



AUTUMN 2022

Brighter Futures

A start in life
a brighter future for young australians

© A BRIGHTER FUTURE

Em's bright future

Your assistance helps us support students for as long as they need. For some, this may only be a year or two. For others, it may be from Kindergarten through to Tertiary studies! Regardless of the time a student is in our program, our goal is for them to thrive and achieve a brighter future. Em is a wonderful reflection of this – an inspirational young woman who was first supported when she was just 8 years old and is soon to complete her University degree. This is Em's story.

Support for Em commenced when her single mother, Jay, was struggling financially. This was the beginning of twelve years of support. Almost immediately they noticed its benefits, saying they both felt less anxious and could focus on higher aspirations. Our assistance over the following years not only helped Em overcome obstacles, but also provided many opportunities to thrive. She began achieving higher grades, was more confident, more motivated and happier at school. She could also enjoy new experiences and felt more included in her school community.

Em's hard work ethic, paired with the assistance provided by supporters of *A Start in Life*, resulted in various academic and extra-curricular achievements. These encompassed acceptance into a selective high school, numerous awards including Most Improved in Mathematics in her cohort, coaching and umpiring netball, and being elected as a Student Representative Council member and a Year 12 Prefect.

Em began playing violin at just 7 years old, and to encourage her musical passions over the years we funded music tutoring, camps and excursions. Over the years, Em's music

teacher commended her proactivity, regularly learning additional music pieces and attending lessons, even during school holidays. Em is now a talented violinist and as a way of saying thank you to *A Start in Life* supporters, she has played the violin at some of our events... and the audience has been delighted each time!

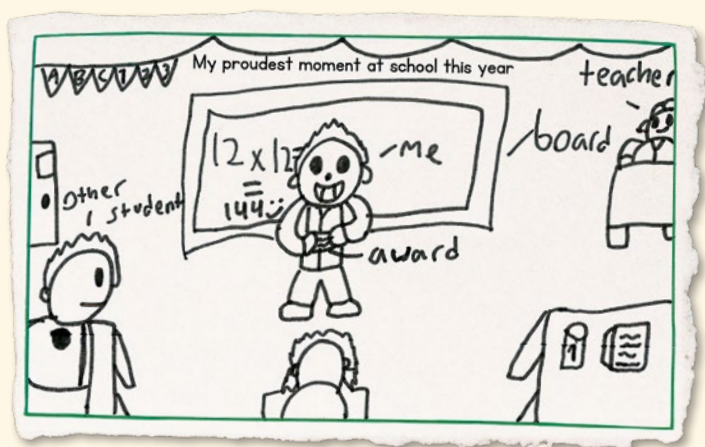
Em advised our Student Support Team at the start of Year 12 her goal was to obtain an ATAR of 95 or above. She achieved an ATAR of 98.5! She was accepted into her desired course, a Bachelor of Commerce, majoring in Marketing and Information Systems. As a driven student, she realised her time at University could be optimised and her employability increased. She therefore participated in various extra-curricular pursuits, joined on-campus societies and Committees, and volunteered for social enterprises.

Em has done so well that she was awarded a University Scholarship at the end of 2021. She advised the terms and benefits of the scholarship were such that she could operate without *A Start in Life's* assistance, and would be happy seeing a new student benefit in the same way she did.

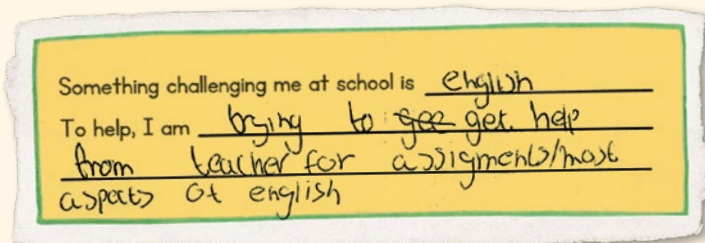
Em stated "A *Start in Life* has played such a major part of my studies throughout primary school, high school and my first two years of University. Financially, the aid I've been lucky enough to receive has truly enhanced the quality of my education and allowed me to excel and also pursue my extra-curricular interests. On a personal level, the help of the team and the reassurance that I am supported by the organisation on the whole has been incredible... A big thank you to the *A Start in Life* team and community for all the support throughout the years. You've truly played such a major role in where I am today and I will always be so grateful."

