



Name of Community Group	Name of Business
Chances for Children	Executive Homes

**Partnership Description**

The partnership centres on Executive Homes constructing a house, and donating the difference between the construction price and the selling price of the house at auction, to Chances for Children. This involved the partners in combination gaining sponsorships from suppliers, contractors, and local service organisations for the purpose of adding value to the property.

The partnership between Chances for Children and Executive Homes Pty Ltd is set to continue with another home planned to be constructed in Swan Hill in 2003/2004.

As testimony to the ongoing nature of the partnership, Chances for Children will benefit from the establishment of a coffee shop, serviced by company staff, in each of the company's local display homes. Display home opening days will be catered for by Chances for Children volunteers, with proceeds donated to the fund. Display homes will also become the venue of a series of Chances for Children benefit garden parties.

Tell us about Your Community Group	Tell us about Your Business
<p><b>Chances for Children:</b> Chances for Children operates across the local government areas of Mildura, Wentworth, Swan Hill, Gannawarra, Balranald and Wakool for the purpose of assisting young people from financially and socially disadvantaged backgrounds to access educational, sporting or cultural opportunities in order that they get the 'chance' to reach their full potential.</p> <p>Chances for Children is the initiative of a leading welfare agency, Mallee Family Care, and the region's three major water authorities to whom, given the growing political significance of water, the partnership offered the potential to enhance their role in the wider community.</p> <p>The project was created in recognition of the social and economic needs of the region, and community concern in relation to the prospects of its young people, who struggle to complete their secondary education and fail to meet their full potential. It recognises that financial circumstances and rural isolation can severely impinge on young people's educational, social or cultural opportunities.</p> <p>The project is about ensuring that our young</p>	<p><b>Executive Homes:</b> Executive Homes is part of The Dennis Family Corporation that stretches back forty years. The Dennis Family Corporation is a group of companies involved in every facet of property and land development. Whether the projects are residential or commercial developments, land, engineering, or housing, these companies closely control and monitor every detail of the process to ensure they meet the highest expectations of quality.</p> <p>Within just four decades The Dennis Group has grown from a two-person family company to become one of Australia's largest development organisations with an annual turnover exceeding \$AUD 242 million.</p> <p>Through their land development division and three housing companies, the company creates housing estate developments in Victoria, southern New South Wales and Queensland. They also develop hotels, commercial buildings and shopping centres.</p> <p>The company is continually investigating opportunities within Australia and overseas.</p> <p>It has a long philanthropic history of providing funds for the community. Its philosophy requires</p>

people have the opportunity to be the best they can be and in so doing build strong and vibrant communities equipped with the capability to meet the challenges now facing rural and regional Australia, challenges brought about by technology, the unprecedented rate of social change, environmental issues and rapid changes to global markets.

In two years of operation Chances for Children has identified and assisted 150 young people with needs as diverse as integration aides for kindergarten entry, to supporting students for university courses. It has also provided assistance to young people seeking to develop their sporting or artistic talents.

it to be family based with a focus on building neighborhoods that reflect the way Australians want to live now and in the future. In short, Executive Homes has a longstanding image of leadership in community building.

### Why did you want to become involved in a Partnership?

**Chances for Children:** The long-term sustainability of Chances for Children depends, to a large extent, on its ability to achieve and maintain a meaningful association with the region's business sector and the ongoing partnership with Executive Homes was seen as an important factor in achieving this objective.

Chances for Children business partnerships have been formulated with firms that are part of the growing number of Australian businesses now realising that whilst their first responsibility is to be profitable, they must also contribute to the wellbeing of wider society, and for business to prosper they must be part of a strong healthy social climate.

As part of its partnership strategy, Chances for Children has availed itself of this exciting new phenomenon that has arisen among socially responsible companies and that phenomenon is their determination to take a "hands on" approach and actively participate in the projects they support.

