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Kids Thrive wins VicHealth Award by boosting student self esteem

by Andrew Sadauskas | December 13, 2017

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The Kids as Catalyst program has been recognised for helping primary school students engage with school and build community connections.



Kids Thrive CEO Dr Andrea Lemon with Victorian Health Minister Jill Hennessy and Kids Thrive General Manager Joanne Taylor.

Arts and community development organisation Kids Thrive has claimed the mental wellbeing category at the annual VicHealth Awards for its innovative **Kids as Catalyst program**, in recognition of its innovative approach to promoting children's resilience.

The initiative was one of the six finalists nominated for the category by VicHealth (The Victorian Health Promotion Foundation), with the awards honouring the state's best health promotion programs.

The Kids as Catalyst program is delivered to students aged eight-to-12 over two school terms, helping them to build educational engagement and community connections through creative training and self-directed action-based learning.

Along with improving personal resilience, the program aims to boost student literacy, numeracy and teamwork skills, while leveraging partnerships with artists, children, schools, education specialists, researchers, community agencies and foundations.

The award follows seven years of development work on the program by Kids Thrive CEO Dr Andrea Lemon and fellow creative director Andrea Rieniets.

The organisation has received funding from The Sidney Myer Fund, The William Buckland Foundation, Helen Macpherson Smith Trust, Newsboys Foundation, Collier Charitable Fund, W.C.F. Thomas Charitable Trust, Tomorrow Today Foundation and the Packer Family Foundation.

In a statement, Dr. Lemon says it is an honour to be acknowledged for the work Kids Thrive is doing with children in communities across Victoria.

"We were thrilled to receive this award – and to be shortlisted amongst the incredible company of the other finalists – Beyond Blue, Ambulance Victoria, Arts Centre Melbourne, Jewish Care Victoria and Victorian Aboriginal Health Service – which are all doing such amazing work. To be recognised in this way is very exciting for Kids Thrive," Dr Lemon says.

"We tell the children we work with 'You don't have to be big to make a change, or to have an impact in the world.' Well, Kids Thrive is only seven years old and we are kicking big goals that might be considered beyond the reach of a small organisation."

VicHealth CEO Jerril Rechter says Kids Thrive and other VicHealth Award winners demonstrate the range, value and influence of health promotion in Victoria.

"These community organisations, arts or research bodies, health services, local councils and major sporting codes are tackling some of Victoria's biggest health issues and have made a huge difference to the lives of many Victorians," Rechter says.

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