Welcome to the Australian Catholic University (ACU) 2016 Donor Report.

This report acknowledges and celebrates you, our donors, as well as the students who have benefited from your generosity.

Being part of the ACU community has always meant being part of something special – we’re not just a bricks and mortar institution, we’re a family with a shared vision for empowering positive change in the world.

While the ACU Foundation grows rapidly in its reach and activity every year, 2016 was undoubtedly our biggest year yet.

We launched our first annual appeal – the Creating Opportunity Fund – to address the gap between the growing number of ACU students, and the number of scholarships available. The endowed fund was opened with a $1 million gift from ACU, and we’ll match every donation that comes in.

We also launched our first Staff Giving program, in which again every gift is matched by the University – dollar for dollar.

ACU’s Future in Youth Program, an innovative sports-based initiative, became further embedded in the local community of Baucau, East Timor. Hundreds of children continue to turn up with and without shoes every year to learn the transferable life skills of soccer.

Our Thai-Burma Program, which offers tertiary education to Burmese students in refugee camps, continues to have an unbelievable impact on young people fleeing oppression, and without hope.

Research is increasingly central to everything ACU does, and without the visionary gifts of our benefactors, our contribution to improving societies both locally and around the world would be diminished.

Donations of all sizes add up to make a significant difference. I invite you to browse this report and see just some of what your generous support has made possible. Again I thank you for your support and I hope that our relationship continues well into the future.

Professor Greg Craven
Vice-Chancellor
MAKING THE MOVE

For student Eloise Biggin, support from the Gleeson Family Scholarship smoothed the transition from her rural hometown to the ACU Brisbane Campus.

“I would have struggled to get to uni,” said Eloise Biggin, a second-year occupational therapy student at ACU’s Brisbane Campus. As the recipient of the Gleeson Family Scholarship, thankfully Eloise has found the pathway smoother than she expected.

“We wanted to support students to find their feet.” Catherine McComiskie

“It’s a nice feeling to know that someone’s invested in me to see me finish my education.” Eloise Biggin

Coming from Stanthorpe, Queensland, Eloise knows the challenges many rural students face when pursuing higher education. “Moving to the city is a big deal, as well as going to uni,” she said. “In my first year, it was a completely different world.”

The Gleeson Family Scholarship aims to support undergraduate students from rural and regional areas of Australia, particularly Northern and Western Queensland, who might not otherwise be able to access tertiary education. It makes an enormous difference for students like Eloise, who said the scholarship gave her more confidence.

John (Jack) Gleeson AM and his family established the scholarship in 2006. Jack is well-known for his work in media and telecommunications and is also the recipient of ACU’s highest honour, Doctor of the University. His dedication to the church and society continues to be evident in the family’s ongoing commitment to helping incoming students at ACU.

“Jack, who is now 95, continues to be very interested in hearing about the scholarship recipients, their successes and their career paths. Jack has earned an array of accolades throughout his career, including recognition as a Knight Commander of the Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. In 2007, he and his wife, Joyce Gleeson (now deceased), were also bestowed a rare papal honour by Pope Benedict XVI in recognition of their services to the church and their involvement in the community: they were made Knight and Dame of the Order of St Gregory the Great. Despite these honours, it’s seeing the impact he can make in individual lives that continues to matter most to Jack.

“My father, Jack, appreciates knowing that it [the scholarship] is making a difference to someone’s opportunities and easing the pressures of study by being a little bit more financially supported,” Catherine said. She added that donating to ACU “is an opportunity to make a difference to those areas that you feel you have a connection with.”

Eloise is enjoying the hands-on and creative aspects of her occupational therapy course. She finds the many different areas of specialisation an exciting prospect. Reflecting on the Gleeson Family Scholarship, she said: “It’s been a lifesaver. I thank the donors from the bottom of my heart.”

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Catherine McComiskie with Eloise Biggin

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**THE GIFT OF SPORT**

The Future in Youth program is extending the community benefits of sports to youth in Timor-Leste.

“Massive improvements in self-esteem, social cohesion, their own value of self and others, and the understanding of hope for the future” – that’s what Mr Anthony Whitty, Deputy Head of School of Exercise Science Melbourne and Program Manager, said the ACU Future in Youth program provides to participants in Timor-Leste.

