

November 2014 - Foundation leads the way

Benalla's Tomorrow:Today Foundation has been recognised as a trailblazer for other philanthropic organisations seeking to improve education, employment and community outcomes for the disadvantaged.

Guest speaker at the Tomorrow:Today Foundation annual general meeting, Ian Potter Foundation Chief Executive Officer Janet Hirst congratulated the Tomorrow:Today team for its whole-of-community approach. "In 2011 an initial evaluation of the program by the University of Melbourne confirmed some significant improvements in key indicators for groups of pre-school children and Year 9 students as well as a dramatic decrease in suspension rates and a huge jump in kids wanting to finish Year 12." Mrs Hirst said.

"Supporting a single project multiple times and with such significant funding is not something the foundation does on a regular basis. In fact it is quite unusual and it is testament to what the foundation has achieved, the value it has brought to the community and the blueprint it has created for similar communities."



Photo: Courtesy of Benalla Ensign

August 2014 - Benalla Scouts take plunge at Rupe's

Six Scouts, two Venturers and three leaders from the Benalla Scout group recently enjoyed an afternoon of abseiling at "Rupe's Rock", named after former local Scout leader Rupe Cheetham, a gentle 30m drop in the Strathbogie State Forest at Lima East.

The day started very grey and cold but all were well equipped for the activity. The Venturers had gained their Abseiling Participants qualification and were keen to put it into practice assisting and teaching the young Scouts abseiling.

The Scout group is appreciative of Tomorrow:Today Foundation's generosity in assisting the group to purchase new equipment so that the young members could participate in this challenging activity.

All members were taken out of their comfort zone for the day; two new Scouts participated in the safety aspects of abseiling, demonstrated the knowledge they had been taught in the Scout Hall prior to attending and undertook five 30m abseiling jumps on the day which gained them their abseiling badge.



May 2014 - Small grants deliver welcome assistance

Article by Monique Freer, Benalla Ensign

Community groups and education facilities in Benalla and district can upgrade and improve their services following a grants handout of more than \$26,000.

Local charitable organisation Tomorrow:Today Foundation donated \$26,554 to 11 groups across the region last week as part of its small grants program.

Tomorrow:Today Foundation chair Sally Gamble said this year's grants were the first to be funded solely from the organisation's Community Fund.

"This is the opportunity to support local groups who are doing great things in the community," Ms Gamble said.

This year's grants were the largest value of small grants the Foundation has given since the program's inception. The grants program began in 2003 and in that period 69 grants have been awarded to 46 different organisations to the value of \$133,000.

"It's quite a substantial philanthropic contribution to the community." Ms Gamble said.

Local groups who received funding through Tomorrow:Today Foundation were: Benalla Scout Group, Upper Murray Family Care - Out of Home Care program, Benalla and district Pre-school Partnership, Rotary Club of Benalla, Ride Avenue Preschool, Little Footprints Community Playgroup, Benalla Support Group for Children with Special Needs, FCJ College, Benalla P-12 College, Winton Primary School and Australian Christian College Hume.

Ms Gamble said this year their focus was on projects relating to; families with young children, youth development, community connectedness and addressing social disadvantage. Board member Bill Dobson said all the groups awarded small grants also benefited young people within the community

"Those grants go to the benefit largely of children," he said.

The small grants are annual and there are criteria for all applications.



Photo: Benalla Ensign

April 2014 - iPads at kinder a hit

The children at Munro Avenue Preschool are benefitting from iPad technology thanks to a \$2,200 grant from the Tomorrow:Today Foundation.

The grant purchased four iPads, educational applications and wireless internet capabilities for the Munro Avenue Preschool campus, which is running a four year old kindergarten and two three year old prekinder programs in 2014.

"Through the use of the iPads we are aiming to boost creativity, fine motor development, coordination, literacy and numeracy skills in the children," program leader Michelle Lindsay said.

"The kids have great fun with them, and don't even realise that by playing and experimenting on the iPads, they are already learning and preparing for the formal schooling system next year."

