



the **Bilum** MercyWorks

PLUS:
AN UPDATE
ON OUR
PROJECTS IN
PAPUA NEW
GUINEA

SISTERS OF MERCY IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA | JUNE 2017

CHILD'S PLAY

THE IMPORTANCE OF EARLY
CHILDHOOD EDUCATION IN
DEVELOPING COMMUNITIES



MercyWorks

SISTERS OF MERCY
IN AUSTRALIA & PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Mission Statement

Mercy Works supports the local and overseas relief and development activities that are part of the vision and mission of the Sisters of Mercy in Australia and Papua New Guinea. The programs engage in partnerships with communities to promote justice, self reliance and to support displaced people and communities who are denied access to basic resources such as education, health care and social welfare. Mercy Works Programs strongly endorse the principles of freedom, mutual respect, environmental sustainability, participation and protection of the rights and responsibilities of all.

Direction

In *Australia*, Mercy Works offers community education in world development concerns, provides assistance with refugees, and works in partnership with Indigenous peoples. *Overseas*, the primary focus is in the South East Asia-Pacific region where, in collaboration with local partners, Mercy Works directs its efforts towards the education, health care, and social and spiritual well-being of those who are poor or displaced.

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The Bilum

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We are a member of the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) and as such committed to the ACFID Code of Conduct for Australian aid and development organisations. See www.acfid.asn.au

Cover: Home of Hope Kiunga.
Credit: Catholic Mission

The Bilum

In Papua New Guinea, bilums or handwoven string bags have been crafted and used by people for hundreds of years to carry their most precious and essential belongings. *The Bilum* carries and communicates the stories of the people involved in the many projects supported by Mercy Works. See what's inside our bilum this issue...

EARLY CHILDHOOD LEARNING

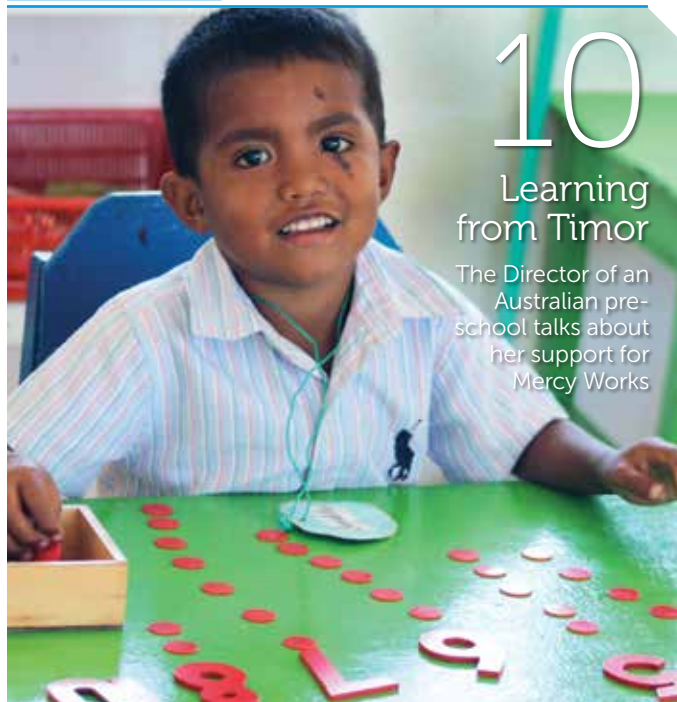


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Working together for transformative change in Papua New Guinea

Early learning is more than fun and games

While progress has been made, many governments still do not prioritise early childhood in their health, education or poverty reduction plans. At Mercy Works, our Early Childhood projects consistently work towards meeting current and future global development goals.



In 1990 Robert Fulghum wrote a poem called *All I Really Need To Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. It is a simple, yet profound reflection on what constitutes the important things in life that allow a person to thrive, for societies to work together and for governments to function well. Its basic lesson is that if we attend to the small things in life then we learn skills that enable the big things to fall into place. Skills such as share everything, play fair, don't hit people, clean up your own mess, take a nap every afternoon, say sorry when you hurt someone are all things we learn when we are in Kindergarten.