Based in Baucau, Timor-Leste’s second largest town, the program promotes health, wellbeing, and life skills through sport. It includes an interschool soccer program and competition, training for teachers and coaches, and the provision of equipment.

“Sport is a great relationship starter, it’s a great conversation starter.”

Mr Anthony Whitty

The program has a tangible impact in Timor-Leste, a country where 61 per cent of the population is under the age of 24 and 37 per cent of people live below the poverty line. By offering the chance for local young people to participate in community-run activities, Future in Youth helps lift the future opportunities available to individuals of all ages.

Each year, three staff members and 10 ACU students travel to Baucau to run the program and support community development alongside community members. It provides a valuable engagement opportunity for the ACU students, who “go through massive transformations from when they go to when they come back,” Mr Whitty said. The program isn’t about doing things for the community, but asking the community what they need and then working together to achieve those goals – valuable lessons for ACU students as they prepare to enter the workforce.

“We are giving children hope. We are giving women hope, young girls hope.”

Mr Anthony Whitty

The program has been operating since 2010, and the focus now is largely on helping the community in Baucau, including the teachers, local youth workers, and youth centre, with forward planning. The hope is to expand Future in Youth to include sporting options beyond soccer, as well as a program exclusively for females.

The benefit of youth sports is well understood in Australia. “We know what it does for our children, what it does for our community,” said Mr Whitty. The aim is to extend that benefit to our country’s closest neighbour. “Sport is a great relationship starter, it’s a great conversation starter... you don’t need to speak a language. Anyone can play and therefore start a conversation. That’s why sport is important,” Mr Whitty added.

Donations to Future in Youth contribute to equipment, the transportation of equipment, uniforms, and the resources to upskill the local teachers. With the program expanding to additional poor, rural areas, donations also impact children in orphanages and disadvantaged parts of Timor Leste. The opportunity to help other countries engage in sport “is a wonderful gift,” as Mr Whitty said.

If you are an ACU staff member and would like to learn more about how you can support this program please visit acu.edu.au/staffgiving
Since 2009, ACU’s Thai-Burma Program has offered refugees the opportunity to pursue life-changing tertiary education.

For the more than 150 students who have graduated from ACU’s Thai-Burma Program, the impact of earning a university degree is extraordinary.

“The program and the donations that fund it make a direct, life-changing impact for these young adults who are living there with no other opportunities like this,” said Dr Duncan Cook, Senior Lecturer in Geography at ACU’s Strathfield Campus and newly-appointed program manager.

Since 2009, ACU’s Thai-Burma Program has offered the opportunity for young refugees living in camps along the Thai-Burma border to earn internationally-recognised qualifications in higher education. Some students who enter the ACU program were born in these camps. While limited primary and lower secondary education is provided by non-government organisations, it often isn’t recognised outside the camps, making an international degree even more meaningful.

Donations are vital to the program and to the lives of its students.

Dr Cook said “ACU and our donors provide a safe place for these young adults to learn – classroom space, dormitory accommodation, and one good meal a day, because we all know it’s hard to study on an empty stomach. And all the other kind of mod cons they need to be a successful student in the globalised world: good internet connection, good laptop computers, and everything else needed to have an equivalent of an Australian university education.”

The program is one-of-a-kind in the Asia region and aims to offer meaningful educational opportunities to those impacted by the world’s longest-running civil war in Myanmar, which, Dr Cook added, is “so close to our doorstep.”

While there are some vocational avenues for the camp’s residents, they are limited. ACU’s Thai-Burma Program offers new opportunities that individuals wouldn’t otherwise have.

Program participants, who are provided with food and accommodation during their studies, earn a Diploma in Liberal Studies. “Many of them go on to become teachers, and they’re going back and then lifting the education standards of their whole community,” said Dr Cook. “Some of our graduates go on to further study at prestigious universities and return and make major contributions to their communities and country.”

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“Thanks to the donations that we have received, we can continue running this important program.”

