



THE GIRLS & BOYS
BRIGADE

Stories from the GBB

AUTUMN EDITION 2023

You are helping us build a brighter future



GBB 1957



GBB 2023

Did you know The Girls & Boys Brigade building is over 100 years old? Throughout its long history, we've had to do a few repairs here and there, but it still needed some extra love. Thankfully, in 2022, we received funding to give it the renovations it deserved.

During this time, our building became a construction zone, and we faced the challenge of having to relocate our programs to a temporary location. It wasn't easy, but it was worth it! Because of your kindness and compassion, we were able to continue our programs without interruption and emerge stronger than ever.

I'm really excited to finally share some of the updated program rooms with you, our caring supporters! I hope you'll share my excitement over our building being made safer, more functional, and fully accessible for the first time. Every corner radiates warmth and possibility, offering an environment where children can grow, learn, and dream.

I hope you know just how grateful we are for your ongoing support. Through all the ups and downs, your unwavering dedication has been a beacon of hope for us and the families we help. Our building is certainly a wonderful part of what we do, but our generous supporters are the foundation on which we build a brighter future. Thank you so much.

Stefan Lamour-Jansson
Executive Officer



New adventures await Year 6 students in the youth room

Year 6 comes with new territory at The Girls & Boys Brigade – literally! After many years of the youth room being off-limits to them, they finally get to go inside and hang out with the big kids.

The youth room offers more freedom, as well as more responsibility. For children who are used to following a specific routine during after school care, this can be a big adjustment. Year 6 students start out with just one day per week in the youth room, then two, and so on. It helps prepare them to enter high school the following year.

Our Year 6 cohort has been so excited about their newfound freedom, and their days in the youth room have quickly become their favourite days at the centre.

Kat* and Bee* have been especially excited. It was nervewracking at first, but the slow transition has helped them build confidence over time. They live down the street from each other, but are planning to attend separate high schools next year. Attending the youth program means that they will still have opportunities to spend time together, which they are very happy about.

They both have been loving the activities on offer, including daily art projects, cooking and baking, and playing sports in the basement. Kat said they've even been able to try boxing, and both girls explained that it's been a great way to release their nerves and any other emotions they have about school, friends, or family challenges.

“I was kind of worried about what the high school kids would think, but they’ve all been really nice. I’m already making friends from my new school, and I haven’t even started yet.”

Being able to provide age-appropriate support for children aged 5 to 18 is one of the things that makes The Girls & Boys Brigade so special, and it's generous people like you who make it possible. Thank you so much for the valuable support that you give to our Year 6s, and children of all ages!

*While the stories in this newsletter are true, names and identifying details of children have been altered to protect their privacy. Kat and Bee were given the opportunity to choose their own names for this story. We love their originality!

One volunteer's storybook success

Judy is helping kids develop a love of learning, and so are you

The Girls & Boys Brigade is supported by countless dedicated individuals who give generously of their time and resources. Among them, there is one supporter whose unwavering commitment shines brightly – Judy.

Judy has been volunteering in the homework room for several years. She looks forward to seeing the children each week, and they love seeing her, too! As a retired lawyer, Judy is passionate about the value of a good education.

Judy recalls one child who was full of personality, but she struggled with reading and was defiant about trying. This led to difficulty in maths and other subjects, because she couldn't understand the questions being asked.

"We persisted, and she struggled for a few weeks, but then she turned the corner and was suddenly able to read," said Judy. "Her self-confidence absolutely blossomed, the change was so enormous – it was one of the most special things in my life, actually."

Of course, transformations like this one don't happen overnight. Judy discussed several factors that seem to really help the children

– things like structured routines, one-on-one attention, consistency of staff and volunteers, and importantly, engaging resources.

Understanding the profound impact of financial support on providing these resources and opportunities for the children, Judy is a regular giver to The Girls & Boys Brigade. Her monthly donation supports children and their families in and out of the Homework Program, helping them in the ways most needed.

"The single best thing is that the children don't have to be there, they want to be there. It gives them a sense of accomplishment."

"I can see the difference in the children's achievement by the new resources that have been supplied," said Judy, noting the new range of graded readers available. She likes to encourage the children to read higher levels by explaining that the stories become more interesting –

and she's right. "I'm hopeful and confident that the children can develop a love of learning."

Like Judy, you are making a huge difference to the families we support. Thank you so much!



GBB Homework Room



The enduring delight of the GBB's historic hideaway

The Girls & Boys Brigade building has provided a home away from home for many children through its long history. Ask any of them what they remember, and they are likely to say something about the basement. It has been the site of countless dodgeball tournaments, obstacle courses, and incursions - everything from skateboarding to Bollywood dancing. To this day, it remains one of the most beloved spaces by the children. Here are a few reasons why:

"I love being pushed on the swings. I always ask to go up to the moon. Once I almost touched the roof!"



"I really like playing on the climbing equipment, the monkey bars, and the spinny thing - what's the spinny thing called again?"



"I love to skip rope with my friends. We take turns playing teddy bear, which is a rhyme you say while turning the rope. The person skipping has to do the actions in the rhyme, like touching the ground and turning around."



"During school holidays, we got to do yoga and mindfulness in the basement. I liked the part when we went to sleep at the end."



"I love climbing to the top of the ladder. I can see everything - it feels like I'm flying!"

Follow us on social media to see how your support is making a difference!

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