My year so far

Now that we are almost half way through the year, we wanted to share our student's own reflections of their school year so far.



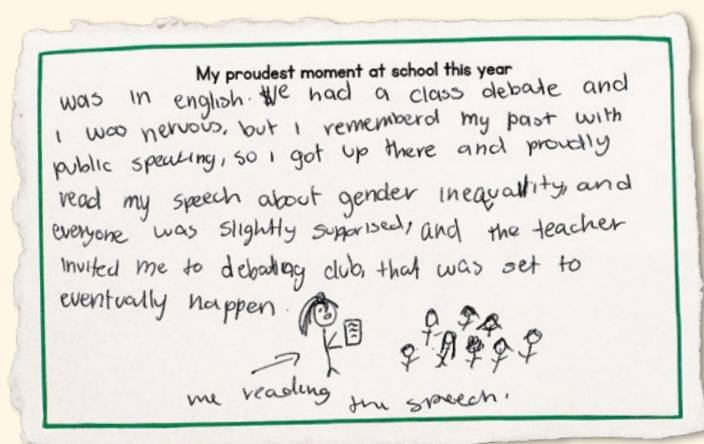
Arnold is in Year 4. His proudest moment was winning a school award for knowing $12 \times 12 = 144$, and being able to perform this equation on the board in front of his teacher and class. Arnold had previously struggled with Maths, however since receiving our personalised support has improved greatly.



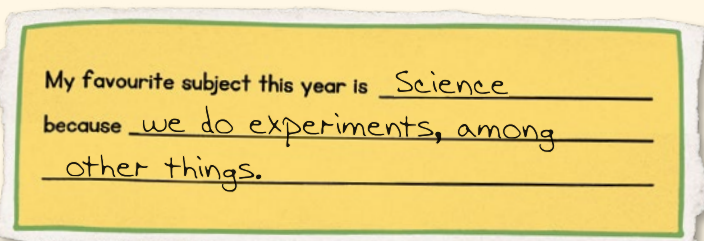
Year 9 student, Hal, has found English challenging as his additional learning need means he struggles to understand and convey language. We are helping by setting learning goals specific to these challenges with English and providing resources including a thesaurus, Editing Rubric, handwriting supplies and reading books. We are also encouraging Hal to regularly check in with his teacher to obtain feedback and improve his work. Hal told us this year he has learned to "never give up".

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Year 7 student, Vee, is incredibly proud of being invited to the Debating Club and of the steps she took that made this happen. We share her pride and delight in Vee overcoming those public speaking nerves. At the start of this year and to help Vee work on her English and public speaking skills, we set goals around reading out loud at least three times a week. We also provided funding for grammar and spelling workbooks and reading books of interest to Vee. Not only did she utilise those resources and achieve the set goals, she went even further, recording videos of herself speaking to reflect and improve!



When Tom told us of his interest in Science experiments, we explored further and discovered he, like so many other Year 8 students, enjoyed using Bunsen burner, tripod and other science equipment in an experiment involving heating certain chemical elements. We share and understand Tom's excitement!



© ANNUAL PRIZE GIVING CEREMONY

A day to remember

Our Prize Giving Ceremony was a delightful success and a day to be remembered.

The annual event was held in April to celebrate the hard work and achievements of students. Nine awards were presented to Sydney-based students for a range of accomplishments – from academic success to humanitarian efforts and more. It was fantastic to witness how proud the students and their loved ones were of their endeavours. The ever-growing smiles on student's faces as their awards and achievements were read out were fabulous. So too were moments like witnessing the loving embrace one mother gave her son after he received his award. It was a special day and emphasised the benefits of your support, not only on these student's lives, but on their family's too.

