Dear valued supporters

Many thanks for your support in 2016. We trust you had a happy Christmas and lovely break. In 2017 we look forward to presenting you with our actual bus, around Easter. Enjoy reading about our achievements up until Christmas.

- Although our wonderful Support Teacher Kathy Green and the many Dubbo volunteers who help the day to day running of the project are on school holidays, we would like to acknowledge the lovely staff at our new address sharing with Vanguard Business Services at 24 Erskine Street. Mark Gardner is the company Director and Senior Farm Consultant specialising in holistic farm & land management. They have welcomed us with open arms and Mark has even held a fundraiser for us! mark.gardner@vbs.net.au

- In September volunteer Director Donna Rees and our Audiologist Robyn Little attended OMOZ (Otitis Media Australia) conference in Newcastle. We are very proud to have Donna attend to present details of our project. All Ear Specialists attending were very impressed particularly with the ear health education part of our project. Some have offered their help. http://www.omoz2016.com.au/

- 26th November we were nominated for and were successful with receiving a Women out West Award for the best Community Organisation. These awards cover an area from Orana, Central West and Far West regions of NSW. Sandra Sully presented the award at a glitzy evening of glamour.

- 8th December we received a welcome phone call from Troy Grant advising us that we were successful with a $50 000, 2016 Community Building Partnership program grant. Work to install the sound proof booth in our bus began the next day! The fit out of the bus is being managed by Scott Wilkins of Alloy Welding in Dubbo and expertly constructed by Gary Nichols of Outback Caravans. The latest photos of construction are available on Facebook and 2 have been attached to this email. The bus is expected to be in schools after Easter and Sainsbury Automotive are organising a cocktail party to launch the bus.

- We would like to acknowledge and thank local Nurse Audiometrists for working with us in 2016 to test children in Wellington and Gilgandra; Rachel Kirsop, Margo Piggott, Trish George and Trish Thorne. Thank you Maryanne Chatfield and Darren Ah-See for supplying your wonderful staff. This not only saves the project money, it enables teamwork to access and support children in a timely manner.

- We would also like to acknowledge and thank Dubbo local Ear Specialists and staff with Dr Hayder Ridha and Ibbi Rabie for allowing us to hold our own Supported Clinics with them in partnership with the Department of Education Conductive Hearing Loss Program. Hayder and Ibbi are wonderful in supplying instant advice via text or email when we need them. They are both dedicated to our project.
Thank you to those schools who were busy fundraising for us in Term 4, 2016. West Dubbo Public School, Orana Heights Public School, St Mary’s Wellington, Wellington High School, Regand Park Early Childhood Education Centre, Dubbo Public School, Yeoval Pre School and Yeoval Central School. A lovely story from Leeanne Lee at Wellington Public School. For a full term, Staff and students collected their small change for the ‘Five Cent Friday’ challenge and competed to see which class could have the heaviest coin tin by the end of Week 8. A total of 56.2 kg was collected by the whole school with the winning class 4E collecting 7.1kgs of this total. They won a prize for their efforts! Total collected was $859.60. A good idea for schools to adopt this year perhaps?

Royal Institute for Deaf and Blind Children (RIDBC) has committed again to support us with supplying Audiologists for 2 visits of 4 days per visit in 2017. In 2016 they were a wonderful help testing with us in Trangie, Warren and Dubbo. http://www.ridbc.org.au/

Working with local organisations has been a key to our success and has enabled children to access services in a much more timely manner. Australian Hearing have been a wonderful support. Along with Audiometrist Sahar Salman at Dr Ridha’s surgery and the wonderful staff at Hearing Life Dubbo. We look forward to working again with you in 2017.

This year we begin another new partnership. We are proud to be working with Macquarie University Audiology students where they will be assisting, at no cost to us, with hearing testing under the guidance of our HoH Audiologist Robyn Little.

We have found this year that our project has been particularly beneficial for Private schools who are not able to access support from hearing support teachers like childcare and government schools can. Kathy has been assisting private schools with this support where their children have been referred on by us and then fitted for a hearing aid. A lovely story from St Mary’s Primary in Dubbo. In a time frame of 6 weeks we have made an enormous difference to the life of student Benjamin Crimmins. He had a hearing test at school, a free supported ear specialist appointment and a supported Australian Hearing appointment with Kathy. This resulted in Benjamin getting booked for ear surgery and a hearing aid. Mum Alison promptly joined our committee! Thank you Ben and Alison for sharing your journey with us and welcome to the Dubbo Deaf Club family. The power of a group of passionate people wanting to help the kids in our community!

We have been busy submitting applications for large grants as funds are slipping away. We have contracted the Grants Hub to help us. http://www.thegrantshub.com.au/ If you are aware of any places for us to apply please let us know as once the money is all gone we will have to stop.

The Hear our Heart Office will be open again from Week 2 of school. The week beginning 30th January.

Until next month,
Regards on behalf of all at the HoHEBP town committees

Sue Went
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January, 2017