extracurricular participation*. Teacher (June/July), 46-50.

2. Australian Bureau of Statistics (2012) *Children's participation in cultural and leisure activities April 2012*. ABS, Canberra.

CREATIVE SHOWCASE *Art highlights...*

Creative Showcase, previously known as the Art and Writing Competition, gives students the opportunity to express their creativity. Last year we received more than 10,000 entries from our students and we'd love to share some with you.



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