



United Way Glenelg

MEDIA RELEASE

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Crowdfunding Event Generates Over \$55,000 for Community Projects

In a testament to the enduring spirit of community generosity, United Way Glenelg is thrilled to announce the remarkable success of this year's SharkPitch event, which raised over \$55,000 through virtual means despite the challenging times we face.

Over 100 individuals enthusiastically participated in the virtual fundraising event from the comfort of their homes, with an additional 60-80 gathering at viewing parties across Casterton & Portland to support three commendable community projects.

With the engaging guidance of MC Neil O'Donnell and Susie Lyons, the audience was motivated to pledge their support to their preferred project. We are grateful for the backing of AWA Alliance Bank, which generously matched pledges up to \$18,000.

Now in its fifth year, SharkPitch has attracted participants from as far afield as Queensland, Sydney and Melbourne.

Multiple viewing parties were organised, including one hosted by United Way Glenelg at The Royal Hotel Cool Room and another at Casterton-Sanford Football Netball Club.

The event began with student Hayley Pumpa from Portland Bay School painting a picture for the audience of young people who yearn for an outdoor space equipped with engaging, purpose-built activity stations to provide healthy, and enjoyable interactions for herself and her friends during lunchtime.

Hannah Palfreyman then presented a well-structured argument outlining the benefits of fitness equipment for students at both Portland Bay School and Portland Primary School.

Portland Bay School initially aimed to raise \$15,000 for the complete installation of one station, complete with three interactive exercise units. Remarkably, they surpassed their target, amassing a total of \$16,660. Steve Crossley, Principal of Portland Bay School, expresses his delight at this achievement.

Kane Forbes, representing Hands-up Casterton, opened his pitch with a beloved motto, "Love many, Trust few, learn to paddle your own canoe," while emphasizing that life's events should not determine our future selves.

Committed to providing young people in Casterton with opportunities akin to his own, he urged the virtual audience to consider the prospect of another child enduring similar circumstances without a support network or role model to navigate the challenges they face.

Hands-up Casterton set an initial goal of \$20,000, which would sustain a youth space and program for an entire year, allowing it to establish itself and deliver tangible benefits to both individuals and the broader community. Remarkably, they exceeded their target, raising a total of \$21,724.

The youngest and final pitchers of the night Jack Thorpe, 18 and Stella Middleton, 14 started their pitch with a shocking statistic with evidence that in 2023 young people are facing record levels of physical inactivity and mental health issues.

As passionate and accomplished BMX riders, they shared their compelling testimonies about the profound value and impact that riding, camaraderie, and friendship have had on their lives.

Jack and Stella set out with the goal of raising \$17,000 to acquire a new building to serve as their upcoming clubroom and canteen. As an additional incentive, Mayor Scott Martin and Councillors Jayden Smith and Michael Carr promised to take a lap around the BMX track alongside the young pitchers if the fundraising objective was met. Remarkably, they surpassed their target, amassing a total of \$17,258, leading to Councillors Gilbert Wilson and Karen Stephens being encouraged to join their fellow council members in the lap.

Nicole Carr Executive Officer of United Way Glenelg said the pitchers put a phenomenal amount of work into raising funds for their projects.

"All the pitchers hit the streets, hosted sausage sizzles, raffles, reached out to MPs, and enlisted the support of friends, family, and colleagues, and even coordinated in-kind support worth thousands of dollars."

"From Queensland to Sydney to Melbourne, people came together to support Hannah Palfreyman and Hayley Pumpa from Portland Bay School, Kane Forbes from Hands Up Casterton and Jack Thorpe & Stella Middleton from Portland BMX Club. Their hard work paid off."

All the pitchers were coached with the support of Debra Crespan, who helped them refine their storytelling skills through an intensive workshop and follow-up support.

Now in its fifth year, SharkPitch has raised an impressive \$266,000 for community projects in the Glenelg Shire.

Gavin Heathcote, CEO of AWA Alliance Bank, expressed his delight at the event's success. "AWA is so pleased to be able to be part of what a wonderful community and event!"

For those who missed the 2023 Virtual Live SharkPitch, you can watch the replay here <https://youtu.be/YIDp1I6nE3w>

You can still pledge your support for your favourite project by clicking here <https://www.givenow.com.au/unitedwayglenelg>

If you would like more information on how to get involved in the 2024 event, please contact Nicole Carr at United Way Glenelg at mail@unitedwayglenelg.com.au or by calling 0410 513 305.

Photo: Jack Thorp, 18, and Stella Middleton, 14, preparing for their pitch.

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