

Port Macquarie Express newspaper feature



Community interaction: Garry Parker, Graeme Keating (manager), Brendan Hall, Leigh Dowzard and Natalie Brondsem.

MCC cooking gurus

IN 2010, ACES approached Mid Coast Care (MCC) to see if clients would be allowed to join their volunteer team and to work with paid supervisors in Mid Coast Care's café. Both ACES and MCC were excited about the opportunity and agreed to involve ACES service users, staff and volunteers in the running of the café.

The initiative has been an outstanding success. ACES volunteers are successfully integrating with the Mid Coast Care community and are providing a worthwhile contribution. The work-like experiences also offer valuable preparation for employment.

"Getting out and interacting directly with the public in this way is a fantastic

outcome," says ACES's Outreach and Service Development manager, Dawn Davies.

"People who go to the café come away with a positive image of people with disabilities," she adds.

Bunnings, Coles and Woolworths stores all provide regular volunteer and work-like experiences for ACES service users. These opportunities are really valued by the individuals who aspire to becoming employed, but need the skills and experience to achieve this goal.

"When a volunteer position at Rock Motorcycles was offered, it was a dream come true for one of our very special people," Dawn says.

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