Fulghum concludes his poem with these words – take any of these items and extrapolate it into sophisticated adult terms and apply it to your family life or your work or your government or your world and it holds true and clear and firm. Think what a better world it would be if all – the whole world – had cookies and milk about three o'clock every afternoon and then lay down with blankies and had a nap. Or if all governments had a basic policy to always put things back where they found them and to clean up their own mess.

No wonder parents are keen to enrol their children in pre-school where they can learn these basic behaviours. This edition of *The Bilum* has stories about the pre-schools Mercy Works is assisting. Whether the pre-school is in

Papua New Guinea, Timor Leste or Australia, the story is the same. Socialisation experiences in group settings accompanied by structured play assist the children to learn the basics in life which enable them to be ready for school. Then they are more ready to learn the more complex tasks because they have had a head start in a friendly and supportive way. Aren't they lucky?

Parents who have pre-school children know the expense incurred in providing this start for their children. The parents of the children featured in this edition are amongst the most marginalized in society and have little or no money for such an activity. They could not even think that such a start is possible. Hence, it is a privilege that their children can have access to such a wonderful start in life. As you read the stories you will pick up an extreme sense of gratitude for the assistance given to them.

It is always a great pleasure to visit these pre-schools. To see the children happy and engaged in the activities without realising how much they are learning is most satisfying to the teachers. I always take the opportunity to encourage the teachers to keep up the good work.

Thank you for your support of this most valuable activity of Mercy Works.

Ailsa Mackinnon RSM AM

Executive Director

Socialisation experiences in group settings accompanied by structured play assist the children to learn the basics in life which enable them to be ready for school.

IN BRIEF



The Honey Ants Club will cater for children in the 3-15 age group.

Catholic Charities Appeal

All parents know how expensive keeping children occupied during school holiday time can be. For our asylum seeker families attending our Mercy House of Welcome centre in Adelaide, the cost of providing vacation care or stimulating activities for their children is prohibitive. Thanks to an incredibly generous \$75,000, 5-year grant from the Catholic Charities Appeal in South Australia, we have been able to employ child-care workers to organise and run quality programs each school holiday period at our Kilburn-based House of Welcome. We're very grateful for this support. ■



Educational support for Aboriginal children

We are pleased to announce Mercy Works is supporting a new project to help indigenous school children. The Honey Ants Children's Club is an active Indigenous academic and recreational after-school program catering for aboriginal children between the ages of three and fifteen from the Davenport community in South Australia.

The children who participate in the program come from a low economic family background and are often placed in the care of grandparents, many of whom have little disposable income to provide extra learning experiences. In addition to providing nourishing refreshments, the specialised program cultivates skills in language learning, science, maths, reading, health, hygiene and creative writing – to name a few.

It is anticipated that these activities plus the use of various resources which will be provided by Mercy Works, will help children to learn, love, and care for themselves and the community and develop as persons with knowledge, skills and values.

We look forward to reporting more on this newest project in our next issue. ■



Clockwise from top left: Guest speaker Sr Maryanne Kolkia with Mercy Works Donor Relations Officer Elizabeth Grady; Mercy Works Board Member Chris Townend (right) with Dr John O'Donnell, Chair of Mercy Community Services; Guest speaker Sr Maryanne Kolkia, Mercy Works Goroka/Mt Hagen Coordinator; Raffle prize winner with Dr O'Donnell; Wendy Florey, All Hallows' School Deputy Principal – Students, Sr Sharon Price and Jacqueline Magurren, Mercy Works Board Members



Left to right: Fun school holiday programs will keep children busy at the Mercy House of Welcome.

