

More info on The Smith Family

- Wikis
 - Encyclopedia
 - The Smith Family history
 - The Smith Family today
 - Volunteering
 - Clothing donations
 - References
 - External links

Related links

Search:

- Map

Maps

Related topics

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- WIKIS
- QUIZ
- MAP
- SEARCH

The Smith Family: Wikis

Advertisements

Australian Recession 2016

- The Smith Family Quiz
- The Smith Family Map

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Encyclopedia

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For the American political family, see Smith (family).

The Smith Family is an Australian, independent non-profit organisation committed to unlocking opportunities for disadvantaged children and their families to participate more fully in society, using education as the key.

Together with caring Australians, The Smith Family has so far supported over 40,000 Australians, from toddlers to tertiary students, in 95 communities across Australia through its *Learning for Life* suite of interconnecting programs.



everyone's family

The *Learning for Life* suite of programs provide financially disadvantaged children with scholarships to assist with school expenses such as uniforms, books and excursions. In addition to these financial scholarships, *Learning for Life* also provides students with access to a critical network of support programs such as mentoring, tutoring and personal development (i.e. arts, music, sport programs). These programs have been designed to provide disadvantaged children and their families with support to assist their development of essential life skills, such as reading, financial and digital literacy, which will give them the tools they need to escape the ongoing cycle of financial disadvantage.

Contents

- The Smith Family history
- The Smith Family today
- Volunteering
- Clothing donations
- References
- External links

The Smith Family history

The Smith Family was founded in 1922 by five NSW Freemasons, who identified a need and responded accordingly. In many ways, this typifies The Smith Family today - an organisation that is enterprising and evidence based. Freemasons are still actively involved with The Smith Family in many senior management roles in addition to the many generous lodges who donate their time and funds annually.

Shortly before Christmas in 1922, the five freemasons, from western Sydney (Rupert Cropley, Benjamin Drummer, HB Carrington, JG Bannerman and LC Packer) were returning from a trip to the Blue Mountains. They debated whether everyone was enjoying the Christmas spirit but rather than go on their opinion only, they established that there was disadvantage and decided to do something about it.

They believed that all children should be able to join in at Christmas so they went to an orphanage where children were without the love of families surrounding them and gave them the joys of Christmas - toys and sweets. They were happy to do this anonymously and when the matron asked them their names so that the children could write a letter of thanks, one of the men replied:

More info on The Smith Family

Wikis

Encyclopedia

The Smith Family history

The Smith Family today

Volunteering

Clothing donations

References

External links

Related links

Quiz

Quiz

Map

Maps

Related topics

"Er .. Smith." "What about the others?" asked the matron. "They're Smiths too," replied the man "We're all Smiths. We're The Smith Family..."

And so The Smith Family came into existence.

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In 1933 when Pneumatic fever became a major health issue affecting children, The Smith Family set up a special hospital to care for them. Mt Arcadia operated in North Parramatta until 1958.

In 1960, The Smith Family, under the leadership of General Secretary George Forbes, founded VIEW Clubs Australia (*Voice, Interest and Education of Women*) to provide a support network for women to meet in friendship and to support the work of The Smith Family. Today, over 23,000 women are members of a VIEW Club in their local community.

The 1970s saw The Smith Family react to the needs of refugee families fleeing war in Vietnam and Timor and supporting the residents of Darwin recover from the devastation inflicted by Cyclone Tracey.

Throughout the 1970s and 80s The Smith Family was spending more than ever before on direct financial relief - in many cases to generations of the same family. In 1987, The Smith Family asked their emergency help clients what they believed needed to be done to put an end to intergenerational disadvantage. They replied "help us help our children to get an education."

In response, The Smith Family set up EDU-CATE for students in the junior secondary years. The program was designed to ensure kids didn't miss out at school just because of their family's financial situation.

During the 1990s the program was extended as *Learning for Life* which has so far supported 40,000 children and young people to make the most of their educational opportunities and break the cycle of disadvantage.

