

MEDIA RELEASE

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The Mary Foundation supports the fight against bullying in Australia

Crown Princess Mary of Denmark's non-profit organisation, [The Mary Foundation](#), is donating \$50,000 to Australian national children's charity, the [Alannah & Madeline Foundation](#), in recognition of the Princess' 50th birthday and the Alannah & Madeline Foundation's 25th anniversary.

Founded by the Crown Princess in 2007 to prevent social exclusion in Denmark, The Mary Foundation's first focus area was in childhood bullying and wellbeing.

As the Alannah & Madeline Foundation's International Patron since 2005, Crown Princess Mary said its [Better Buddies](#) initiative provided the inspiration for The Mary Foundation's first and largest program, Free of Bullying.

"In 2005, even before The Mary Foundation was founded, I had the idea for a new initiative focusing on tackling bullying among children. The idea was inspired by the Alannah & Madeline Foundation's program, Better Buddies," the Crown Princess said.

The Free of Bullying project began to take shape in Save the Children Denmark. Later, when The Mary Foundation was founded in 2007, The Mary Foundation and Save the Children Denmark worked together to further develop and spread the Free of Bullying program. Today, Free of Bullying has been implemented in more than half of all Denmark's childcare facilities and in nearly half of all schools and after school clubs.

"From my very first experience with Better Buddies, I could see that the approach could be something very special in terms of creating communities and togetherness among children. It seemed clear to me that Denmark could take inspiration from Better Buddies. It has been very rewarding, and we are grateful for the starting point it has given us in The Mary Foundation's work to combat bullying," the Crown Princess said.

"Over the course of almost 15 years, thousands of Danish children have learned about the values of tolerance, respect, care and courage," director of the Mary Foundation Helle Østergaard explained.

"Our evaluations show that preschool children who work with Free of Bullying clearly demonstrate greater empathy than children who do not work with the program. And they're better at handling bullying and teasing. Without the inspiration of Better Buddies, Free of



Bullying would not have become what it is today. Therefore, we would like to say thank you and give a little back with the donation to the Alannah & Madeline Foundation.”

Free of Bullying has been adapted to Danish conditions and Danish day care centres, preschools and schools. But the Foundation’s iconic purple teddy bear, Buddy Bear, can also be found in the Free of Bullying universe.

The Alannah & Madeline Foundation’s CEO, Sarah Davies, thanked the Crown Princess and The Mary Foundation for their generous support.

“Our 17-year-old relationship with Crown Princess Mary is so highly valued,” Ms Davies said.

“The Alannah & Madeline Foundation still works to end bullying and cyber bullying among children and young people through targeted and cutting-edge programs.

“Both our foundations have the shared purpose of keeping our children safe.”

Facts about The Alannah & Madeline Foundation

The [Alannah & Madeline Foundation](#) was founded in 1997, one year after the Port Arthur tragedy, by Walter Mikac AM in memory of his two young daughters – Alannah and Madeline – who were tragically killed that day.

Twenty-five years on, its vision is that all children and young people are safe, inspired and have freedom to flourish – to protect them from harm, to ensure those touched by violence can heal from it, and to serve as a beacon of hope for a better, safer world.

Since 2015, the Foundation has supported Australian children, educators and families to build essential digital skills to help develop a generation of safe and strong digital citizens. It does this by designing and developing interventions that build the competencies and capabilities of children and young people to reduce the risk of exposure to online harms and enable them to navigate the digital world safely and successfully

Facts about Free of Bullying

- Free of Bullying was launched in 2007 and is used by about 40 % of childcare facilities, 60% of preschools and 45% of primary schools and after school clubs in Denmark. The program is also used by childcare professionals.
- Free of Bullying is Denmark’s first major, comprehensive effort against bullying at childcare facilities and the primary school level and was inspired by Better Buddies – the program developed by the Alannah & Madeline Foundation in Australia.
- Free of Bullying has been developed in collaboration with Save the Children Denmark and receives financial support from the Ole Kirk’s Foundation.

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