

Community Minded Kids Program



By learning about community building, volunteering and creative ways to contribute positively to their school and community, children will feel empowered and confident to initiate, act and participate in community efforts and initiatives.

Current statistics show that 18.3% of the Australian population, that is 1 in 5 people, report experiencing some type of disability that impacts their lives (ABS 2016). With such a large number of people with disability living in Australia, it is astounding that a lack of understanding about their respective realities continues to be so prevalent within our communities.

Inclusion is not only an important value of Community Minds but a priority when it comes to our community development projects and events. Our programs aim to celebrate the myriad of diverse populations that come together to form our local communities.

In today's social climate, we firmly believe that this process of enlightenment should begin in the formative years of life to bring about a systemic change in thinking that can be sustained for generations to come. It is crucial that we instill and cultivate community mindedness in our children, transforming a "me" generation into a "we" generation.

This inclusion of children with disability has numerous benefits. It will empower them to share their unique experiences and make their voices heard about their own lives. In turn this is likely to have a greater impact on their able-bodied peers who are also participating in the program.



"What is often overlooked is the contribution that people with disability make to building social capital and goodwill in the community."

*2010-2020 National Disability Strategy
(Australian Government)*

Our response

Community Minded Kids (CMK) is a primary school-based program that aims to inspire and instil community minded thinking in children by fostering collaborative relationships between the student, school, family and community to promote civic participation and community well-being.

Through the program children learn about community building and participation and are encouraged to collaborate and participate in citizen-driven community efforts (strengthening collective efficacy).

The tenets of the program play an integral role in ensuring that people with disability are able to participate within society. In Australia, the greatest barrier to participation is a lack of understanding about the respective needs and realities of people with disability within the wider community.

Through both in-class lessons and community-based “discover and do” activities, the program dispels the misconceptions of disability whilst also providing children with the tools to positively interact with people with disability in their local communities. This will, in turn, begin to breakdown the attitudinal barriers that continue to impede the rights to participatory parity and equality that people with disability are entitled to in society.

"Don't feel sorry for me... I can give and contribute despite challenges I may face"



Underpinning their learnings and discoveries, the program interweaves important values and knowledge around social justice, inclusion and empathy towards others.



CMK program endeavours to showcase to the broader community how people with diverse abilities can contribute and play an active role in shaping their communities.

To achieve this, the program provides an accessible platform that places people with a range of 'disabilities' as equally valued citizens and contributors to their community, rather than just perceived as just victims or recipients of 'help' and services.

Chalmers Road School



In 2019, the program was offered to a special needs school, Chalmers Road School located in Strathfield (NSW). Chalmers Rd provides educational programs for students aged four to eighteen years with moderate or severe intellectual disabilities.

THIS IS WHAT CHALMERS SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, MS MICHELLE DAVIES, HAD TO SAY ABOUT COMMUNITY MINDED KIDS PROGRAM:

"The program was initially designed for mainstream schools, but during the pilot we discovered that all aspects of the program could be easily modified to enable access to students of all abilities in our school. The program lesson plans and resources provided were comprehensive and allowed for flexible application, which is important when working with students with different abilities and challenges.



The program allowed our students to be recognised as contributors to their school and broader community. It provided a platform for our students to contribute to their community based on their own level of ability. Once we mapped out all the ways in which our students were 'Community Minded', we were able to come up with more ideas of how we can continue to inspire them and further build on the momentum of the program.



Student from Chalmers sharing their community 'Discovery's' and 'Do's'. Featured is the Community Minded Kids passbook provided to every student.

The school prides itself on being community focused which is reflected in our vision statement: The school supports and inspires students to develop a love of learning, to become responsible, considerate and creative citizens to reach their full potential'

The program was in line with our vision and allowed us to think more creatively in creating a more community minded culture and environment in our school."



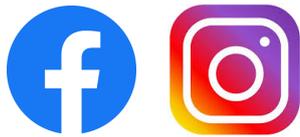


For information on program details and inclusions
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Follow Community Minds on Facebook (@comminds) and
Instagram (comminds)



CommunityMinds

Global Reach, Local Thinking

"All children regardless of their
abilities have something to offer
others and their community. Any child
can be a community minded kid"

Zizi Charida, Community Minds CEO