**Executive Homes:** Executive Homes wanted to maintain its longstanding image of leadership in community building.

The partnership was also seen by Executive Homes as an opportunity to enable its staff to get involved by linking them as other partners in the project, and allowing them to participate in the range of activities that are being undertaken.

Outcomes from these activities were expected to achieve an increase in both staff morale and prospects for recruiting the best and brightest jobseekers.

### What were you attracted to when choosing your partner?

Chances for Children saw Executive Homes as an ideal partner because of its association with the Dennis Family Group of Companies.

Executive Homes and the Dennis Family Group had a track record that they could be justly proud of. For a number of years they had played a leading role in the field of corporate philanthropy.

Being a genuinely family based company with a

**Executive Homes:** Chances for Children's proven ability to build young lives and provide worthwhile futures by giving young people the opportunity to fulfill their dreams, had led to it becoming the region's highest profiled, most publicised and, on the whole, most prestigious local charity.

A sponsorship package with Chances for Children was seen as a way assist the company,



fine record of generosity toward charitable causes, The Dennis Group fitted well with the image presented by Chances for Children, an organisation committed to educational and other assistance for children and young people from disadvantaged families.

Finally there was the close identification of the company Principal Mr Bert Dennis with the financially disadvantaged youth who were the object of Chances for Children assistance.

At the launch of the project on October 5, 2001 Mr Dennis said, "Our family was disadvantaged because my father died when I was two. With no financial support available in those days, we survived on the kindness and support of friends and family.

"Without this support I may not have been able to do the things I have done ...I spent a period of my early childhood living in a tent on the banks of the Murray near Mildura. People in this community assisted my family. Today I take great pleasure in being associated with this project and giving back to a community that helped me."

to promote its already well-known culture of corporate social responsibility and enhance its own reputation as a supporter of the visionary process.

Furthermore it would offer the company an opportunity to become a contributor to that fellowship of believers, who are committed to fulfilling their role in the development and growth of the Australian community.

Chances for Children was seen as a project ready made for sponsorship investment by a company seeking to maintain its name in lights through a marketing program that would further enhance its reputation and standing, and strongly connect it to the community from which it draws its customers.

### Detail the first steps of the process of developing your partnership. Where did you start?

**Chances for Children:** As the purpose of the project was to add as much value to the house as possible, from the beginning regular weekly meetings took place between company employees, "Chances" staff, and other contributors, for the purpose of coordinating the project.

The estate agency that provided the pro bono auctioning of the home was represented as an advisor on the committee.

While completing the home in Mildura, company employees were able to obtain bricks and other building materials at substantially reduced prices from their regular suppliers on the basis that the supplier concerned was investing in a valuable community project.

Altogether 53 companies and organisations were involved in the value adding process and the house was sold, fenced, fully furnished, with water and telephone connected, and landscaped including a fully installed irrigation system and with plants and lawns.

Both Chances for Children personnel and company employees participated in approaches to local companies for the purpose of gaining support from these local companies.

**Executive Homes:** See opposite



Chances for Children negotiated a separate partnership in respect to the landscaping. This partnership consisted of nursery proprietors, irrigation experts, the Local Government garden crew, who designed the garden and the Lions Club, who provided the labour.

A great deal of publicity was given to the project and the auction, and a large board with all the names of contributors was placed outside the property during construction.

### What have been the benefits – both short-term and long-term?

**Chances for Children:** The sale of the house realised a profit of \$60,000 and it is estimated that the 2004 follow-up project in Swan Hill will realise at least a further \$40,000, therefore benefits to Chances for Children are realised through its increased prospects for long-term financial viability, and as a result of that, its ability to provide continuous educational assistance to disadvantaged children.

Part of the Chances for Children strategy for long-term sustainability is the establishment in the region of corporate philanthropy, citizenship and social responsibility through partnership building programs in which companies commit to giving financial support to Chances for Children and encourage employee volunteering. We hope that the success of this partnership, under which both parties have obtained tangible benefits, will provide an incentive to other companies across the region to look upon social responsibility as a function of business, taking from the community and balancing this against what they put back into building the community.

