

eNEWS

June 2015

HANDSON LEARNING 

WELCOME



THANK YOU

Hands On Learning Australia (HOLA) would not have been anywhere near as successful without the vision of our supporters. To our philanthropic partners, local businesses, and community organisations thank you for your invaluable support, to school leadership thank you for your commitment to our partnership, and to the dedicated Hands On Learning (HOL) artisan-teachers and volunteers that support HOL students day in day out, you are the heart and hands of HOL - thank you, from HOLA's shared leadership team.

Cameron Wiseman, Lisa Vagg, Richard O'Donovan

GROWING EVIDENCE OF NEED

More than 10 per cent of Year 8 boys were suspended last year according to a new report by the Victorian Auditor-General highlighted by Henrietta Cook in *The Age* in March. The Auditor-General found absenteeism and suspensions increase significantly following the transition to secondary school. And the numbers are particularly grim for boys, indigenous students, those with disabilities or from low socio-economic backgrounds. There are now five primary schools piloting HOL as a means of easing the transition to secondary school for some of their most vulnerable students and we will be urging the Department of Education and Training to keep a close eye on the outcomes.

MORE NEW SCHOOLS

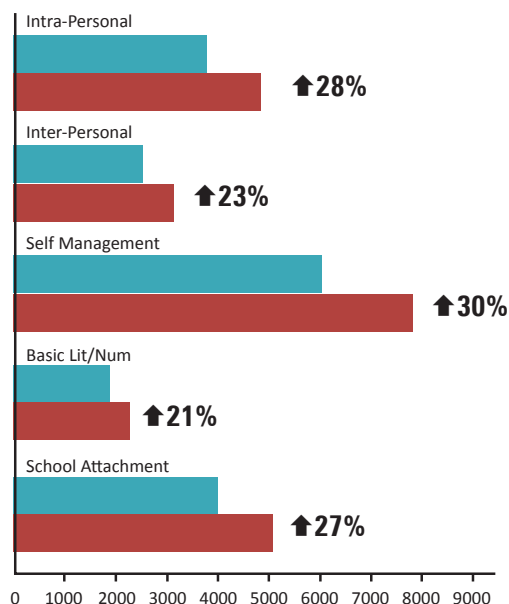
We have had a great start to 2015 with eight additional schools starting Hands On Learning, another eight schools on the horizon for a Semester 2 start. In 2015 we have already welcomed:

Boneo Primary
Brookside P-9 College
Copperfield College
Croxtton Special School
Dromana Primary School
Horsham Special School
Jackson Special School
Warracknabeal Secondary College

*Ongoing professional
development is key
to the success and
sustainability of HOL*

We are at the forefront in Australia of collecting quantitative data on the development of social and emotional skills in young people, measuring the impact of HOL on participating students at the beginning and end of each year.

2014 Pre-/Post Baseline Data for HOL Students at 26 Victorian Schools
aggregated item scores (N=538)



PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS GETTING HANDS ON

In a pilot of a new approach to teacher education, 12 Monash students have taken up placements in Hands On Learning teams at Noble Park Primary School, McClelland Secondary College and Fitzroy High School. A real promise to the future!

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SKILLS

In our experience, the impact of HOL demonstrates how spot on the new landmark report is from the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) entitled *The Power of Social and Emotional Skills*.

HOL Founder Russell Kerr highlighted this quote from the report at a meeting of artisan-teachers recently and the way it reads like a description of the outcomes of HOL, "Children need a balanced set of cognitive, social and

emotional capabilities to adapt to today's demanding, changing and unpredictable world... In particular, social and emotional skills matter for facing the unexpected, coping with multiple demands, controlling impulses

and working effectively with others." The story of Matt at Newcomb Secondary College of p.11 is a great example of the way HOL students develop invaluable social and emotional skills for school and life.

TOWARDS A WORLD FIRST EVALUATION TOOL

Four of the keystone organisations involved in the three year Australian Research Council funded *Building Futures for Young People* project have teamed up to take the next big step in pushing the boundaries of how organisations working with young people can best evaluate and track their impact. Hands On Learning Australia, Beacon Foundation, SEAAC, and the Dusseldorp Forum are investing heavily in developing a world first tool that will leverage the Connections, Capacities, and Meanings (CCM) framework as a meaningful way to measure what they do.