Dr Duncan Cook

The current Diploma of Liberal Studies students are due to graduate in May 2017. Their families often travel for days through rough terrain to attend the emotionally charged ceremony. Dr Cook said some of the students are pinching themselves. They’ve come from incredibly disadvantaged backgrounds, “the likes of which we can barely understand in Australia,” and less than two years later, they are graduating with a diploma from an Australian university.

“Thanks to the donations that we have received, we can continue running this important program… If we didn’t have those donations the sustainability of the program would really be in jeopardy, so we are incredibly grateful for the support.”

If you are an ACU staff member and would like to learn more about how you can support this program please visit acu.edu.au/staffgiving
Research at ACU

Research at ACU continues to grow and evolve, thanks not only to high-achieving students and world-class researchers but also to the donors who support their critical work. Here's a glimpse into two of the University's seven research institutes and programs that are changing lives today and for tomorrow.

CARING FOR THE CARER

PRIMED, one of the Institute for Health and Ageing’s (IHA) signature programs, looks at a whole new aspect of dementia by supporting those who care for elderly family members living with the disease.

“Family carers often neglect their own mental and physical health, so they get worn out and run down and start to experience health problems themselves,” said Professor Marita McCabe, Director of IHA. There are more than 300,000 Australians living with dementia today. In the next decade, that number is projected to increase to more than 400,000. With around two-thirds of people living with dementia residing at home with the support of family members, there is a clear need to care for the carers too.

That’s what the Institute for Health and Ageing’s PRIMED program is all about – ensuring that carers’ personal wellbeing is nurtured so that they can, in turn, continue to be there for their families.

“We have designed a program for carers of people with dementia to assist them to both manage the behavioural problems experienced by the person with dementia... and also help them to develop better stress and coping strategies so they can look after their own health,” said Professor McCabe.

The ultimate goal of PRIMED is to help people remain in their own homes as they deal with some of the challenges associated with ageing. The program aims to do this by enhancing carers’ skills and providing them with much-needed information.

Professor McCabe said that PRIMED “helps build relationships with family and friends so that there is more support, giving them strategies to get help where help is needed.”

The program is online, meaning it’s accessible to people in regional, rural, and remote areas. It’s also personalised, recognising that each carer has a unique situation with particular barriers. Carers receive tailored input based on information they’ve provided and are directed to relevant resources.

While PRIMED is designed to build the necessary skills for family members in caretaking roles, a complementary program, BPSD (Behavioural and Psychological Symptoms of Dementia) Care, focuses on the needs of the elderly person being cared for. Similarly, this program runs online and provides hands-on resources. Each program is the result of close partnerships with carer agencies, as well as carers themselves.

“We have designed a program for carers... to both manage the behavioural problems... and help them to develop better stress and coping strategies.”

Professor Marita McCabe

With donor support, the institute aims to carry out a broader roll-out of both programs in order to provide essential resources to more people, helping them care for those they love.

“Older people are a part of our community,” Professor McCabe said. With ongoing support, IHA programs such as PRIMED will continue to make a difference in the day-to-day lives of those impacted by dementia.

For more information or to support this initiative please contact Sarah Thyssen, Donor Relationship Manager, on sarah.thyssen@acu.edu.au or +61 3 9230 8032
ON THE POSITIVE SIDE

The newly launched Australian Centre for Indigenous Thriving in the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE) is charting a course for real change.

Empowering individuals and communities, helping people from all backgrounds thrive and flourish, finding out what helps individuals overcome adversity – these goals are the backbone of the Institute for Positive Psychology and Education (IPPE).

“Positive psychology is about helping everyday individuals get the most out of life,” said Director of IPPE Professor Rhonda Craven. “We try to discover what enables people to lead productive and fulfilling lives.”

“We believe that this centre is really important because it’s tackling a significant Australian issue of our time and is based on Indigenous strengths.”

Professor Rhonda Craven

IPPE is applying this approach through data-driven research projects across the country. Programs include collaboration with the New South Wales police force working with families of Syrian refugees; a collaboration with health insurers enabling principals’, teachers’, and children’s wellbeing; and iPLAY, which aims to enhance children’s physical activity.

As the leading institute in Australia in educational psychology, IPPE works with disadvantaged populations, including Indigenous Australians.

