

PARTNERSHIP BROKERS

SCHOOL+BUSINESS+COMMUNITY

SMS – TSF Partnership

Purpose:

To improve the well-being of disadvantaged students to enable them to engage in their education.

Partnership Members:

- Sanderson Middle School
- The Smith Family

Context and Goals

Sanderson is a low socio economic area in Darwin's northern suburbs. Sanderson Middle School (SMS) has a high proportion of ESL and Indigenous students. The partnership targets these students and their families. The partnership aims to improve student wellbeing, family engagement and attendance rates.

The Partnership's Approach

Most TSF programs aim to benefit the whole school: the You Can Do It Program, the setup and maintenance of a school Concert Band, the setup and maintenance of a Sustainability Garden, the initiative of an annual family night ("Sanderson Under the Stars"), the Family Yarns each term. The only program that individually targets low income families is the Learning for Life (Lfl) Scholarships.

"I didn't know that it would be so hard to engage people where their kids are concerned thus I am in awe of what you guys do and achieve....how can you be thanked enough for the fantastic work you do."

Kathleen Pledger, Sanderson Middle School Chairperson commenting to The Smith Family.

Benefits

- SMS has improved dialogue with disadvantaged families, particularly Indigenous parents, through Parent Yarns: 17 families participated, 76% Indigenous.
- 45 Students on Lfl Scholarships can access funds for electives they could not afford previously.
- SMS now has a fully equipped Concert Band and has performed publicly on 25 occasions. They are now of a standard that selected participants can attend Jazz Camp in Sydney.

"Liam's grades overall have impressively improved, his morale has also been boosted by being recognised as being committed enough to have been chosen to attend the Jazz Camp in Sydney. Liam has been receiving a lot of praise and positive support and I firmly believe that Liam's involvement in music has had a lot to do with his new found confidence and improved behavior." Indigenous parent



Next Steps

Funding for the partnership work has been renewed and expanded for a further three years enabling the inclusion of some new initiatives such as the sustainability garden and the Student 2 Student literacy program. The development of the sustainability garden and other initiatives at SMS in 2013 will bring new organisations to the partnership. These may include but are not limited to the Australian Children's Music Foundation (ACMF), Menzies School of Health Research, City of Darwin.

Support from the Partnership Broker

The Partnership Broker discussed with SMS avenues for support for the sustainable garden project including linking with community garden experts, Bunnings hardware suppliers and a local Rotary Club which sponsored a trailer.

In addition, the Partnership Broker facilitated the entry by the school for this new project in the NAB Schools First Seed Funding Awards, for which SMS won \$15,000. The Partnership Broker ensured SMS Indigenous girls participated in the "Girls Step Up" careers event, linking them to inspiring women in the workforce to develop career aspirations.

TOP TIP

It is important to have open communication, trust and a shared understanding between all partners.