

# Welcome

Thank you for your support, and welcome to our family.

You have done a wonderful thing in deciding to join our family of generous sponsors. Together we make a difference to the lives of over 59,000 Australian children in need.

Currently in Australia there are over 1.2 million children and young people experiencing poverty.<sup>1</sup> For families facing financial hardship, the prospect of a better future is overshadowed by the ordeal of making it through another week. A child living in disadvantage needs some financial help to pay for the kind of things that their family cannot afford, like a proper school uniform, shoes and text books. But they also need extra support with learning.

Research shows that the best educational outcomes for children living in disadvantage come from a combination of financial and personal support, as well as ongoing support through learning and mentoring programs. These programs give students the boost they need to build their confidence, improve skills like reading and writing, and help build positive aspirations for their future.

Through your sponsorship you are supporting our *Learning for Life* program helping children to get the most out of their education. This support for children can help prevent them from experiencing a lifetime of poverty.

By becoming an important member of our family and investing in a child's education, you are helping break a cycle of disadvantage that can continue through generations. By believing in these children, we can help them believe in themselves and take steps towards a better future.

Thank you, and welcome.

Yours sincerely,



Doug Taylor  
Chief Executive Officer



## Our vision

A better future for young Australians in need.

## Our belief

Every child deserves a chance.

