

Great Expectations

"I thought to myself this guy is 17 now. He's going to be a millionaire by the time he's 25. And he was a millionaire by the time he was 25." ~ Property developer, George Margolis

"I don't know that I regret anything in terms of behaviour except that I was sucked into a vortex of greed." ~ Businessman, John Fitzgerald

"Hello, you don't know me - my name is John Fitzgerald. I was given your name as a contact. I have lots of money and I would like to help street kids and I'm told you're the people who can help me."

~ Business tycoon, John Fitzgerald to eminent psychologist, Dr Ron Farmer

John Fitzgerald is a 35-year-old business tycoon with all the trappings of great wealth. He owns and runs a polo team. He lives in a Gold Coast mansion and throws glamorous parties. He's a self-made man and he enjoys his material success.

But, John Fitzgerald is a man with a past. His experiences as a fatherless boy who felt abandoned have propelled him in unusual directions in the last few years.



John Fitzgerald

He is the sole benefactor and creator of a registered charity called the Toogoolawa Foundation which aims to assist and rehabilitate street kids .

Not only does he fund it, he actively participates in workshops and other activities and tries to imbue the kids with some of his own survival strategies and philosophies. His partners in this endeavour are eminent psychologist Dr Ron Farmer and his wife, Swanti



Swanti and Ron Farmer

The Toogoolawa approach is unconventional and mixes Eastern mysticism and spirituality with a dose of old fashioned, right-wing values.

Many of Fitzgerald's business associates are unaware of his philanthropic activities which seem to stem from some tough experiences as a youngster - losing his father when he was only eight and being sent off to boarding school where he witnessed systematic abuse of other children.

Ron Farmer says: "What struck us about him was that he was a man who knew how to make money but he also had this sense of responsibility to the community. And in fact he didn't regard this skill of making money as his own, he said it's been given to him."

Fitzgerald tells Australian Story that his goal now is to set up other Toogoolawa Foundations in other states and persuade other members of the business community to invest in helping kids