



Mirabel Newsletter

May 2020
Issue 33

Reflecting on the last few months, it's hard not to focus on the challenges and uncertainty that have come with COVID-19. Mirabel's immediate reaction was concern for the children and carers – particularly for those grandparents, deemed most vulnerable to the virus, raising their grandchildren.

But once these worrying times have passed, the generosity, kindness and incredible community spirit that surround Mirabel is what I will remember the most.

Our phones have been ringing hot with supporters asking what they can do to help. Hampers, supplies and activities for the children have been dropped off on doorsteps. Online shopping vouchers were sent to pass on to families we couldn't reach. Our volunteers, with no activities to attend, offered to do whatever was needed and our

Education Program has received an unexpected and valuable boost as a result. We now have a team of volunteers helping children with online schooling, and supporters have donated innovative online programs including a daily exercise routine specifically designed for Mirabel carers and a before- and after-school program for primary school children.

If every cloud has a silver lining, then this has been ours. Above all, the ongoing resilience, gratitude and selflessness of the carers and their children is a reminder of exactly why these families are so special.

Stay safe and well and I look forward to seeing many of you when life returns to some normality.

Jane Rowe – Founder/CEO

Sampson

Sampson is nine and attends the Mirabel Southern Boys Groups. Sampson has a lot of energy and suffers from ADHD, which can be a handful for his carers. His grandpa, Harry, reports that isolation has been a challenge. Recently Sampson, along with twelve other eight- to ten-year-old boys, called into the Southern Boys Group Zoom meeting. It was fantastic fun with charades, celebrity heads, a quiz and a treasure hunt that kept the boys busy and gave the grandparents a break. At one stage Sampson set up the iPad in his backyard and showed the other boys how he does a very impressive jump on his BMX. Through these groups Mirabel continues to keep connected to the children, as well as keeping them connected to other kids with similar experiences, so they know they are not alone. Harry even found time to have a cup of tea!



Carers & kids online

So you think home schooling is hard? Spare a thought for our Mirabel carers and kids who are tackling home schooling with minimal resources. Because many Mirabel children live with elderly grandparents, home schooling for them presents some unique challenges. Kathleen, 78, cares for her ten-year-old grandson Harley and nine-year-old granddaughter Hope who are both home schooling. "I never thought I would need to be a teacher. All of the logins, passwords and computer programs – it's been a real challenge. When I went to school it was just books and pencils!"

Kathleen attended an online carer support group and Harley will be joining our upcoming tutoring program – just some of the ways Mirabel is supporting families like Kathleen, Hope and Harley to navigate the difficulties facing our community right now.

