

st mary's women

LAUREN SHEPHERD ('94) Corporate and Community Partnerships Co-ordinator



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There are many of us out there who would love to get paid for working with dogs. For Lauren Shepherd this is a dream come true. Not only does her current role allow her to be surrounded by dogs all day but it also combines her love of helping others through the not-for-profit sector.

Where has life after St Mary's taken you and did you follow your passion? Was there a defining moment when you decided on the pathway you wanted your career to take?

The thought of traditional employment in the form of a 9-5 desk job never really excited me. I knew fairly early on that all I wanted to do was travel or work with animals, or ideally both. My Hotel Administration and Event Management qualification enabled me to travel and get paid for it. It was almost too good to be true. Years later, my qualifications and experience provided the skills needed to move into the not-for-profit (NFP) sector. My first NFP job was at the Princess Margaret Hospital Foundation where I saw how my role benefited the Foundation and really made a difference. This was definitely a defining moment for me.

Fourteen years on, I'm working with Guide Dogs WA, a cause that combines my love of dogs and helping others. I'm able to make a difference in the lives of both children and adults living with low vision, disability or illness, and to see first hand the ways in which our dogs are truly changing lives. It really is a perfect fit for me. It takes over two years and costs more

than \$50,000 to raise and train a Guide or Assistance Dog. In my role as Corporate and Community Partnerships Co-ordinator, I work with the community and private sectors to develop rewarding partnerships and sustainable funding for our training programs. Without them, our training programs simply wouldn't exist.

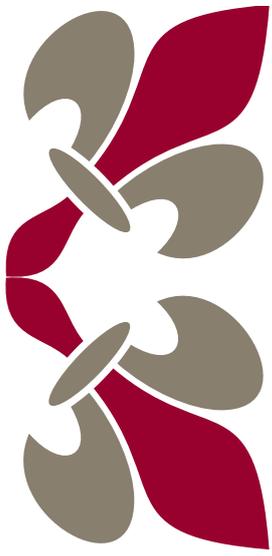
How do you think St Mary's prepared you for life after school?

St Mary's gave me confidence and endless opportunities, which definitely helps you define where it is you want to go with your life after school.

Who has been your biggest influence?

Subconsciously, I think my family have had the biggest influence on me. I've never been afraid of hard work, which I think largely comes from watching my Dad work hard, running a third-generation family business. My love of animals, and dogs in particular, definitely came from family.





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I believe a person's character can be judged by their treatment of animals. I can't remember a time in my life where I haven't had a dog. As a child, our dog was very much a member of the family (sometimes even more so than me!). And I'd have to say my empathy for those less fortunate (humans and animals included) and a strong desire to give back has come from Mum. As a family, we donated to a number of different causes and always sponsored children in Africa. At Christmas there was always a trip to the wishing tree to buy a gift for a child less fortunate. Both are traditions I still follow today.

What accomplishment are you most proud of?

It probably sounds cliché, but definitely my family. My husband, Ryan, and I have two daughters, Charlie (11), and Rosie (9). As a parent, I'm conscious of the way my actions influence our children. I'm determined to raise strong girls who know they're capable of anything. Just as my parents did for me, I'll work hard to give my girls the same opportunities that I have had.

What is your fondest memory of your time at St Mary's?

St Mary's always had a great sense of community. The days when the whole school came together for events, sports carnivals, concerts or fairs are great memories for me.

How do you think St Mary's helped you discover your passion?

St Mary's presented me with endless opportunities to discover my strengths and a supportive environment to develop and pursue them.

Do you agree with the statement 'Do what you love, and you will never work a day in your life'? Why/why not?

One hundred percent, but you need to be prepared to work for it. I'm going to sound really old here, but I see it so often where there's almost a sense of entitlement and a sense of urgency to get to the top overnight. Do the work, it's part of the journey. Work out what it is that you want to do with your life and do whatever it takes.

