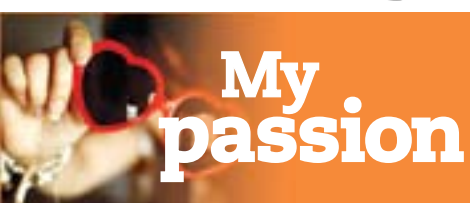


A slice of life

Mikayla is going for gold



By BEN CAMERON

A BERWICK student's passion for putting herself out of her comfort zone has underpinned a level of performance acclaimed around the world.

Mikayla White is one of 80 Victorians set to be awarded the Gold Duke of Edinburgh's Award at the inaugural Gold Awards Gala held at the Melbourne Town Hall this Saturday.

"It was such a surreal feeling (to get the award)," she said.

"Being given the opportunity to complete such a prestigious award, not only gives you a sense of achievement but I truly felt ... that I was able to do something in my life that I normally wouldn't do, to challenge myself in all aspects of life.

"Just give it a go (if you're interested), challenge yourself in your everyday life and you never know what, you might succeed."

The 19-year-old joins Berwick's Madeline Blackwood and Kaitlyn Robertson, Bryanna Mischler from Belgrave, Maddison Coward-Smith from Harkaway and Adele Mepstead from Upper Beaconsfield to achieve The Duke, which was established in 1963 and is renowned as the world's leading achievement



Mikayla White has enjoyed a life-changing journey and is about to receive the Gold Duke of Edinburgh Award.

award for young people.

Mikayla was involved in various activities to claim the gold level, including volunteering, where she coached several sporting teams at

St Margaret's School as part of a physical recreation component.

"I've always loved to help where I can and being able to volunteer at my school was so re-

warding," she said.

"Working with the students and teachers allowed me to be so comfortable, which motivated me to try even harder.

"I have already learnt so much in just a short year. I have gained so many new skills not just in the area of sport, but all aspects of schooling life."

She also attended a horse riding camp for her "adventurous journey", and Lady Somers Camp early last year for her "residential project".

"It was such an experience ... it tests you mentally, physically and emotionally, the duration of the camp is a week and you do countless numbers of activities throughout that time, from group sporting games, to listening to incredibly touching guest speakers," she said.

"These are all life-changing camps and I highly recommend them to any one that is interested in applying.

"I've made so many friends and I've continued to volunteer with this organisation which has taught me many life lessons and skills that will stay with me for a lifetime."

Just don't ask her what's next.

"I have always struggled to know exactly what I want to do in the future," she said.

"I love the idea of teaching and doing sport, yet I have such a strong passion for singing and acting.

"Once I have finished up for the year at St Margaret's, I will be studying a Diploma of Screen Media TV and radio presenting."

Take ten

with Mrs Australia
Globe, Becky Branca

What is something people don't know about you?
I was a huge tomboy in school - I used to wear boys' tees and a backwards hat, the works.

What has been the most memorable moment of your life to date?
The first time I held my daughter Izabella. My whole world and perspective on life changed - it was the most incredible feeling to become a mum and having this little person you created be totally dependant on you.

If you had to choose, what would your last meal on Earth be?
I love my food, so this is a hard one. I've been spoilt having a chef as a husband ... probably baked scallops or anything sweet. Love my desserts.

If you could witness any event, past, present or future, what would it be?
V-J Day in Times Square, to be a part of the crowd when the photograph by Alfred Eisenstaedt was published in Life in 1945 of the soldier kissing the nurse. It's my favourite photograph. To witness the emotional energy, the joy, relief and optimism of everyone affected by the war. I wouldn't want to witness the actual war but to catch a glimpse of that carefree joy would be incredible.

What is your favourite television show?
Scandal ... love it, totally hooked.

What is your favourite book?
Trading Up by Candace Bushnell - love that the main character is so flawed.

You are hosting a dinner party and can invite six guests, dead or alive. Who would they be?
Richard Branson - I've met him on a few occasions he is so nice and entertaining. Nelson Mandela, Angelina Jolie, Jane Austen, Leonardo da Vinci, Jesus. I think they would be a interesting mix ... couldn't imagine we would be stuck for conversation.

What has been your most embarrassing moment to date?
Probably singing in front of the entire school. That was so embarrassing!
My sister is the singer in the family, not me. I'm way too shy when it comes to being that vulnerable in public, admire her ability to be able to do it.

If you could live in a particular era, which would you choose?
That's a hard one. I love the late '50s and adore the fashion. You would get to witness people like Frank Sinatra, Marilyn Monroe in their prime, the civil rights movement, it was a really exciting time.

What was the first or best concert you have ever attended?
Michael Buble.



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