At my school we have a special program for our students and I am sure that all readers of this newsletter are well aware of the Stephanie Alexander Kitchen Garden (SAKG). School is a place for learning and to many people from different perspectives and generations this might mean different things. The great challenge today is firstly trying to teach children for their future and not our past; and it’s a future we cannot predict; not even five to ten years from now. The other great challenge is to try and create an environment whereby children want or need to learn because it is relevant, challenging, and that learning is required to achieve success in carrying out a task. We call this ‘authentic learning’ and I think it is the most exciting form of teaching and learning in schools today. But it is not easy making this happen. It is hard work.

The SAKG program manages to address these educational issues. In brief, exposure to environmental and self-sufficiency issues through their time in the garden enables children to prepare for and think about an uncertain future (the recent G20 meetings in Brisbane saw the most powerful people in the world discussing climate change) and both the garden and the kitchen in particular require certain skills in completing/producing a real world product (i.e. putting a meal on the table).

The SAKG program here at Dunkeld School began with start-up funding. After just 3 years in operation and a considerable investment in infrastructure and resources we would be facing the proposition of terminating the program as the start-up funding came to its end. For it to continue, the SAKG would need annual funding and this looked like being an enormous drain of the time and energy on school community members, on top of commitments already testing the capacity of those involved.

During this year, many good people involved in the school community got together and decided to approach individuals and businesses around Dunkeld and in Hamilton. As a result, we are close to being able to ensure that the SAKG will continue its good work for a further five years. Importantly, it means our School community can take a breather from this challenge while concentrating on other important support projects for our school and ultimately the children we care about.

This article is an opportunity to express our sincere gratitude and amazement at the generosity and trust people have extended towards our school through making financial commitments towards the SAKG, both large and small, long term and single offers. And so the children of Dunkeld Consolidated school need to be thankful to these people:

- **Aquila Eco Lodge**s Harry and Iwona Wakeling
- **Raivac Transport** Simon Armitage
- **Bendigo Bank**
- **Todd and Carol Burger**
- **Des Burgess**
- **Café 109** Malcolm Russell
- **Cogger Gurry Accountants**
- **Doug Craig**
- **Dunkeld & District Lions Club**
- **Elders** David White
- **Fitzpatrick Builders** Dennis and Ingrid Fitzpatrick
- **Fort Electricians** Alan and Tracey Fort
- **Bill and Heather Funk**
- **Andrew and Keryn Gordon**
- **Brendan and Dinah Gordon**
- **Grampians Cricket Club**
- **Griffins Hill** Frank Jesse and Jane Gibb
- **John and Yvonne Hallam**
- **Hamilton Real Estate** Simon Cullinane
- **Geoff Handbury**
- **Huf Builders** Andrew and Annette Huf
- **Izzy’s Mountain View Café** Melanie Peace
- **Adrian Kelly**
- **Lake Repose** Robin Jackson
- **Mark Lazzari Gardening**
- **Royal Mail Hotel**
- **Roxburgh Café** Bruach Colliton
- **Swan Hill Bus Lines** Peter Pickering
- **The Planning Connection** Lucinda Peterson
- **Waltanna Farms** Mike and Bronnie Nagorcka
- **Williamson Plumbing** Craig and Eda Williamson

Importantly, I would like the community to know that our task is not completed. We are close, as mentioned about but we are looking for further support to tie up the certainty of five more years of SAKG. I know that many in the local community have not been invited to consider financial commitments for our program and so for those who would like to be part of this initiative, please contact our school on 5577 2384, any members of the School Council who may be known to you or by emailing direct to jeffreys.paul.m@edumail.vic.gov.au

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