

OCTOBER 2024 NEWSLETTER

IMPACT



OPENING THE DOORS FOUNDATION
Keeping Koorie Kids in an Education of their Choice



St Annes Catholic Primary School - Seaford

Message from Vicki Clark OAM - Chair and Co-Founder

As Chairperson of the Opening the Doors Foundation, I am deeply grateful for our achievements, including a remarkable 30% increase in individual student grants over the past four years. This year alone, we funded 1,065 grants—up from 817 in 2021—with 214 school partners. This success comes at a pivotal moment. The ongoing cost of living crisis had challenged our ability to secure donations, putting our foundation's future at risk. Yet, thanks to your generous support, our donation income has increased by 15% above budget this past year, providing much-needed relief. Thank you for answering our call for assistance! While we celebrate this progress, we know that a long road lies ahead to meet the growing demand for student grants. Our dedicated team is tirelessly working to explore new fundraising opportunities and develop impactful grant proposals. OTDF Trustees are aware of the challenges ahead and have worked hard to continually refine the student grant funding criteria to ensure we reach those who need it most.



I want to emphasise the incredible power of community during these challenging times. The unwavering commitment of schools, parishes, and community groups has been essential to OTDF's fundraising income. It's inspiring to witness a resurgence of initiatives as we emerge from the pandemic and embrace face-to-face interactions. Each fundraising event represents not just a means to raise money, but a shared belief in the vital importance of education for all!

The Opening the Doors Foundation was founded on the principle of providing equal access to education for every First Nations family, who applies for support within our guidelines. Our steadfast commitment to this mission has led to extraordinary achievements, showcasing the transformational power of education to uplift bright minds and empower First Nations students. None of this would be possible without YOU and our incredible team of staff and volunteers. Your unwavering belief of our life changing work and ongoing support have fuelled our 24-year journey, helping us cultivate a network of First Nations change-makers dedicated to shaping a brighter future for all First Nations generations to come.

Thank you for your unconditional investment into the lives of young First Nations children and your belief in the transformative power of education. Our goal remains clear: to continue to keep our doors open and provide life-changing opportunities. Together, we can ensure that the intergenerational history that has impacted the lives of many First Nations families will lead to strength and positive change as OTDF children grow stronger and smarter every year.

The office of Opening The Doors Foundation is located on the lands of the Wurundjeri Woiwurrung People of the Kulin Nations. Opening The Doors Foundation acknowledges the traditional Owners of ancestral lands across Australia. We respect Elders past and present and local Aboriginal Custodians.

Artwork-Vicki Clark OAM

2024 School Fundraising



Maharishi Primary School

In the lead up to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Children's Day on the 4th of August, 15 schools held events to raise funds for OTDF's **Together We Walk** campaign. We thank all staff, students and school communities who participated with over \$15,000 raised in total. Schools have been actively fundraising for us throughout the year, and particularly during Reconciliation Week and NAIDOC Week. Their dedication and support have made a significant impact!

A heartfelt thank you to Maharishi School for organizing a Fun Run, where students proudly wore the colors of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander flags. Firbank Grammar raised funds by hosting a casual clothes day. St Paul's Primary School in Mildura raised over \$1,300, while St Thomas Carr College contributed over \$2,900. St Pius X Primary School exceeded \$3,000 in their efforts. The Genazzano Trivia Night raised \$770—thank you to all who participated! Caroline Chisholm Catholic College, attended by Vicki, raised \$1,000, and Padua College contributed over \$1,000. St Francis Xavier College collected over \$1,900, and St Michael's Primary School in Berwick raised more than \$1,800. Assumption College Kilmore and Avila College both raised over \$1,000. Thank you to all the schools for their generous contributions.



Sacred Heart Girls College

A BBQ for Reconciliation Week

A special thank you to Sacred Heart Girls College for hosting a BBQ during Reconciliation Week to raise funds for OTDF. Each year, on the Feast of the Visitation, the school launches Reconciliation Week, providing a meaningful opportunity to share important messages about Reconciliation. As part of the week's activities, they organised lunchtime art projects that fostered creativity and community engagement. This year, they unveiled an Indigenous garden designed by their Art Teacher, Mr. Toth, situated under the Bunjil statue. The garden will be maintained by the Fire Carrier Leaders. Additionally, an Indigenous Dance Teacher conducted a successful workshop with Year 10 students and plans are underway to offer a similar workshop for Year 7 students. Thank you to everyone involved for their commitment to promoting Reconciliation and cultural understanding!

Emmanuel College ran an incredibly successful fundraising campaign, raising a total of \$5,013 for OTDF through a variety of initiatives, including a casual dress justice day, a trivia night, and a silent auction. Cameron, a past student (OTDF Trustee Sherry Balcombe's son), was invited as a guest speaker, adding a personal touch to the events. Over the past year, OTDF has collaborated closely with Emmanuel College to support their involvement in the FIRE Carrier program.

At Marcellin College, Redden House selected Opening the Doors as its charity for social justice initiatives. Students participated by purchasing paper footies, which they then personalised with their names before "kicking a goal for Reconciliation."

Thank you to both colleges for their outstanding efforts in promoting social justice and Reconciliation!



