



THE GIRLS & BOYS  
BRIGADE

# Stories from the GBB

SPRING EDITION 2023



## You are helping us build a brighter future

Throughout this term, I have been reminded time and again about the importance of community. All that we do is made possible by generous people like you, and I am so grateful.

Recently, we were able to gather with some of you at our 10th Annual Golf Day Fundraiser. It was a delight to see so many old friends come together for a great game of golf, in support of a worthy cause. We were fortunate to hear from one of the parents from The Girls & Boys Brigade, who talked about the support that he has received along his journey as a single dad. He discussed how he works multiple jobs to support his family, but can take comfort in knowing that his daughter is picked up after school, fed, nurtured, and supported by the GBB. She gets daily help with her homework, and gets to take part in fun activities after school and during school holidays. I'm pleased to share



that the event exceeded our target, raising over \$160,000 to support many families just like theirs.

I'm excited to share this newsletter with you. It shares some delightful stories related to the GBB bus. I think you'll really love reading about James, who attended the GBB over 20 years ago. On the final page, you can check out some of the pieces from the youth art competition. Activities like this help young people reach their full potential, and they are made possible by generous supporters like you. Thank you so much!

Stefan Lamour-Jansson  
Executive Officer

# On the road to empowerment

Your support fuels adventures that kids will never forget

At our Golf Day in 2022, we raised funds for a very exciting project, the first ever GBB Bus! Thanks to the amazingly generous supporters in attendance, as well as a successful grant, this project has been brought to life. Earlier this year, we were able to purchase a Toyota Coaster 22 seater bus!

The bus has transformed the way we are able to support the children, youth, and families at the GBB. It has opened many new possibilities of how we can help those in need. Most of all, it has helped us transport young people to excursions and weekend camps — activities made possible all because of you! Here are a few of our favourite adventures that have been made possible with the GBB bus.

Pedal Boating  
in Lane Cove  
National Park



Youth Camp to the  
Blue Mountains



Youth Week Excursion  
at Woolloomooloo



Bushlands Shelter  
Challenge at  
Centennial Parlands



Steel Park in  
Marrickville

# An impact that lasts for decades

## 20 years after attending the GBB, James is giving back

As a child, James Tran saw The Girls & Boys Brigade as a fun place to go after school. Now an adult, James understands there is much more to it – and he's giving back.

James attended The Girls & Boys Brigade with his sister in the early 1990s. At the time, Surry Hills was a rough area. James recalls walking to school and seeing needles on the street.

"Back when I grew up, it was one of the places in Sydney that you just don't go to," said James.

Still, it was the site of the once-booming rag trade, and many migrants found work there over the years.

James' parents were among them. When they came to Australia as refugees during the Vietnam War, they had no money, no English, and next to no education. Working as garment sewers allowed them to provide for their young family, and The Girls & Boys Brigade helped look after their children while they were at work.

"I just knew it was fun, something that mum and dad let us do," said James. He recalls there being a go-kart track in the basement, where he would race against his schoolmates. "It's those little extra things – like having a go-kart. We never had the space to have one at home, and mum and dad didn't have the money to buy one. We were doing it tough."

James now has two sons and a daughter of his own, which has provided him with a new perspective about his time at The Girls & Boys Brigade. "As a child, you see it as play time. And as an adult, you see it as a program to try to help kids grow up to be the best possible person you can be," said James. James currently works as the

owner and director of Trixie Branding Group, which provides business signage and other promotional products. Following a recommendation, The Girls & Boys Brigade inquired with Trixie about a bus wrap, and were shocked when James explained that he attended The Brigade as a child. James generously provided our beautiful bus wrapping free of charge.

**"Looking back, it's been immensely beneficial. The time we spent at The Girls & Boys Brigade allowed mum and dad to work, and it allowed us to make memories."**

"I don't think about it as giving something for free, this is something that I was able to give back," said James. "I was happy to do it."

James recently visited The Girls & Boys

Brigade with his three children. Following the tour, he was presented with a special artwork of The Girls & Boys Brigade building. "It's beautiful, it's hanging in my office at work," said James. "It's a nice reminder."

Thanks to our wonderful supporters, The Girls & Boys Brigade continues to be a beacon of hope for families in the Surry Hills area.



James + his children at the GBB





## You help young people reach their full potential

There is a lot of artistic talent among the youth at The Girls & Boys Brigade, but we could not have expected the amazing results of a recent art competition held during school holidays.

All participants were given a sheet of A3 paper, and were allowed to use any of the supplies in the craft cupboard to create a competition-ready artwork. The winning artist would receive a \$30 voucher, as well as prime placement of their art in the Youth Room at The GBB.

GBB Youth Coordinator Mr. Bill helped everyone get in the zone. It didn't take long for their creations to begin taking shape.

"I had my phone set up with music to get them in the groove, and I was taking song requests from the youth," said Bill. "I always participate as well, sometimes I'll do a little example to help inspire the youth. And I'm always there if they need any tips or pointers."

Each of the youth had different ideas about what to base their art on. One chose to draw their family dog, and one did a perspective drawing with different buildings in Surry Hills.

Another found a photo online of a building in Seville in Spain, which she drew in impressive detail.

"Everyone was very unique in their approach, which was good. It was nice that they all used different mediums. They all expressed themselves in a different way," said Bill. Paint, crayons, and pencils were just some of the supplies used by the youth.

Art activities like this one are great for so many reasons. Not only do they encourage young people to develop their talents, but they also encourage self-expression, connection, and mindfulness.

While the competition is meant to have finished, some of the youth have continued to work on their projects. Choosing a winner will be challenging, as many of the youth put a lot of time and effort into creating some seriously amazing works of art.

Your support of The Girls & Boys Brigade provides young people with valuable opportunities to develop their talents.

**"It lets them get creative, and it gets them away from their tech as well. They were really in the moment, just drawing away, listening to music, enjoying the process."**

Art activities like this one are great for so many reasons. Not only