**Executive Homes:** Executive Homes have benefited from the partnership through achieving an edge on their competitors by creating an image of leadership in community building investment.

While achieving brand awareness, sponsorship offers the company the opportunity to stimulate loyalty with customers and also obtain new customers through interesting and participatory programs.

It also offers.

- Community visibility and public profile
- Promotion that creates positive consumer attitudes toward all Dennis Family companies.
- Increased employee morale

### What contributions does your organisation make to the partnership? (e.g. in-kind support, volunteers, membership on Boards etc)

**Chances for Children:** Publicity for the partnership and promotion of the company as a good corporate citizen and a socially responsible company.

**Executive Homes:** Cash donations of the profits made from special partnership projects.

Use of company facilities for Chances for Children charity functions.

Company employees assisting at Chances for Children charity functions, and as mentors in the Chances for Children Mentor Program

### What have been the challenges?

**Chances for Children:** To be professional in effective planning, administration and promotion of the project so that all parties benefit – the business through increased sales and an improved socially responsible company profile,

**Executive Homes:** See opposite.



Chances for Children through their increased ability to provide financial assistance to socially and financially disadvantaged young people.

### What have been the lessons?

**Chances for Children:** As more responsibility for community wellbeing falls on business and the charitable sector, traditional models of philanthropy are often not adequate to support the relationships now required between these sectors.

Partnerships are more complex than the traditional gift philanthropic framework and require clear guidelines for managing expectations and ensuring that both parties profit from the joint venture.

This partnership is successful because there is a realistic understanding of the culture and capacity of each partner by the other.

More importantly, there is trust and respect.

**Executive Homes:** See opposite.

### What advice could you offer to others thinking of forming a partnership?

**Chances for Children:**

- Identify companies likely to participate in the project.
- Maximise the amount of funding available from the business sector by publicity, marketing and networking across the region and build in performance indicators so participating organisations can be given 'value for money' for their contributions;
- Work with business and create partnership packages which best fit the capacity and motivation of the businesses to be involved.

**Executive Homes:**

- Identify the outcomes that you wish to achieve from the partnership.
- Work with your partner and create partnership packages which best fit the achievement of these outcomes.
- Ensure that these outcomes are realistic and achievable.
- Ensure that company employees are informed about the issues and are given the opportunity to become engaged in the various projects undertaken by the partnership.

### What plans do you have for future partnerships – with either your current partner or with other organisations?

**Chances for Children:** The establishment of Chances for Children, and to a large extent much of its subsequent support, has relied on funding from the philanthropic sector, however the Chances for Children model presumes that long-term sustainability of the project depends on its ability to be locally funded.

Also, as previously stated, traditional models of philanthropy are now often not adequate to support programs such as ours and more responsibility for community wellbeing falls on relationships between the business and

**Executive Homes:** The Dennis Corporation is involved in partnerships with charity sector organisations in a number of regions and these encompass areas of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria.

It is hoped that following the Swan Hill project in 2004 the project will remain ongoing.



charitable sectors

Chances for Children has therefore deemed it important to develop a range of coordinated strategies linking together to ensure the project's viability and provide a continuous income stream.

One approach is to encourage corporate investment in socially responsible projects. To this end Chances for Children, in conjunction with the La Trobe University Strategic Business Unit has developed a plan to create long-term corporate sponsorships.

Another significant strategy has been the introduction of the Chances for Children Sustaining Supporters Group. This program aims to engage businesses and individuals who pledge to donate at least \$1000 annually, and who will encourage others to think creatively about their involvement.

In four months the Sustaining supporters group has raised \$145,000 in annual subscriptions.

We think that it is most important to engage local businesses and establish local ownership of a project. An important step in growth and progress is a strengthening of community spirit and partnerships assist in this process by giving local corporations the opportunity to join together, contribute to their region's future and ensure its continuity.

**If you are willing to assist other businesses or community groups in advice on partnerships would you provide your contact details for others to talk through any questions they may have?**

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