The four organisations are looking to design and develop an online platform that will make it possible for the organisations to collect data relevant to their work with young people. Importantly, because the data will be mapped against the CCM framework, it will be possible to start measuring the combined impact all of the organisations are having. More information about the framework can be found at enablingspaces.org.au.



OUR POLITICIANS ENGAGING

It would be safe to presume both Federal and State education ministers are fully aware of the impact of Hands On Learning following personal visits to HOL schools during the last six months by both Federal Education Minister Christopher Pyne (pictured with Senator John Madigan) and Victorian Education Minister James Merlino. And our engagement with the political world doesn't stop there. Follow these

links to news stories about additional visits to HOL schools by Senator John Madigan who relishes the opportunity to highlight the power of Hands On Learning and support HOL teams with donations of tools.

<http://www.northernbaycollege.vic.edu.au/news/hands-on-learning>.

<http://handsonlearning.org.au/?p=2640>





SCHOOLS ATTRACTING SUPPORT FOR HOL

"When you are on to a good thing back it," might as well be the motto of a growing band of individuals, community and business groups who support Hands On Learning at schools across the State.



PROTECTING FITZROY HIGH'S ICONIC HUT A helping hand from local business

It would be hard to find a more appropriate 'hut' for Fitzroy High School -our new inner city school running Hands On Learning - than the beautiful W class tram donated last year by Yarra Trams and Public Transport Victoria. Students have worked tirelessly,

building new friendships and skills as they transformed this icon into the home for HOL at their school. Their achievements have helped change their attitude to both school and life. They are now working with a local artist on a bright and vibrant decorative art

project for the tram. The Nelson Alexander Charitable Foundation has stepped in with a \$1,000 donation, "because we believe in supporting students to thrive in their educational environment and we are active and passionate about delivering meaningful

responses to the needs of worthwhile causes such as the Hands On Learning program," according to Nelson Alexander's Kerry Donchi.



CARPE DIEM

Local electrician grabs every opportunity to support HOL

Mornington Peninsula electrician Tim Browne is one enterprising young guy grabbing every opportunity to support local HOL teams.

This year Tim has given his time and sourced donations to help the Mount Eliza and Somerville HOL students. Now he wants to expand the help across more schools, inviting HOL teams to devise an electrical materials wish list and he will do his best to help source support.

"There's a lot of waste from business that could be used by Hands On Learning teams. Middy's electrical wholesalers have been fantastic and I'm sure there's more support out there," Tim says.

At Mount Eliza Tim worked closely with HOL artisan-teacher Loren Fleming (herself a former electrician) and even had the kids helping him rough in new wiring for light fittings, and at Somerville he sourced light fittings, powerpoints and safety switches.

"I wanted to get involved because my own youth was challenging. All it takes is a small thing to bring your morale back up. Someone to lend an ear and make you feel worthwhile, and turn your thought processes around about your own worth."

"It is frustrating that government doesn't realise that if these kids don't get this time and boost to their morale there's a much higher chance of them losing their way in life," he added.



THE POWER OF A GOOD SUPPER

Local ladies raise \$4000

Benalla's Uniting Church Evening Fellowship is a determined group of ladies with one main thing in common – generous natures. This vibrant group raises funds for charities and organisations both locally and internationally. They donate all profits from their efforts baking goods and catering for local funerals. They have already raised \$4000 for HOL Benalla College.



FUNDING FOR WHITTLESEA

Salvation Army Crossroads helps establish the home for HOL

Whittlesea Secondary College's Hands On Learning team can now connect electricity to their hut, build a pavilion for wet weather, construct a pizza oven and roof the building thanks to a \$13,000 grant from the Victorian Bushfire Appeal administered by Salvation Army Crossroads. "The Salvation Army supports young people finding meaningful ways to educate themselves. Schools are such important community hubs and we love the way the Hands On Learning program brings together community agencies, schools and the local council to deliver an innovative program on site as part of the school curriculum," Nik Filips, Youth Support and Development Program Manager said.



IMPROVING OUR WORLD

Not many of us feel we have the power to change the world, but we do have the means to improve small parts of it little by little. Jeff Fisher spent six years lending a hand one day every week as a volunteer in the Hands On Learning at St. Francis Xavier College Berwick.

There are many kids who respond well to guidance by example and side-by-side mentoring. These opportunities are not available to many kids these days and I believe that the mentoring that is possible through HOL contributes enormously to the self-esteem and growth of these kids.