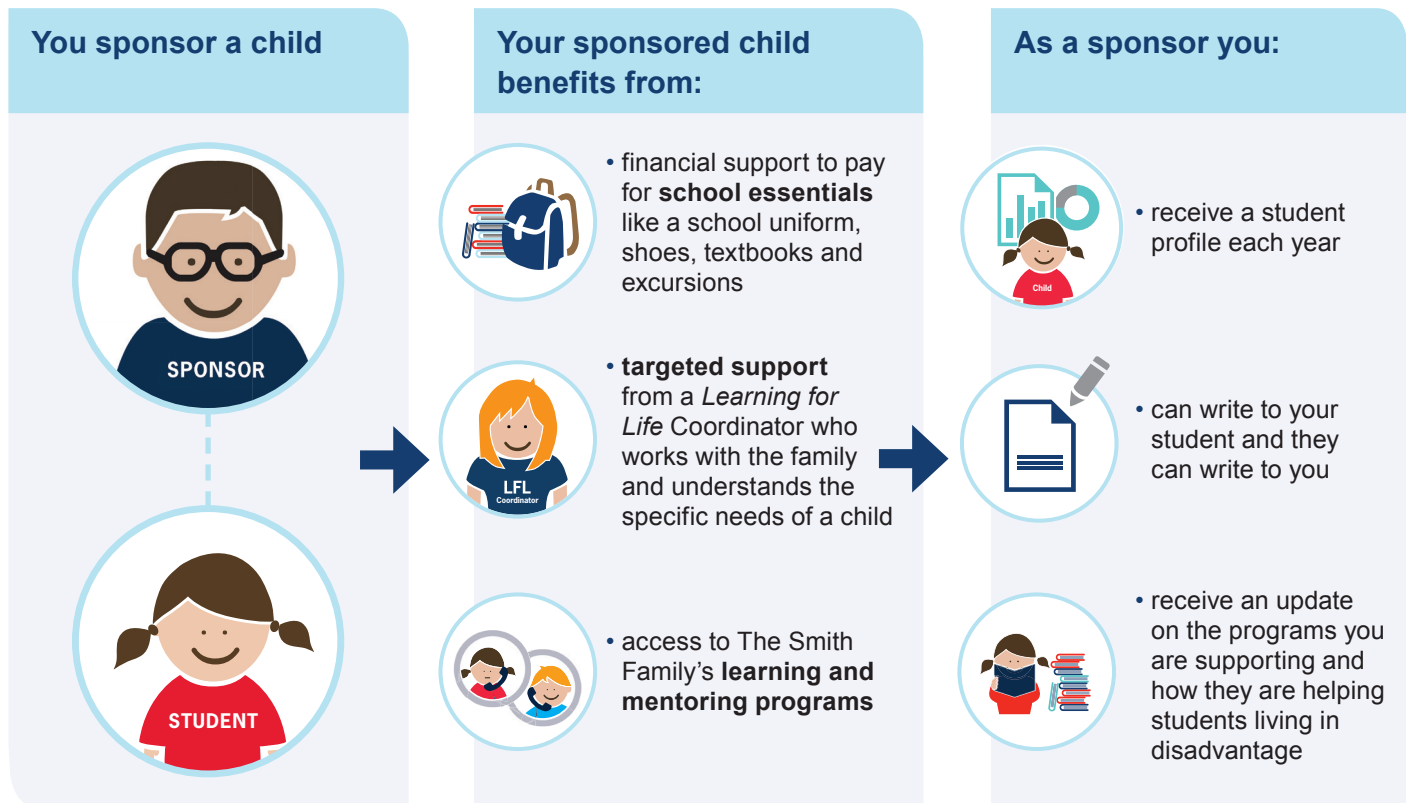
## Our mission

To create opportunities for young Australians in need by providing long-term support for their participation in education.

# How sponsorship works

As a *Learning for Life* sponsor, your donations provide a combination of three important pillars of support for a sponsored child:

- financial support for their school essentials, and
- guidance and personalised support from a *Learning for Life* Coordinator, and
- access to our learning and mentoring programs.



Learning for Life coordinator, Mathias

## Meet a *Learning for Life* Coordinator, **Mathias**

As a *Learning for Life* Coordinator, Mathias connects students and their families to the help they need.

“Schools refer students to me when they sense somethings up. For example, if a student can’t afford to go on an excursion, or he can’t do his homework because there’s no internet at home, or he’s always going hungry at morning tea time, I get a call.”

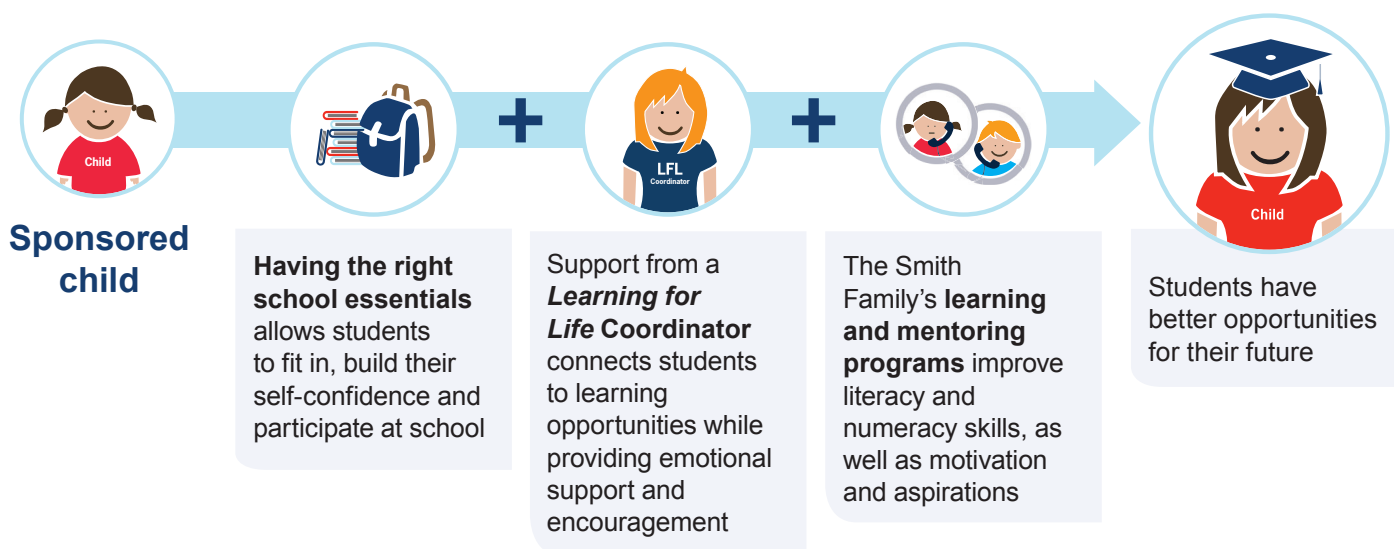
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# How sponsorship helps

The support provided through sponsorship helps students to:

- attend school regularly,
- complete Year 12, and
- move on to further education and employment post school.

