

Media Release

Chiefs of Staff, News Directors

Thursday, 16 June 2016

Children's University forges fun pathways into further learning in Tasmania's North-West

A successful University of Tasmania learning initiative aimed at raising the aspirations of young children while broadening their horizons, has been officially launched in Tasmania's North-West.

Students from East Devonport Primary School are the first in the region to be issued with their Passports to Learning, as part of the Children's University program, which also provides pathways into further education in a bid to boost educational attainment across the state.

The Children's University promotes education by encouraging students aged 7 – 14 to engage in learning activities outside of school hours, where they can collect stamps for their passport, which culminates in a graduation ceremony at the end of the academic year.

Susannah Coleman-Brown, Coordinator of Children's University Tasmania, said it was exciting to see the program expanding since officially launching in the state last year.

"Our hope is through engagement with this program, students will move through their lives with experiences that will influence them to make positive decisions later in life," Ms Coleman-Brown said.

The Children's University is led by the Peter Underwood Centre for Educational Attainment, which aims to inspire Tasmanians to embrace learning.

"The Children's University allows young people to explore their passions and interests, however it also brings together teachers, parents and communities in the region to foster improved educational outcomes for local children," Centre Director Professor Elaine Stratford said.

"Children participating in this initiative can try a range of activities, and these experiences could be the starting point of a successful journey towards higher education and beyond that, achieving something great in the future."

East Devonport Primary School Advanced Skills Teacher Sharon Daly said the Children's University initiative was an amazing opportunity for students to be recognised for learning activities they participated in outside of the classroom.

"This is a wonderful opportunity for us to offer new experiences to our students through the Children's University and it is also great that students who may not have considered university now get this avenue to explore higher education as a possibility for their future in a really nice way," Ms Daly said.

Organisations hosting activities for the North-West Children's University Tasmania program include the Devonport Regional Gallery, Slipstream Circus, Cradle Coast Natural Resource Management, Devonport Gymnastics, Girl Guides Tasmania, and the Australian Axeman's Hall of Fame.

The Children's University began in the UK in the early 1990s. Adelaide University secured the Australian rights to the program in 2013 and last year the University of Tasmania became the first in the country to join them.

The Children's University has now been successfully rolled out in 12 schools across Tasmania. More than 300 students hold Passports to Learning and will graduate at University of Tasmania campuses in December.

Information released by:

University of Tasmania, Communications and Media Office

Phone: Ben Wild 0438 510 616

Email: Media.Office@utas.edu.au