

THE GIANT STEPS IMPACT REPORT 2021

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MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA
SUPPORTING AUTISTIC CHILDREN AND ADULTS.



WE ARE
GIANT
STEPS AND
WE ARE
PROUD



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LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN

The saying 'if you want to go fast go alone, if you want to go far go together' has never been more true than in the last 18 months at Giant Steps Melbourne. It is the exceptional work, care and commitment of many that has seen Giant Steps remain operational through all the challenges Covid 19 has presented us with. Our dedicated team of teachers, therapists, educators and support staff have literally 'gone that extra mile' to provide education, care and support to our children and young adults with autism and their families. As each challenge arose the team thought about solutions, we worked with families to try and minimise risk, we adopted Covid-safe practices wherever we could while still providing education and therapy to our students and participants. We will be forever grateful to our staff who have continued, as always, to be caring and positive no matter what the challenge.

As I think about the past 18 months I can't help but think about those that have supported us, helped us through difficult times, families that have been understanding when changes had to be made at short notice, families who despite the stress and challenges of caring and supporting their children have continued to raise funds for Giant Steps.

Giant Steps is unique, it exists because of the efforts of many. Our community goes far beyond our families and staff. The help that is always on offer is amazing, from doctors coming to the fore and offering to set up an on site vaccination clinic, medical professional providing us with rapid antigen testing capability, equipment suppliers donating air purifiers, experts helping us plan for the future with our new building project, not to mention the wonderful generosity of our many donors. I could go on and on with stories of the generosity, commitment and care that have helped us through.

As we go far together, we work to create new opportunities, new buildings, a truly special place, a place of knowledge and understanding, of care and support. Together we will continue to make a difference for children and young adults with autism and their families.

—
Barry Irvin AM
Chairman



IF YOU WANT
TO GO FAST,
GO ALONE
IF YOU WANT
TO GO FAR, GO
TOGETHER

2016

Opened Giant Steps Melbourne in Kew in February to a cohort of 11 children.

Ran the inaugural Giant Steps Mid-Winter Social.

Ran the inaugural Giant Steps Breakfast.

Offered Melbourne families access to an onsite Mental Health Clinic.

Collaborated with Flying Fox to run first sleep away camps for all student.



2017

Secured \$1.2M grant from the Federal Government to renovate existing facilities to allow for cohort and program growth.

Ran the inaugural Giant Dinner.

2020

One of the only independent specialist schools in Victoria to stay open and continue to run programs during COVID-19 crisis, only having 2-student-free days across whole year.

2021

Opened Adult Autism Services at offsite location for cohort of 5 young adults.

Launched GLOW, the second social enterprise created by our senior VCAL students.

Timeline

2018

Renovated existing site to allow for double student numbers.

Ran the inaugural Trivia Night.

Hosted the first Siblings program to facilitate supported conversation.



2019

Commenced VCAL program with Box Hill TAFE.

Secured \$9.7M grant from Department of Infrastructure to build college services and expand program offering on site.

Ran the inaugural Giant Steps Golf Classic at Kingston Heath.

Launched first social enterprise, PAWS, a dog biscuit business run by our senior VCAL students.



A SNAPSHOT OF GIANT STEPS

Our School

Our five fabulous classes, Diamond, Ruby, Opal, Emerald and Sapphire bring together a growing cohort of 30 plus students aged from 5 - 18 years. The full Victorian Curriculum is incorporated into an individualised program for each student. A holistic blend of Music Therapy, Speech and Occupational Therapies are provided within the classroom environment.

‘Giant Steps has given my brother a place to belong. I go to school knowing my brother is understood, learning, celebrated and safe.’

— Felix, sibling



Adult Autism Services

Our first five Giant Steps school graduates enrolled and commenced our Adult Services College program in 2021.

Our first five school graduates extend themselves through Hiking and nature exploration; Community Garden work; Yoga and Meditation; The Giant Steps School Barista Club, Giant Steps Girls Club, Shopping, The Glow Social Enterprise, Supported Employment at TAFE and our Self Care program.

Adult Autism Services will extend to include more students once we complete our Kew development project.