Bennelong Foundation

Our Mercy Connect Melbourne project recently received a generous \$20,000 grant from the Bennelong Foundation. Established in 2002 by the Bangarra Group, the foundation aims to enhance community wellbeing and provide opportunities for lasting change in our community. With a strong focus on migrant and refugee welfare, this grant will go towards training additional volunteers to support newly arrived refugees as they adjust to the Australian education system. ■



Volunteer assists student in the Mercy Connect Melbourne program

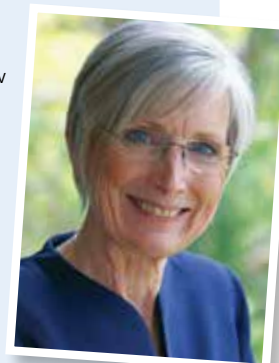
A Gathering of Friends

In April the annual Friends of Mercy Works gathering was held in Brisbane to enable us to say thank you to the many friends who continue to support Mercy Works. This year's focus was Papua New Guinea and was hosted with the generous support of Catherine O'Kane, Principal of All Hallows' School. Over 50 friends gathered on the grounds of the beautiful Brisbane-based school for what was an enjoyable evening. A special feature was a keynote speech by Sister Maryanne Kolkia RSM, the Co-ordinator of the Goroka/Mt Hagen Mercy Works project. ■



Our newest team member

Jennie Ryan RSM has joined the Mercy Works team as the new Manager, Domestic Projects-Asylum Seekers and Refugees. Jennie comes from an educational background and was a Principal of a number of Primary



Schools in Sydney. She was also the Congregation Leader of the Sisters of Mercy, North Sydney for nine years. Jennie's passion for the welfare of refugees began in the 1970's with the boat arrivals from Vietnam. She has continued to advocate for them through her roles in leadership and involvement in the local community and now brings that passion to her new position. We welcome Jennie to the team! ■

Pushing FOR pre-school

Early Childhood Education and Development is one of the most cost-effective investments in human capital which leads to a country's sustainable development. Through our Early Childhood Programs in Australia and abroad, Mercy Works continues to take advantage of a child's earliest years as an important window of opportunity to address inequality.

The greatest asset of any country lies in its young students. It is through these students that society will grow and flourish. Combine this with a strong parental desire to educate their children, and you have the most powerful force that exists for building the wealth of a nation. Unfortunately, in many marginalised and developing communities, education, and in particular, the education of pre-primary aged children, is not a high priority. This is partly due to the parents themselves having received no education whatsoever, let alone any early childhood education. They have never really seen the benefits that can be accrued, and they have more pressing daily concerns. Likewise, many governments in the developing world view the need to ensure adequate health, nutrition, sanitation and water provision for the youngest members of their nation as the most pressing concern. Early Childhood education is seen as a secondary or non-compulsory need.

And yet, the opposite is true. Optimising the early years of children's lives by ensuring they have the right stimulation and nurturing, is the best investment any society can make in ensuring its future success and breaking the cycle of poverty.

Nobel Prize Winning American Economist James Heckman has argued that all Governments, particularly in the developing world must "invest in early childhood education now or pay later". He has found that every dollar invested in a pre-school program generates a 17 per cent return to society. Too much money, he says, is spent in later years addressing issues that could have been prevented in early education.

Since the beginning, Mercy Works has always operated with the knowledge that the effects of early disadvantage on children can be reduced. We knew that targeting our projects exclusively on health and nutrition without considering the holistic nature of Early Childhood Development would not be beneficial. As a result, a large number of our programs both in Australia and abroad focus on the provision of quality early childhood education.



Clockwise: Lunch, storybook and creative arts time at the Pwakayini Pre-School in Bathurst Island, Northern Territory.



Indigenous Pre-School Programs Northern Territory, Australia

This year's Closing the Gap report delivered a result that we have become accustomed to hearing when comparing outcomes between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians, that is, not enough progress is being made. There is improvement in some areas, but stagnation in others, with Early Childhood Education being one area where the government policy has not been successful. As a result, a new target of ensuring 95% early childhood education attendance for all Indigenous four-year-olds was set.

For the past four years Mercy Works has been supporting two Indigenous pre-school programs in the Northern Territory.

The 'Little Children's Learning Centre' based at Our Lady of Sacred Heart College in Alice Springs is a proactive Indigenous Education engagement program that caters for approximately twenty children aged three to five years who come from families that would otherwise have no access to pre-school. Most of the children are placed in the care of grandparents, many of whom have little disposable income to provide extra learning experiences for the children. Some of the children have suffered trauma and hardship in their young lives. Through our support, resources and toys are purchased which are used to recall events in their lives and which in turn helps them deal with post-traumatic stress. ►

...every dollar invested in a pre-school program generates a 17 per cent return to society. Too much money is spent in later years addressing issues that could have been prevented in early education.



