

3. An Image of Our Work

The Boys' Town program is unique drawing on both the education and welfare sectors to produce a life changing experience for young people and families. Yet the model does not sit comfortably within either the education or welfare sector because of its intensity, focus and insistence on skill development within all aspects of the child's ecology. We have attempted to develop an image that presents the unique nature of our work that distinguishes it from 'just another school or welfare agency'

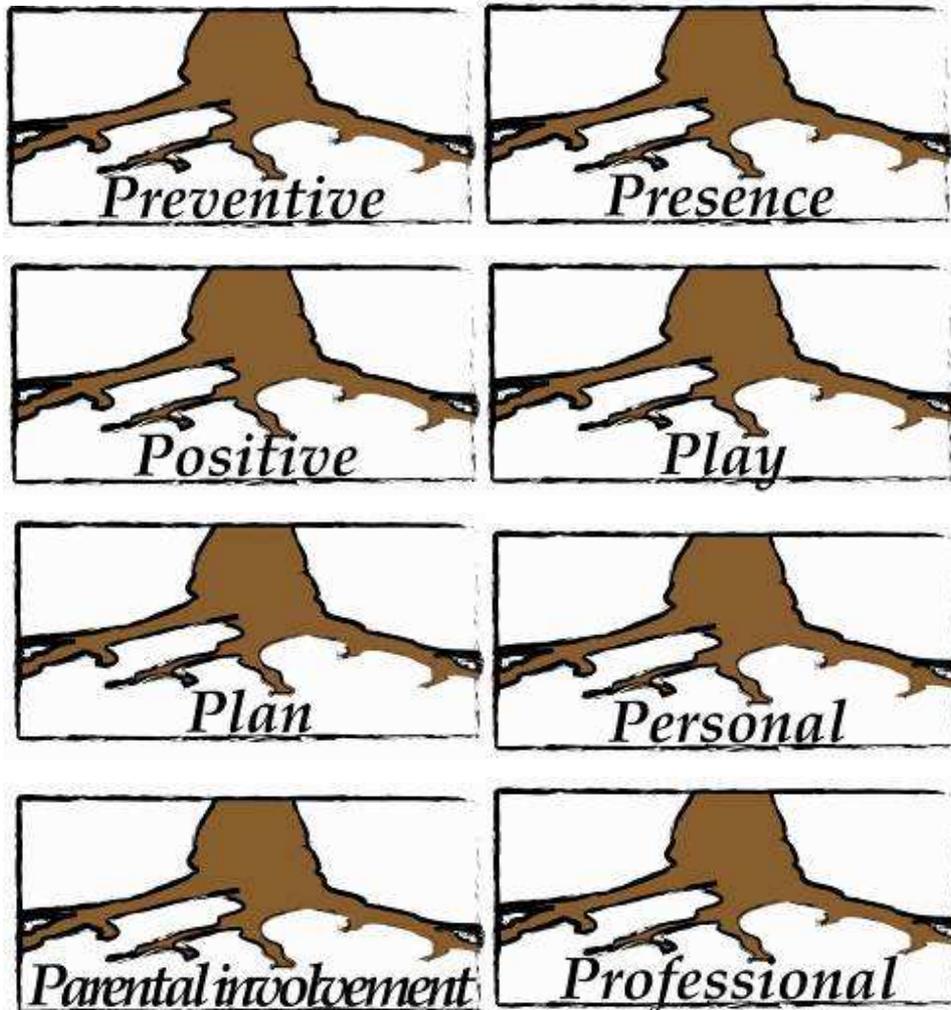
The Australian Sandalwood

We have likened our program to the truly unique Australian tree, the Australian Sandalwood, (*Santalum acuminatum*) commonly known as the Quandong. This Sandalwood, also known as the native peach, adapts and thrives in arid environments and is not fussy about different soil conditions and climates, nor about water quality. Undamaged kernels find it hard to germinate. Damaged kernels are vulnerable to infection. The Sandalwood has proved difficult to domesticate. Nevertheless the fruit holds more vitamin C than an orange, the kernel contains valuable proteins and is rich in oils and aborigines are familiar with its medicinal qualities. The plant can be easily confused with the Australian wild apricot which is poisonous.

The model is nourished by 8 roots (or planks) which characterize service delivery. These planks are;

- Presence
- Preventive
- Plan
- Professional
- Positive
- Personal

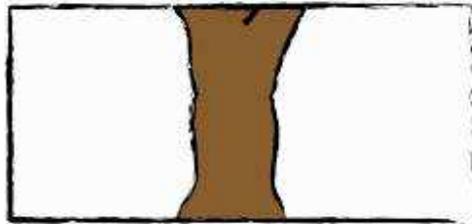
- Parental Involvement and
- Play.