All children attending Munro Avenue Preschool have access to the iPads, with different programs run for the three and four year old groups. There are still places available in the three year old Pre-Kinder groups at Munro Avenue with Purple group running from 9am to noon on Wednesdays, and Yellow group 9am to noon on Fridays.

For more information, or to see the iPads in action, phone Michelle on 5762 3053 or email munro.ave.kin@kindergarten.vic.gov.au.



March 2014 - Vouchers help with costs

Benalla's Tomorrow:Today Foundation is helping children of families experiencing financial hardship to start school on a positive note, with back to school vouchers worth \$22,500. 450 'Sidney Myer Fund/ Foundation for Rural and Regional Renewal Back To School' Vouchers have been distributed by the Foundation to 14 Benalla and district schools.

The vouchers assist families in need to purchase essential items such as shoes and clothing as well as books, stationery and school bags.

The vouchers are given to school principals who arrange for them to be distributed to families experiencing financial hardship. This is the 10th consecutive year that Tomorrow:Today Foundation has helped Benalla and district families in need with back to school expenses for their children's education. Winton Primary School head teacher Alanna Bell said the vouchers were greatly appreciated by families. Tomorrow:Today Foundation Director Geoff Oliver said they were very pleased to be able to work with the schools and FRRR to support the program. "School principals and their staff do a great job in ensuring that families and children with the greatest need get the most benefit," Mr Oliver said. Mr Oliver also thanked the Benalla branch of Soroptimists International for the \$200 contribution the group made to provide additional vouchers.

The 2014 Sidney Myer Fund/FRRR Back to School Program is supported by the Origin Foundation, the Pratt Foundation, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, The Ian Potter Foundation, the Julian Flett Foundation managed by Perpetual, other generous donors, Target and the Department of Infrastructure and Regional Development.



February 2014 - Community donates

The generosity of the Benalla community has been demonstrated with more than \$100,000 donated to Tomorrow:Today Foundation's grant making fund in 2013.

Tomorrow:Today is Benalla and district's own Foundation, formed and run by local residents and focusing on building a stronger and more resilient community.

"To raise \$100,000 in less than one year from a small district of only 14,000 people is truly remarkable and heart-warming," Tomorrow:Today Foundation Chair Sally Gamble said. "It is a wonderful example of our citizens working together to support local people and local projects."

Ms Gamble said the latest appeal boosted the amount held in the fund to over \$700,000. She said income produced by the fund through interest and investments went directly back into Benalla and district through annual small grants to local community groups.

In an innovative approach to fundraising, the 2013 'Challenge Appeal' featured ten local sponsors, from Benalla's private and business sector, who each committed up to \$5,000 for a possible total of \$50,000. "The challenge made to the Benalla community was to achieve the maximum benefit from the challenge by donating at least \$50,000 which would be matched dollar for dollar by the pledged funds," Ms Gamble said. "The response from the community was excellent with donations received by December 31 totalling \$50,726."

Ms Gamble said one of the many contributors who helped get the appeal across the line was Australian Munitions, Benalla. She said on behalf of its employees, it nominated Tomorrow:Today Foundation to receive the proceeds from the sale of excess computer equipment and other miscellaneous items.

Australian Munitions Manufacturing Operations General Manager, Trevor Gunn and HR Business Partner Judy O'Loughlin visited the Foundation in mid December. Ms Gamble said Mr Gunn was so impressed with the work of the Foundation and the concept of the grant-making fund that Australian Munitions topped up the \$800 in funds generated from the sale up to \$1,000.

Tomorrow:Today's next round of small grants will open in February and community groups will be briefed on what grants are available.

Donations to Tomorrow:Today Foundation can be made at any time. Personal donations are tax deductible and can be made over the counter at the local branch of the Bendigo Bank or by visiting Tomorrow:Today's office, Shop 10 Cecily Court, 66 Nunn Street; by mail to PO Box 281 Benalla; or by bank transfer; see www.tomorrowtoday.com.au

Sponsorship by local businesses can be claimed as a normal business operating expense and gives even greater flexibility in the range of local organisations that can be supported. For more information phone Tomorrow:Today Foundation on 5762 1211.