Above and Right: Lunchtime at the Catherine McAuley Child Care Centre in Kiunga, Papua New Guinea. **Far right and below:** Students and staff during class time at a Timorese pre-school.

- ▶ Particular focus is given to sensory equipment due to sensory issues being displayed by many of the children. We also help to provide transport to and from school as many children in the program will only attend school if they are picked up and returned home.

Mercy Works also supports a Family Engagement Program at Pwakayini Pre-school in Bathurst Island – 80kms north of Darwin. “The whole community benefits from families who are engaged in the education process” says Joanne Moller, Pwakayini Coordinator and head teacher. “The mothers and fathers, many of whom became parents at a very young age, learn child management practices and develop a more secure attachment with their children. Through our program, they learn cooking and food handling skills as well as functional literacy. This has a flow on effect to the children who benefit from their parents’ involvement. We are, in essence, teaching both the students and their parents”. Joanne can’t stress enough the stark difference between primary school students who have not been to pre-school and those who have. For starters, the Pwakayini students possess a love of reading by the time they start kindergarten. “Very few of our 30 students have books, developmental toys or even regular nutritious meals at home and so it is vital that they can have access to these at pre-school. Over time, they become avid readers and adept at creative play. We also work hard to ensure our curriculum is tailored to make it culturally inclusive and appropriate for our families while also ensuring the students get the best possible head start in life”.

Catherine McAuley Childcare Centre, Kiunga Papua New Guinea

In Papua New Guinea, the early childhood care and education of young children is largely a parental and community responsibility. Like many other village-based societies more than 80% of Papua New Guinean children grow up in subsistence farming and fishing tribal villages. Parents in these regional areas believe that while children participate in work and village activities, they are developing all the skills and knowledge they need to become competent adult members of their community. Little thought is given to formal pre-kindergarten education. Moreover, most pre-schools are privately run and the fees when on a subsistence salary are prohibitive.

Mercy Works funds the Catherine McAuley Childcare Centre in Kiunga Papua New Guinea where 55 children aged 3 to 6 attend four days a week for 8 weeks per term, allowing children from financially disadvantaged families to have access to early childhood education. Students are offered a quality school readiness program as well as a nutritional meal each day. Additionally, we ensure teachers have the relevant training and sponsor one teacher annually for further professional development at a tertiary institution.

“Our children love coming to school each day. They learn so much through games and creative play and it really gives them a headstart when they go on to primary school” says Juliet Hmentori, Centre Coordinator. “I witnessed this first hand at a Year 6 graduation ceremony



“All the students who received awards for academic excellence were students who had attended our pre-school, including the Dux of the School”.



teacher training and the development of curriculums richly infused with creative and practical educational experiences that will assist the students’ cognitive, emotional and social development. Most recently, we have been providing training in the Montessori method of teaching which the staff and students have fully embraced. At a recent visit to one of the centres, Sr Anne Foale, Coordinator for our Overseas Projects noticed how well the students adapted to the new style of learning. “All the Montessori materials are set up around the classroom and children are free to walk around and choose which one they’d like to play with. They loved the sense of independence this gives them. Staff have told me that after our children graduate on to Primary School, the teachers know which ones have come from one of our centres. They’re so much more advanced.” Anne proudly remarks.

at a neighbouring school which I attended at the end of last year. All the students who received awards for academic excellence were students who had attended our pre-school, including the Dux of the School”.

Early Childhood Learning Centres, Timor-Leste

In a country where only 5% of children have access to basic pre-school education, Mercy Works has been heavily investing its support in Early Childhood Education and Care in Timor-Leste and has been doing so since 2007. In addition to building seven pre-schools in remote villages in the south-west Cova Lima District, we have been involved in the refurbishment of several more. We have also focused our support on

Mercy Works also provides much needed nutritional support for the children. Timor-Leste has one of the world’s highest rates of malnutrition for children under 5. The Timorese Department of Education intermittently funds a food program for Primary School students but not for pre-schoolers. If caught early enough, many of the harmful effects of malnutrition can be reversed. This in turn helps improve not only children’s physical health but also their aptitude for learning.

