

Stacey finds new purpose through Max Potential

By ANIKA HUME

Since joining Club Mudgee Max Potential, Kandos High School student Stacey Lobley has achieved the unthinkable.

She has sent her academic results skyrocketing, confirmed three stepping stones towards a previously undetermined career and developed so much determination that her mentor Brad Cam has been struggling to contain her goals.

Before the program Stacey was at school under duress. She was very quiet and I didn't think she'd ever be able to speak in public," he said.

"Now she has such a positive and determined attitude and she keeps telling me about all these things she wants to get up and go do and I have to keep reminding her that she's only 16."

"It wouldn't surprise me if she was advocating for world peace soon enough judging by the rate she's going at the moment."

As the only Kandos student in the Club Mudgee Max Potential program, Stacey counts herself lucky she found a mentor as supportive as Mr Cam.

"Working with Brad has been really fun - he's been really helping me sort out where I'm going with my life and make decisions about what I want to achieve, and he's made the program a really positive experience," she said.

Mr Cam said he was very privileged to be mentoring Stacey.

"We got into a really good communicative relationship from the start and we can talk about anything together without fear of any judgement, so I hope we keep in contact after the program ends," he said.

Mr Cam and Stacey credit a huge improvement in Stacey's confidence for the success of her Max Potential community service project.

"I used to help my cousin volunteer at Ada

Cottage, talking to residents who didn't have any families or joining in some craft activities with them, and that's how I got the idea of hosting a theatre day," she said.

Stacey and three of her friends rearranged the Ada cottage lounge room, dressed up as usher and presented 'A Trip Down Memory Lane' - a classic movie morning for residents, complete with ice cream, soda, jokes and clips "just like the old days".

"I thought a movie day like they used to go to when they were younger would be a great way to bring back some positive memories for them, so I tried to make everything as realistic as possible," she said.

Nine of Ada Cottages' 19 residents came to watch the western comedy *Car Rollin'*. Stacey and her friends took some snacks to residents before and after the show.

"They don't often have young people there so I think it was the interaction with me and my friends that they loved the most and I think that's what drew them out," she said.

"I was worried because a lot of residents only come out of their rooms for meals and there's usually only about two who show up for any event, but it turned out to be one of the biggest turnouts Ada has ever had so I was really happy," she said.

Now Stacey is busy preparing for the Club Mudgee Max Potential showcase in August before setting her sights on a much larger goal.

"I'm going to complete a Certificate III in Early Childhood next year before I go to TAFE to continue study, then I'm hoping to use my qualifications to travel around and maybe nanny on some stations in the Northern Territory," she said.

Stacey encouraged other Kandos students coming into senior schooling to get involved with the program after receiving some great encouragement and support from the school and its staff during her experience.



REACHING GOALS: Club Mudgee Max Potential student Stacey Lobley, pictured with mentor Brad Cam, presented one of the most successful events Kandos Ada Cottage has ever held as part of her community development project.
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