

Embracing Ministries

An initiative of the Anglican church of Canberra and Goulburn

September 2019

Embracing Siblings

What is it all about?

Disability impacts everyone in the family – sometimes this can be an intensely positive and rewarding experience and at other times it can be really challenging.

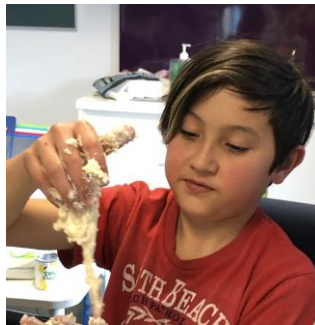
Embracing Siblings is all about placing a special focus on the brothers and sisters in families who have a child with a disability. It's about giving kids time away from their caring role to relax, have fun and just be kids.



Embracing Ministries' Team

We are so excited to introduce you to our *Embracing Siblings* Team. We are so blessed to have a great team of five people to support our young siblings. Our young leaders Amelia, Amber and Lulu all have lots of energy to help plan and engage our young people in games and fun. Deb and Lorna are more experienced leaders in youth programs. They bring siblings together in a safe environment to share and learn about issues specific to being part of a family that experiences disability. These are mini workshops that cover a range of topics to help siblings cope in their caring roles.

This term our main focus has been on getting to know each other and help build the children's self-esteem, so that they lose their shyness and are able to express themselves and enjoy being a part of the group.



We have also had lots of messy fun making pizza and biscuits. We had a great excursion to the zoo. In our next session we will be going to Questacon.

Lorna: leader for ages 6-8



Lorna is an Accredited Mental Health Social Worker who has years of experience working with families in the Canberra area. Lorna currently works in the ACT Education Directorate supporting vulnerable families as well as assisting families to achieve best possible outcomes from her private practice in Belconnen.

As a wife, mother and a sibling of someone living with a disability,

Lorna is all too familiar with the struggles of day to day life and is passionate about providing care and support to all with whom she engages.

Deb: leader for ages 9-12



Deb grew up in a community of disability because her brother, Chris, has Down Syndrome. While studying Psychology, she worked Chris' special school in after school care and the school holiday program.

Since then, Deb has worked with children, adults, families and in aged care. She has worked in disability services, mental health and pastoral care, including 9 years as a school chaplain. Deb has raised 2 gorgeous children with special needs of their own. She recently retrained as an Occupational Therapist and now works as a rehabilitation consultant. Deb is the assistant director of Embracing Ministries and a volunteer for several of the programs.

Embracing Ministries

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Embracing Ministry supports and nurtures the spiritual life of all people, regardless of their abilities

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School Service Days

Embracing Ministries partners with schools to offer information and guidance on disability and inclusion, with the goal of increasing the awareness and community participation of young people in their churches and Christian youth groups.

This term Andrea has been to a number of schools to share with young people in school years 9-12 about the importance of disability inclusion. Researchers have found that disability awareness programs at schools can help young people to develop empathy and a positive attitude to inclusion. These young people are then more likely as adults to be aware of opportunities for inclusion in their work places, their communities and churches.



It is for these reasons that Embracing Ministries offers a Mentor program. Mentors are extensively trained to prepare them for the unique challenges faced in working with peers with special needs. The training is done in partnership with professionals in special needs education. There are so many personal benefits for young people on the mentor

program. They are given opportunities to learn about themselves, learn life lessons, learn new communication strategies, develop positive self-esteem and confidence, and have a sense of making a difference. They also have an opportunity to build new friendships and to have shared interests with other young people with and without special needs.



The mentor program aims to break social barriers and allow a better approach to inclusion of people with disabilities. The most essential factors when teaching children and young people about the importance of disability awareness are empathy, acceptance and diversity.

Important dates

15th September

Siblings Program at Questacon

20th September

Retreat to the Abbey

28th September & 5th October

Mentor Training

29th September 2pm-4pm

Family Picnic at Malkara,

7th October

Holiday Program Meet and Greet

8th -11th October

Christian Spring Holiday Program



Embracing Ministries are looking for volunteers for the **Spring Holiday Program this year during the upcoming school holidays, 7th-11th October 2019.**

We are looking for enthusiastic volunteers who want to expand their experience in the disability sector. This position does not require past experience in teaching or disability, however those with experience would be very welcome.

The Spring Holiday Program is a program for young people with intellectual and physical disabilities. This exciting week serves students in school years 6 to year 12 in the ACT area.

All aspects of the program are designed to give young people with disabilities an optimal experience. The daily schedule will include sensory-friendly daily prayer services, modified learning of Bible stories, crafts, singing, dancing, and lots of other fun activities. This year we have visits from the reptile zoo, Kulture Break and Rhythm Village drumming.

If you would like to volunteer, we would love to hear from you soon!

If you would like to come and be part of a great team! For more information please contact Andrea on 0404 256 714.

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