

Adelaide local wins Channel 9 Young Achiever Award

On Friday 28th April 2017 TIA founder Tessa Henwood-Mitchell was announced as the winner of the University Senior College's Create Change Award as part of the Channel 9 Young Achiever Awards.

Tessa, 29 from Aldinga Beach, now lives in Cochabamba, Bolivia where TIA Australia supports young people exiting state institutions so they can build a brighter future. She hopes the award will help raise awareness of the work TIA is doing, all fully funded and supported by a team of Adelaide volunteers.

"I'm so incredibly humbled and grateful to be selected as the winner of the Channel 9 Young Achiever Awards Create Change Award," said Tessa.

"This award really goes to all the incredible people who have helped to make TIA what it is today including 4 Bolivian staff and over 100 volunteers."

"So thank you to all who have come on this journey with me to empower youth and inspire brighter futures here in Bolivia."

The award brings awareness to Tessa's incredible work in Bolivia and the volunteer-run NGO, which she set up over 8 years ago.

TIA's ValenTIA (meaning 'courage') Transition Program, has provided workshops for 100s of Bolivian teenagers to support transition into independent living after exiting state care. TIA also runs a residential transition centre and other programs supporting Bolivian youth.

Tessa's Story

Tessa was born in Adelaide and attended UniSA, graduating with a double degree in International Relations & Social Work, with an Associate Degree in Languages & Culture Studies. While at university Tessa volunteered at a number of orphanages in Cochabamba, Bolivia.

Tessa was shocked at the lack of opportunities available to the children in these centres. In Bolivia once a child reaches 18-years-old all support from these state care facilities ceases and they are left to fend for themselves. She believed a link was missing in the system; there had to be a better way to support these children through the transition so they didn't end up on the streets.

Upon her return to Australia, at age 21, Tessa founded TIA Australia with a goal to empower youth through education and support, and to ultimately foster independence and allow them make positive change in their lives and communities.

Over the last 8 years Tessa has managed to empower young people in Bolivia and galvanise a growing support base in Adelaide and around Australia. Two distant communities are united by her passion and drive to create change for those who otherwise have little hope for a different life.

Tessa travels between Adelaide and Cochabamba, and her vision is as strong as ever. Tessa is a great source of inspiration, someone who has dared to follow her passion and make a lasting difference in people's lives.

For more information, images or to organise an interview with Tessa Henwood-Mitchell please contact:

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