



UNIVERSITY *of*
TASMANIA

Tuesday 11 December 2018

Tiny town's big heart embraces Children's University Tasmania

Siblings Blake and Izabella Riley, and Nyasha Mukarati will be proudly representing the tiny town of Wilmot at today's Children's University Tasmania graduations in Burnie.

A picture-perfect farming community, nestled between Cradle Mountain, Lake Barrington and the shores of Bass Strait, Wilmot is best known for being the site of the original Coles store.

Sadly, the store was lost in a fire in 2014, but Wilmot's quirky Letterbox Trail, local museum and emerging tourism ventures are indicative of the pride locals have for their community and its many assets.

And the heart of the community is the historic local school.

Wilmot Primary has just 27 students, but Principal Rochelle Cunningham said it was a special place to be.

"It is a lovely school, and it is the hub of the community," Ms Cunningham said.

"The local families really support the school, and everyone turns up to every event we have."

Year 4 Blake, his Prep sister Izabella and Year 6 Nyasha are the first students from Wilmot to graduate from Children's University Tasmania and will be among the 125 North-West members who will have the honour of leading the University of Tasmania's Town and Gown procession through the streets of Burnie today.

Philanthropic support from the Tasmanian Community Fund has enabled Children's University Tasmania to be extended to 10 schools in the North-West in 2018.

The other participating schools are Devonport High, Devonport Primary, East Devonport Primary, Hillcrest Primary, Miandetta Primary, Montello Primary, Parklands High, Romaine Park Primary and Spreyton Primary.

Children's University Tasmania was launched in Tasmania in July 2015 through the Peter Underwood Centre at the University of Tasmania.

The program helps to develop children into adaptable, lifelong learners and builds bridges to employment and higher education by providing a diverse range of learning experiences outside of school hours.

Each member is issued with a *Passport to Learning* in which the hours of activity at validated Learning Destinations are recorded.

Once they have reached the required number of hours, members graduate from Children's University Tasmania.

Ms Cunningham said Wilmot students had accumulated hours developing products from the school's farm to sell at the town's Saturday market; engaging in regular activities such as sport, dance and music; and participating in the Children's University Tasmania school holiday programs.

"The kids have enjoyed it, and the little group of three who are graduating are very excited," she said.

More than 500 people will be attending the Children's University Tasmania Graduation ceremony at the Town Hall.

Peter Underwood Centre Deputy Director Dr Becky Shelley said graduations were a wonderful celebration of the achievements of the children and young people, and the role their families and school communities have played in helping them to engage in extracurricular activities.

"It is such a positive and joyous occasion, and emotional for all concerned," Dr Shelley said.

Photo/interview opportunity:

Who: Wilmot Primary School Principal Rochelle Cunningham, and students Blake and Izabella Riley, and Nyasha Mukarati.

When: 1:40 pm, TODAY, Tuesday, 11 December. Town and Gown to begin at 2 pm.

Where: Burnie City Council Chambers.

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Information released by:

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