“We have a fundamental concern for justice, equity, diversity, and the dignity of all human beings,” said Professor Craven.

With this in mind, the institute recently established the Australian Centre for Indigenous Thriving. It offers an opportunity for those interested in helping to enable Indigenous children, youth, and communities to not only succeed, but to thrive.

“We believe that this centre is really important because it’s tackling a significant Australian issue of our time and is based on Indigenous strengths and applying the drivers of this success more broadly,” said Professor Craven.

There are several pilot programs launching within the centre. The first will introduce a wellbeing program led by Indigenous high school kids, building their leadership skills.

An early intervention program for Indigenous children who are struggling with literacy will also be launched and tested. The program is based on the latest international advances in literacy.

The Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), which is launching in collaboration with colleagues from the University of Queensland, will initially operate in the Aurukun community in Far North Queensland.

Another pilot program, Indigenous Ways of Knowing, will identify conceptions of wellbeing among Indigenous children, youth, and communities to better understand how to support young people in community and school settings.

Contributions from the CAGES Foundation, which supports locally-owned initiatives providing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children access to the best pathways to reach their full potential, will help fund one of the centre’s many innovative projects.

Real change is what IPPE strives for, and the new Australian Centre for Indigenous Thriving is just one of many ways they’re making it happen.

“We’re trying to do things differently,” said Professor Janet Mooney, a leading Aboriginal academic. “We are truly community led. We work in genuine partnerships with Indigenous children, youth, and communities to identify and test new approaches that enable them to succeed and thrive.”

Collaboration is key to IPPE. “We like to work with partners and engage with partners in the research process,” said Professor Craven, “to understand their needs and come up with the best state-of-the-art research design and research methodology.”

There are many ways donations can make an impact, said Professor Craven. “If someone is interested in making a difference, we’re interested in working with them.”

For more information or to support this initiative please contact Dinidu Illangakoon, Donor Relationship Manager, on dinidu.illangakoon@acu.edu.au or +61 2 9465 9038
CREATING OPPORTUNITY

To help students receive the education they deserve, ACU successfully launched the Creating Opportunity Fund in 2016. This endowed scholarship program aims to empower students, create new pathways to higher education, and help future graduates reach their potential without being hampered by circumstances outside of their control.

Since 2008, the number of ACU students has doubled from 16,000 to 32,000. That’s twice as many students seeking out the unique qualities of an ACU education, and twice as many graduates going out into the world to make a difference.

However, the number of scholarships has not kept pace with demand. While ACU currently offers nearly 400 scholarships across all disciplines, the financial burden of full-time study has continued to increase. For some prospective students, entering university feels more out of reach than ever.

By generously supporting the Creating Opportunity Fund, you will be directly helping talented people unlock their potential and explore their gifts and passions without limitation.

To kickstart the appeal, Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Greg Craven announced a contribution of $1 million from the University. With an endowed fund, only the interest is distributed so the principal can continue to grow. This means that when you make even a small gift to this fund, your contribution will create a legacy that benefits many, many ACU students for years to come.

For every gift you make to the fund, the University will match your contribution, dollar for dollar, doubling the value of your donation.

“’To have someone else support you … is a pretty good feeling. It’s like someone else is investing in your future.’”

Verity Watt

We will be reaching out to our wonderful alumni network through the annual appeal, and to our staff through the ACU Staff Giving program, asking them to make a contribution and help provide equity scholarships for students who are highly motivated and deserving, but facing obstacles to their studies.

You will be supporting students like Verity, Aaron, and Laura, three young people who are a wonderful illustration of the common good in action, using the opportunities available to them to make a difference in their communities.

To learn more about the Creating Opportunity Fund please visit acu.edu.au/creatingopportunity

If you are an ACU staff member please visit acu.edu.au/staffgiving

LAURA BISHOP

“It’s pretty overwhelming being in first-year uni, and scholarships really take a burden off your shoulders (by helping) with financial costs,” said Bachelor of Nursing/Paramedicine student Laura Bishop, who received the $2,500 Calvary John James Hospital Excellence in Nursing and Paramedicine Scholarship.

