

Back to school in 2022

An exciting new year!

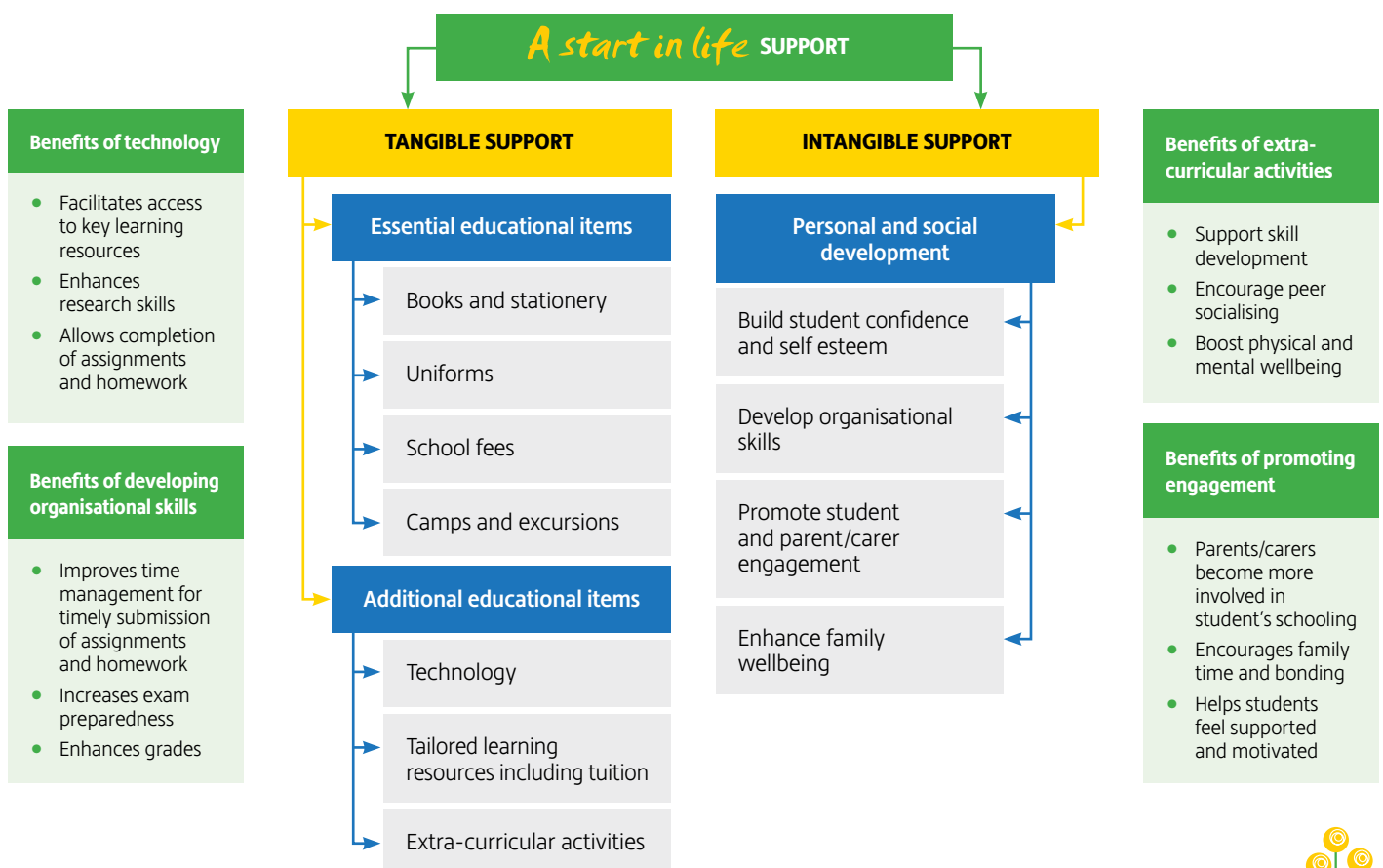
We've welcomed 2022 with our arms wide open. Despite ongoing changes and challenges in the world around us, it's still a new year and exciting time for many – including starting a new term, transitioning from primary to high school or from high school to tertiary education. With many new beginnings in sight, we will keep doing what we do best – helping students overcome barriers to their education. We thank all those in our community who give so generously to us, as we could not support our students without you.

