

Alice Springs Early Childhood Literacy Scholarship



Rotary Club of Alice Springs Mbantua

Information Pamphlet

Introduction

The *Alice Springs Early Childhood Literacy Scholarship* connects early childhood aged participants in Alice Springs to the Kumon literacy program by covering the costs of the program.

The scholarship – and the work of families and the whole community – has the potential to make a profound difference to the literacy outcomes of a recipient's life.

Why this work is important

This scholarship works on a simple basis: it aims to attract Aboriginal families who want to see strong literacy outcomes for their children and are willing to work hard to achieve this, but lack the opportunities to do so.

This initiative recognises the importance of early childhood education and its potential to a life of learning.

Why the whole community needs to be involved

Improving literacy outcomes requires effort across the whole community.

First, **finding appropriate recipients requires the use of networks and contacts.** People and networks are often the best resource. If you know of a potential recipient please contact the project coordinator.

Second, **strong family support** to improve the literacy outcomes of the scholarship recipient **is necessary.**

The *Rotary Club of Alice Springs Mbantua* coordinates the initiative on a voluntary basis. The Club actively seeks sponsors of scholarships and connects potential recipients.

This pamphlet aims to promote the initiative and seek support and connections across Alice Springs.

It recognises the hurdles that Aboriginal families face and the challenges of being strong in culture and strong also in literacy.

It is an initiative done on a voluntary basis made possible by the support of scholarship sponsors and the work of families.

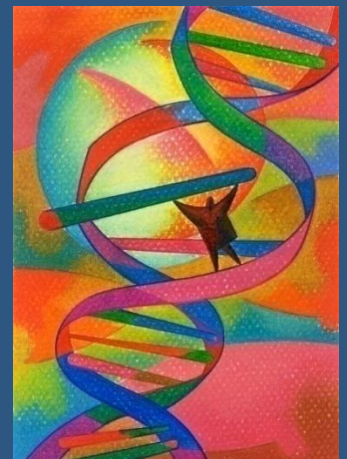
There must be active family engagement.

Third, schools play an important role supporting Aboriginal students. Support for literacy outcomes **requires the use of all available resources and support networks** to encourage outcomes. Those involved in ensuring this scholarship works well hope to tap into these resources and put in place a whole-of-community effort.

“This scholarship, and the work of families and the whole community, has the potential to make a profound difference to the literacy outcomes of a recipient's life.

This scholarship is valued at over \$1'000 a year and is aimed at the early childhood aged level (4 years+)”

A community project put together by the **Rotary Club of Alice Springs Mbantua** but made possible by the generosity of sponsors and the work of families.



Strong literacy in the early childhood stage of the individual puts in place the building blocks for expanded choice and opportunity later in life.

The Rotary Club of Alice Springs Mbantua is coordinating the scholarship initiative as a community service project.

Club details:

President (2009-2010)
Jean-Luc Revel

Mobile 0401 117 560

Post PO Box 2705
Alice Springs NT 0871

The project coordinator is John Rawnsley. Please contact John to discuss the possibility of becoming a sponsor or to find out more information:

Mobile 0439 881 009

Email rawnsleyj@gmail.com

Correspondence to the club postal address noted above.

The criteria we look for is aimed towards success

The first scholarship was organised in 2009. The *Rotary Club of Alice Springs Mbantua* set out three simple criteria:

- **Early childhood aged applicants of Aboriginal descent (aged 4+)**

By identifying early childhood aged participants the scholarship offers the greatest potential to assist at such a crucial age of a young person's learning life.

- **Applicants with solid support from families to oversee their child's participation in the program (Kumon relies on strong and active family support)**

There are many Aboriginal families who want to see strong literacy outcomes for their children but lack structured opportunities. This scholarship aims to fill this gap.

- **Applicants from a background where the opportunities to engage in the Kumon program would not otherwise exist (e.g. financial position of family or language barriers)**

This scholarship actively considers the circumstances of the family to identify factors that limit the opportunity to engage such a focused and structured literacy program. The third criterion is based on need.

Why the Kumon program?

Kumon is an internationally recognised Maths and Literacy program with a centre in Alice Springs.

The Kumon program was chosen because the Rotary member who put this initiative together could see its benefits through the participation of his 6 year old son. Through this participation and observance it was recognised that the Kumon method suits any child regardless of background. The observation was also made that there appeared to be minimal Aboriginal engagement in the program, although there were (and continue to be) many Aboriginal families who could benefit.

The physical presence of the centre and twice weekly visits provides added support to families.

This scholarship initiative is being developed with a focus on continual improvement and evaluation. The criteria used for selection considers the likelihood of success in terms of engaging the Kumon program.

For more information about Kumon and the Kumon method please visit <http://au.kumonglobal.com/>

How the scholarship works

The *Rotary Club of Alice Springs Mbantua* is a community service organisation run by volunteers. This club assists as a liaison point between the scholarship recipient and the scholarship sponsor. It actively seeks scholarship sponsors from across Australia and connects scholarship recipient families.

Key aspects:

- The club calls for expressions of interest from residents of Alice Springs to identify potential recipients;
- The club is always approaching funding sources from across Australia seeking sponsorship of scholarships;
- A selection committee comprising 3 members of the *Rotary Club of Alice Springs Mbantua* assess potential recipients;
- The recipient family is invited to attend the Kumon centre and assess whether they are interested in meeting the expectations;
- The project coordinator works with the recipient family and various support mechanisms (including schools) to encourage the best outcomes.

This scholarship serves to compliment the hard work of schools and teachers.