Inspired by a terrifying childhood incident where she helped save her little sister’s life — with assistance from local emergency services — Laura always knew paramedicine was for her.

“I was always attracted to the health sciences and caring for people, but that [life-saving] experience confirmed it for me. At school, I would see all the paramedic vans drive past and think, ‘That’s going to be me one day!’”

For every gift you make to the fund, the University will match your contribution, dollar for dollar, doubling the value of your donation.

To help us make a difference and continue building a university that values justice, equity, and the dignity of all human beings, please visit acu.edu.au/givenow
CREATING OPPORTUNITY
AARON BROWN

Self-declared 'outback kid' Aaron Brown from rural Queensland knows he simply wouldn’t be studying a Bachelor of Teaching/Bachelor of Arts (Humanities) degree if it weren’t for the generous support of two scholarships: The Catherine McAuley Scholarship, worth $2,500 for each year of his four-year course, and the $15,000 Edmund Rice Education Australia & St Joseph’s College, Gregory Terrace – Equity Scholarship.

When Aaron began his studies, the costs took his family by surprise. “I would have had to defer my course for 18 months and go home to work,” he said. “My parents said: ‘Just keep applying for scholarships and see what happens’.”

Thanks to his scholarships, Aaron is now on track to complete his degree and is already looking to the future, which he hopes will include a doctorate in disability services and returning home to teach.

“Regional youth need great mentoring and role models, and access to the same opportunities as their city counterparts.”

CREATING OPPORTUNITY
VERITY WATT

When Bachelor of Nursing/Paramedicine student Verity Watt was awarded the Sisters of Mercy Scholarship, worth $4,000, she had been struggling with the significant financial burden of full-time study and future debt.

She said: “(The scholarship) alleviated a lot of potential financial stress. To have someone else support you like that is a pretty good feeling. It’s like someone else is investing in your future.”

For Verity, the scholarship support meant she had the freedom to pursue her passion for youth advocacy. She’s currently the Youth Mayor for the Corangamite Shire Youth Council in rural Victoria, organising regular events and an annual youth awards program.

She is also a member of the Ballarat Headspace Youth Reference Group, which provides young people with a sounding board to change attitudes surrounding mental health.
GIVING A HAND UP

The Sister Assumption Neary Scholarship gave regional student Taylah Ryen the boost she needed to study nursing at the ACU Ballarat Campus.

Coming from Dimboola in regional Victoria, Taylah Ryen knew that her pursuit of a nursing and paramedicine degree at ACU’s Ballarat Campus would come with plenty of costs. Thankfully, the Sister Assumption Neary Scholarship helped alleviate some of the stress so she could stay focused on her studies.

She said: “It was good to have that peace of mind that I had that money support there for me; otherwise, I think I wouldn’t have done as well at uni.”

“… we can give someone who might be struggling a bit of a hand up – not a handout, a hand up.”

Maureen Waddington

Taylah used the $2,500 from the scholarship to help pay her rent in Ballarat and buy nursing uniforms, paramedic uniforms, textbooks, and other university essentials.

That’s why the Sister Assumption Neary Scholarship was created, to support those facing financial disadvantage, while a second scholarship, the Sister Cecily Dunne Scholarship, similarly supports those with excellent potential.

As the recipient of the Sister Assumption Neary Scholarship, Taylah said the support is crucial to her ability to stay at university. She added that without donors, “I feel like a lot of students would find it really hard to get to uni.”

“It was good to have that peace of mind that I had that monetary support there for me.”

Taylah Ryen

The scholarship is part of the legacy of the Sisters of Saint John of God. Maureen Waddington, Director of Mission at St John of God Hospital in Ballarat, said: “The Sisters have a strong commitment to equity – they did not have a wealthy founder and understand financial challenges only too well.” With that background, they understood socioeconomic disadvantage and the challenge of having the skills without the financial means to achieve their goals.

“These young people balance so much,” said Maureen, speaking of Taylah and past recipients of the scholarship. “They work to support themselves, they often move away from home and live in a new community and then they need to travel back and forth, sometimes for long distances, to be with their families. In amongst these demands they need to study and do well in their studies.”