Family Services

Autism not only affects our students, it has significant impacts on the families of our cohort. Giant Steps looks to support the families through the provision of in-home training for carers and family members, Family therapy with our in-house psychologist and School Holiday programs for our students. Whilst the Holiday programs have been limited by Covid-19 restrictions this year, we are hopeful of a full calendar of events in 2022.

Mental Health Clinic

Our students have complex behavioural needs that often require the support of a highly specialised medical team. Access to Psychiatrists, Psychologists and OT, Speech and Music Therapists and the sharing of information between these specialists is often time consuming and stressful for our students and their families. Furthermore, observation of our students' behaviour is difficult in a clinical setting.

Helen Appleton, Giant Steps Psychologist and Dr Peter Wurth, our consultant psychiatrist specialising in Autism Spectrum Disorder, Developmental Disability and Dual Diagnosis for over 30 years, coordinate the clinic onsite (or during COVID-19, via Zoom) in a collective session to review data, analyse behaviours and work with the teaching team and families to provide world class behavioural support plans and tactics to best support the student.

This year the onsite Mental Health Clinic held over 100 appointments.

Due to the school and college programs remaining open and ongoing regular access to the clinic, the students have actually been able to maintain most of our medication regimes, with very few students requiring increases this year, despite all the unpredictability of Covid.



COVID-19 SUPPORT & RESPONSE

Staying Open — We did it!

COVID-19 has affected all facets of our lives, having a particularly significant impact on young people, the education system and services to people with a disability. Despite the adversity, Giant Steps was one of the only schools in Victoria to remain open during the pandemic. Our staff continued to come to school each day with smiling faces, delivering engaging programs to some of our community's most vulnerable individuals. This allowed parents to continue working and offered stability and consistency for families over the last 18 months.



On-site Vaccination Clinic

With the support of High Street Medical Clinical, the Carp family and the office of Federal Minister Greg Hunt, Giant Steps were proud to run COVID-19 Vaccination Clinics in September and October. Vaccinations were available to students over 12 years old, adult services participants, staff, family and carers. This allowed vaccinations to be accessible to students in a familiar and supportive environment where teachers and therapists were on site to assist. It also further safe-guarded our community from COVID-19 by having students, staff and close members of the community fully vaccinated.

100% of our staff are fully vaccinated.
83% of eligible students are vaccinated.



Rapid Testing Trial

Thanks to Dean Mohr and the team at Body Care, Giant Steps is implementing daily Rapid Antigen Testing in Term 4, 2021 for all teachers, visitors and some students. This additional measure will add to the list of precautions Giant Steps have taken to keep our community safe.

We are so proud of the resilience that the entire Giant Steps community has demonstrated during these unprecedented days. Staff got creative and used their innovation to implement activities to keep morale high and the mood light.



GIANT FACTS

3 PARENT
WORKING BEES
HELD ON SITE

37

TOURS FOR
NEW FAMILIES

OVER
500 JUMPS ON THE
TRAMPOLINE
EVERY DAY

32 GARDEN PARTIES (WHERE
WE SANG THE GIANT
STEPS SCHOOL SONG!)

50 BLOCK WALKS
EVERY WEEK TO
SUPPORT
EMOTIONAL
REGULATION

7 SPECIAL EVENTS—
MOTHER'S DAY,
FATHER'S DAY, BAR
MITZVAH'S & MORE.

2 SCHOOL GUINEA PIGS
— TRISH & BUBBLES

8 ZOOM MEETINGS
HELD EACH WEEK
BY THE THERAPY
TEAM ACROSS
2020-2021

14

MENTAL
HEALTH CLINICS
HELD TO SUPPORT
OUR FAMILIES
& STUDENTS

1 THERAPY DOG,
ARCHIE, ON SITE
EACH WEEK

ON AVERAGE
100 KILOMETERS
WALKED BY OUR
STUDENTS EACH WEEK

PARTNERS

Partnering so many incredible organisations, schools and community groups provides our students invaluable opportunities to broaden their experiences and skills. We are so proud of the relationships we have built over the years and look forward to continuing to expand this program over the coming years. Some of the incredible partners we are working with are:

Melbourne Storm

Melbourne Storm under 20 players work as Educators across the school and adult services gaining skills and providing alternative career pathways to broaden their experience of working within a team.