The HOL day is a special time for the students and is a strong anchoring experience for their character - a good deal of their experiences in HOL "stick" - and to those of us who have spent a lifetime gathering a variety of skills, passing them on is incredibly rewarding. You really sense you are making a big difference on so many levels, even if it is only a few people at a time. But HOL gives us older folk an opportunity to make a difference, a positive contribution to these kids' character, and helping them build useful and strongly portable skills that also influence other aspects of their lives at school and home.

I found myself responding to the need in HOL - being available to these kids is satisfying and somehow in our DNA, being able to reach back in later life and try to help these younger captains steady their ships. I believed at times that we "untrained" and unsophisticated figures have a different impact to classroom teachers, and that the kids value that. We are appreciated.

Working with the HOL artisan-teachers who had similar values and attitudes to my own has been immensely enjoyable. I always looked forward to the wonderful midday meal the kids had prepared, and I especially enjoyed the reflection time at the end of the day, and seeing over the course of a year how the kids themselves grew into their new "skins" in a comfortable and easy way. It was always a privilege to be involved and has always been both rewarding and satisfying.

Thank you and good luck HOL.

Jeff Fisher





GIVING BACK

Making valuable contributions to the community, building self-esteem and connection is one of the fundamental elements of Hands On Learning. In this issue we celebrate just some of the ways HOL teams have been giving back this year.



BENALLA P-12 COLLEGE

The Cemeteries and Crematoria Association of Victoria delivered Lone Pine trees throughout Victoria to commemorate 100 years since the ANZAC landing at Gallipoli. One of the trees was planted at Benalla Cemetery by Benalla P-12 College's HOL after the students completely remodelled the memorial gardens to commemorate the 100 year anniversary of the Gallipoli Landing during the month leading up to the ANZAC day.



McCLELLAND COLLEGE, FRANKSTON

Students from schools across Frankston tied their messages of hope to the Positivity Tree created by the Hands On Learning team at McClelland College as part of Frankston Youth Central's anti-bullying campaign.



KURNAI COLLEGE, MORWELL

HOL student Sam Tormey was ill with cancer, so his fellow HOL students rallied help from the local community, businesses and staff to complete a backyard blitz at his house to create a place of peace and rest. Sam passed away recently and our thoughts go out to his family and friends.



HORSHAM COLLEGE

HOL spent much of the last term building an enormous cubby house for Laharum Primary School. It was pre-fabricated in the College's HOL shed and assembled onsite at Laharum.



RAINBOW P-12 COLLEGE

HOL students made the front page of the local paper when they teamed up with members of the Rainbow town committee to lay lawn in the final stage of the revamp of the Federal Street gardens in Rainbow in April.

LOVING WHAT THEY DO



HOL's first brother and sister team Jenni Downer and
Brenton Hurley of Murtoa College

Jenni Downer is passionate about her role as a Hands On Learning artisan-teacher. "I go home feeling like I have achieved something for the day," she reports. "You might have one kid with lots going on and you are able to concentrate on them – just listen and offer an ear, that's all they want sometimes." For her brother Brenton, the other half of the artisan-teacher team at Murtoa College in western Victoria, it's simply ensuring the kids have a positive experience and seeing them leave with a smile, that makes his day.

Jenni is a great champion of the value of working in a team and communicating respectfully. Brenton is a carpenter by trade but loves the opportunity to work with young people in a school. Both talk of the quality of the relationships that they are able to build with the kids in HOL that makes the difference. It might be Year 10 student Corina who has now gone back to the classroom five days, after two years in HOL with heaps more confidence and a fresh sense of her future. Or the Year 8 boy who was cranky, angry, with a bad temper before and now you can talk to him. Or just that these kids are at school at all. Some only turn up to school on their Hands On Learning day.





TRANSFORMING LEARNING

BROOKSIDE COLLEGE, CAROLINE SPRINGS



It might only be three months old, but HOL at Brookside College is already transforming learning for students.

"It helps kids that are hands on cope with school," according to Year 9 student Braden. "I learn more math in HOL than I do in class, it makes more sense to me because I'm a hands on learner."

Brookside College received a Federal Government grant to build a memorial at the school to honour the 100 years of the ANZACs earlier this year. The school decided it was a great opportunity for the HOL team to take the lead and learn and discuss the history of the ANZACs in the process.