The prize winners and their families were also joined by other students and families in our program, and a handful of our dedicated local supporters. It was a delight to see students making friends and playing games with one another after the ceremony. Parents and carers had the opportunity to bond with one another, and supporters met the students and families they so kindly assist. Our staff enjoyed talking with students and their families in person, instead of virtually via Zoom. The Australian Museum proved a great location, as students were able to explore and enjoy the wonderful exhibits after the ceremony.



Arnold, Evan, Theo and Lex all became friends at the Prize Giving Ceremony, and attended the special dinosaur Lego exhibit afterwards together.

There were even blue skies for most of the morning! It was a great opportunity for everyone involved to feel they were indeed part of a larger community all dedicated to supporting the education and futures of Australian youth.

One supporter reached out to us afterwards to say she had a "skip in her step" as she fondly thought about the students excitedly receiving their awards and going to the Museum exhibits after. We had secured tickets to a special dinosaur Lego exhibit, for all students and their families. Four of our students, who all became friends at the ceremony, even attended the exhibit together. They had a fabulous time, as you can see from their smiles in the photo!

While we were delighted to have played a part in a day filled with such joy, accomplishment and community, we wish to acknowledge and thank our loyal supporters for making all this possible.

Over the next two months, we are also looking forward to visiting regional areas to present awards to students residing in those areas.



Ella, who won our Artistic Achievement Prize, and award presenter Douglas Chan, representing a key supporter group.



Bea receiving the Lodge Ionic Jubilee Prize for Most Improved Tertiary Studies from Alan Hislop



Mo, the recipient of the H and M Pope Prize for Excellence in Engineering / Information Technology, with our board members Anne Ellison and Jeannine Walsh OAM



...he passed Maths ... This is the first time ever he's done so well!

at how he passed Maths. This was a huge goal. This is the first time ever he's done so well!"

These growing Maths skills are already proving beneficial for Bo, including helping in his new job at a fast food outlet and developing some saving habits. Bo's substantial improvements resulted in him winning the *A Start in Life* award for Significant Uplift at our recent Prize Giving Ceremony (see Page 3). Congratulations Bo!

Lee Year 4

Lee recently agreed on three learning goals with our Student Support Team to strengthen her Maths skills. These were to recall her 4 times tables without any help, perform addition and subtraction 'number facts', and practice problems involving fractions.

To help Lee strengthen her Maths skills and achieve these goals, we directed funding towards Maths resources including a times table chart and flashcards. We also located and funded a Maths tutor who has significantly helped. Lee is now well on the way to achieving all three goals – she not only knows her 4 times tables but many others too, can now add and subtract decimals, and can represent halves and quarters of objects.

Through Lee's enthusiastic approach and focus, she is even developing additional Maths skills, including reading timetables for public transport. We anticipate such skills will be very useful for Lee as she grows older, including catching the bus to her future high school or the train to a future job!

Lee is so proud of her new Maths skills that she regularly updates her grandparents on her achievements. Her progress is also reflected in her most recent school report, where she improved to an "excellent" effort rating. Lee is continuing to work hard at number facts and fractions, and her grandparents told us they were "overjoyed" at her progress. We are also very proud of Lee, congratulations!

Mathematics skills to last a lifetime

While Maths skills begin to develop at school, their value becomes paramount as we enter adulthood and go about our daily lives – from saving for the future to completing our tax returns and more.

A Start in Life helps students grow and strengthen their Maths skills by agreeing individualised learning goals focused on general and specific Maths areas. The benefits of this are exemplified in the stories of Bo and Lee.

Bo Year 9

Prior to commencing Year 9, Bo agreed two Maths focussed learning goals with our Student Support Team. They were to build confidence by regularly revising concepts learnt at school, and to practice percentage problems.

At a recent check in, Bo informed us he was achieving these. The tutoring assistance made available by *A Start in Life* was also helping in some of the more troublesome areas. Through regular practice and revision, Bo was more confident in his Maths skills and was pleased with his improvements in percentages and fractions. As he had also become aware he worked better from Maths textbooks, rather than the computer, we included funding for additional textbooks to further aid his learning.

Bo also received positive feedback from his Maths teacher, who commended his hard work, positive attitude and perseverance. Semester 2 2021 was Bo's best Semester. His mother, also delighted, told us "I was crying yesterday