

## **Report of the Area Gala Day held in Tamworth:**

Gunnedah Evening VIEW Club Members joined other club Members within our VIEW Area, for a day of connection and inspiration at the area gala day in Tamworth.

Each club presented an overview of the year's activities, including fund-raising events for their Learning for Life students.

A highlight of the day was hearing from former *Learning for Life* scholarship recipient, Emma, who is now working within the charity to help others like herself.

*It is a real privilege to be standing in front of you today as a representative of The Smith Family's Learning for Life program, knowing the wonderful and everlasting impact it has on the lives of many students and their families,* Emma said.

*I am proud to say that I was a Learning for Life scholarship recipient, and I am now a program coordinator for The Smith Family in Tamworth.*

Emma was in Year 5 when her family was introduced to the Learning for Life Program and it brought instant financial relief.

*"It was always an exciting time in the family when the student profiles arrived at our house in the mail, Mum had always encouraged us to dream big about our futures – that nothing would hold us back, so when the questions on the student profiles asked us what we wanted to be when we were older our answers were always ready,"* Emma said

*"When our scholarships arrived mum would sit us down and together we would budget for things we needed and how best to spend our scholarship"*

Emma said they would come home tired at the end of the day but happy and extremely grateful that there was 'someone in this big wide world who wanted us to be successful, that someone other than their mum cared and wanted the best for them'.

*A really special part of being on the scholarship was receiving handwritten letters and post cards from my sponsor. I still have those letters stashed away in my keepsake box. They are a little reminder that I was worth a chance and that a little can go a long way. They remind me that with a little faith the impossible is possible.*

*All five of us girls completed our Higher School Certificates with high grades such as bands 5 and 6s and we all further completed a level of tertiary education being bachelors, diplomas, and certificates. Between us there are qualifications in social science, criminology, early childhood education, hairdressing, photography, and veterinary care.*

Through the scholarships, Emma's family was able to explore all educational opportunities without the strain of financial restraints thanks to 'the generosity and thoughtfulness of sponsors'.

Emma said she is happy to now play a part in addressing the needs of today's young scholarship recipients through her role as the program coordinator with The Smith Family.

Emma was accompanied by Family Partnership Coordinator for The Smith Family Learning for Life program, Cindy Pearce, who gave an overview of the past 12 months and thanked everyone for their support.