The memorial is on track to be completed by the end of Term 2 with students hitting the ground running - applying what they are learning in mathematics about perimeter, area, and volume to a real life project. They have already prepared the site, designed and measured the area, ordered the materials and equipment they will need and worked within a budget.

"There are many success stories amongst the group considering the short time we have had HOL. Increased connectedness to school, feeling they belong somewhere, achieving success for the first time, taking pride in their

work, and huge decreases in behaviour related issues," according to HOL artisan-teacher Michael Heyne.

"Braden is one great example. He is a very shy student who doesn't talk much but is now taking the lead, using his natural organisation talents and mentoring the younger students".

Who knows what is next?

When im working I always make sure everythings right and im always giving a helping hand to who ever needs it. At the end of the day we always have completed our job for the day with no problems and no mistakes. We learn something new and everyday in HOL its also lots of fun.



ON A BETTER TRACK

Newcomb Secondary College Year 10 HOL student Matt Nicholls has just been selected as his school's nominee to walk the Kokoda Track an event being organised by Victoria Police in Geelong. And if you had told Matt in Year 8 he would be on this track, "I probably wouldn't have believed it," is his response.

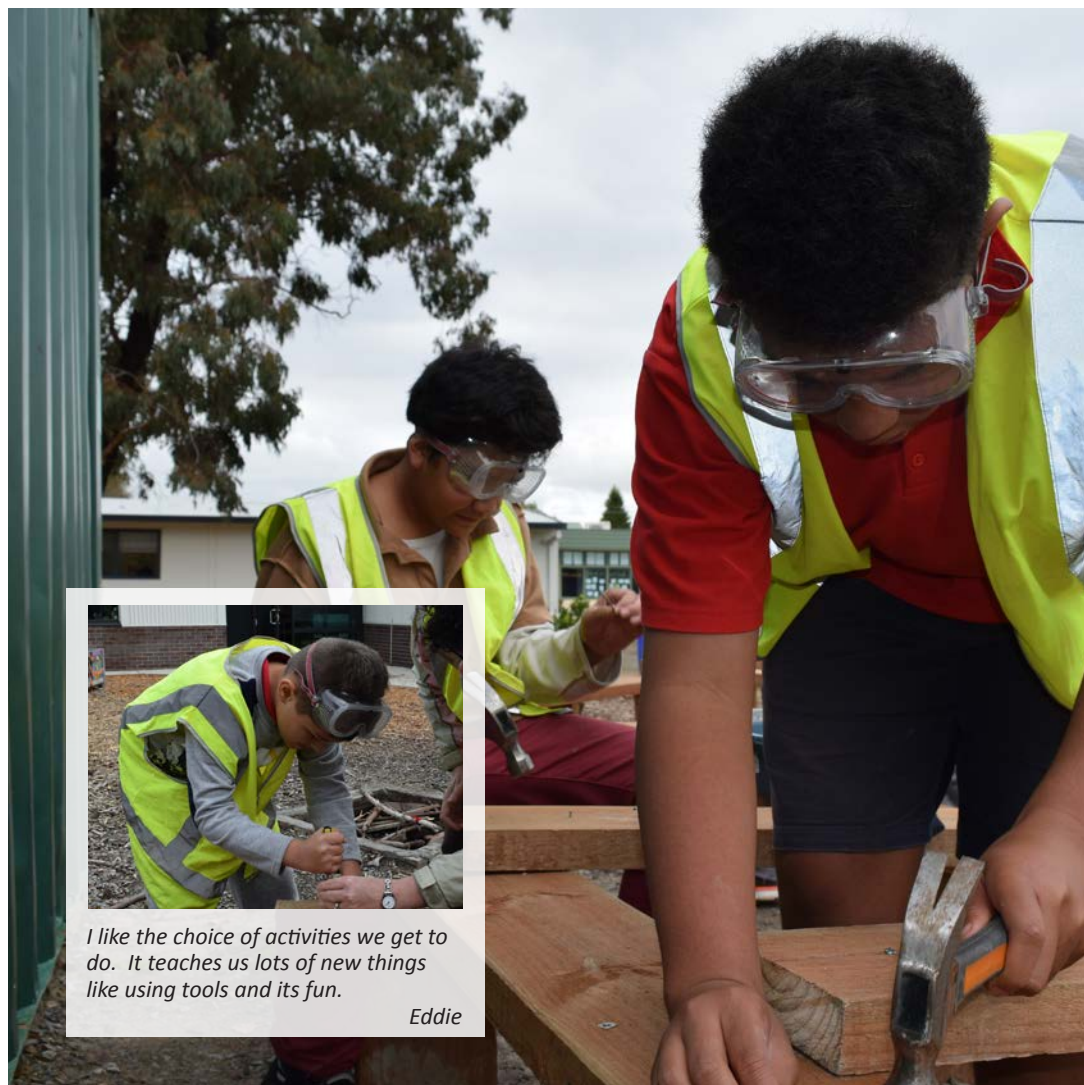
By his own admission, Matt used to be a bit of a trouble maker. "In Year 8 I was always arguing with teachers and got suspended a few times. I used to really hate going to school and doing all the school work."