We provide targeted support from early in a child's life throughout their education. This is how together, we help children in need break the cycle of disadvantage.



Research shows that completing Year 12 (or equivalent) increases a young person's likelihood of continuing with further study, as well as entering the workforce.<sup>1</sup> It also leads to higher annual earnings for individuals, greater community involvement and economic benefits for the country as a whole.

1. Access Economics 2005, *The economic benefit of increased participation in education and training*. Dusseldorp Skills Forum and Business Council of Australia, Sydney.

When he receives that call, Mathias is there to support the student in need. He meets with them, spends time with them to understand their situation and helps to provide the extra support they need. Mathias can recommend them for sponsorship and he connects the students with additional learning support through our range of out-of-school learning programs. Additionally, Mathias refers students and families to other support services within their community that go beyond The Smith Family's offering.

Mathias ensures families receive their sponsorship payments and complete their paperwork. He takes these opportunities to get to know each family personally.

**“In those communities that need extra support, we find that most of the families are dealing with a range of**

**issues,” says Mathias. “It’s rarely just financial – and those issues are often complex and interconnected.”**

“If a student is struggling with their reading, I might refer him or her to our *student2student* program,” he says. But his time with the student may reveal so much more. “A student might say, ‘I don’t want to go to school, I’m sick.’ But, if you drill down, you soon enough realise she doesn’t want to go to school because she’s wearing an old, torn jumper or she doesn’t have anything to eat at lunch time or she’s being bullied.”

Sponsorship connects students and their families with skilled, caring *Learning for Life* Coordinators like Mathias, providing intensive support to help them thrive and do their best at school.

# Our programs

Thanks to your sponsorship, your student will have greater access to educational support.

Their *Learning for Life* Coordinator will identify areas your student may need extra help, and provide them with access to our learning and mentoring programs as needed. Our programs give students the support they need to build their confidence, gain new skills and keep up with their peers at school. Some of our programs include:

## ***Learning Clubs***

Children living in disadvantage may not have a quiet place at home to concentrate or be able to get the help they need to complete their work. *Learning Club* provides a safe and supportive out-of-school learning environment. Trained local volunteers provide students with access to resources and expertise to help them with their homework, reading, writing and learning. *Learning Club* aims to increase a student's engagement with school by developing core skills and increasing their confidence in their school work.



**In 2020, 84% of students agreed going to a *Learning Club* helped them do better in class\*.**

## ***Student2student***

When a child is behind in their reading ability, keeping up in the classroom can become a constant struggle, that affects their entire education. *Student2student* is an 18-week program that pairs students who are at least two years behind in their reading with trained buddies who work with them to improve their reading skills. The mentoring is provided over the phone, with the pair reading from the same book two to three times a week.



**In 2022, 95% of students in our *student2student* reading program improved their reading ability.**

## ***iTrack***

Students from disadvantaged backgrounds often have limited access to role models or mentors who can help them make effective study and career choices. *iTrack* is an 18-week online mentoring program for high school students in Years 9 to 11. Students are carefully matched with a supportive adult (other than a teacher or parent) who mentors them, and gives valuable guidance about study, workplace and career opportunities.