Primary and Secondary Students

Every student in our program is assisted across a variety of areas. This includes tangible support (including books, uniforms, school fees, technology and tuition) and intangible support (such as building confidence and self-esteem, development of organisational skills and enhanced family wellbeing). Our Student Support Team dedicates



approximately 1,200 hours each year interacting with students and their families to ensure such support achieves the maximum benefits and helps them overcome barriers to their education. Here is a breakdown of our support, with some of those areas and their key benefits highlighted.



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Tertiary Students

Our tertiary students also receive tangible and intangible support to help them overcome barriers to their education, create brighter futures and optimise career opportunities. The tangible support we provide to our tertiary students is similar to that of our primary and secondary students. Support is also provided for accommodation, utilities and food, as these are significant additional costs many of our

tertiary students face while living away from home. Our Student Support Team meets with each tertiary student four times a year to check in. These check-ins:

- Ensure student's studies stay on track and our assistance is helping as expected
- Facilitate discussion of any potential issues and help provide solutions – e.g. a new study technique
- Help students continue to feel supported and engaged
- Enable us to assess if students are eligible for additional funding due to improved or consistently high grades

© PUTTING THEORY INTO PRACTICE

The importance of work placement

Many university degrees and TAFE courses require students to undertake practical work placements. These ensure students can put theory into practice and enhances their career prospects.

To help tertiary students complete mandatory placements and alleviate the financial burdens of such, we provide work placement grants. These help replace income lost when part-time work cannot be completed due to the demanding hours placements require. Our grants help cover travel costs, as placements are often in distant locations, and help ensure students have the special uniforms and equipment required. With these costs covered, students can direct their focus and energy towards getting the most out of placements and gaining practical hands-on experience. Marcus's story illustrates this.

Marcus has been supported by *A Start in Life* since 2019, when he was in the first year of his Bachelor of Paramedicine / Bachelor of Nursing degree. Marcus applied for our support as his parents did not have the financial resources to support

his degree and the small amount of Centrelink income he received was not going to cover his basic living costs. 2022 marks the final year of Marcus's degree. A vital component of this degree is the successful completion of various work placements, both as an ambulance paramedic and as a hospital nurse. His university's course handbook describes these as enhancing student's experiences as well as their readiness for the workplace.

Our work placement grant enabled Marcus to complete his required placements and greatly alleviated financial stress. Our support also meant he could purchase paramedic and nurse uniforms, key equipment including a stethoscope, and required learning supplies such as notebooks.

During his placements, Marcus observed and practiced many crucial roles, including responding to a cardiac arrest. He reflected on the value of this, particularly the support offered by his instructor to the patient's family – *"the empathy and care shown has definitely added to my knowledge bank"*.

Marcus also received amazing feedback from his preceptors who said they saw his passion and a glow in his eyes when he talked about his work. They were confident he would go a long way with his positive attitude.

He says our support has helped him flourish throughout his studies and that his experiences have reaffirmed he has *"definitely chosen the right career pathway"*.

... they saw his passion and a glow in his eyes when he talked about his work.

☉ STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

Build it!

Engagement and learning through a fun building challenge.

We are passionate about supporting engagement and learning in a variety of ways, not just at school but also at home through various initiatives. Our most recent initiative invited students to build towers made from only a handful of materials. We were astounded by the results!

Over the course of three 'mini challenges', students were encouraged to employ creativity, mathematics and science in a fun hands-on way. With only five pieces of A4 paper, 30cm sticky tape, scissors and a ruler in the first challenge, the task was set to build the tallest tower possible. Students were then encouraged to reflect on what went well and what didn't, before creating a taller tower in the second challenge. The third and final challenge then invited students to be even more imaginative and build the most creative tower with any materials they wanted. Our participants showed lots of ingenuity and impressed us greatly. Paper was folded, cut and taped in all sorts of ways; triangles, domes and cylinders were created; and more. Many shared with us how much fun they had. Two brothers, Alex and Tom in Years 5 and 7 respectively, even told us that it brought them together to "gather ideas and respect each other's ways".