Matt started HOL in Year 8 and believes he has learnt heaps – particularly from older kids about teamwork and putting in and how you should act, talk to people and be respectful. "It's not like being in the classroom. We have done heaps of projects around the school and you learn how to work in a team, you can help others learn new skills and you become aware why school matters and how many career options there are outside school. Not everyone is going to be a doctor or a lawyer and I realised how many things I could do. In HOL you actually get to work on something with your mates, make stuff, it's just awesome."



GETTING IN EARLY

There's a real camaraderie and sense of being part of the team amongst the students at Noble Park Primary School, where a modified version of HOL has been running since 2013, keeping vulnerable students connected to school as they transition to secondary.



I like the choice of activities we get to do. It teaches us lots of new things like using tools and its fun.

Eddie



I've been using tools for the first time. HOL helps me solve my problems. It helps me because usually I give up early, but in HOL the whole team encourages me not to give up early. I can do my work quicker and I don't give up, even in class.

Godios



I don't like HOL– I love it! It helps me with my learning. The measuring part is Maths and now I'm higher up in the Maths class. It's really good because you get to focus on one thing and see the real start and finish the job.

Lina

NONE OF THIS WOULD BE POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE SUPPORT WE HAVE HAD

Hands On Learning Australia's funding comes entirely from philanthropy. Founder Russell Kerr reflects on the impact of support and investment, and ten years on in the first of a new series, pays tribute to the long-term partnership we have had with Goldman Sachs Australia.

In 2004 I was encouraged by friends and supporters to apply for a significant grant to grow Hands On Learning. The AMP Youth Boost was offering financial support to programs that could provide a solution that would tackle the "root causes of student disengagement." Our initial application led to a presentation as one of the 10 finalists from a field of 335 to a panel including David Gonski Principal of Wentworth Associates, Dr Peter Shergold Secretary to Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, Mary Woolridge, CEO Foundation for Young Australians, Andrew Mohl CEO AMP, and Michael Trail CEO Social Ventures Australia (SVA).

Fortunately our effort was rewarded and we were chosen to be a recipient of this funding from AMP. This was the beginning of our association with SVA, leading in turn to our introduction to Goldman Sachs Australia.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF ONGOING SUPPORT

Goldman Sachs has remained with us on our journey since early 2005 providing vital financial support, enabling us to grow each year and develop our capacity to expand Hands On Learning into more schools meeting the needs of a growing number of students.

Beyond this direct financial support Goldman Sachs has played an important role in hosting numerous large events, providing facilities and leadership personnel for Board meetings. They have also created great opportunities for us to tell our story, and introductions to others

who have subsequently formed partnerships and become long term supporters and friends. Let alone the many corporate volunteer days when teams from Goldman Sachs have worked alongside HOL students providing a whole new perspective on life after school.

UNDERSTANDING OUR PURPOSE

Our relationship from those early days with Barb Hurley has always been characterised by a deep personal interest and respectful understanding of the work we are undertaking. This understanding of our purpose and our desire to provide environments in schools of trust and inclusion has provided a rock solid base for our long term relationship.

After 10 years of unflagging support we want to express our gratitude and thanks to our friends at Goldman Sachs for the faith they have placed in us each year, and for the vital financial support they have provided for the life changing work we are undertaking with some of the neediest young people in our most disadvantaged schools.

So Goldman Sachs we say thank you for your vision and long term partnership with HOL, understanding the importance of what we are about and encouraging others to do the same. Without your backing I seriously doubt we would have been able to sustain our growth and effectively deliver the support we do to an ever increasing number of disadvantaged young people.

Russell Kerr



Goldman Sachs Australia Foundation's Barb Hurley taking part in a corporate volunteer day with HOL