Upon these, the trunk or main supports of the model are in the areas of:

- Education and schooling support;
- Behaviour management programs that ensure safety and sustainability of placements and school positions;
- Life and Social Skill development programs;
- Residential living program;
- Individual and family counseling and psychological services;

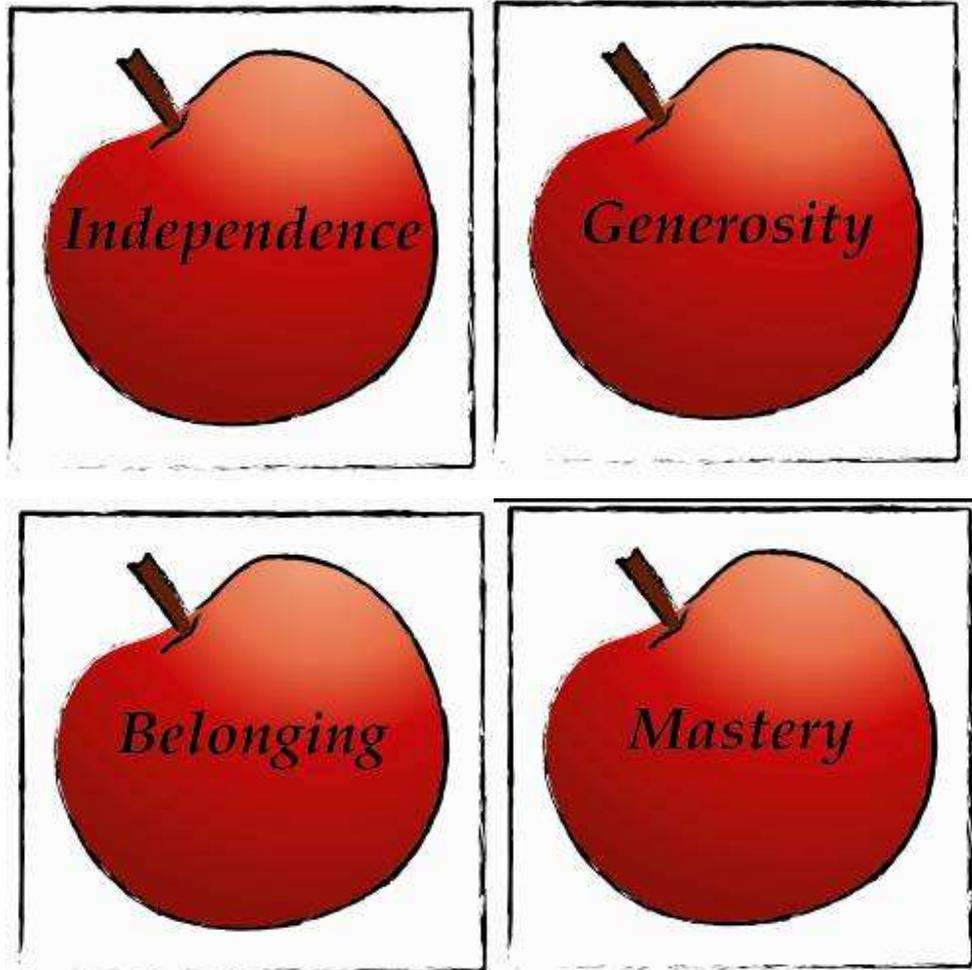
- Family restoration;
- Respite.



These supports branch into the ecological environment of the child including his family, school, peers and community.



The fruits of the model are life giving and include experiences of mastery, generosity, independence and belonging.



The Sandalwood image reflects the ecological environment of most of our clients which is often harsh and arid as well as the processes used at Boys' Town. Mostly, our clients have not experienced a rich and nutritious soil, but have adapted to the situation in which they find themselves. There is damage, which can be used for growth, and danger of infection because the

circumstances of our families needs to change. Too often they have tried other programs with the poisonous outcome of the native apricot.

Yet the fruit is amazingly nutritious and healing.

While the model is unique to Boys' Town, and not yet a commercial crop, it has the potential of the only Australian native fruit to achieve export status, the macadamia nut. This model works and should find use beyond Engadine.

In developing the model, clarity has been established about a number of variables that allow us to focus on restoration and re-engagement issues for our families in crisis. Thus there is clarity about the target group (12 – 15 year olds at risk of disengagement from family and education), structures (small groups that are voluntary, temporary, leading to transition and involving the parents), strategies (positive behaviour management), policies and procedures and expected outcomes.