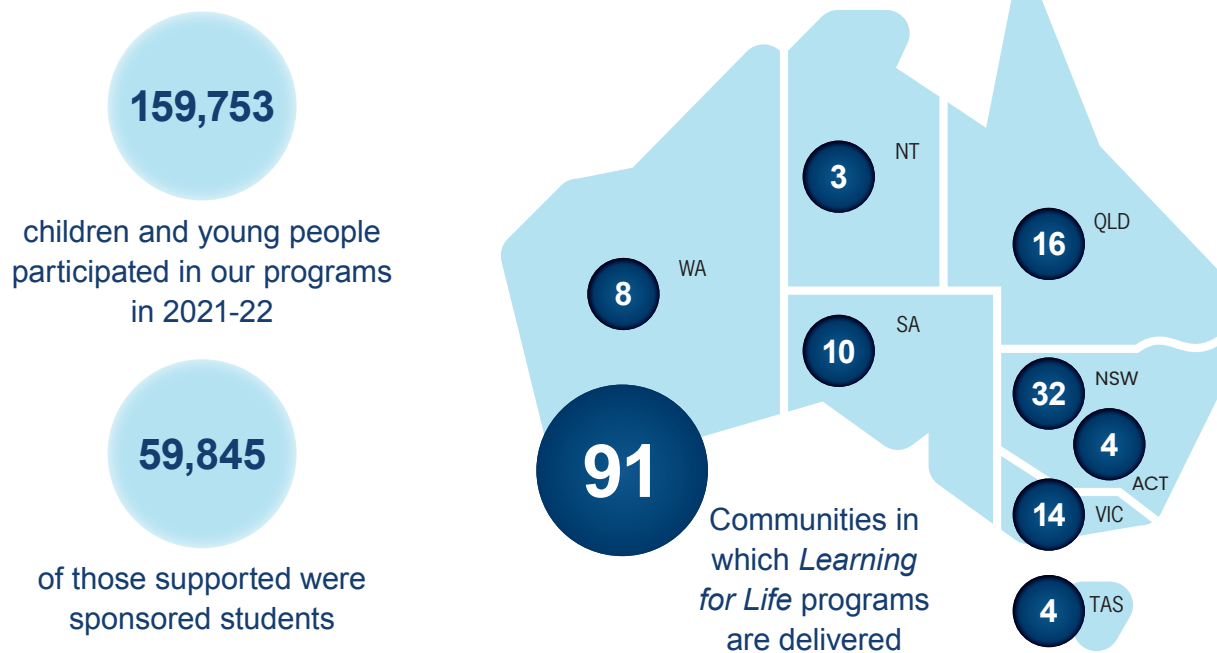


**In 2022, 79% of students reported that participating in *iTrack* improved their knowledge of post-school options and career pathways.**



# Together we are making a difference

The Smith Family helps children in need to get the most out of their education, preventing them from experiencing a lifetime of poverty. But we can't do this alone. Through the support of thousands of sponsors like you, together with our donors, volunteers and business supporters, we are providing the tools and support that they need to thrive at school. At The Smith Family we want to help even more children and young people in need. Last year, we reached 159,753 children and young people.



## Our volunteers help us make an even bigger difference

Every year, we are grateful that so many compassionate people choose to help The Smith Family by volunteering their time and skills. We engage thousands of dedicated volunteers in our learning programs such as *Learning Club* and *iTrack*, and to support our day-to-day operations in sponsorship administration. For example, one of our volunteers collated this welcome pack just for you. And if you choose to write to your sponsored student, it will be a volunteer that ensures it is privacy-checked and delivered to your student in a timely manner.

4,617 volunteers supported The Smith Family's work in every state and territory in 2021-22



Find out how to become a volunteer at

[thesmithfamily.com.au/volunteer](https://thesmithfamily.com.au/volunteer)

116,038

total hours donated by volunteers, equivalent of nearly \$3.7 million

# Communicating with your student

Writing to your sponsored student can be a very rewarding part of your sponsorship journey.

Every year, you'll receive a student profile from your sponsored student, who will share with you more about their family, their interests and favourite subjects at school. We also send cards and reminders to encourage you to correspond with your student at other times throughout the year. Students often tell us that hearing from their sponsors gives them added inspiration and motivation to succeed.

We do understand and respect that you may not wish to write to your student. Choosing to correspond with your student is entirely optional.

## Getting started

In the back pocket of this booklet we've included a sponsor profile for you to fill out. This will help your student get to know you. You can write to your student at any time of year and we've included a flyer with this booklet containing tips and things to remember.

We'll send a reminder when their birthday is coming up, so you can send on birthday wishes if you choose. These are small, but meaningful gestures that have real significance for a child.

