



Rotary NEXT STEP Program

Our Vision

Socially and economically disadvantaged young people are guided and supported through their transition from school to a first career job that matches their interests and competencies.

Our Mission

To support disadvantaged young people who attend mainly alternative schools primarily within the City of Yarra, who demonstrate the ability to complete an activity/project they are interested in and are recommended by their school. Provide them with a mentor, help them identify their competencies and first career job matching their interests. Develop a matching education plan, contribute to their education cost, train them with life skills and then help them to find and gain the first career job.

Why there is a need:

As described above the initially our participants typically live in inner city suburbs typically in the High Rise estates. These estates are considered some of the most disadvantaged areas in Melbourne. They are “disadvantaged” in every aspect of their lives and unemployment is as high as 60%. The young people mainly attend alternative or underfunded schools with limited capability to advise and support a young person’s career development and prepare them for a life time of work..

The young people come from Australia and an array of other countries examples are Ethiopia, Somalia, Liberia, Afghanistan, Turkey, Iran and Asia. Most have had a disrupted education and for some English is a newly acquired second language. Their circumstances may be the result of the breakup of their family, personal abuse, in trouble with the law, mental health issues, having refugee status, or a disadvantaged segment of our population such as aboriginal descent. They tend to be disconnected from society.

They do not live in an environment that has the knowledge or capability to support them from school into a working environment of any description and certainly not capable of helping a young person achieve any longer term career objective.

To our surprise many of the young people we have interviewed for a place in the Rotary Next Step Program have a view of what they want to achieve. These views however may not be always realistic. Few of them have any idea how to achieve their goal, nor is there anyone who is focused on helping them. This is the purpose of the Rotary NEXT STEP Program.

How we connect with and recruit our participants.

Our participants are young people attending an array of non mainstream or under resourced schools. They include Sydney Road Community School, Lynall Hall, Collingwood Alternative School, Collingwood English Language School, Collingwood College, Princes Hill Secondary College, NMIT – Yamec, Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. They are usually in Year 10 at the time we invite them to participate. Programs such as the Rotary Club of Richmond's Youth Arts Project are used to identify and connect with young people who demonstrate their enthusiasm to complete a project. The completion of a project combined with a teacher/youth worker recommendation ensure we focus on the young people most in need.

The stages in the project:

1. The interview and offer of a Mentor

In our first interview explaining the project to the young person we encourage them to have a Mentor for it provides a source of stability in their unstable world. If they decide, with the support of their parents or guardian (if they have them) they want a Mentor, they complete the application and are matched to a Mentor. This is arranged by our project partners **Big Brothers Big Sisters** or and can take some time. Mentors also come from other sources.

2. Discovering an individuals strengths and potential career goals.

The next step is to help the young person discover their capability strengths and interests thereby clarifying a potential career goal. This is achieved with the use of the support of our project partner **Chandler Macleod's CMY People** using their unique online Employability Skills Profiler. The projects Youth Support Worker conducts the individual testing in conjunction with the person responsible for career guidance. The results are discussed with the young person and with help and understanding a plan is progressively developed to achieve the first career job and education.

3. We organise Work Experience with the school

Work experience programs exist in most schools however our objective is to give it greater focus in line with the first career job. Using the Rotary Network we are more able to find the work experience to match the first career job. This helps us discover if the young person is enthusiastic about the opportunity

4. We provide key life skills and support in gaining the first career job

The "How to Get a Job" training helps a young person understand the nature of work, how to define their interests, experiences, and understand how to define their first career goal job. It helps them understand the career guidance they receive. We teach how to research where to find that job and apply for it and then train them to develop interviewing skills.

We train in "How to Manage Money" including, financial goal setting, budgeting, managing debt and investing.

We will also offer training in "Effective Communication Skills".

We organise training to gain a Driving Licence and First Aid Training.

The training is delivered by volunteer practicing professionals.

5. We help find the first career job. We prepare the young person to apply for the job and the interview.

6. We make a contribution to the costs of the tertiary education related to the first career job.

Throughout the three year program a participant can earn as a reward for completing training, career guidance, maintaining contact, completing work experience, attending interviews up to **\$700 of Educational Credits** payable to an education Institution on the invoice.

In summary

The project case manages young people through during the final years of school and transition into employment typically over a three year period from around 16 to 19 years of age.

Currently there are 45 young people in the program. Each year we induct about 15 new participants and graduate up to 15 young people.



Graduating
“How to Get a Job” - Kate Norton - HR Manager Formero



Graduating
“How to Manage Money” - Gavin Martin - Cornerstone Wealth with Alissa Walsh Youth Support worker



Gavin in the classroom



Addo and his mentor Rohan



“How to Manage Money” with Gavin Martin