Timor remains one of the poorest countries in the world, but with continued support and investment in the educational and nutritional support of its youngest citizens, Mercy Works is optimistic for a brighter future. ■

Learning from Timor



Maria Aiossa is the Director of Glenhaven Private Pre-school in the semi-rural suburb of Sydney. With over 30 years' teaching experience and a passion for the early childhood sector both in Australia and the developing world, Maria has been an avid supporter of our Pre-School programs in Timor-Leste, having donated \$13,000 over the past five years.

In the Western world, we tend to assume that we have all the answers which will trickle down to the people at the base of the pyramid. But there's a lot to be learned from unexpected places too. In 2013, Maria and three of her teachers from her Glenhaven-based Pre-School travelled to Timor-Leste spending one week visiting our pre-schools and learning that the West isn't always best.

"I can't actually recall where and when I first met Sr Helen Nolen (Mercy Works' Timor-Leste Coordinator from 2004 to 2016) but I do remember that I was struck by the importance of her work and the no-nonsense manner in which she carried it out. I knew from personal experience that running a pre-school in Australia is no easy feat, but to have to manage several pre-schools in a developing country with no resources or infrastructure was to me, unfathomable" recalls Maria.

"And so it was with great pleasure that I decided to concentrate our school's fundraising efforts on Mercy Works' Timorese pre-school projects. Since 2012, we have been running Easter and Christmas raffles with the funds being solely designated for this purpose, encouraged greatly by the parents of our students who have been wonderful supporters. Each raffle ticket only costs a few dollars but so many parents say to me, "here's \$50, I don't want any tickets. I'm just happy to be supporting such a worthwhile cause".

But Maria felt that she could offer more to her Timorese counterparts. Together with three



Left to right: Maria with some of her Glenhaven Pre-School students; Staff and students at one of the Timorese pre-schools the Australian group of educators visited.

of her staff members and several suitcases brimming with teaching resources, she travelled to Dili and then on to remote regions in the Maliana district for the purpose of running capacity-building workshops. "We were lucky Helen was there to meet us at the airport, otherwise we're sure that Customs would have thought we were salespeople intending to peddle our wares" she laughingly says.

The trip proved to be an eye opener. The Sydney team witnessed wonderful work carried out in very difficult conditions. Staff and students had to travel up to two hours to get to the pre-school each day where they would essentially have no contact with the outside world for the

duration of the school day. The roads were non-existent and the few who had access to a car drove up and down mountains in unsafe settings where one wrong manoeuvre could potentially have disastrous consequences. There were frequent water and power outages throughout the day, until 6pm when the electricity was permanently shut off for the duration of the night. Break-ins at the schools were frequent. Children were malnourished with rib bones visibly protruding through meagre clothing. And yet, underlying all of this was a strength and resilience never before seen by the group of visitors.

"When we arrived, one of the villages we visited put on a celebration for us. We were



“It was immediately apparent to all of us which schools had been built or funded by Mercy Works.”

creative ideas happen with limited resources. An airplane made out of two sticks for instance, allows for an unlimited expansion of play – long after the flashing lights and engine noises of its plastic counterpart have run their course.

“It was immediately apparent to all of us which schools had been built or funded by Mercy Works. The buildings and facilities stood apart from the other schools which were almost always in a state of disrepair. The pre-schools supported by Mercy Works were modern and clean, providing a warm and inviting environment for quality learning. And you could tell that the teachers were obviously well-trained through your capacity-building workshops. Also, their curriculum was of a very high standard,” adds Maria.

Nonetheless, the aspect of the trip that will forever remain in the heart of the Glenhaven Pre-School team, is the interaction they had with the children. “We could see real potential in some of the students we met. They were incredibly bright and you just knew that, given the right opportunities, these children could go on to achieve great things.”