☉ KINDNESS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Thank you!

We recently had the pleasure of welcoming Lorinda Logaraj from District 70 Toastmasters to our office to present the team and our CEO, Neil, with the District 70 Toastmasters award recognising outstanding service to the community, state and industry through communication and leadership. It was a joy to meet Lorinda and learn more about the organisations fabulous work. Thank you to the entire team at District 70 Toastmasters, we are very humbled to receive your support and acknowledgement.

We are also thankful for all the support we are given, which comes in many different forms. Recently, we have received research assistance from the Actuaries Institute



Taylor and Dee's creative tower made from playing cards

... students were encouraged to employ creativity, mathematics and science in a fun hands-on way.

Prizes were awarded for the tallest as well as the most creative towers, with winners receiving Australian Geographic vouchers to further enhance their learning and creativity. Joe, a Year 6 student, built the tallest tower – a massive 253cm tall. In fact, the tower was so tall that all of it could not fit in one photo so he sent us a video instead! Siblings, Taylor in Year 5 and Dee in Year 9, built the most creative tower, made out of playing cards (pictured above).

This building challenge proved to be a fun and engaging way to enhance creativity, knowledge, and maths and science skills.



Lorinda presenting the 2020–2021 Leadership Award to Neil and the team (L–R: Jason Chan, Neil Robinson, Lorinda Logaraj, Chloe Jiao, Sapna Saini and Nina Kingsford-Smith)

of Australia, corporate sponsorship from Ritchies Stores, community support from Masonic Lodges, a bequest from Stanley Pendall, and in memoriam donations recognising fellow lodge members.

Although we cannot thank all our supporters individually, each and every one is appreciated and we are extremely grateful. Thank you to you all.





The value of increased confidence

We're excited to share the stories of Fifi and Eve, whose confidence has grown with our support. With their confidence improved, their social skills and academic results have also thrived. They are just two of the students in our program who have experienced such valuable benefits.

Fifi Year 8

Our support for Fifi began when she was behind in her schooling, struggled to communicate effectively with teachers and peers, and experienced low self-esteem.

Since receiving our assistance, Fifi has experienced significant improvements in her confidence, grades and communication skills. We recently helped Fifi set a learning goal to "speak confidently with peers by practicing regularly with a speech pathologist" and allocated funding towards speech pathology sessions.

... she is more confident in making valued contributions during class discussions.

Fifi's self-esteem and communication skills have thrived as a result of these sessions, with her speech therapist noting her proactive approach and commitment. Overall, she now displays greater independence and initiative, speaks confidently amongst peers and approaches teachers to ask for help if needed. Her grades have also improved, receiving mostly B's and C's across the board in her latest school report. Her teachers have commended her for her diligence and enthusiasm, and have noted she is more confident in making valued contributions during

class discussions. Fifi's Science teacher even wrote a letter to her mother congratulating Fifi on her work ethic and participation. Congratulations Fifi!

Eve Year 5

Our support for Eve began as her single mother was struggling to care for her four children. At the time, Eve told us she wanted to be less shy and become more confident when interacting with others.

With the help of our Student Support Team, Eve set a goal to increase her confidence when speaking in front of a group of people. To encourage this, our Student Support Team actively encouraged Eve to practice reading aloud at home and to advocate for herself by asking her teacher and mother for help. We also directed funding towards books, gymnastics classes and school excursions.

Through our support and Eve's dedication, her self-esteem has noticeably grown. Eve's teachers also noted this change, commenting that it has been great to see Eve build up confidence when working with her peers. With this newfound confidence, Eve loves going to gymnastics lessons, has formed close friendships, often asks her teacher for help when needed, participates in class discussions, achieved an "excellent" overall effort in her recent school report, and even decided to join her school breakfast club to help ensure students started the day with a healthy meal. In fact, she received our Significant Acts of Community Service Award in recognition of these contributions. Well done Eve!

