

Your Support Real Impact

Real stories of change made possible by you.

"It was fun to explore what I could be – and it definitely helped me decide what I want to do."

**Inside this issue –
all thanks to you.**

- Year 8 students unlock the power of their creativity
- Declan's story: Books, goals, and big ambitions
- Meet Alana, a passionate *Learning Club* volunteer

RG | Spring 2025



**The Smith
Family**

Learn today, change tomorrow.



Students participating in *SmArts*

Year 8 students unleash their creativity

“They see for themselves, how great they really are.”

– Phil, Story Factory Facilitator

On a March morning, an eager group of Year 8 students gathered to start a learning adventure.

Some love to write. Others aspire to be lawyers and scientists. **Today, they're challenged to unleash their creativity** and produce something magical; a wildly original, deeply personal, radio poetry play.

Thanks to generous support like yours, they're taking part in *SmArts*.

This innovative out-of-school program helps students **grow their confidence and develop valuable skills**. Writing. Teamwork. Creative thinking. And problem solving.

It also gives them crucial **insights into what an arts career might offer**, just as they're considering elective subjects for Year 9.

SmArts is just one of the highly innovative learning programs students can access thanks to your gifts. This kind of mentoring gives Australian children the chance to dream big for their future – and develop the skills and contacts they need to pursue it.

Immersed in creativity

Over four days, the students visit recording studios, learn about podcasts and radio, and explore types of poetry. Then, they develop an entire radio play. With zombies.

“Students get to discover things about themselves that never had the chance to come out before. They get to see how great they really are,” says Phil, from our program partner Story Factory.

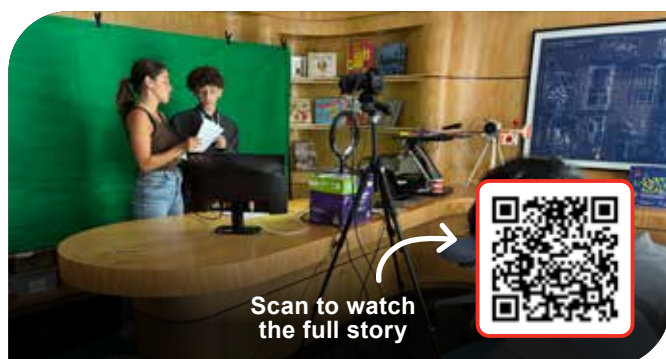
Their teacher agrees:

“My students are from a low socio-economic area. Being able to learn experientially, with mentors they would never otherwise meet, has **given them skills that will serve them for years to come.**”

And what do the students say?

That *SmArts* “helped me get on my creative side,” and “got me to push past my boundaries”.

Best of all, it gave students guidance and inspiration for the future, proving the impact of your wonderful support. “It was fun to explore what I could be – and it definitely **helped me decide what I want to do.**”



Declan's proudest moment, supported by you



Declan, *student2student* participant in year 7

We've been following 13-year-old Declan's progress for some years now. You may remember him from previous student updates.

Now in Year 8, he's settled in well at high school. And if you ask him what subject he likes best, he'll struggle to choose.

Science. Indonesian. Art. Sports. English. He's a confident all-rounder.

But turn the clock back five years ...

In 2020, everything was different. Declan, who has dyslexia, "struggled to read even basic words," says his mum, Cassie. **"He was in Year 3 but only reading at Grade 1 level. He was very low in confidence."**

Then Covid-19 sent schools into lockdown, and learning got even harder.

"We couldn't afford an internet connection for online learning," says Cassie. "He tried so hard but fell behind, especially in reading."

The turning point

Everything changed for Declan when his school referred him to The Smith Family. Thanks to generous gifts like yours, he was able to access our out-of-school learning support programs.

These included our innovative *student2student* program. Declan was paired with a reading buddy, who called him twice a week to listen to him read and help him sound out hard words.

With the help of his buddy, Declan moved up an incredible six reading grades.

"It's amazing to see how far he's come."
– Cassie, Declan's Mum

Declan fell in love with reading – and saw all his hard work pay off.

"I went from D to A in English", he beams. "I'm so proud of that."

"It's amazing to see how far he's come," says Cassie. **"He's caught up with all his classmates in reading, and it's helped him do better in all his subjects."**

Declan now has his sights set on a career in construction. (Or better yet, professional footy!)

Thanks to the generosity of people like you, nothing stands in Declan's way.



Declan, *student2student* participant in year 5

Alana, Learning Club Volunteer

A Learning Club with a difference

“**Learning Clubs give so many kids access to amazing life-altering opportunities.**”
– Alana, Learning Club Volunteer

Every week, university student Alana spends two joyful hours volunteering as a tutor at her local *Learning Club*.

Thanks to support like yours, students at our after-school *Learning Clubs* receive **personalised learning support to catch up and keep up with their schoolwork**. While most *Learning Clubs* focus on homework support – with 84% of participants reporting it helps them do better in class¹ – Alana’s takes a more practical approach.

“We teach through cooking,” Alana explains.

1. The Smith Family Learning Club Program Outcome Report (2024)

“Reading recipes develops students’ literacy skills and measuring ingredients helps them understand concepts like volume and weight.”

Alana has a very personal reason for volunteering. “I grew up in a low-income family,” she says. “A lot of things had to go right for me to achieve academically. I feel privileged to give back to less fortunate kids. Especially when I see the difference it makes.”

“**There was one girl who was really shy, but she’s now one of the liveliest kids in the group,**” Alana adds. “One session, she took the role of teacher, having me spell out different words, then writing them down. She really enjoyed that!”

“*Learning Clubs* give so many kids access to amazing life-altering opportunities. I want to say a big thank you to all the donors who make that possible.”

Welcome to
**‘Conversations with
The Smith Family’
Podcast**



Scan to hear from
leaders in education
and philanthropy

Education creates lasting change – and so do you.