Our sponsored students come from a variety of backgrounds with different beliefs and traditions. Please be mindful of this when corresponding with your student.

## Privacy and Safety

All correspondence between students and sponsors is reviewed by The Smith Family before we forward it on. This is to ensure that your privacy and your student's privacy is maintained at all times.

The Smith Family will always act in the best interest of students, and will only forward correspondence between sponsors and students which complies with our correspondence guidelines.

The Smith Family will exercise complete discretion when dealing with any correspondence which does not satisfy guidelines and reserve the right not to share any correspondence which is found to be inappropriate.

The Smith Family is a child safe organisation. For information on our commitment to Child Protection, visit our website at [thesmithfamily.com.au/child-protection](https://thesmithfamily.com.au/child-protection)

## What you can include

As you'll appreciate, we need to protect the privacy and safety of our students and our sponsors. We cannot pass on any information that can identify yourself or your student. This table summarises what you can and can't include:

OK to include	Cannot be included
First name	Surname/last name/distinctive or unique first name (you can use a nickname)
Age	Date of birth
Occupation	Place of work, business or company name
Hobbies and interests	Address, town, suburb, email address, phone number or any social media details. Links to videos and personal websites
Education	Place of study or name of school
Photos of your pets	Photos of people
Gift cards, vouchers or lightweight gifts	Food (such as chocolates), fragile or heavy items
Separate wrapping paper	Pre-wrapped gifts (as we will need to unwrap them)

Your valued sponsorship is a great gift in itself and further gifts are not required or expected. If you would like to send a gift, we ask you to limit your gift to \$100, as some students have siblings who may not receive gifts from their sponsor.

# Sending your correspondence

All correspondence between students and sponsors is checked by us before we forward it on. If you choose to send correspondence to your student, you can send it in the following ways:

## Mail

Send your correspondence and gifts to:

**Learning for Life student correspondence**  
**The Smith Family**  
**GPO Box 10500**  
**Sydney NSW 2001**

Attn: Your student's first name, your student's ID and your Smith Family ID.

Due to recent reductions in postal services, mail is taking longer to deliver. We recommend writing to your student by email or through our online portal *My Smith Family* (below) where possible.

## Email

You can email your correspondence to **sponsorship@thesmithfamily.com.au** and we will print and send it on to your student. Please include your Smith Family ID and your student's name and student ID in the email.

## Online

You can use our online portal *My Smith Family*. Simply create your own account at **www.thesmithfamily.com.au/register**

Our team of dedicated volunteers ensure all correspondence between students and sponsors is checked for privacy and child protection purposes. Please keep in mind that the entire process can take up to six weeks.



**For more information please visit [thesmithfamily.com.au/correspondence](https://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/correspondence)**

## Hearing from your student

While our students and their families appreciate hearing from you, please remember that due to a range of extenuating circumstances, they may not always be able to respond. Some students may feel embarrassed about their circumstances or inadequate writing skills, they may not know how to respond appropriately or may have a disability. Parents may also struggle to communicate with you as they may be juggling many demands such as working multiple jobs to make ends meet or caring for an ill or disabled family member. Some students, particularly younger students, may not fully understand the concept of sponsorship.

Parents often want to protect their children from the worry of financial stress and in some cases students don't fully become aware of having a sponsor until their senior years of schooling. Please don't take this as a lack of appreciation on their part. We know that hearing from their sponsor can be very encouraging for our students.





Learning for Life student, Declan

## Sponsorship helped Declan find joy in the pages

**At age 10, Declan would tell anyone who'd listen he hoped to be a policeman one day. But Declan's mum Cassandra felt worried about his reading problems and low confidence. Both could block him from his dream.**

When Declan received sponsorship through our *Learning for Life* program, Cassandra was impressed by the range of extracurricular activities he could join to help him catch up and keep up. "I thought the programs were excellent," she says.

Declan joined *student2student*, our out-of school reading peer support program and was paired up with his buddy Matteo. Matteo would call Declan twice a week to chat, listen to him read and help him sound out hard words.

"Suddenly, Declan was falling in love with reading," says Cassandra. In the two years since, Declan has moved up six reading levels at school and, remarkably, will read anything and everything!

