

Girls' Brigade celebrates 125 years

Eisa Samuel

This is an exciting year for Girls' Brigade Western Australia (GBWA): in 2018, the vibrant community organisation celebrates 125 years of mission.

To kick-off 125 years with a bang, GBWA hosted its national Girls' Brigade camp Fonomarae (Fono) at Woodman Point in Perth, with over 100 people from across the nation attending. The week was filled with challenging activities and fun ones too, such as a photo scavenger hunt in Perth city.

The Fono camp is the start of birthday celebrations. GBWA State Commissioner, Nikola Lewis is enthusiastic about preparations to celebrate in a big, but meaningful way.

"All our members will receive a Bible with testimonies and devotions on our motto 'Seek, serve and follow Christ'. Our Girls' Brigade leaders had a celebration day to connect, celebrate all God has done through Girls Brigade in WA and most importantly, have some fun," said Nikola.

"The WA theme for 2018 is 'Abundance', whilst the International theme is 'Fruitful and Overflowing!'"

Known for its educational activities and challenging outdoor events, it is no surprise GBWA have plenty lined up to celebrate its milestone anniversary.

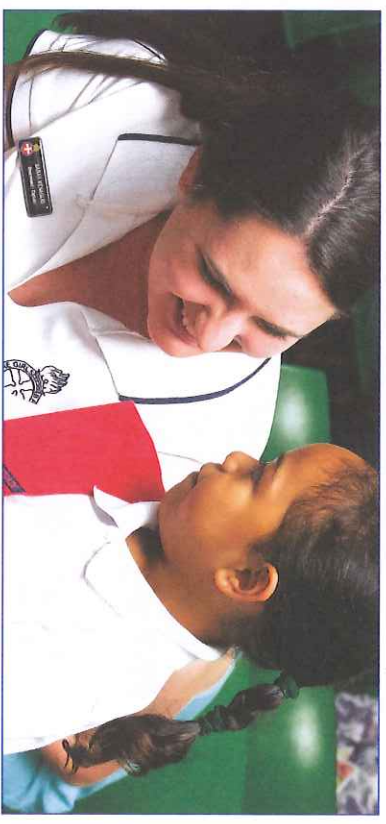
"We are organising three regional events for the girls to have fun and have the opportunity to share Girls' Brigade with their friends," Nikola said.

"Our State Awards Celebration will be a large one. We are inviting past and present members and the Governor of Western Australia, Kerry Sanderson to reflect on the highlights of Girls Brigade over the past 125 years and look forward to the future."

GBWA is part of the global Girls' Brigade, a not-for-profit Christian movement that has partnered with churches for over 120 years.

Currently, there are four GBWA groups (also called companies) partnered with the Uniting Church WA: Bicton Uniting Church, Noranda Uniting Church, Trinity North Uniting Church and Kalamunda Uniting Church.

GBWA groups meet weekly during the school year, conducting a wide range of activities. The groups are run by skilled volunteers who teach the girls about God, and give them practical skills.



Sarah Menaglio, Greenwood Girls' Brigade Captain (meets at Trinity North Uniting Church) and Cadet, Alana Laopo.

For the past three years, GBWA has been under the leadership of Nikola, recently elected to stand for a second term of three years. Her goal as State Commissioner is simple, yet significant.

"We see ourselves developing young Christian women to be effective leaders in their communities. We provide a safe environment for our girls to come to develop who they are in Christ, to build confidence to be the best person that God created them to be," Nikola said.

To empower girls, particularly in leadership while discovering Jesus in a safe environment, for 125 years is admirable. Girls' Brigade has come a long way since its inception in Australia in 1927.

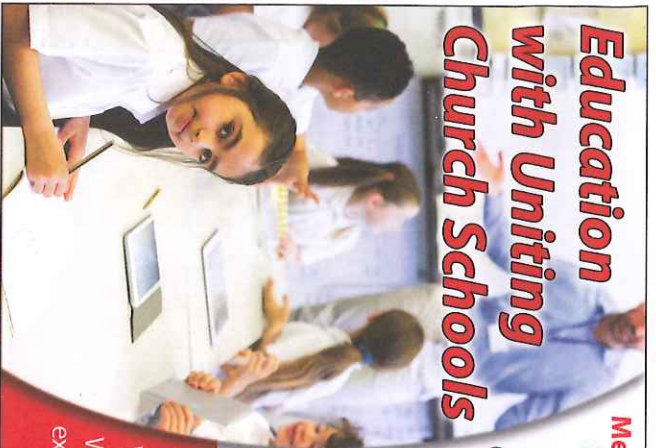
"The first Girls Brigade Company in WA started in Wyalkatchem. Unfortunately, it closed. In 1950, Wagin opened, followed by 1st Perth in Osborne Park in 1952, and 2nd Perth in Bayswater in 1954.

"We've had over 60 companies since 1927 and we currently run 17 companies, 15 in the Perth metro area and two regionally based in Kalgoorlie and Narrogin," said Nikola.

The organisation continues its mission, while striving to remain relevant. "It used to be drills and marching, but now we've shifted to games and encouraging girls to explore their faith with God. We've updated our leadership training, our constitution to meet legislation requirements and provide intentional mentorship to develop girls as leaders in all spheres of life," Nikola said.

GBWA have also recently launched their new branding, which includes a new website and uniform designs later down the track.

To keep an eye out for these updates or for more information, visit girlsbrigadewa.org.au or their Facebook page at facebook.com/girlsbrigadewa.



Education with Uniting Church Schools

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While these schools respect the faith diversity of all students, the story, values and practices of the Christian faith are expressed with integrity in order to nurture young lives for sound learning, faith, compassion and responsible service.

* Not all schools offer Pre Kindergarten.