

Welcome to the latest update from Hands On Learning Australia

March 2011



COUNT US IN

Sale College's students have transformed the barren landscape surrounding the local Wilson Lodge Aged Care Facility by planting 500 native grasses, shrubs and trees with the help of Greening Australia.

'The students were really hands on and could instantly see the results of their labour - they were stoked,' Aged Care Project Co-ordinator Lisa Ross said.

And they were not the only ones. Residents delighted in watching students plant a garden all for them.

'The students developed such a sense of ownership that one boy returned voluntarily over the weekend to water all the new plants,' Ms Ross added.





MORNINGTON GRADUATE WINS PRIZED APPRENTICESHIP

Hands On Learning 2010 graduate **Michael Meany** of Mornington has secured a mechanical fitting apprenticeship with Silcar, part of Bluescope Steel's operations at Westernport Hastings.

Sixteen year old Michael was selected ahead of 700 other applicants and is the youngest apprentice in his field at Bluescope for 17 years.

'He could so much have gone the other way as heaps of his friends dropped out of school in year 8 and 9,' according to his mother Kim Day.



'Every kid should have the chance to find something that they enjoy so they can grow and realise that they are capable of achieving and start to look at what is possible in life,' she added.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Hands On Learning Australia is firmly focused on helping as many young people in need as we can. Last year we put the spotlight on student absenteeism and disengagement with media coverage highlighting how we work to improve educational outcomes for these young people.

In 2011 a small specialized team is working out of our head office to build strategic partnerships with schools, ensure quality service delivery and grow awareness. Our capacity to deliver ongoing weekly training, professional development and support for schools is critical to the growth and enhancement of Hands On Learning. Please do not hesitate to contact any of our team.



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A PRIORITY INVESTMENT

Hands On Learning is front and centre from the moment you arrive at **St. Francis Xavier College's** Berwick campus. The impressive main entrance features raised garden beds surrounded by block walls, designed and made by the students of Hands On Learning.



'Our students learn how to lay blocks, do levels, pour concrete and they walk past the fruits of their labour every day. They own it', according to Hands On Learning teacher Dick Stumbles.

Hands on Learning is a priority investment from College Principal Paul Desmond's perspective. *'We spent two years exploring the options but nothing else compares with HOL's success keeping kids at school,'* he said.



'We say to the students, give us four good days in the classroom, and we will give you one day on the tools. The payback comes in droves. These students are now achieving in the classroom. As their behaviour and engagement improves in class, their performance improves.' Mr Desmond added.

HANDS ON IS THE HOOK

Up in **Far North Queensland** maths is translated into real life as students learn how to measure out the concrete slab that will form the base of their new pizza oven.

'We have seen a phenomenal change in attendance - an immediate and real impact on the kids who weren't going to school. Not only does the program work to dramatically increase school attendance, but it also impacts positively on how these students perform in other school subjects.'

There are just too few effective programs in place for the kids who are falling through the cracks in the middle years.

Hands On Learning keeps them coming back and lets them break into their education,' **Gordonvale State High School** principal, **Kate MacDonald** said.



HELPING HAND

Wangaratta High School's HOL students helped out on a farm at Mudgegonga, about 20km south-east of Beechworth where the farmer lost all his fencing on Black Saturday.

The HOL team and teacher **Renea Duursma** relished the opportunity to lend a hand, pitch in and help construct two kilometres of new fencing.



GETTING THE JOB DONE



Kyle has come full circle. The current Year 10 Carrum Downs student graduates from Hands On at the end of Term One with significant improvement in his behaviour, 100% attendance rate, and a real understanding of what it takes to get the job done.

Kyle now plays a significant role as a mentor of younger students, leading by example and calmly ensuring they complete set tasks.

HOL artisan **Wayne Bollard** is thrilled with the way Kyle is modelling responsibility and taking his work seriously.

'Kyle realises he is entering the serious Years 10-12 of his schooling and that his ability to get on with and complete his work will be essential.'

ABOUT US

Hands on Learning Australia is a not-for-profit harm prevention charity helping secondary schools deliver a one-day a week in-school program for students most at risk of leaving school early.

Creative building projects that benefit the school and local community give disengaged students the belief, confidence, and opportunity to achieve something valued by others.

And it works. Attendance at Hands on Learning averages 98%, and 92% of students have moved into apprenticeships or further study.

Hands on Learning Australia operates today thanks to the generous support of philanthropic individuals and organisations.

HOL Snapshot March 2011

Schools: 19

Staff: 32

Students: 420