

ACT CHILDREN'S WEEK AWARDS – 2011

RECIPIENT	CITATION
<p><b>MECCANO PROGRAM</b></p> <p><b>Significant Contribution Award</b></p>	<p>The School Volunteer Meccano Program had a modest beginning in 2006, led by Bob Greeney. There are now 30 volunteer mentors working with students in six Primary schools involving 30 students each term - 120 students each year.</p> <p>Under Bob's leadership this Program has proved to be an outstanding way of engaging students who often experience difficulty interacting with others, who lack self-esteem and who may not be coping well.</p> <p>Each student completes a model and presents it at a School Assembly. In addition to developing fine motor skills, students benefit from interaction with a mature adult who helps interpret plans, while encouraging patience and persistence in their students.</p> <p>This very popular Program is continuing to grow, only limited by the availability of volunteer Mentors.</p> <p>This nomination was supported by Testimonials from the students – <i>'...we think Meccano is fun ... it is challenging and our Meccano men help us to do things we didn't know we could do...we have learnt how to build machines and some of us have used these skills at home...we think our Meccano men deserve a Children's Week Award because they help us...we feel proud when we finish'</i></p>
<p><b>HEATHER GIRDLESTONE</b></p> <p><b>Child Development Award</b></p>	<p>Heather Girdlestone has been a volunteer at Amaroo School since her grandson entered the Preschool. She is actively involved in school activities but also volunteers to act as a mentor to two students from disadvantaged circumstances. As a former teacher she has designed programs to suit each child, scaffolding the activities while building trust and skills.</p> <p>Heather's craft program has resulted in one student being invited to teach the skills she has learned to other classes. This empowering experience has made her feel very special; an experience not present in other areas of her life. Heather has also assisted in improving her literacy and mathematics skills - improvement which Heather rewards with extra time to share cooking together.</p> <p>Heather has become an important part of this child's life. On one occasion she hugged her teacher tightly saying, "Thank you, thank you, thank you for Heather."</p> <p>Heather also works with a very active Kindergarten student, researching, planning and conducting science experiments together. This meets the need for the student to be active but also allows him to develop oral language and skills in following directions and self discipline. He loves working with Heather and looks forward to their special time together.</p> <p>Teachers describe Heather as "fabulous". Heather is making a real difference to the lives of these two small children, as well as the the whole school.</p>
<p><b>JON GOODE</b></p> <p><b>Child Development Award</b></p>	<p>Jon has been instrumental in the development of young people within the North Belconnen community for over 9 years.</p> <p>As the Group Leader of the Crowajingalong Scout Group, Jon coordinates the parent support team and the adult leaders who provide youth development activities for 6-8 year old Joeys, 9-11 year old Cubs, 12-14 year old Scouts and 15-18 year old Venturers.</p> <p>There are over 70 youth members currently involved in the Group, and many times that number have been involved in the Group during Jon's leadership.</p> <p>Not only does Jon provide enthusiastic and supportive leadership to adult members of the team in their youth development role, Jon also takes an active part in delivering exciting youth development programs to Venturer age Scouts and is an excellent role model.</p> <p>Jon always finds time to pick up any extra load. He steps in to provide direct leadership and support to other groups to ensure young people do not miss out.</p> <p>Jon's caring, supportive and active approach is the glue that binds the Crowajingalong Scout Group together, ensuring it can successfully deliver a fun-filled development program for young people in our community.</p>

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<p><b>CLUSTER WELL-BEING INITIATIVE – Student Representative Councils at Alfred Deakin, Melrose, Stromlo, Telopea Park High Schools</b></p> <p><b>Youth Commitment and Community for Children Award</b></p>	<p>The Cyber Safety Central/Weston Schools Network Leadership and Wellbeing initiative includes SRC students, teachers and members of their high school communities. A leadership program was designed to address cyber awareness with a strong anti – bullying focus, including intervention strategies and ways to minimise bystander behaviours.</p> <p>Students were asked to undertake a network-wide commitment to address Cyber bullying and investigate ways to implement strategies within their schools. This led the students to develop the Network Cyber Safety Week – a free event for families, children and young people and the broader ACT community.</p> <p>The program highlighted a number of initiatives to promote a safe online environment for children and young people, created by the Network schools' SRC and supervising staff.</p> <p>The week included educational resources, organised activities and a promotional awareness campaign to promote Cyber awareness, as well as general wellbeing, connectedness and a sense of community.</p> <p>This initiative was designed to create a strong and collaborative group of students as the leaders in the fight against Cyber Bullying in their own communities.</p> <p>The program also promoted the positive results of student-action based initiatives, as well as creating an ongoing momentum for the implementation of future programs to address this serious issue.</p>
<p><b>DEBORAH PACKER</b></p> <p><b>Community for Children Award</b></p>	<p>Deborah Packer worked for the NSW Department of Education for over 30 years, much of the time spent teaching students with learning difficulties, especially in reading. Deborah developed a reading scheme known as the Queanbeyan Reading Program, now used in many schools around Australia. In the latter 10 years of her career she trained and managed a team of 50 Specialist Learning Difficulties teachers.</p> <p>Over a number of years Deborah has generously contributed to several ACT School Volunteer Program Orientation Seminars for new volunteer mentors. She also conducts half day Reading workshops for new mentors. She is an excellent and inspiring presenter who, although retired, maintains a very active interest in improving the reading skills of young people.</p> <p>Deborah insists on giving her time free of charge which is very much appreciated by a voluntary organization such as SVPACT. Her knowledge and enthusiasm has made a significant impact on our mentors and equipped them to make a positive impact on the students with whom they work on a one to one basis in schools.</p> <p>Deborah Packer is highly deserving of this Award, for making an outstanding contribution to young people in the community.</p>