"We really appreciate our partnership with Giant Steps Melbourne. Offering our players the chance to be employed as Educators gives them the opportunity to develop skills and knowledge in education, disability support work and inclusion. Storm players Damian and Aman have loved their experience with Giant Steps and we hope to offer this placement to more players in the future."

— Brian Phelan, Player Development Manager, Melbourne Storm

Endota Spa

Australia's largest chain of day spas have been working on some incredible partnership ideas across both the school aged students and the Adult Services cohort that have included an art activity to be leveraged for Endota's yearly holiday card, data entry support and a potential laundry service. This is a great opportunity for our participants and students to gain meaningful work experience and transferable skills through a well-respected and established organisation.

Flying Fox

Flying Fox provides social opportunities for young people with a disability and have been facilitating Giant Steps sleep-away camps and holiday programs for our students.

"The best part of the Giant Steps community is that it is a platform for students to dream big! The Giant Steps school community provides a framework for every student to achieve every one of their goals, with no exception. Flying Fox is proud to sing from the Giant Steps song sheet."

— Dean Cohen, OAM, Founder Flying Fox

Schools

We are so grateful to the following schools who have shared their facilities, come on site to support our students and in return helped us spread our messages for a more inclusive and educated world.

Bialik College	Mt Scopus College
Kew Primary	St Kevins
Melbourne High School	Xavier College
MLC	

"Kew Primary School is strongly committed to building relationships with the local and global community. We are excited about the possibilities and the potential for our partnership with Giant Steps. Our goal is to foster a partnership that promotes a genuine sense of connection, sharing of ideas, expertise and opportunities for collaboration."

— Peter Dewacht, Principal, Kew Primary School

Adult Autism Services Partners

Our adult services program are fortunate enough to partner with some incredible community and social organisations to gain meaningful work experience and transferable skills to foster more independent and meaningful young adult lives.

Ability Works
All Things Equal Cafe
Box Hill Institute
Christmas Tree Farm
Cooking with Ricky
Kew Neighbourhood Learning Centre

"Over the last three years, Box Hill Institute have built a strong partnership with Giant Steps Melbourne to ensure that students reach their full potential. The accredited courses we have delivered have provided important opportunities in vocational learning and work placement for the Giant Steps students, who in turn, have helped our teachers to expand their skills in educating students with autism. The Giant Steps staff are highly skilled in working with individuals with autism and are dedicated to providing the support students need to access their learning in a fun and nurturing way. Box Hill Institute are grateful to be working with Giant Steps, a highly specialised organisation, who value collaborative partnerships that benefit the young adults in their care."

— Jane Mahoney, Box Hill TAFE



OUR IMPACT

34

STUDENTS ENROLLED,
WITH ENROLMENT
ALMOST TRIPLING
IN 5 YEARS.

115

FAMILY
MEMBERS
SUPPORTED
EACH YEAR.

10,000

HOURS OF THERAPY
PROVIDED (2020 - 2021)

ALL

ELIGIBLE
STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN
FOUNDATION
VCAL.

100%

GRADUATION
RATE FOR
STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN
HOSPITALITY
CERT 1.

65%

OF PARENTS FELT
A REDUCED SENSE
OF ISOLATION SINCE
STARTING AT
GIANT STEPS.

100%

OF PARENTS REPORT IMPROVED WELLBEING
SINCE STARTING AT GIANT STEPS.



'Giant Steps is a place where energy levels are high, smiles are plentiful and the 'can do' spirit is infectious. Our students flourish and grow in a space where education and therapeutic approaches combine. Each Student travels an individualised pathway which evolves over time to meet their complex and changing needs as they move throughout school and begin their transition into adulthood. The focus of our work is regulation, engagement and participation. Using data, the transdisciplinary model and parental expertise to guide decision making, interventions equip students with the skills and strategies to access the community and live a fulfilled and purposeful life.'

— Davina Bate, Principal

Stories

My brother Zak loves Giant Steps because the school gives him an opportunity to be himself, grow, learn and express himself in ways he never could before. Giant Steps is an amazing school and I see the tremendous impact it has on Zak every day. The school has allowed him to be a part of his own community and make many great friends. Every morning he wakes up and can't wait to go to school. He loves the programs they do and I'm so proud we have Giant Steps in our lives now!"

