Dear friends,

Time has flown since the International Transforming Education Conference recently held in Darwin. What a blessing it was to have the opportunity to learn and be inspired together as people engaged with Christian education across the world.

Thank you for visiting the NT Christian Schools booth at the Conference, or taking the time to check out our website. We love that you have taken the opportunity to join our story.

There are many different ways that you can share your story with us. Please see our website to find out more ways that you can join our story, and please feel free to share our story with your friends and colleagues. We would love to hear from you!

We have decided to feature Gäwa Christian School a bit in this newsletter, following on from their beautiful performances at the Conference. However, we would like to acknowledge and thank all of our schools for the contribution they made to the Conference (did you see the beautiful table runners at the markets?) Please have a look at our website to see the amazing work being done across all our schools!

CONGRATULATIONS to Tracy Kennedy of Illawarra Christian School, NSW – the winner of our iPad competition at the Conference. Tracy, we pray all is continuing to go as you were hoping as you explore this new technology for your classroom!

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Gäwa Dancers
(originally published in the July 2011 Gäwa Christian School newsletter)

As we sat in the wings of the Darwin Convention Centre; twelve nervous kids and five equally anxious adults, we peered out at the crowd gathering in front of us. It was the moment we had all been waiting for, and now that it was finally here it seemed surreal, exciting and terrifying all at once! It seemed like so long ago that we had accepted the privileged yet daunting task of representing our school and Territory in the opening ceremony of the Conference.

Although daunting as it seemed, we had not arrived in Darwin ill prepared. Since January the teachers, students and community members alike all banded together. We choreographed both worship and traditional dances as a team which we practiced every morning before school.

Now all the preparation and practice seemed like distant memories as we sat, in our orange costumes and white body paint, awaiting the call to stage. The murmurs of the crowd suddenly die down, there’s a voice on the microphone. We are being called. Quickly using our last few moments before show time we huddle together for prayer, asking God for courage, dedicating this dance to Him and then march our way onto the stage. The music begins and the nerves amazingly disappear. We are together and enjoying the special moment, dancing, seemingly oblivious to the huge crowd before us. The sound of applause echoes throughout the auditorium—what a precious few minutes etched into all our memories!

- Salome Moes

This is Lara’s calling

An innocent trip to the library with her three year old daughter set about a chain of events that relocated Lara Hvala and her family from their hometown of Melbourne, Victoria to the remote Indigenous Homeland community of Gäwa, at the tip of Elcho Island in the Northern Territory. “There is no doubt that God brought us to the NT to work with Indigenous kids in Gäwa,” says Lara “It was not part of our own plans—but God had other wonderful ideas!”

Lara exudes joy when she talks about her experiences at Gäwa, “I love spending time with the delightful and happy kids that live in Gäwa and the surrounding homelands”, she enthuses “They teach you so much and bring great joy to my day. Whether I am spending time with them in the classroom, jumping on the trampoline with them, going swimming in the ocean or running with them in the rain and puddles—I love every minute I am around the kids of Gäwa. They are simply wonderful!”

Lara talks about the strong sense of community at Gäwa. “We do most things together” she says, “the children are part of our family and we see them after school, weekends and evenings. There is a great trust and respect from the parents and grandparents to allow the children into our homes and lives.” The strength of the community at Gäwa is also reflected in the regular events held together, such as the community dinners held each term to celebrate and give thanks together: “our community dinners are a celebration of culture, school, dance, food, love, friendship, family, community and hope!” says Lara.

“[I] love being a part of the ever-unfolding Gäwa story.”

To read more of Lara’s story, or other NT Christian Schools staff stories please see our website

www.ntcsa.nt.ed.au/stories