Marcellin College

Meet the OTDF Team

OTDF is an efficient charity, operating with a total of only 1.1 full-time equivalent staff - which consists of 2 part-time employees, 3 casual staff, and 4 dedicated volunteers. We are proud of our significant impact on First Nations students, ensuring that every dollar of our limited resources is used effectively to support those in need.

Lisa Moloney - FIRE Carrier Program Coordinator

Lisa joined OTDF in 2022 after working as a teacher and FIRE Carrier representative at Avila College. Her passion for education and the FIRE Carrier program has driven her to expand the program across Victoria, where she takes pride in seeing First Nations students succeed in shaping their futures.

Eric Du - Accounts

Eric became part of OTDF in 2022 after moving from Vietnam, eager to give back to the welcoming Australian community. He finds joy in helping others and appreciates the supportive atmosphere at OTDF. Eric has a wonderful passion for numbers!

John Farlow - Financial Controller

John has been with OTDF since 2018, motivated by his commitment to Reconciliation. After Vicki approached him, he transitioned to a finance role, modernising our payment processes. He enjoys connecting with First Nations families and initially volunteered before becoming our part-time bookkeeper. John is also a former OTDF Trustee and is currently enjoying volunteering again with us as Financial Controller.

Brigid Knight-Braniff - Office Administrator

Brigid joined OTDF in 2019, bringing experience from other First Nations organisations. She values the dynamic environment of our small team, which allows for diverse roles and efficient collaboration. Brigid enjoys engaging with grant families and is inspired by Vicki's impactful leadership within First Nations communities.



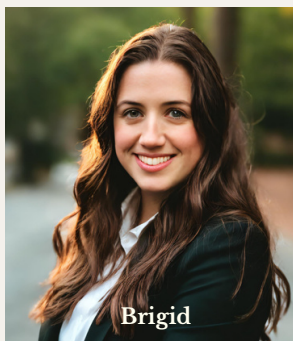
Lisa



John



Eric



Brigid



Michelle

Michelle Gale- Philanthropy Specialist Consultant

Michelle joined OTDF in 2020, bringing 30 years of experience in the charity sector to help OTDF increase its income and impact. She is motivated to help alleviate the generational suffering faced by First Nations peoples. She enjoys working with philanthropists to help transform lives for future First Nations generations.

Celebrating Success

The Victorian Catholic Education Authority (VCEA) was proud to host the annual Year 12 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Graduation Dinner, recognising the wonderful achievements of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students graduating from Year 12 in Catholic schools across Victoria this year. Lisa Moloney from OTDF attended and felt it was an honour to be present to celebrate with the students and their families and to acknowledge all those who have supported them so far on their journey - including the support of OTDF and its donors. Professor Mark Rose - Gunditjmara man, and VCEA CEO Professor Elizabeth Labone provided keynote addresses and attendees heard and celebrated the incredible stories and future hopes of an amazing group of young people. OTDF wishes each student abundant blessings as they embark on the next chapter of their life's journey.



Special Thanks to Parishes



We are truly grateful to see parishes and their congregations generously supporting OTDF once again as we move beyond the pandemic. We would especially like to extend our heartfelt thanks to St Therese's Parish in Essendon, Our Lady of the Nativity, St Kevin's Parish in Templestowe, Holy Saviour Parish, Joan of Arc Catholic Church in Brighton, St Thomas Parish and St Martin De Porres for their incredible support. Your contributions make a significant difference, and we are grateful for your commitment to our mission. Thank you!

Computers to the Rescue

Monivae College shared their appreciation of the support their students received from OTDF - "We would like to share a photo of our students who received your generous grants, which allowed them to purchase laptops for their studies at Monivae College. These laptops play a crucial role in their classwork and will be instrumental as they complete their end-of-semester tests. We are incredibly grateful to the foundation for this wonderful opportunity for our students. The laptops have been very well received and are making a significant difference in their learning experience. Thank you!"



Monivae College students

Thank You to All Our Supporters

The Opening The Doors Foundation wishes to thank all its supporters who enable us to continue to support First Nations students.

We would especially like to thank the following valued partners for their contributions during Financial Year 2024:

The Guillaume Family
The Noel and Carmel O'Brien Family Foundation
The Coopers Foundation
Flora & Frank Leith Charitable Trust
Anthony Costa Foundation
The Eric and Elizabeth Gross Foundation
Brigidine Sisters
The Killen Family Foundation
Catholic Diocese of Ballarat Foundation
The Melbourne Archbishop's Charitable Fund
The Arthur Family Charitable Trust
Magistrates Court
The Myers Family
William Angliss Charitable Fund
Wood Australia Pty Ltd
6A Foundation
Fr Charles Balnaves
Bloomberg
Waratah Foundation

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donating and
investing in First
Nations children
today*

Get in Touch

www.openingthedoors.org.au

enquiries@openingthedoors.org.au

0401 487 414

Wednesday to Friday
9am to 5pm

Maharishi Primary students



2024 Grants

In 2024 OTDF supported 1065 students compared with 817 in 2021. This represents 30% growth in 4 years.

Category	Expenditure
Levies-camps	\$310,100
Uniforms	\$217,914
Books	\$89,112
IT/Laptops	\$54,853
Sports Shoes	\$40,268
School Shoes	\$22,968
Well-being/Health	\$21,178
VET/VCAL Fees	\$11,360
Total Grants	\$767,753

**2025
GRANTS OPEN**
25th October 2024
See OTDF website