— Claudia Kutner, Sibling

'Giant Steps has given us a feeling of confidence in our son's schooling and learning, and a feeling of hope for his future. We know he is well taken care of.'

— Deanne Wald, Parent



'I love Giant Steps because the teachers are my friends and I feel excited when they take me to Eglington park. When I go to Giant Steps I feel happy. My favourite thing at school is lunch orders! And walks with my friends.'

— Connor, 16, Student

‘Since he began at Giant Steps, James has shown steady gains in a range of areas. The incorporation of community engagement in the curriculum and the in-school methodology have him bounding out of bed each morning with a smile on his face asking, ‘Giant Steps today?’

— Paul Dietzsch, Parent



“Giant Steps is not just a single place, but an entire community. The teachers, therapists, educators, support staff, families, friends and everyone in between all share the same passion, striving towards the same goal — to provide equal opportunities, a safe environment and a sense of purpose and joy to all students and participants. This is the goal today, tomorrow, next year, in 10 years and ongoing.”

— Andy Smith,
Adult Services Program Manager

‘I like Giant Steps because I get to play outside with friends. I like the friendly teachers. I like all the outdoor excursions especially going to Kmart’

— Demi, 10, Student

‘Lucy is at a school and part of a community where she is valued, safe and given every opportunity. The staff are outstanding, they are prepared to do anything required to provide the optimal environment for her learning and mental health. Giant Steps cover everything to make life easier — hair cuts, dentists, NDIS support, immunizations and holiday programs. We love it.’

— Naomi Simmonds, parent



‘A WHOLE NEW WORLD HAS OPENED UP FOR OUR CHILD AND FOR US AS A FAMILY IN GENERAL. MATTHEW IS NOW HAPPY TO ATTEND SCHOOL, FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER. THE AMOUNT OF SUPPORT THE SCHOOL HAS GIVEN US IN TRANSITIONING MATTHEW TO A NEW SCHOOL, NEW HOME AND NEW COMMUNITY HAS EXCEEDED ALL OUR EXPECTATIONS. GIANT STEPS MELBOURNE HAS CHANGED OUR SON’S LIFE AND IT IS THE BEST GIFT WE COULD EVER GIVE HIM.’

— Daniella Rogic, Parent





THE FUTURE

The future of Giant Steps Melbourne is promising and exciting. There is a clear path paved for where we need to go and how we can get there.

2022-2025



Malmsbury Campus Development Project

In 2019 Giant Steps received a \$9.7million grant from the Department of Infrastructure to redevelop the current Kew site to house a purpose built Adult Services facility, expand the senior school class rooms, staff rooms and specific therapy and program spaces. Unfortunately due to COVID-19 and various council hold ups we are delayed in commencing this project but aim to have it completed by 2024 which will allow Giant Steps Melbourne to double the cohort offering.

Program Expansion

It is fundamental to the Giant Steps model to ensure our students engage with their community and environment regularly and at various levels. We will continue to stimulate freshness into the curriculum that will provide learning opportunities outside the classroom walls.

Some of these programs include:

- Outdoor Education programs - all ages
- VCAL development
- Holiday programs
- Family support opportunities
- Sibling engagement programs

New College Campus Opportunities

As the college cohort expands, Giant Steps will be looking for a secondary site within close proximity to our Kew campus to expand on their programs and learning opportunities. The site will house areas for upskilling, life skill development and learning spaces for multi-disciplinary therapies, social enterprises and community engagement.

Cohort Growth

It is a priority to offer places to 4 more students over the next 12 months, growing the cohort to 37 students at school, reaching capacity at the current site. Giant Steps will continue to offer support to those families in need of services aiming to reduce the eligibility list as soon as class availability allows.



FINANCIALS

Each year there is a large funding gap between government funding and operating expenses and in FY2021 the fundraising target is almost \$1 million.

Giant Steps Melbourne is a registered Charity, a Public Benevolent Institution and a Deductible Gift Recipient.

Giant Steps was established in 1995 by a group of dedicated parents who wanted to bring world's best practice in the education and support of autistic children and adults to Australia. Some 26 years later, Giant Steps Melbourne, Giant Steps Sydney and the Autism Training Hub continue to be recognised as a centre of excellence responding to the growing demands of professional learning services and support for families and our expanding cohort.

