

# InSchools Philanthropy

The Kids Thrive *InSchools Philanthropy* program's arts approach empowers primary school aged children to connect with their communities through philanthropy. The children immerse themselves in music, writing, play-acting, drawing and dance to understand and explore philanthropy, community and their personal values/motivators. They then initiate and forge partnerships with local organisations to create and deliver beautiful projects to benefit their communities. To learn more, visit: <http://kidsthive.wordpress.com/>



The Beautiful Box Builders from East Ivanhoe Primary School pitching their philanthropic proposal to the InSchools Philanthropy Grant Assessment Panel to buy and install nesting boxes for key species affected by their school's building development.

Kids Thrive is located physically within the Auspicious Arts Incubator in the Emerald Hill Cultural Precinct of South Melbourne, Victoria along with fellow arts-related organisations and businesses. This arrangement provides infrastructure and business mentoring support to the Kids Thrive leaders.

## Innovation

Kids Thrive's *InSchools Philanthropy* (ISP) program is unique in that it consistently and comprehensively engages with young children, their significant adults, and the professionals who work with them exclusively through arts based experiences.

*InSchools Philanthropy* pilot is part of the social enterprise stream of Kids Thrive.

*Philanthropy is, in essence, about resourcefulness; finding ways through, ways around, ways home. Saying 'Yes!' to what you want upheld in the world. The philanthropic discussion is too readily bogged down in 'those that have' helping 'those who don't have.' Don't have what? Stuff? Access to leveraging opportunities? With a re-focus on resourcefulness above resources, anything is possible – which is, in fact, the essential creative act. ISP is fired up to get kids to be really resourceful. To see the gaps and opportunities in the*

## Governance

Kids Thrive is a not-for-profit incorporated association with a committee of management (CoM). The CoM has a governance role with regard to the work of Kids Thrive. They focus on the Vision, Mission and legal requirements. At this time the accounts are audited internally by the Treasurer.

Kids Thrive is endorsed by the Register of Cultural Organisations (ROCO) as a Deductible Gift Recipient (DGR) as covered by Item 1 of the table in section 30-15 of the Income Tax Assessment Act 1997 and endorsed as a Tax Concession Charity (TCC). Each of Kids Thrive's arts-based child-led community development programs includes a steering committee that informs and advocates.

## Model



(The hand is Kids Thrive)

Guiding principles and practices Kids Thrive uses to engage effectively with philanthropy and schools ...

*Create child-led community building:* Kids Thrive provides the expertise to support children to forge relationships in their community, supporting children to develop the knowledge, confidence and skills to communicate with groups directly themselves. In doing so, there is a new generation of children who are learning to connect within their community.

*systems and relationships and to develop a much keener eye for the opportunity to act. (Andrea Rieniets, Kids Thrive)*

Language associated with philanthropy, such as 'giving back' can foster a culture where we think we have to wait 30 years before becoming a philanthropist: give and take, breathing out and in. Why hold your breath for 30 years? The *InSchools Philanthropy* pilot challenges this thinking and practice. The children are actively supported to become philanthropists in their own communities. Through a series of structured 'action-based learning' activities, run by the Kids Thrive team,

... an aspect of creativity is that you can make something beautiful from something very small. By placing philanthropy within a creativity paradigm we make it inspiring and achievable - a different possibility altogether. 'Let's make something together.' So philanthropy itself becomes a creative act - not just reliant on thoughts, processes and logic. It's about getting in touch with your values and your feelings: what do you feeling strongly about? What do you feel strongly against? What if...? (Andrea Rieniets, Kids Thrive)

the children get in touch with their personal values and motivators. They find out who in their local community is doing work that aligns with their values. The children learn to 'talk to people', approach them directly, and to develop 'potential partnerships'. They rehearse being philanthropists and immerse themselves in the process. This includes the children putting together a 'pitch' for funding for their local community project, which they present to a panel of school council members, local community leaders, community bank representatives, and philanthropists.

From a curriculum perspective, *InSchools Philanthropy* can be a vehicle for teachers to explore with students areas such as civics and citizenship, sustainability, literacy and numeracy (budgeting), thinking

processes, humanities (economics) and other student learning, such as leadership, personal learning and interpersonal development.

Kids Thrive is commissioned by local businesses and philanthropic organisations (delivery partners) to develop and deliver the program in local communities. These local delivery partners – such as Community Bank branches of the Bendigo Bank – provide grants of up to \$1000 for the children's projects. In 2013, the Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation is also supporting the program in four primary

schools. In total, 7 programs in 2013 are being run with "imaginative young philanthropists" in the catchment areas of East Ivanhoe and Heidelberg West, St. Kilda, and the regional towns of Maldon, Newstead and Baringhup.

*InSchools Philanthropy* is one of a number of programs developed and offered by Kids Thrive. Each program sits within the overall approach of Kids Thrive to be 'relationship-centred', arts-powered and child-led.

### Factors for effective engagement

*(see all 10 factors on p. 22)*

Building the capacity of the children and teachers to connect with their community is crucial. This involves developing their knowledge of philanthropy and the ways philanthropic acts can build strong, resilient communities. It also means skilling children in how to think and act philanthropically in their community. Effective capacity building also comes when all the partners – Kids Thrive, the school, the prospective community partner and the 'delivery' business or philanthropic partner demonstrate a commitment to the program. "Everyone needs to embrace the aims and processes of the program," says Andrea Lemon, Kids Thrive.

The most challenging aspect for effective engagement is being impact focused so that everyone in the program benefits in the longer term:

*With many projects we (the not-for-profit) can become the 'vegemite' in the sandwich between philanthropy and schools. The school cannot really know what a program is about until they have done it, which can make it initially more challenging for them to engage and commit. The philanthropics are understandably interested in impact, as are we, but at what point will our impact be evident? While we can measure the impact from one program, we are working for generational change and this doesn't happen in a 12 month funding cycle. (Andrea Lemon, Kids Thrive)*

### Impact

#### What are the main outcomes?

*InSchools Philanthropy* is in its infancy as a program. This said, the team is noticing positive changes as a result of the Kids Thrive approach

and methodologies within the program. These include, at a really fundamental level, teachers and students now knowing what philanthropy is and how to pronounce the word!

Furthermore, Andrea Rieniets has observed:

From a teaching and learning perspective, the program leaders use the arts as a different modality of learning. Teachers tell the Kids

Thrive team that as a result of this modeling, they are now using some of these learning approaches in their other classes.

The strong school-community focus of the program also provides a unique bridge for new relationships to develop. The Kids Thrive team report that many of these relationships go beyond the life of the program with children continuing as volunteers within the organisations they partnered with in the program, and community organisations continuing to partner with the schools.

The fact that a new delivery partner, The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation, has come on board for 2013 is testament to a growing interest in the work and its value.

#### **How is information gathered?**

Information about how the pilot is going is gathered iteratively and

informally via the program's events. Immediate feedback is also gathered by the Kids Thrive team from the children and teachers as they undertake various 'action learning' processes.

#### **How do you share the information gathered and with whom?**

The program has two key community story telling public events: the presentation 'pitch' for funding that the children do, and the public celebration where the students, artists and philanthropists share their projects once they have been achieved.

The children move from 'cold' to 'hot' as the program progresses. Their knowledge expands and their skills improve. They become aware of what's needed in their community and what could 'we' be doing differently. We see their confidence levels grow – and we see them grow six inches in height (literally) - from session 1 to the final celebration event in the program – as they experience being leaders, being taken seriously by adults, and making elemental changes in their community.