Cassandra loves that she can connect anytime with Declan's *Learning for Life* Coordinator Sarah to help him access our learning support programs. **"Our lives have changed dramatically since**

**Declan got sponsored. We feel so supported and Declan can do much more than before" says Cassandra.**

"It is so great that my sponsor helps me be able to do school sport and have a uniform like every other kid," Declan says.

As a sponsor, this is how you disrupt disadvantage, helping your student take small but crucial steps to achieve their long-term aspirations. "Thanks to his sponsorship, he has self-pride in wearing his uniform," Declan's *Learning for Life* Coordinator Sarah says. "Having access to these programs – all of those things combined has really changed his outlook as a young student."

"I've wanted to become a policeman since I was a little boy, and that's still my dream," says Declan. "My mum and teacher are so proud of me for how far I've come."





Learning for Life  
student, Kaytlyn

## Kaytlyn's boost to reach big goals

Growing up on the north-west coast of Tasmania, Kaytlyn dreamt of one day going to university. However, instability at home and living in a small, remote community made her goals feel out of reach.

Kaytlyn joined our *Learning for Life* program in high school. "I always had the vision that I would go to university, but there were a lot of unknowns," Kaytlyn, 21, says. "I didn't know how I was going to get there because of my family's financial situation at the time. There were never any real conversations about how university would be funded, or where I was heading.

"I was lucky to connect with The Smith Family and that was where things kicked off. The Smith Family was there to help me in the transition and have that confidence and security to move away.

**"I still feel grateful that someone would donate their own, hard-earned money to a child in need. It's these people who don't even want the thanks or the accolade of helping. They're just there to help you."**

Kaytlyn reached her dream of going to university, moving to Melbourne to study a Bachelor of

Science. "Natalie, my *Learning for Life* Coordinator, was super helpful. I was able to call her and talk, and she always kept in touch with me. "So, it's not just that financial confidence and stability that's provided, but sponsorship also gave me that one-on-one mentorship, or mental support."

Empowered by her sponsorship, Kaytlyn has become an inspiring young leader. Her leadership and passion were recognised when she had the honour of being named Young Australian of The Year for Tasmania.

Kaytlyn always had the drive to conquer her situation, but the financial and personal support provided by her sponsor smoothed her path.

**Sometimes sponsorship is the boost a young person needs to know their potential – and to know they can go for it.**

# Frequently asked questions

## Q: How are students identified for sponsorship?

A: Usually, students are referred to a Smith Family *Learning for Life* Coordinator through their school. Our *Learning for Life* Coordinators are based in the disadvantaged communities in which we work, which helps us more actively identify and respond to students in need in that area. Our students families must possess a Health Care Card or Pension Concession Card to be eligible for support. Students must also demonstrate a commitment to education (e.g. by attending school regularly).

## Q: How does The Smith Family know that the financial support is used appropriately by the family?

A: The partnership requires families to keep receipts of educational expenses and be able to show these as requested, as well as return partnership paperwork (e.g. student profiles and student attendance reports).

## Q: What is the difference between shared sponsorship and full sponsorship?

A: You have chosen to be the sole sponsor of a child by taking up the full cost of their sponsorship at \$110/month (for a student in Kindergarten to Year 10). Some sponsors choose a shared sponsorship. This is where two sponsors contributions are combined to sponsor one child. If at any point you would prefer to change to a shared sponsorship, please contact our Supporter Care Team.

## Q: Does the cost of sponsorship increase as my student gets older?

A: As students advance to senior school (Year 11 and 12) and tertiary studies, the cost of their educational essentials do increase. That's why our tiered sponsorship model reflects the greater needs of higher education. We will contact you in advance when there are any changes to your student's educational level.

## Q: Will there be any other changes to the cost of sponsorship?

A: Every two to four years, we review the cost of sponsorship to ensure it is keeping up with the rising costs of living and education. Our last price increase took place in July 2022. We will give you at least two months notice before any price increases of this nature takes place.