FORECAST PROFIT & LOSS FY21

REVENUE

Donations	\$210,000
Parent Contributions	\$385,250
Fundraising	\$216,037
Commonwealth	\$1,330,472
State	\$176,832
Other Income	\$833,732

TOTAL \$3,152,073

OPERATING EXPENSES

Other Expenses*	\$220,054
Salaries & On-costs	\$2,643,561
Site Expenses	\$243,441

TOTAL** \$3,173,042

* Other Expenses includes teaching resources, insurances and general office expenses

** Does not include Depreciation expense of \$220,054

Thanks to PwC for auditing our financials each year and to Arnold Bloch Leibler for their legal support.

‘Before we found Giant Steps I couldn't see a path forward for my son. Thanks to Giant Steps, he now has a future.’

—Parent

THE TEAM

The team at Giant Steps is made up of:

8 AMAZING TEACHERS
22 WONDERFUL EDUCATORS
2 FABULOUS SPEECH THERAPISTS
3 FANTASTIC OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS
1 TALENTED MUSIC THERAPIST
2 KEY ADMINISTRATORS
& 1 ROCKSTAR PRINCIPAL.



Lain Adams, Frances Anderson-Dwyer, Leyla Araci, Davina Bate, Sarah Bylart, Vanessa Burns, Damien Chandler, Talia Cohen, Lucie Dorse, Liam Ellison, Sara Enderby, Luke Evans, Robert Feher, Rebecca Graham, Elizabeth Heaver, Katherine Hender, Ricky Holt, Alisha Hopkins, Noah Kay, Sam Kershler, Daryn Meyer-Jones, Tali Mervis, Luke Miranda, Kieu Nguyen, Albert Orr, Rebecca Paddick, Sonny Pettybourne, Georgia Pitts, Acacia Powell, Laura Presse, Rhiannon Robertson, Dale Rugachwa, Aman Singh, Andy Smith, Ebonie Smith, Angela Townsend, Claire Walker, Mathew Walker, Deli Winthrope.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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 Executive Chairman, Bega Cheese

Geoff Stein, Deputy Chairman
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 General Counsel & Company Secretary, Nine Entertainment

Amanda Coombs
 Financial Services Leader, Early Stage Investor, Giant Steps Parent

Daniel Fink
 Director, Family Office

Brett Kelly
 Company Secretary, Bega Cheese Limited

Glenn Poswell
 Founder Gannet Capital/Victor Smorgon Partner & Centennial Asset Management

Jessica Stimson
 Strategic Marketer, Giant Steps Parent

Jonathan Wenig
 Partner, Arnold Bloch Leibler

SUPPORTERS

Our GIANT thanks go out to our community of supporters who have attended our events, donated to our cause and continue to support our growth in so many ways to support as many children and young adults as possible live their most successful and fulfilled life.



The Giant Steps Trivia Night



The Giant Dinner

Corporate Donors and Grants

Alter Family Foundation
Bendigo Bank
Benjamin Duncan Foundation
Boroondara Youth Foundation
BP Foundation
Cher Family Foundation
Collier Charitable Fund
Finer Power Transmissions Pty Ltd
Gandel Foundation No.4
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Swann Family Foundation
The Coca-Cola Australia Foundation
The Pratt Foundation
The Werled Foundation
Westfarmers
Westfield Community

We would also like to acknowledge and thank our numerous anonymous donors who support us and continue to impact us with their generosity.

In-Kind Donors and Supporters

Anaconda
Arnold Bloch Leibler
Body Care
Crown Casino
Galit Krongold and Archie
Head On Media
High Street Medical Clinic
Krongold Construction Group
Kew Junction Traders Association
Ortolan
PwC
Sandy Rogulic
Spotlight
WellcoPure

The financial strength of the school would not be possible without the tireless work of the parent community who dedicate time, effort and care throughout the year to support all fundraising activity. We can't wait to celebrate our stories and community with you in the years to come.



Poker with the Stars



Scan and listen to the Giant Steps playlist.

This is a collection of the kids and teachers favourite songs that you can hear in the playground, as the kids arrive at school and at any opportunity to have a dance and a fun time. We hope you and your family enjoy it!

PS...make sure you turn it up loud!

GIGANT
STEPS
IS
THE PLACE
FOR YOU
AND ME

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