She recognises that it takes a lot of energy and effort. That’s why Maureen and the St John of God Hospital find it so rewarding, “that we can give someone who might be struggling a bit of a hand up – not a handout, a hand up.”

The scholarship is not just a contribution to the individual, it’s one to the community as well. These students “will go on to be really good nurses,” said Maureen, “and they will care for the community, whereas they may or may not have dropped out because of other financial difficulties.”
KEEPING IT LOCAL

The Sister Cecily Dunne Scholarship enabled a mother of three to pursue her nursing dreams while working in her own community.

With three daughters aged 10 and under, Carly Wemyss persevered to complete her Bachelor of Nursing degree in four years. Financial support from the Sister Cecily Dunne Scholarship, offered by St John of God Hospital in Ballarat, helped her remain focused on her course. And, even more importantly, it helped her stay local by securing a graduate nursing position at St John of God.

“Having children, it was really important for me to stay local, and I’ve worked in volunteer capacities within the health advocacy field for many years locally,” Carly said. “Local community is very important to me.”

Maureen Waddington, Director of Mission at St John of God Hospital in Ballarat, said the Sister Cecily Dunne Scholarship reflects the “Sisters of St John of God’s commitment to supporting excellent nursing practice – their focus was always on the patient and what was best for the patient by adopting a ‘head, hands and heart’ approach.”

Carly used the financial support from the scholarship to purchase textbooks. “To obtain the most recent published textbooks was really important to me,” she said. She also used the funds to buy new uniforms. “I’m a firm believer in presentation being very important,” she added.

“Donations make a real difference to students,” Carly said, noting that the scholarship helped not only her but her family as well, as she studied for her degree.

“Nurses are really a necessary resource and there is a shortage of nurses in Victoria. We are trying to build up those numbers for our community. It’s really important to support people at a grassroots level to help them to achieve that and add to our very important nursing workforce.”

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For James Hanna, receiving a scholarship from the Australian Catholic Superannuation and Retirement Fund enhanced his ability to explore his subject area in more depth.

For many students, including James Hanna, receiving a scholarship is about far more than financial support. “That money makes a big difference not just to professional development, but also for personal development,” he said. James received the Australian Catholic Superannuation and Retirement Fund Postgraduate Scholarship, which is offered to two high-achieving honours or postgraduate students to support them with their career aspirations.

“That money makes a big difference not just to professional development, but also for personal development.”

James Hanna

James, who is beginning his career as a personal development, health, and physical education (PDHPE) teacher, said the scholarship “allowed me to explore who I am as a teacher.”

During the final year of his masters degree, James used the $5,000 scholarship funds to assist with his research project as part of his practicum. He aimed to measure students’ activity during PDHPE lessons. Rather than using a method such as surveys, James used the money to buy pedometers and gather insightful data for his research. Because he could purchase the equipment, which he’ll continue to use in future classes, James said: “I could do something meaningful and relevant for me… a big part of PDHPE is getting young people engaged in physical activity, and that’s really difficult to measure in a normal setting.”

Now, James said he is entering the workforce with “a much deeper knowledge of my subject area.”

For Cameron Wood, Head of Marketing and Business Development at Australian Catholic Superannuation, meeting the successful scholarship recipients and keeping in regular contact with them is rewarding.

Australian Catholic Superannuation is a super fund whose members are predominantly school teachers in the Catholic education system. “Education and teaching and learning are very close to our heart,” said Cameron, and the connection with ACU is a natural one as the two organisations share the same values and ethics.

In addition to offering two Australian Catholic Superannuation postgraduate scholarships, the organisation also supports ACU’s Future in Youth program in East Timor. “There has always been that underlying desire to assist those from underprivileged communities,” Cameron said about Australian Catholic Superannuation. That desire to help reverberates abroad and back at home with the scholarship James received.

The connection with students is “not only important to our staff,” said Cameron. “It’s very important to our members.”

Australian Catholic Superannuation’s staff and members can rest assured that their contribution truly makes a difference. “Knowing that there are people out there willing to donate that money really helps,” said James. And it’s about far more than the money: James said the real value comes from “having that support and that confidence that someone thinks what you are doing is valuable… and they want to enhance your time at uni.”
A NEW APPROACH TO EDUCATION – AND A NEW BEGINNING

With support from the Fernanda de Carvalho Memorial Jarjum Scholarship, Michael Ingram discovered a whole new approach for students struggling with mainstream education in Sydney’s Redfern.