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<p><b>ST NICHOLAS YOUNG CARERS PROGRAM</b></p> <p><b>Youth Commitment – Community for Children – Significant Contribution Award</b></p>	<p>St Nicholas Young Carers Program has been helping young people with significant care responsibilities to reach their goals and aspirations for over 13 years. St Nicks provides holiday camps, day activities, peer support and leadership programs for young carers in the ACT. It is run by youth volunteers, including young carers who have been through the program as participants.</p> <p>St Nicks provides social and recreational support to young carers and their families, promoted access to support services and has encouraged positive and caring relationships within the community and the group. Information and skill building activities are also important, aimed at reducing the impact of caring on their own social, financial and family situations</p> <p>St Nicks works with a number of other services within the sector, advocating on behalf of all young carers and their families.</p> <p>It has participated in research projects and conducted evaluation to ensure they provide the best-service possible. St Nicks has had a positive impact on the young carer sector in the ACT from the start.</p>
<p><b>JAYSON PERRIN</b></p> <p><b>Child Development Award</b></p>	<p>Jayson Perrin is a Youth Worker with Melba Copland Secondary school, working to develop programs and initiatives with the pastoral care coordinator to support disengaged students. He advocates for the rights and opportunities for all young people and is always looking for innovative and flexible ways to reengage students.</p> <p>One program that Jayson has been instrumental in developing is the Melba Pride Painters project. This painting, decorating and design program has been developed and supported by the school, the Canberra Institute of Technology, Directorate of Municipal Services, Magnet Mart, Belconnen Community Centre and Mission Australia.</p> <p>Melba Pride Painters aims for students to develop competencies that are nationally recognised and a stepping stone into an apprenticeship.</p> <p>Jayson's work has also assisted in re-engaging the school community with the sense of <i>Melba Pride</i>, whereby students take greater ownership of the School through a whole community approach, reducing the incidence of graffiti and vandalism.</p> <p>Jayson has donated countless hours towards the success of the program and mentoring students. He has been a fantastic mentor not only to our Melba Pride Painters but to the school community as a whole. He listens to their concerns, advises and supports them and always goes above and beyond what is required.</p> <p>Jayson is recognised for his years of dedication and services to the school community.</p>
<p><b>MAUREEN CONNELLY</b></p> <p><b>Community for Children Award</b></p>	<p>Maureen Connelly has made a committed contribution to many highly vulnerable children in Canberra, through her advocacy and campaigning for the support group 'GrandParents ACT and Region'.</p> <p>This group was formed in 2003 through Marymead, Canberra Mothercraft Society and Relationships Australia Canberra becoming increasingly aware of the unmet needs of, and challenges faced by, grandparents raising their grandchildren. After running successfully for eight years, this group was in danger of losing its recurrent funding.</p> <p>Maureen became very proactive, raising the issue widely. She worked tirelessly to obtain additional funding. Her letters to the Human Rights Commissioner and various senior members of the ACT Government were heartfelt and moving.</p> <p>Through Maureen's determined campaigning, GrandParents ACT and Region has now been allocated funding for another three years.</p> <p>Over the years many children and young people have been assisted to live with caring family members through the existence of GrandParents ACT and Region – thanks to the magnificent work of Maureen Connelly.</p>