Throughout the past 85 years, The Smith Family has continued to review the needs of disadvantaged children and families and responded accordingly.

The Smith Family today

"The Smith Family" is an evidence based organisation and seeks to understand how we can unlock opportunities for disadvantaged Australians. Research enables the organisation to work with communities effectively to build their capacity to improve outcomes for children and young people and their families.

In working towards positive and sustainable long term change for disadvantaged Australian children and families, The Smith Family has identified five outcomes for each early life stage that best demonstrates its commitment to breaking the ongoing cycle of disadvantage. The Smith Family offers programs and initiatives that help achieve the following outcomes:

Early Years (0-5years)- All children are ready for school. The Smith Family strongly supports emergent and numeracy skill development and through various initiatives is working towards an outcome where all children are ready for school.

Primary School (6-12 years) - All children meet minimum literacy and numeracy standards. The Smith Family aims to ensure that all children, particularly those aged between 6 to 12 years of age, meet minimum literacy and numeracy standards by supporting their development in school years.

Middle School (12-16 years)- All young people stay engaged in education and learning. The Smith Family provides opportunities to help all young people stay engaged in education and learning.

Young Adults (16-24 years) - All young people make a smooth transition from school to work or further education. The Smith Family supports young adults in their preparation to undertake the transition from school to work or further education, so that they have a clearer idea of their abilities, interests, and the opportunities available to them.

Parents/Carers (25+) - All parents and carers have the skills and qualifications to lead active and productive lives. The Smith Family encourages dual generational lifelong learning so that all parents and carers have the ability to build their skills and qualifications and in turn, lead active and productive lives (strong families).

Volunteering

Volunteers are key to enabling The Smith Family achieve its vision of a more caring and cohesive society. Without volunteers, much of the work done would not be possible.

More info on The Smith Family

Wikis

Encyclopedia

The Smith Family history

The Smith Family today

Volunteering

Clothing donations

References

External links

Related links

Quiz

Quiz

Map

Maps

Related topics

The Smith Family needs the support from community volunteers from around the country to carry the work. Each year 6,500 volunteers contribute to the success of Smith Family programs across the country. Volunteers add diversity and first-hand knowledge to the skill set of The Smith Family and in return they have the opportunity to invest in and contribute to the areas in which they live. All volunteers are extensively trained to give them an understanding of the vision, mission, purpose and values of The Smith Family, and to give them the skills necessary to carry out what are often very challenging and demanding roles.

There are regular opportunities to find out more about current volunteering vacancies on the Smith Family website [1].

Clothing donations

The Smith Family operates clothing donation bins, into which people deposit used clothing. Less than 10% of this clothing is of wearable quality, and 25% of clothing becomes waste.^[1] More than half of clothes are exported^[2] Some are also converted to rags.^[3] Rags might end up as carpet underlay, sound proofing, road base and dishcloths, and are typically manufactured in India or the Middle east, by groups who purchase the clothing for 100 to 200 dollars a ton.^[4] The remainder are discarded. The Smith Family faces landfill costs of over \$200000^[5]

References

- ↑ http://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/site/page.cfm?u=110
- ↑ http://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/site/page.cfm?u=112
- ↑ http://www.thesmithfamily.com.au/site/page.cfm?u=109
- ↑ Cut from a different cloth - July 30, 2008 Sydney Morning Herald
- ↑ Ibid

External links

- Official website

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Up to date as of November 16, 2009

- ✓ Official website - Home Page - Winter Appeal
- ⋯ The Smith Family Clothing Exports
- ⋯ Wiping rags - The Smith Family
- ⋯ Donate clothes to The Smith Family

Advertisements



More info on The Smith Family

Wikis

Encyclopedia

The Smith Family history

The Smith Family today

Volunteering

Clothing donations

References

External links

Related links

Quiz

Quiz

Map

Maps

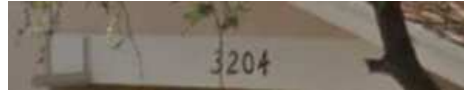
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