The ripple effect that started with the family of Fernanda de Carvalho, a dedicated teacher and catechist, continues today. David de Carvalho, Fernanda’s nephew, and his family started the Fernanda de Carvalho Memorial Jarjum Scholarship in 2015 to contribute to the development of Indigenous primary school teachers formed in the Catholic tradition. The scholarship is awarded to a final-year Bachelor of Education student of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background to undertake a practicum placement at Redfern Jarjum College. Michael Ingram, who comes from the Central Coast, is the first recipient of the scholarship.

“Jarjum, which means children, is a Jesuit primary school in Sydney’s Redfern that supports Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students who ‘just did not fit with the mainstream systems’, Michael said. Principal Fran McCarthy said “All of the children who come here are failing in the education system. They have been suspended, they have been expelled, or they are just not attending.”

The school creates a safe place where the students learn more than just academics; they learn practical, life skills – how to cook scrambled eggs, for instance – social and emotional skills, and behaviour management as well. Redfern Jarjum College maintains very small class sizes and employs a full support team, including a speech therapist, psychologist, and behaviour support roles.

“We are here for the families and the community,” said David, who remains involved with the school to understand what resources are needed. “Just seeing – very tangibly – the immediate impact it has on student engagement and knowing that it [the scholarship] is going to have a lifelong impact on him and on any of the Aboriginal kids that he comes in contact with – just knowing that is quite mind-blowing.”

Thanks to the time he spent at Redfern Jarjum College, Michael now aspires to continue working at a school that caters for kids who struggle in the standard system. “After having gone down there, that’s now where I want my whole career to go,” said Michael.

“I think there is a real need for these kinds of schools, not just in the Redfern community but in every community;” he added. “So the more future teachers who are actually exposed to these kinds of settings and see the benefits that it affords for kids, I hope that it has a flow-on effect and more of these kinds of schools spring up.”

That’s the goal of Redfern Jarjum College – to reach more children and, ultimately, create a high school as well. The ripple effect is just beginning.
COMING FULL CIRCLE

By creating a memorial scholarship in honour of his wife, Sue, John Mitchell is helping nursing, midwifery and paramedicine students close the circle on their dreams.

“We also know the challenges of students coming from rural and remote Australia,” John added, a point that "Winning a scholarship definitely boosts your confidence." Emma Landow

Having the books she needed on-hand during the spare moments when she could squeeze in some study helped her successfully finish her second year of the course. John Mitchell established the scholarship fund in 2008 in honour of his late wife, Sue, who passed away after a long, brave battle with cancer. Sue was an accomplished nurse in the Gungahlin region of Victoria who went on to practice midwifery, and the scholarship is available to paramedine, midwifery and nursing students studying at the Canberra Campus from rural and regional areas.

John said it rewarding to donate to the education of young Australians, particularly young nurses. “We have, off and on, a shortage of nurses and paramedics in this country,” he reflected. In many ways, John is bringing it full circle. In addition to creating a memorial scholarship for his wife, he said he wanted “to repay my free education from the Whitlam scheme.” Now he recognises that his scholarship may support the training for an emergency nurse who could one day save his own life – and others as well.

With support from the Sue Mitchell Nursing Scholarship, Emma was able to buy her textbooks and pay for the fuel necessary for her hour-and-a-half drive to the ACU Canberra Campus. “I couldn’t just nip into uni if I wanted to borrow some textbooks,” Emma said.

“Winning a scholarship definitely boosts your confidence.” Emma Landow

With two children and a third on the way, Emma Landow’s determination to continue her studies, particularly young nurses. “We have, off and on, a shortage of nurses and paramedics in this country,” he reflected. In many ways, John is bringing it full circle. In addition to creating a memorial scholarship for his wife, he said he wanted “to repay my free education from the Whitlam scheme.” Now he recognises that his scholarship may support the training for an emergency nurse who could one day save his own life – and others as well.

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