

# Your Support Real Impact

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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."*

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**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 Caroline, passionate *Learning for Life* Coordinator

SP | 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

One March morning, an eager group of Year 8 students gather 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 wonderful sponsors like you, 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.

Access to innovative programs like *SmArts* is one of the many life-changing ways your sponsorship helps students. 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.

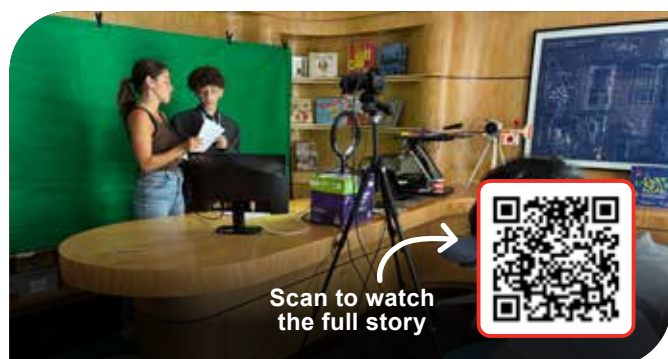
Their teacher agrees:

“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.**”



## How sponsorship helped Declan soar



Declan, *Learning for Life* student in year 7

We've been following *Learning for Life* student Declan's progress for some years now. You may remember him from previous updates.

Now 13, he's settled in well at high school. And if you ask him what subject he likes doing 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.

"I was struggling to even cover groceries and petrol, so we couldn't afford an internet connection," says Cassie.

### The turning point

Then someone amazing, just like you, became Declan's sponsor.

"Our lives changed dramatically," says Cassie. "Through his sponsorship, Declan got free wi-fi, which made a massive difference. And the financial support really helped with shoes and uniforms."

**But it was access to extra learning support that made the most difference.**

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

**"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 gone up six reading grades since he started *student2student*, 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 a sponsor like you, nothing stands in his way.**



Declan, *Learning for Life* student in year 5

Welcome to 'Conversations with The Smith Family' Podcast



**Scan** to hear from leaders in education and philanthropy





Alana, Learning Club Volunteer

## A Learning Club with a difference

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

Thanks to sponsors like you, 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 class<sup>1</sup> – Alana's takes a more practical approach.

"We teach through cooking," Alana explains. "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 sponsors who make that possible."

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



MEET THE TEAM

Caroline, Learning for Life Coordinator

## Empowering families, together

*Learning for Life* Coordinator Caroline never knows what each day will bring.

"Sometimes I call a family for a quick check-in, and it turns out it was the exact right moment to call," she says. "They tell me they're experiencing challenges that are affecting their child's education, so we meet and work out a plan."

*Learning for Life* Coordinators like Caroline are an **amazing resource Australian families can access as part of your sponsorship**.

As soon as a school identifies a student in need, Caroline swings into action. From then on, she is there to support them every step of the way. Removing obstacles to their learning and helping them to stay motivated.

"I provide a lot of emotional support and encouragement. I also help families to work with their child's school and match students with our learning programs," says Caroline. "Sometimes, I link families with different services. It's all about making sure **nothing stands in the way of children making the most of their education**."

"What I love about my job is that we help families empower themselves," she adds.

"**Together we help students shape a brighter future – and it's all thanks to sponsors like you.**"

## Education creates lasting change – and so do you.