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<p><b>CRANLEIGH SCHOOL ASBA STUDENTS – Catherine Dempster (Radford) Samantha Dowdeswell (Melba Copland) Codie Frank (Belconnen High)</b></p> <p><b>Youth Commitment and Community for Children Award</b></p>	<p>Catherine, Samantha and Codie are currently completing an Australian School Based Apprenticeship at Cranleigh Specialist School. Cranleigh provides education programs for children from 3 to 12 years with moderate to severe intellectual or multiple disabilities.</p> <p>Whilst each has attended the school weekly as part of their ASBA requirements, they have continued to donate time and volunteered at the schools for over 2 years. They have demonstrated leadership and an outstanding level of commitment to supporting the Cranleigh School students and the local community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Samantha</b>, hugely reliable, with a particular interest in Autism, actively seeks opportunities to support our students with the highest and most complex needs</li> <li>• Executive teachers have noted <b>Codie's</b> very strong sense of commitment and her passion for continuing a focus on disability studies – her skills in photography have also been appreciated.</li> <li>• <b>Catherine</b> has built on her skills and runs the school canteen. The students in her class look forward to her days and love to show off their achievements to her.</li> </ul> <p>All are highly deserving of the Youth Commitment Award – for excellent rapport with staff and students, their support for others, sense of humour, empathy, honesty, responsibility, mature approach, flexibility and their focus on the educational and social needs of our students.</p> <p>Cranleigh School would like to acknowledge the hard work and dedication of Catherine, Samantha and Codie. Each has indicated they want to seek careers within the Disability Sector.</p> <p>The school believes we should all celebrate people who are choosing to move into an area that can be, at times, very challenging, while at the same time, so rewarding.</p>
<p><b>ELVIRA RAMANAUSKAS</b></p> <p><b>Community for Children Award</b></p>	<p>Dr Sue Packer has worked with Elvira on countless committees over the years for ACT Government and NGO events – she has submitted this Award for Elvira.</p> <p>Elvira's role has been to coordinate and provide the infrastructure for ACT Governments recognizing children and families. She is also synonymous with ParentLink over the years.</p> <p>In actual fact, she does so much more. She is the one we ask to 'follow up' on so many of the tasks and processes necessary to ensure events are a success.</p> <p>Elvira is quiet and unassuming, but commendably persistent – encouraging well intentioned, but preoccupied people to do the things they have undertaken to do, have forgotten about, or done nothing about! Elvira is meticulous in ensuring any project she is involved in is done properly and to a high standard.</p> <p>On the day itself, Elvira is very 'hands on' - in the setting up, in assisting at the events, wherever help is needed – importantly, noticing when help might be needed. She is always one of the last to leave when all the tedious cleaning up is done.</p> <p>Children's Week, National Child Protection Week, the launch of the Children's Plan, Multicultural Week and the many Expos for families and children – Elvira will be there 'personing' the Social Services Stand if there is one, giving a helping hand to all around who need help and noticing and being available to attending families, all at the same time.</p> <p>Thank you Elvira for your quiet, reliable commitment – it certainly makes a difference.</p>

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<p><b>TORSTEN SCHWICK</b></p> <p><b>Community for Children Award</b></p>	<p>Torsten Schwich is a Chemist and PhD Researcher at the Australian National University.</p> <p>Since 2008, whilst continuing his studies towards his PhD, Torsten has also discovered another area of interest - his weekly volunteer sessions with Year 5/6 Garran Primary School Science classes.</p> <p>Torsten has generously volunteered his time and Chemistry expertise each week to help students with Science lessons. His involvement has allowed the classes to experience real hands-on Chemistry.</p> <p>Students continually benefit from the interaction with an actual scientist and are able to extend their own knowledge. Working with Torsten has provided an invaluable source for developing the skills they need in completing their Science Fair projects. He also donates additional time by judging the students' entries.</p> <p>Testament to Torsten's contributions to Garran's school Science saw the school winning all four categories at the Science Educators Association of the ACT Science Fair in 2009. Teachers have also benefitted by watching and emulating experiments presented by Torsten.</p> <p>This Award provides the school with an opportunity to say thank you to Mr Torsten Schwich for generously donating over four years of time, expertise and sharing his talent and inspiration with our school community.</p>
<p><b>BOYS GROUP AT GIRALANG</b>  <b>– Andrew Macleod, Kieran Blackwell, Alistair Scherer</b></p> <p><b>Child Development Award</b></p>	<p>The Boys Program at Giralang Primary was designed by Andrew Macleod to help a group of boys who frequently exhibited poor social skills and continually found it difficult to develop and maintain positive friendships.</p> <p>Kieran Blackwell and Alistair Scherer joined Andrew to plan a range of lunchtime activities based on the 'Rock and Water' program.</p> <p>The key elements being rules based, invitation only, fun, involving purposeful physical contact and social cohesion, provided by three positive male role models.</p> <p>The aim is to explicitly teach social skills, resilience, reduce conflict with increased harmony, enjoyment and mateship within a structured physical environment. Social skills are easily monitored through Playground Incident Reports, observations on the playground, in the Boys Group' and in class.</p> <p>The outcomes speak for themselves!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It is now rare to receive a Playground Incident Report for any of the boys</li> <li>• All boys display a higher level of tolerance for others</li> <li>• Higher levels of compliance and engagement in class</li> <li>• All boys report they enjoy the activities and that they don't fight with each other any more</li> <li>• The boys are lining up for the sessions before the start time</li> <li>• Zero suspensions in 2011 directly related to the creation and consistent implementation of this program</li> </ul> <p>The Boys Group at Giralang has certainly contributed to improving young people's opportunities to learn and grow.</p>

