



Commencing with Ganbina in 2010, Lachlan Harlow is now in Year 10 at Melbourne Grammar School.

Equity Trustees

The Killen Family Foundation was established in 2008 by Tony Killen, Chairman of the Board of Equity Trustees and his wife Kay, with a particular focus on supporting the Indigenous community through education initiatives.

Since its inception the Killen Family Foundation has funded, among other charities, Opening Doors Foundation which benefits primary and secondary Indigenous students in educational institutions in Victoria, Worawa Aboriginal College's Scholarship Program and the Monash University Indigenous Initiatives Fund.

With philanthropic support, Monash University of which Mr Killen is an alumnus, has continued to develop new programs with a focus on individual experiences, mentoring and leadership to encourage young Indigenous people to complete secondary education and go on to a successful tertiary education.

Opening the Doors Foundation which assists Indigenous students to participate in all aspects of their education has grown from 32 students in 2001 to 520 students in 2011.

The Australian Government in its Indigenous Reform Agenda, *Closing the Gap*, a commitment to improving the lives of Indigenous Australians and providing a better future for Indigenous children, acknowledged the value of corporate, NGO and philanthropic support in assisting Indigenous people and communities.

Good health and good jobs are underpinned by a good education including the achievement of foundation skills in literacy and numeracy. To that end, the Killen Family Foundation is focused on supporting initiatives to provide Indigenous families a choice in educating their children well into the future – and closing the gap.

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Red Dust Role Models

By **Darren Smith**, Chief Executive Officer, Red Dust Role Models.

In remote regions of Australia some children have limited opportunities in life due to geographical isolation, limited access to education, socioeconomic conditions, severe health and hygiene issues or lack of safe and suitable play environments. Red Dust Role Models seeks to improve the general health and wellbeing of disadvantaged Indigenous youth by addressing obvious health challenges and improving educational opportunities. Red Dust seeks to remove barriers, enable access and create opportunities that provide pathways for positive social change.

Red Dust Role Models Ltd was registered as an Australian health promotion charity in 2006. The Red Dust Lifestyle Education program has been designed for youth between the ages of eight to 18 who are widely acknowledged as 'disadvantaged' or 'severely disadvantaged'. Communities currently engaged in the program include; Nauiyu (Daly River) NT, Nguui (Tiwi Islands), Kintore NT, Areyonga NT, Lajamanu NT, and Yuendumu NT.

The Red Dust Lifestyle Education Program is conducted over a four to five day community visit using a combination of numeracy and literacy based classroom lessons, sports activities, coaching clinics, music workshops and art and cultural activities that actively engage youth and the broader community. Red Dust has developed the program through extensive consultation with key stakeholders within each community including Traditional Owners and community elders. In doing this, Red Dust has formed strong relationships within each community making it possible to deliver a program that is reflective of what each individual community wants and needs.



Red Dust – Daly River.



Red Dust – Daly River.



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As a health promotion charity, Red Dust understands that education and positive health outcomes are necessary to break the cycle of poverty and to build community capacity. Red Dust also understands that participation in music and art activities are excellent opportunities for children and youth to develop physical, emotional, intellectual and social skills. However, art and music programs are often unavailable or are severely under-funded, particularly in remote Indigenous communities that do not have the resources or personnel to dedicate to these important educational programs.

Red Dust music and art programs work in conjunction with schools and community groups to deliver health and educational content in creative learning environments whilst continuing to develop and improve their literacy skills. The children are also empowered to express themselves creatively in non-threatening environments to help build upon their self-esteem and personal growth.

The objective of the art and music workshops is to assist with improving school attendance and retention and to identify and mentor local youth ‘Champions’ or role models within each community. Red Dust believes that art and music programs help to build the capacity of youth by empowering them to become respected role models within their communities.

Program benefits:

- provides a strong foundation on which to build community relationships and create a sense of value for education;
- assists in the development of literacy and communication skills, collaborative learning and social skills;
- promotes education as a means to achieving goals and gaining meaningful employment;
- provides leadership development opportunities through the fostering of peer mentors, as well as community mentors; and
- increased school attendance during weeks of program delivery.

Delivery method:

The Red Dust teams guide students through a curriculum specific for each community visit utilising a variety of music, singing and performance, dance and art, video production, drama and presentation. Outcomes and achievements are celebrated and acknowledged at the end of each term with a community concert/festival.

The monitoring process includes:

- the number of Indigenous people who successfully participated in each program;
- comparative participation numbers upon each program delivery;
- the percentage of male and female participants in activity and average age; and
- anecdotal or qualitative data from community leaders, community stakeholders and students.

Each Red Dust team that visits a community comprises of individuals with a passion to work with children and expertise in their chosen field. The arts based Role Models vary from accomplished artists, in both traditional and contemporary mediums, to musicians and producers, film makers and talented dancers in a variety of styles.

A typical music based program might include writing, producing and creating a film clip of a song which has a strong health message. Whilst an art based program might include the creation of a mural for the community, working on posters about eating healthy food or screen printing T-shirts with positive health messages on them.

A Red Dust visit to a community is not about the high profile of the Role Model or what being part of Red Dust may do for someone’s public persona. Red Dust is about working alongside the community leaders and people who work and live in communities full-time to positively invest in kids in ways that help to improve their overall health and outlook for the future. ■