

# The Sharon Faye Foundation Quarterly

January 2017 Volume No. 3

## Dear Friends

We welcome the opportunity to share our experiences with you and to keep you up to date with the Foundation's activities. It has been a big few months at the Foundation. We have hit the media again and kicked off the 'Building Emotional Strength in Education' project. Sharon ran her 6th marathon.

### At a glance:

- Sharon presented to 40 principals and regional heads at the WA Primary Principal's Association ( WAPPA) State Assembly in October, 2016. She shared her ES journey, outlined our research project and invited expressions of interest from the audience.
- Sharon's presentation generated an overwhelming response, with principals lining up afterwards to get in first. What we got from it is how much principals want to generate positive change in their schools, but don't know how to make it happen. Tristan was a wonderful support on the day.
- Our story "Can Anybody Hear Me?" was published in the online magazine *The Educator* on 12 October 2016. This was followed up the next day with a piece on the Foundation's education research plans, headlined "Study aims to boost teachers' emotional strength."
- Sharon's life story was published in the *West Weekend* magazine on November 26 2016 under the headline "Inside Out."
- The response to this feature article has been tremendous and it will take us quite a while to respond to each and every one of these enquiries. The enquiries can be categorised into three main areas: Business, Education, Clinical.
- Tristan and Sharon have been meeting with educational academics who have expressed an interest in collaborating with us on this project.
- Congratulations to Sharon who ran in her sixth marathon in Honolulu. Sharon put in a fine performance and was thrilled to run her best marathon so far. Sharon is grateful for all of you who supported her and stayed up late to track her live (even if you did fall asleep). Your support made all the difference. Sharon could feel the supportive energy all the way from Perth to Honolulu.



### Sharon's Profile in the *West Weekend*

"How can we be better human beings?" This is the closing quote of Sharon's profile in the *West Weekend*. It epitomises her approach to business, and what the Foundation is all about.

We'd like to share a little of our experience of the article being written, and what it was like after publication.

The article took many months to come to fruition, from our first contact with *West Weekend* editor Julie Hosking in May 2016, interviews with Sharon in June and August, the photography session in October, interviews with Michael and Phil in early November, final queries to Sharon the day before it went to print (an exchange between Julie and Sharon that took place between 1am and 4am) and finally to publication.

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This doesn't account for the months, in reality years, it took for Sharon to be ready to share her story with the world.

It wasn't an easy story for Julie to write. In her "Editor's Note" she talked of how difficult it was to convey Sharon's story in words, let alone in a way that did it justice.

We had no idea what to expect. We'd done our due diligence and knew Julie cared deeply about the result, but it was still a leap of faith to open up to the media. We were nervous that the story would appear sensationalist or, alternatively, trite. We wondered what kind of feedback we might get. Would there be a response at all?

The response was overwhelming. It included corporate and clinical queries, as well as interest in the research project from schools. Some people contacted us just to say they were inspired; others to offer their services in a volunteer capacity. Sharon was approached by people for days afterwards, even while out running.

Thank you to Michael and Phil for putting themselves on the line and sharing their ES journey in interviews with Julie. Thank you to those who offered their support in the way of calls and texts. We'd also like to thank Julie for the respectful and caring way she approached the story, despite finding it hard.

"How can we be better human beings?"

## Building Emotional Strength in Education

We've had such an overwhelming response from primary schools to the feature article on Sharon's life story. Sharon is still spending every moment in her breaks returning calls and scheduling meetings with school principals and senior staff. Schools want to be a part of this important research project. The design of the study has evolved, and continues to, as we speak to more principals and get clear on their needs. Next week Sharon is presenting to all staff in the short-listed schools.

We have also started a dialogue with the Education Department to gain their support, and are in the process of writing a research proposal to submit to the universities for collaboration purposes.

## The Honolulu Marathon

Hawaii, it sounds so exotic. As humans we love to dream. I didn't expect my bubble to burst so quickly when I discovered my Blue Hawaii was full of high rise hotels, condos, fast food and obesity. I felt sad and very ripped off. I felt very isolated and alone as hotel staff didn't even know there was a marathon on Sunday. Late afternoon the day before no one knew where the starting line was. I am driving around Waikiki in a taxi looking for a place that I needed to be by 4.30 the next morning. I couldn't find it so I had to trust that if I headed in the general direction of the start I would find it.

I arrived a few days earlier than previous marathons as I was unsure about the humidity. I didn't realise that my biggest challenge would be not being able to get healthy food. So I found an acai bowl and a kale and quinoa salad that became my stable diet (lunch and dinner) while I was in Waikiki.



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In the week before the marathon I didn't see any runners let alone marathon runners. It was bizarre. Thankfully I had so many people from Perth sending messages and calling me offering love and loads of encouragement. I felt so isolated in Honolulu and so supported in Perth.

On the day, it is 2am and I am feeling anxious. I am focused and engaged in my preparation. As I am walking in the general direction of the marathon, thousands of people started coming out of the towers at the Hilton and I began to experience my community of marathon runners even though 50% of participants didn't speak English. There is a sort of a code among marathon runners different to any other sense of belonging that I have experienced. I finally felt at home. I knew this world. I am still in awe of my experience of myself as an experienced international marathon runner. A few years ago Deikan said to me "run like the wind Mimi" and I ran like the wind my beautiful boy.

Thank you all from the bottom of my heart for your support when I felt so alone. Each and every one of you were running with me.

## Media Links

- "Inside Out," West Weekend, 26 November 2016:  
<http://clearperceptions.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Weekend-West-Inside-Out.pdf>
- "Why aren't our children being heard at school?", The Educator, 12 October 2016:  
<http://www.educatoronline.com.au/news/why-arent-our-children-being-heard-at-school-224759.aspx>
- "Study aims to boost teachers' emotional strength", The Educator, 13 October, 2016:  
<http://www.educatoronline.com.au/news/study-aims-to-boost-teachers-emotional-strength-224842.aspx>

See you next time.

Sharon Faye Foundation Team

"How she (Sharon) pulled herself out of the quagmire to pursue a different path is a testament to the emotional strength she has worked so hard to build - and one that she is determined to teach others."

Julie Hosking, Editor *West Weekend*