

Print media story - Focus - Port Macquarie

focusinterview. by Michelle Newman from Newman Communications

The 'Day in the Life' series gives us a glimpse into the working lives of the people we don't often see or think about, but who play an important role in keeping our community running.



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A DAY IN THE LIFE

For Hope Café volunteer Leigh Dowzard, work is all about making the most out of life ...

The Hope Café and Hope Shop, in partnership with Access Community Education Services (ACES), provide a workplace where more than 100 people with a disability can participate in the community and have more fulfilling lives.

All funds raised are redistributed to those in the community in need of help through counselling, financial assistance and household goods.

Leigh said she enjoys spending time with her friends and serving customers. "I like making coffees and also making a difference in other people's lives."

She has worked at the Hope Café for more than three years, and like most us, Leigh looks forward to her morning tea break for a chance to catch up over a cappuccino with her colleagues and friends.

"It's a fun place to work, and there are plenty of laughs. We always look forward to Melbourne Cup Day, when we all dress up in racing clothes and hats and have a fancy lunch while we watch the big race on TV," Leigh said.

"I LIKE MAKING COFFEES AND ALSO MAKING A DIFFERENCE."

"I also remember one day when our supervisor, Graeme, dressed up as the Hope Shop Tweety Bird to promote the Masquerade Ball."

The Masquerade Ball is an annual event which attracts around 200 people and has raised more than \$100,000 over the past seven years.

Leigh said her mum was particularly pleased about her role at the Hope Café.

"Mum is glad I'm part of the Hope Café and Hope Shop community. She is happy that I am picked up for work, spend a great day at the café and then get dropped home. She doesn't need to worry about me."

The Hope Shop volunteer transport team pick up and drop off the volunteers and also pick up four to six loads for the op shop each day. They are in need of additional drivers to help keep up with demand.

The dumping of soiled or broken goods after hours is a major problem. Dealing with rubbish takes up the volunteers' time, makes the shop untidy and harms morale.

Organisers ask that people remember the op shop is not an alternative to the tip.

Take the time to make a difference. You'll find a range of tasty treats at the café and a wide range of clothing and furniture at the op shop at 3 Milton Circuit, open six days.



• MY DAY •

- 6.00am Alarm goes off. Breakfast with mum and a bit of housework
- 9.15am Picked up by the ACES Hope Shop volunteer driver
- 9.30am Arrive at work and start cleaning up – serving customers and preparing food for sale
- 10.30am Morning tea coffee break with the staff and other volunteers
- 11.00am Continue work in the café - stacking the dishwasher and wiping tables
- 12.30pm Lunch with everyone and time to chat with my friends
- 1.00pm Back to my café duties and washing up the day's dishes
- 3.00pm Pack up to leave and catch a lift home with the volunteer driver
- 3.15pm Arrive home and tell Mum all about my day