

Valuable lessons in helping others

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INDEPENDENT schools are increasingly incorporating charity and not-for-profit activities into the curriculum to help students develop strong social values.

"It is hoped that students' extensive practical involvement in charitable work will provide personal enduring links between beliefs and actions," Russell Bailey, bursar of **Redeemer Baptist School** in North Parramatta, says.

Redeemer's students support 18 charities, in Australia and overseas, but their involvement is not just about raising funds. Students are encouraged to help those less fortunate than themselves through a range of activities.

Last year two of the school's year 12 students invented a device to measure contrast between surfaces, to assist in the design of buildings and equipment for the visually impaired.

The students won national and international recognition, including first prize for technical communication at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Indianapolis and Vision Australia's Making a Difference award.

Every year, year 11 design and technology students construct and design furniture for the Alice Betteridge School for students with hearing loss, vision impairment or intellectual disability. Their brief is to produce furniture to assist the needs of these students in their daily lives.

This month year 10 students are hosting members of the Watoto Children's Choir, which is made up of AIDS orphans from Uganda.

These activities are not a distraction from academic life, but an integral part of it. "As many of the charitable activities are embedded in the curriculum, students are achieving academic outcomes in the course of providing for others in need," Bailey says.