When asked how Timorese pre-schools differed from their Australian counterparts, Maria pauses, choosing her next words carefully. “They’re a lot more resilient than our children. Over here we’re

seeing an increase in parents who are wrapping their children in cotton wool. We need to break this habit and allow kids to take risks, challenges and responsibility. We also found that teachers in Timor have more control in the classroom. In Australia, it can sometimes be the other way around with students dictating what they want to do. Sadly, a lot of my colleagues have said that respect for teachers has broken down due to a misguided attempt to empower students and give them more control over their lives. The students we met in Timor still have a healthy respect for authority which I think will make them more prepared for the realities of adult life”.

Indeed, nothing makes the staff at Glenhaven Private Pre-school happier than reading updates about the students they met. “We recognize their faces in some of your photos in the Bilum and see how they’ve grown in the past couple of years. It’s my dream to be able to go back and visit them in about twenty years’ time to see them again, but this time as adults. I know that many of them will go on to bring about positive change in their country in various ways. They were born to learn and lead. I feel so privileged to have met them and their families” Maria says, with her voice catching once again as she talks about the children who taught her so much. ■

moved by their generosity for these people had nothing. Yet, here they were, sharing their few possessions with us in a tremendous display of beautiful hospitality” Maria fondly recalls with a catch in her voice.

The staff were equally impressive. Working with limited resources and minimal support, they consistently achieved amazing outcomes with their students, many of whom came from families who did not appreciate the benefits of an early-childhood education and would have much preferred to keep their youngsters at home to help with the housework and mind infant siblings. But Maria and her team learnt quite accidentally that the most effective and



Targeted help

*Mercy Works relies on the generous support of donors to carry out its work improving health, education and social well-being. For the past two years, our biggest supporter in Papua New Guinea, the **Old-DART Foundation**, has been quietly and consistently helping us to improve lives.*

Clockwise from top: Directors of the Old-DART Foundation meet with educators in Wewak, East Sepik Province; New students' dormitory at Fatima Secondary School in Mt Hagen nears completion; Sr Anne Foale and Foundation Directors travelling between Mt Hagen and Goroka on an 8-seater recycled crop dusting plane.

The literal definition of the Greek-derived word philanthropy is 'love for humankind' in the sense of caring, developing and enriching what it means to be human. Not to be confused with the term, 'charity' (although the two words are regularly used interchangeably), philanthropy is much more long-term, more strategic and focused on rebuilding – the difference between the proverbial gift of a fish to a hungry person as opposed to teaching them how to fish.

The Old-DART Foundation, based in London, UK, is one such philanthropic organisation. By supporting initiatives that improve health, literacy and education across six countries spanning Peru to Papua New Guinea, the Old-DART foundation is creating sustainable and transformative change in impoverished communities.

In 2015, The Old-DART became one of Mercy Works' major partners in Papua New



Guinea. With their support, we're not just building classrooms, we're also educating men and women to teach in them.

Earlier this year, Sr Anne Foale, our Coordinator for Overseas Projects, travelled with several of the Foundation's Directors to visit the extensive number of projects they fund and witnessed first-hand the life-changing effect our combined efforts are having on the lives of people in remote Papua New Guinea.

Some of our projects currently funded by the Old-DART include:

- Two dormitories which will house 200 male and female students at St Gabriel's Technical

Investing in the future

With funding from the Old DART Foundation, we've awarded close to 100 scholarships to financially underprivileged tertiary students in remote regions of Papua New Guinea. Two students tell us how these scholarships have changed their lives.



My name is Stanley Willie and I am 25 years old and have three sisters. I come from a poor, rural family - both my parents were subsistence farmers. In 2007, my mother died from cancer and I left high school because my father alone could not support us all. Through a flexible, long-distance program I was able to finish grades 11 and 12 while working to help the family. In 2013, I was accepted to study for a Bachelor's Degree in Tourism and Hospitality Management at Divine World

University. Unfortunately, after 3 years I was forced to drop out as I could not afford to pay the last year's tuition fees which had increased significantly. With God's help, I found out about Mercy Works' scholarship Program and was successfully awarded a scholarship to go back and finish my studies. I hope to graduate at the end of the year. Without your help and since it's so hard to get a job in Papua New Guinea, I might have ended up on the streets, or become someone I didn't want to be.



