

MENDI BLACKHAWKS SKY'S THE LIMIT SUBMISSION 2022

CATEGORY: JOHN KNIPE AWARD

NOMINATION: MENDI BLACKHAWKS SKY'S THE LIMIT



TOWNSVILLE HAS A LONG-DOCUMENTED HISTORY OF YOUTH-CRIME ON A NATIONAL SCALE. "SKY'S THE LIMIT" IS A COMMUNITY PROGRAM BY THE MENDI BLACKHAWKS DELIVERED TO SCHOOLS IN THE TOWNSVILLE AREA.

The program launched in 2018 is designed to help students improve in their academic performance, increase school attendance, live healthier lifestyles, and make positive lifestyle choices. Originally, our Sky's the Limit program commenced in the Townsville area with a pilot program initially launched at Rasmussen State School and has already increased to three other schools in the Townsville region. However, with the continued success of this program, we aim to deliver the program throughout our footprint, into the Western Corridor which extends over 900km out to Mount Isa and all regional towns in between.

The "Sky's the Limit" Community Programs aim is to improve academic and social outcomes for schools and students, by leveraging the student's interest in rugby league. Mendi Blackhawks players and our Development Officer visit the schools to deliver the program on a regular basis. We also provide a healthy breakfast for the students each morning, to give those involved every opportunity to achieve at school that day.

We contacted primary schools to identify children to participate in the program based on attendance, behaviour, and classroom engagement. These students receive a "Sky's the Limit" workbook to complete, as well as participating in Rugby League skills and drills activities. Once they complete the workbook, they then have an opportunity to be rewarded with a "Money Can't Buy" Blackhawks home game day experience, which includes running the team out on the field for the game, merchandise, tickets, and transportation to the game for them and their family.

We have used Rugby League to capture the young audience, with all subjects relating to the Mendi Blackhawks and sport. Once the children work through the program, they will begin to learn the importance of attending school, healthy eating and using positive behaviour. With the support of the Queensland Police and collaboration from local schools, the design of the program will not only educate students but provide them with activities they enjoy. These lessons will then spread out from the classrooms into the school yard and wider community. We believe the program will be a success and will benefit the entire community.

It differs from other classroom-based solutions as most of these children look at the Blackhawks players as idols.

Additionally, some of our Blackhawks players understand the difficulties in the community and can talk from life experiences that the children can connect with.

Positive changes from students are measured by reductions in absenteeism, improved school culture, as well as a reduction in bullying and aggressive behaviour at school.

The increased number of young people participating in physical activity and eating a healthy balanced diet at school regularly has also increased.

This program is important to the Mendi Blackhawks because we are passionate about giving young people every opportunity to reach their full potential and to help give life direction to children that need it most.

We have received wonderful support from the Queensland Police and our host club, Brothers Leagues Club Townsville.

"THIS PROGRAM IS HAVING A POSITIVE EFFECT ON THE TROUBLED CHILDREN IN THESE SCHOOLS AND IT'S MOTIVATING THEM TO DO THE RIGHT THING."

- Sergeant Matthew Dixon, Townsville Police

"BEHAVIOUR HAS WELL AND TRULY IMPROVED OVER THE LAST TERM."

- Brad Coey-Braddon, Acting Deputy Principal, Weir State School



Proud supporter of the education, health and wellbeing in the community.

