

Brand new initiative for kids

By Carla Grossetti

Credit Union for Kids (CU4K) actively demonstrates the credit union philosophy of “people helping people”. As well as helping sick or disadvantaged children, the fundraising program assists credit unions in promoting their social responsibility commitments within their community.

It’s an initiative that Herald Austral Credit Union has happily embraced.

The Marketing Manager of Herald Austral, Mark Ciantar, says although the program has only been in place for a few months, the feedback the credit union has received has been extremely positive.

“Being involved in CU4K increases our members’ awareness that

their credit union is doing something positive and that we are not just another financial institution,” Mr Ciantar says.

“When the public finds out what Herald Austral does for them, they will find there are enough good reasons for members to join ... but the feel-good factor of being involved with CU4K shows the community that there is more to credit unions than dollars and cents,” he says.

Herald Austral has been in business for about 30 years, with most of its member base made up of staff from *The Herald & Weekly Times*, Kodak Australia and WA Newspapers.

Implementing CU4K has complemented the fundraising campaign run by

the *Herald*, which raises a lot of funds for the Royal Children’s Hospital.

“The thing that attracted us to CU4K was that we wanted to do something positive for the Royal Children’s Hospital and the program allows us to do this in a more structured fashion,” Mr Ciantar explains.

“Each credit union can nominate its own specific charity. We have a strong link with *The Herald & Weekly Times*, so we feel we will be doing the same sort of thing as them.

“If the money goes to the hospital it can provide better facilities and better equipment and I don’t think we can ever give hospitals enough money,” he says.

Mr Ciantar says when he put the CU4K proposal to the Board it unanimously supported the program. He believes one of the reasons the fundraising strategy is so attractive to credit unions is because of the support it receives from Credit Union Foundation Australia (CUFA), which created CU4K.

“It’s been so easy to implement because it is all co-ordinated through CUFA. The business and marketing supplies, the merchandise and marketing material is all provided. It’s just a matter of ordering what you need, like the charity tins and posters.”

Mr Ciantar believes because each credit union operates independently, that business opportunities are sometimes missed.

“We sometimes don’t take

enough opportunities on a global scale ... which means we lose a lot of the impact we could have,” Mr Ciantar says.

“It’s something that all credit unions can get involved in and it is something that all credit unions can benefit from. You get one brand [CU4K], which means all credit unions are under that umbrella and all benefit from the communal marketing of that brand and logo. It becomes better known in the community simply because it is all under the same umbrella,” he says.

Margaret Lester is the Developmental Manager at CUFA.

She says the CU4K program objectives are simple: benefit to children through the provision of credit-union sponsored programs targeting, in particular, health and education initiatives; to support credit unions to develop their profile through activities that benefit children and the future wellbeing of the communities in which the credit unions operate; and to create growth opportunities for credit unions and members through a program that is complementary to the mission and objectives of the foundation. ■



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For more information about CU4K, please email CU4K@cuscal.com.au or call Margaret Lester on (02) 6232 6666.