

# 20 years of Kids Hope

## in Mooroolbark

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**“One Child. One Hour. Once a week”.** This is the motto for Kids Hope Australia. A simple statement but one with remarkable impact.

Kids Hope is a charitable organisation that connects a local primary school with a local church that provides volunteers to spend time with a student who needs some extra care and support through a one-to-one mentoring relationship. It is the largest early intervention mentoring program in the country and it started in Australia right here in the Yarra Valley. Next year will be the 20th year that Kids Hope has been operating.

Kids Hope is registered as a ‘Quality Assured Program’ with the Australian Youth Mentoring Network, and it provides an effective, proven intervention for children needing additional support in schools.<sup>1</sup> Two of our Living Today team writers, Randall and Mary Bouchier from Grace Communion Mooroolbark, have been mentoring with Kids Hope at Pembroke Primary School from the very start. Combined they have mentored over 20 different students and are still going strong. As the motto suggests, the idea

behind Kids Hope is that one adult spends one hour per week with one student and usually continues until that student graduates from the school. In essence, a meaningful relationship can extend over the whole primary school life for the student. Mary Bouchier says, “Though the basics for being a good friend like kindness, patience and attentive listening haven’t changed, today’s children face many different challenges in growing up to what we experienced as children, so being a mentor means being willing to learn, too. And having fun, being creative, and having a sense of humour makes the time pass too quickly!”.

Mooroolbark Baptist Church and Life Ministry Church, along with many other churches in the surrounding postcodes, are also part of the Kids Hope program. We are so appreciative of the work of Kids Hope as 20 years of partnerships comes up and we want to celebrate and thank all the churches that are involved and all the mentors that give of their time each week. Let’s celebrate 20 years in 2024!

<sup>1</sup> <https://kidshope.org.au/>