My name is Harudy Denem and I am 23 years old and a third-year Bachelor of Business student (Accounting and Management) at Pacific Adventist University. I have three siblings and my mother who is the only one who works in our family, struggled to pay for my

university fees. I lived with the burden that I was responsible for the hardship my family was undergoing because of my education. If I didn't get the scholarship from Mercy Works, I would have had to eventually drop out of my studies. I can't thank you enough for investing in me. ■



College in Kiunga

- One dormitory which will house 80 female students at Maria Hilf Vocational Training Centre in Kainantu
- One dormitory which will house 80 male and female students at Fatima Secondary School in Mt Hagen
- The complete renovation of one dormitory at the Mercy Secondary Girls' School in Yarapos
- The building of two classrooms and four teacher's houses at Lower Bamu
- The purchase of two school buses for the safe transport of students at St Gabriel's Technical College, Kiunga
- Training, capacity building and ongoing support for teachers in Port Moresby and Mt Hagen, East Sepik Province
- Mobile training programs for youths in Port Moresby
- Close to 100 full scholarships for financially underprivileged tertiary students. ■

Learning to give



Last year, students from 72 primary and high schools across Australia supported Mercy Works by holding numerous group and individual fundraising events which raised an impressive \$119,621 for our projects.



We send our children to school to learn. And sometimes, that learning involves not only reading and writing but also about giving back. From lemonade stalls to walk-a-thons, students work hard to raise funds for projects they believe in. Students plan and run the fundraising activities themselves — a feat that no doubt many adults would hesitate to undertake.

Mercy Works is incredibly thankful that so many schools have chosen to support us as their organisation of choice. Each year, students are establishing what we hope will be a lifelong interest in helping others and their compassion and interest in helping impoverished communities speaks well of our next generation of leaders.

Our Lady of Mercy College, Parramatta NSW

Tiana Gebrael, a Year 10 student at OLMC Parramatta, recently held a sweet stall for the purpose of raising funds for our projects. With

the help of her mother, she baked and sold the delicious Middle-Eastern dessert, 'Kanefeh' raising a staggering \$1,060! Tiana was moved to hold this fundraiser after hearing about the hardship faced by people in developing countries. "I feel these people are so grateful for anything that comes their way, whereas we don't always appreciate all the luxuries that we have. As a result, I really wanted to do something that could help to make their lives the slightest bit better".

Merici College, Braddon ACT

Late last year, students from Balgo House at Merici College shared their time and talents by undertaking fundraising initiatives for Mercy Works. The students ran a lemonade stand, nail polish station and cupcake stall which raised an impressive \$875 specifically designated for our Bathurst Island Pre-School project. As a token of their appreciation, the Balgo House students were sent drawings, letters and shells with Indigenous paintings by the students and

staff at the pre-school.

Merici College takes pride in its partnership with Mercy Works not only due to the students' willingness to help needy communities but because of the history of Balgo House, where the Sisters of Mercy travelled to the remote Indigenous community of Balgo in WA, to help educate the youth and provide welfare to the community.

OLMC Heidelberg, VIC

Students at Our Lady of Mercy College in Heidelberg, Victoria held a Mercy Day fundraising event last year which involved hosting a number of activities such as a crazy hair stall, disco, inflatable obstacle course and a sausage sizzle. The day was a huge success and raised \$5,881 for our projects. House Captains Mikaela Whitty and Laura Pozzobon said that it was also a "day to come together with other students and staff and reflect what mercy means to us while also allowing us to go home to feel good about ourselves for how we've helped".



Clockwise: Year 10 OLMC Parramatta student Tiana Gebrael; SHC Kyneton student Niamh Sutton; OLMC Heidelberg students at their Mercy Day events; Merici College Balgo House students proudly displaying their gifts from the Bathurst Island Indigenous Pre-School and in their lemonade fundraising stall.



