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MEDIA RELEASE

VIRTUAL CROWDFUNDING EVENT RAISES OVER \$50,000

United Way Glenelg has illustrated that even in difficult times, adaptability and community generosity shines through once again with over \$50,000 raised virtually for this year's SharkPitch event.

Over 170 people embraced the virtual fundraising event, SharkPitch, to see three deserving community organisations pitch for their projects.

Held successfully last year as a face-to-face event, the model was quickly adapted to an online platform, with a small team facilitating the virtual event.

Thanks to the on-line platform United Way Glenelg were able to reach more people, far exceeding their expectation of attendance said Nicole Carr, Executive Officer United Way Glenelg.

"It was important to maintain the experience of the live event for our virtual audience. The chatbox enabled our audience to engage more interactively during the event."

"It was truly wonderful to see the community spirit at its best!"

Troy Lovett kicked off the proceedings by speaking passionately about achievement and sacrifices made by Gunditjmara servicemen and women and how they could honour their heroic efforts through a large-scale mural on the locally recognised Heywood Water Tower. The mural will proudly acknowledge the commitment they made while serving as a conversation piece that unites our community.

Mandy McErvale and JoAnna Pitts then shared the screen and spoke about Mandy's late husband Paul and his dream to provide programs that support the patient, their carer and the family. Random acts of kindness and YMCA & Snap Fitness Wellness programs are providing a welcome respite from endless medical appointments and chemotherapy sessions for residents of Glenelg Shire.

And concluding the pitch's was Harley Doedee who shared the constant worry parents have regarding what will happen to their child with disability once they're gone and the need to plan for contingencies. An independent life, living in a house set-up for the purpose is essential. To accompany these developments plans are underway for an attractive outdoor environment that includes an undercover barbecue area and seating to enhance social gathering between the residents and their family and friends.

Troy Lovett said it was fantastic to see the support our community project received both in dollars and the number of people who attended the event has been mind-blowing.

"United Way Glenelg's Shark Pitch event has been a wonderful and very humbling learning experience for me to be a part of," said Mr Lovett.

"On the night I couldn't see the individual donations as they were being pledged, I did sense all the support coming in from my local community which was such a great feeling. Then at the reveal of the funds raised it had collectively doubled our original goal which for me was the cherry on top," he said.

"We know this project is going to make a real difference in our community. We can now take our project to the next level, adding to our original plan of painting a mural on the Heywood Water Tower.

We can install landscaping and signage at the base of the tower to serve as a reflection space. The signage will serve as recognition to all Gunditjmara men and women who served in the Australian Defence Force and the reflection space will include a smoking bowl for the community to pay respects and continue to heal. This takes the project from a great mural to welcoming community space for all,” concluded Mr Lovett.

The pitchers learnt the art of storytelling through an intensive workshop and sharpened their message with the support of Bayview College English teacher, Mrs Debra Crespan.

With encouragement from MC Neil O’Donnell, the audience were encouraged to pledge to their favourite project. In less than 30 minutes, \$45,000 was raised. Supporting the event was AWA Alliance Bank which match pledges up to \$12,000.

Graeme Scannell, CEO of AWA Alliance Bank, said the night exceeded all expectations.

“Partnering with United Way Glenelg allows us to contribute to an improved and sustainable future for our members and local communities. As a social enterprise bank, now more than ever, you’re making a difference with us.”

Since the event, further donations have been made, including a generous donation from Portland All Saints Outreach of \$6,000.

If you missed 2020 Virtual LiveSharkPitch event you can watch the reply here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vIGirIreQxU&t=3s>

You can still pledge for your favourite project. Click on this link <https://www.givenow.com.au/unitedwayglenelg>

If you would like more information on how you can become involved in the 2021 event, please contact Nicole Carr at United Way Glenelg mail@unitedwayglenelg.com.au or phoning 0410 513 305.

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