## Q: What are the different sponsorship levels?

School Level	Sponsorship Option	Monthly Payment
School student (K – Year 10)	Shared sponsorship	\$55
	Full sponsorship	\$110
Senior school student (Year 11 – 12)	Shared sponsorship	\$78
	Full sponsorship	\$156
Tertiary school student	Shared sponsorship	\$110
	Full sponsorship	\$220



## Q: When will I receive a receipt?

A: You will receive a consolidated receipt for all of your sponsorship payments after the end of the financial year, unless you pay annually in which case you will be receipted immediately.



### **Q: What information do I receive about my sponsored child?**

**A:** We ask all students to personally complete a student profile each year, which we will send to you in the mail. It gives your student the opportunity to share their hobbies and interests with you, as well as their age and the subjects they are studying. Younger children can include a drawing for you. You will receive this in the last half of each year.

### **Q: Can I send gifts to my sponsored student?**

**A:** You are welcome to send gifts to your student in the way of gift cards. Being able to shop for themselves can be exciting for students. As some students have siblings whose sponsors might not send them gifts, we also ask you to please limit the gift card amount to no more than \$100. Please refrain from sending any food items such as chocolates and biscuits as we cannot send this on to your sponsored student.

### **Q: Why can't I share photos of/with my student?**

**A:** The Smith Family is a child safe organisation, the protection of the children and families we support is a very important priority for us. This includes protecting their identity as well as yours. We comply with the law in each state and territory and comply with the National Principles for child safe organisations to ensure we always act to protect children. For more information on our commitment to Child Protection visit our website at [thesmithfamily.com.au/child-protection](https://thesmithfamily.com.au/child-protection)

### **Q: Why do students leave the program? What happens if my student does?**

**A:** Students may voluntarily leave our sponsorship program because they complete their studies or decide to pursue other opportunities such as entering the workforce. Or their circumstances may change and they no longer require our support. Occasionally, a family does not honour the agreed terms of their partnership with us. In these cases, we work with the family to get the partnership back on track, but at times this may result in a family leaving the sponsorship program.

If your student leaves the program, we will transfer your support to another student in need of help. If this happens, we will notify you as soon as possible. You remain in control of your sponsorship; you can change, pause or cancel at any time.

### **Q: How can I find out about volunteering opportunities?**

**A:** A list of current volunteering opportunities around Australia can be found on our website [thesmithfamily.com.au/volunteer](https://thesmithfamily.com.au/volunteer)

#### **Have another question?**

**Contact us via our website, email or phone number on the back of this booklet.**



The Smith Family is a child safe organisation, committed to always acting in the best interests of children, providing safe environments and acting to protect them and other vulnerable people from abuse and neglect. For more information, visit our website at [thesmithfamily.com.au/child-protection](https://thesmithfamily.com.au/child-protection)



# Hear from our students and families

We hope you enjoy reading these messages from some of our *Learning for Life* students and their parents.

"Learning Club helps with my homework if I don't understand and makes me able to hand in my task in time because the tutors help me." **Alexis, Year 6**

"Having someone believe in me so much as to support my studies has inspired me to work hard and dedicate myself to my goals." **Hannah, Year 11**

"If someone had told me a new school uniform and shoes plus a few new pens, pencils or a hat could have turned a child around, I would have laughed. But there can be no other explanation for my daughter's turnaround this year. She has gone from hating school and being in strife to being one of the best behaved, from near bottom of the class to being able to help other children within the class. This I attribute to you. My thanks go out to you and all those like you." **Utimalie, mother to sponsored student Calvin**

"The best part of *student2student* was learning difficult and massive words like navigation and photosynthesis." **Bethany, Year 5**

"I would like to thank my sponsor for their help, it is very hard for my mum because she has had to raise me and my siblings on her own. And the money helps with my senior uniform, and a good pair of shoes that will last me for year 11 and 12." **Isabella, Year 11**

"I would say two things to sponsors and supporters of The Smith Family. Firstly, you're giving children the belief in themselves through investing in them. Secondly, you're not just helping the child you sponsor, you're not even just helping their immediate family, you're helping a whole generation." **Rhiannon, University student**

