

Port Macquarie Express newspaper feature

Providing career paths

School-based traineeships have become an effective way to encourage young people to consider the disability and community care sector as a career path.

Jordan Verey, a year 12 student from Camden Haven High School, is nearing the end of a two year school-based traineeship.

As part of his traineeship Jordan has spent one day a week working alongside various ACES staff and volunteers in a range of capacities. These experiences have included taking clients on outings and participating in group activities.

ACES staff supplied the training and support needed and were on hand to answer any questions or concerns.

For Jordan, this is an ideal pathway into the sector. He has been able to successfully combine his Higher School Certificate study with paid employment, on-the-job training in a recognised vocation and Vocational Education Training.

At the end of his traineeship he will gain a Certificate III in Disability Work, which is a nationally recognised qualification.

School based traineeships suit young people who think they may want to work in the sector. Jordan says it was his school careers advisor who alerted him to the opportunity.

After spending time at a pre-school, which he says was "pretty good", he seems genuinely enthusiastic about the time spent working and training at ACES.

"It's such a rewarding job," he says.

Brock Williams completed his traineeship last year whilst attending West Port High. He now has a job at the centre and is a popular member of staff.

Recent changes to traineeships have made them more flexible and user-friendly for organisations like ACES.

"We'd be happy to hear from any young people who think they might like to work in the disability field or they can ask their schools for the information

on traineeships," Dawn Davies says.

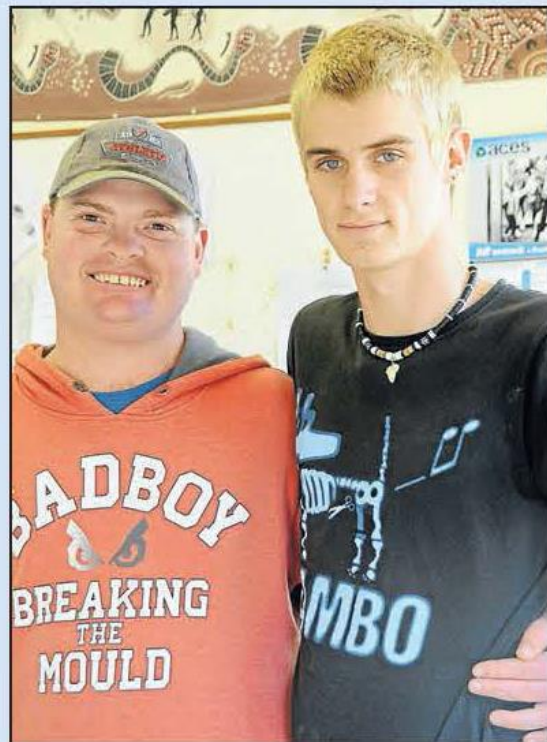
With so many program users in their late teens and early 20s, it is a bonus for all concerned when young people train and work at the centre.

"The trainees have great energy and bring knowledge and experience about what young people do and enjoy," Dawn explains.

She says it is clear that the younger service users relate better with someone close to their own age.

"We have had trainees suggest different activities and get some really positive outcomes from the service users," she adds.

"At one point we were scratching our heads trying to work out how to encourage this highly functioning young man to join in with others. One day a young trainee went up and started talking to him, and now he's doing so much more."



Teamwork: Alex Jones, with trainee Brock Williams.

page 64, Port Macquarie Express - 19/9/12