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<p><b>NADINE ELLIS</b></p> <p><b>Child Development Award</b></p>	<p>Nadine Ellis is a dedicated parent with two children attending Richardson Primary School. She has been the key organiser, co-ordinator and the driving force behind the weekly Richardson Homework Club set up in 2009.</p> <p>Nadine demonstrates a strong commitment and dedication to making a difference to improve the success of all children but, in particular, Indigenous children. The staff and the community volunteers have confidence in her ability and value the numerous hours she has devoted to liaising and chasing up leads and options to support the Homework Club.</p> <p>Nadine has organised the program's timetable, liaised with the various stakeholders including parents, staff and volunteers. She comes up with creative ways to include everyone as well as celebrate successes each term.</p> <p>Nadine contributes to the lives of young people by taking a key interest in each child, making strong connections with the parents of these children, the volunteers and the school staff. Her success is acknowledged by students, parents and teachers.</p> <p>Nadine perseveres and succeeds in connecting with every student and parent she meets through the Richardson Homework Club. She is an outstanding community role model who regularly makes extraordinary contributions to maximise the opportunities for each of the Homework Club children. Nadine is most certainly an inspiration to members of the Richardson school community.</p>
<p><b>BLACK MOUNTAIN SCHOOL STUDENTS – HOSPITALITY PROGRAM WITH TURNER PRIMARY SCHOOL</b></p> <p><b>Youth Commitment Award</b></p>	<p>Black Mountain , a Secondary Special School catering for students with moderate to severe intellectual disabilities, provides individualised learning plans and encourages each student to develop to their maximum potential and to be as independent as possible.</p> <p>The Hospitality Program, a Work Education program developed with Turner Primary School, provides students with job training skills, promotes healthy eating choices and demonstrates that people with special needs play an important part in the community.</p> <p>Currently there are eight excited, dedicated and ready-to-work Black Mountain students who each week donate their time, enthusiasm and canteen services to Turner Primary School.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bradley West-Newman – with his strong eye for detail and his commitment to perfection</li> <li>• Dominique McCartney – her enthusiasm towards a job well done is contagious</li> <li>• Chloe Smith – dedicated to teamwork and setting her aspirations high</li> <li>• Bradley Carruthers - 'everything man' to the group, multi-tasking and providing positive and caring membership to his peers</li> <li>• Brent Coombes – newest member who has set his sights on learning quickly and working hard</li> <li>• Corinne Fairweather – with a positive attitude and committed to growing and improving as a worker</li> <li>• Tim Carr – always positive and always willing to help out a team member</li> <li>• Mitchell Langbein – 100% dedicated with strong initiative in the workplace – leads by example.</li> </ul> <p>This team coordinates over 150 Canteen orders, food preparation, cleaning, assisting with cashier duties and general Canteen duties with their assistant teachers.</p> <p>Important is a sense of pride – pride in a job well done! These students are most deserving of this recognition.</p>

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<p><b>SUE LIEBKE and BEV ACKLAND</b></p>	<p>The Canberra College, in partnership with the Education &amp; Training Directorate, ACT Health and significant Government and Non-Government community services, provides an education and support program for pregnant and parenting students and their children.</p> <p>The Program offers Year 12 Certification, goal oriented learning packages and employability skills, while developing the social and emotional intelligences important for managing personal circumstances and to be the best parents they can be.</p> <p>We have two amazing volunteers from our local community, both retired school teachers, who give their time and expertise to the children of CCCares. The children of our students need appropriate care and specific learning opportunities each day.</p> <p>Bev and Sue organize fine and gross motor activities, rhyming play games and art and craft activities for our children. They spend hours each week reading gripping stories, building cities, painting masterpieces, creating symphonies – all with 2, 3 and 4 year olds. There are screams of delight when Bev and Sue enter the building.</p> <p>The combination of teaching experience, a genuine care for the wellbeing of our children and the wisdom of grandmothers, all make Bev and Sue such an important part of CCCares.</p>