Sacred Heart College, Kyneton VIC
The decision to support Mercy Works can sometimes come from an individual student as opposed to an entire year group or school. Year 9 students at Sacred Heart College in Kyneton hold an annual Expo with the intention of giving students the opportunity to explore their strengths through the creation of a long term project. The Expo also allows students to use their project to raise money for a charity of their choice. At the school's

most recent Expo, Niamh Sutton chose to look at the 10 years since the "Closing the Gap" strategy was introduced and through her research discovered that Mercy Works is a strong supporter of this government strategy. As a result, she held an information stall which included a plant stall whereby Geraniums, Pigface and Lupins were sold. Niamh had propagated the plants herself and raised an inspiring amount of \$350 for our Indigenous pre-school projects. ■

Mercy Works is incredibly thankful that so many schools have chosen to support us as their organisation of choice.

*Right across Australia,
school children
generously raise funds
to support our projects.
We would like to extend
our deep appreciation to
all the schools that have
helped raise this incredible
amount from January to
December 2016.*

THANK YOU!
\$119,621

- Notre Dame College, Shepparton ■ Cathedral School Primary School, Bathurst ■ Catherine McAuley Catholic PS, Orange
- Sacred Heart College Geelong, Newtown ■ St Mary's Catholic School, Wellington ■ Notre Dame Catholic Primary School, Cloverdale
- Holy Family Primary School, Kelso ■ St Mary's School, Beaudesert ■ St Paul's School, Coburg ■ Emmanuel College, Warrnambool
- McAuley Catholic College, Grafton ■ St Aloysius College, Adelaide ■ Mercedes College, Springfield ■ St Therese's School, New Lambton
- St Mary Magdalene's School, Elizabeth Grove ■ Sacred Heart College, Kyneton ■ Mercy College Mackay, Mackay ■ St James' Primary School, Muswellbrook ■ St Patrick's Parish School, Albury ■ Santa Maria College, Melville ■ St Mary's College, Gunnedah ■ St Monica's College, Cairns
- Marian Catholic College, Griffith ■ Mount Lilydale Mercy College, Lilydale ■ St Michael's School, Bassendean ■ St Columba's Catholic School, Bayswater ■ Bunbury Catholic College, Bunbury ■ Mercedes College, Perth ■ Chanel College, Gladstone ■ Mercy College, Mirrabooka ■ Catherine McAuley Westmead, Westmead ■ Our Lady of Mercy College, North Parramatta ■ St Pius' School, Enmore ■ McAuley Primary School, Rose Bay
- Holy Cross Catholic Primary School, Bondi Junction ■ St Oliver's Primary School, Harris Park ■ Sacred Heart Primary School, Westmead ■ St Mary's School, Bowen ■ St Luke's Catholic Primary School, Woodvale ■ St Teresa's Primary School, Brighton ■ Sacred Heart School, Cootamundra
- St Mary's School, Crookwell ■ St Aloysius College, North Melbourne ■ St Joseph's School, Queens Park ■ St Patrick's College Townsville, Townsville
- Marist Regional College, Burnie ■ Padbury Catholic School, Padbury ■ St Kieran's Catholic Primary School, Tuart Hill ■ MacKillop College, Bathurst
- St Laurence's Primary School, Dubbo ■ St Joseph's College, Mildura ■ St Francis Xavier Primary School, Ballarat ■ Our Lady Star of the Sea, Ocean Grove ■ St. Raphael's School, Parkside ■ St Anthony's Catholic Primary School, North Rockhampton ■ St Brigid's Primary School, Raymond Terrace
- St Columba's Primary School, Adamstown ■ St James Primary School, Kotara South ■ St John's Primary School, Lambton ■ Marymede Catholic College, South Morang ■ Holy Cross College, Ellenbrook ■ St Helena's Catholic Primary School, Ellenbrook ■ St John Fisher College, Bracken Ridge
- St Vincent's Primary School, Bundall ■ Galilee Catholic School, Aldinga Beach ■ St Augustine's School, Salisbury ■ Merici College, Canberra
- Monte Sant' Angelo College, North Sydney ■ Cardijn College, Noarlunga Centre ■ Emmaus Catholic Primary School, Mt Clear ■ Clovelly Park Primary School, Clovelly Park ■ St Dominic's Primary School, Broadmeadows