College News

AUTUMN/WINTER EDITION 2023



STEPS PATHWAYS COLLEGE

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AND MUCH MORE!

To our STEPS College Pathways *community,*

Welcome to our latest newsletter! In this edition, you'll read about the memorable visit from Sunshine Coast Airport staff, the joyful celebration of Café on George's second birthday, and the remarkable achievements of our recent student graduation.

We're also excited to share the success of our Steps for STEPS fundraiser and the warmth of our STEPS Nursery Autumn Open Day.

I am truly honoured to be a part of this extraordinary community, where every achievement, every milestone, and every step forward is celebrated with boundless enthusiasm and such unwavering support.

Together, we are making a positive difference in the lives of our students and in the broader community.

Thank you for your continued dedication and belief in the mission of STEPS Pathways College.

Enjoy this edition of our 2023 newsletter, and may it inspire and uplift you as much as it has inspired us.

Stephanie Patey
Executive Principal
STEPS *Pathways College and SSB*

How you can help

The generosity of our community has changed our students' lives.

You have the chance to change many more.

With help from our brilliant community, we can create brighter futures for people with a disability and autism.

Donate now



Student Graduation 2022

Nine students at STEPS Pathways College celebrated their graduation towards the end of 2022, marking the end of a significant chapter in their lives and the beginning of new adventures.

The graduation ceremony was a moving event, with students, staff, family members and friends gathering together to celebrate the achievements of the graduating class. The ceremony was a testament to the hard work, dedication and perseverance of the students, who have overcome significant obstacles to reach this milestone.

During the ceremony, each student was recognised for their unique accomplishments and presented with a graduation certificate. The event was a proud moment for everyone involved, and it was clear that the students had made a lasting impact on the college and the wider community.

For the graduating students, the future is full of possibilities, and they are well-equipped to navigate the challenges that lie ahead. They are leaving the college with a wealth of experience and skills that will help them in their future careers, and they are eager to take the next step in their journey.

A huge congratulations to Andrew, Jordan, Michael, Caelan, Paul, Grace, Jemma, Sebastian and Shobi. We wish you all the best in your future endeavours and look forward to seeing the impact you will continue to make in the world.



WALKING FOR A CAUSE



The recent Steps for STEPS fundraiser was a huge success, with the STEPS Pathways College community coming together to raise an incredible $58,271 for the college. The fundraiser was a testament to the power of community, with students, staff, families and friends all working together to support the important work being done at the college.

This year the students took their fundraising efforts to a whole new level, posting promotions on their own personal social media accounts and handing their unique flyers out to members of the Sunshine Coast community.

Their hard work and dedication paid off, with the students raising more than $20,000 through these initiatives.

Our students were thrilled to be walking alongside 92.7 MIX FM presenters Mark and Caroline who were broadcasting the walk live on air. Though the weather was warm on the day, everyone crossed the finish line together and joined in celebrations at the college campus where the final fundraising figure was announced.



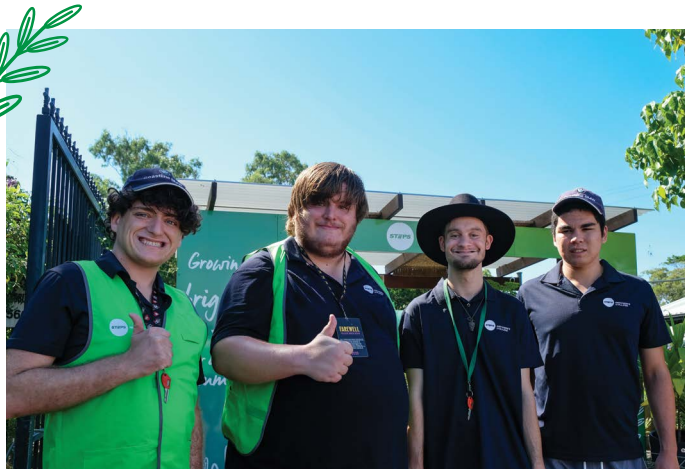


"Kenny and I honestly thought that Colby would be with us forever and then after we were gone he would be with our daughter, but now we have hope that he's going to learn the skills to be able to support himself and live independently – and that's all through the College."

Kim Speare, Colby's mother



STEPS NURSERY Open Day



The students took part in the recent STEPS Nursery Open Day to celebrate the changing of seasons, an event that was filled with plenty of smiles, laughter and a real sense of community spirit.

They did an amazing job, serving up delicious food from the BBQ and chatting with visitors about their experiences at the college. It was wonderful to see the students engaging with members of the community, and their enthusiasm and positive energy was contagious.

The Autumn Open Day was a wonderful opportunity to showcase the work being done at STEPS Nursery and STEPS Pathways College more broadly.

Events like these provide an opportunity for the students to showcase their skills and abilities to the wider community.

This environment gives students the opportunity to build their confidence and gain valuable experience in customer service and interpersonal skills which will be incredibly helpful as they move forward in their studies and their future careers.

Important changes coming to STEPS Pathways Day College

From July 3, STEPS Pathways Day College will be moving to a minimum 3-day week schedule, bringing even more learning opportunities to our students.

Our enhanced curriculum over the 3-day week will offer a wider range of subjects based on the 10 key areas of learning. This means our students will have more chances to explore different topics and gain valuable skills over a 2-year period. In addition, students can then choose from elective subjects such as cafe skills, horticulture skills, employment skills and creative skills to increase their learning over a 5 day week.

Why the change? We want to give our students the best possible educational experience. Research has shown that attending college for at least three days a week significantly boosts engagement and leads to better outcomes for independence.

With this new schedule, our students will have more time for hands-on learning, collaboration, and personal growth. They'll have more opportunities to connect with their peers and instructors, creating a more immersive learning environment.

This transition aligns with our mission to foster independence and prepare our students for the future. By gradually increasing their autonomy and responsibility, we're equipping them with the life skills they need to thrive.

We're thrilled about the positive impact this change will have on our students' journey. Thank you for your continued support as we strive to provide the best education for each student at STEPS Pathways College. Stay tuned for more updates as we embark on this exciting new chapter together!

Sunshine Coast Airport 'Passion Day' visit

The STEPS Pathways College campus was alive with anticipation and excitement as the Sunshine Coast Airport staff arrived for their Passion Day. Staff had the chance to explore the campus and interact with students, gaining a deeper insight into the work done at the college and the support provided to young adults with disabilities and autism.

In a heart-warming display of community spirit, the airport staff and students came together to plant trees on campus, commemorating the visit and underscoring the shared commitment to sustainability and environmental responsibility. STEPS Nursery manager, Steve, joined in the planting activities, guiding and supporting the participants every step of the way.





Engaging with prominent businesses in the region holds significant value for our students, as it equips them with essential life skills that extend beyond the classroom.

These interactions provide practical experiences in problem-solving, communication, teamwork, and adaptability, enabling students to develop a well-rounded skill set that prepares them for various aspects of life beyond their academic journey.

"Tom said to me the other day that he's living the dream... it's provided the independence that Tom deserves. Just because you've got a disability, it doesn't mean that you shouldn't have an independent lifestyle."

Paul Amarena,
Tom's father





Sarah's life behind the lens

It takes a keen eye and a whole lot of patience to master wildlife photography, but for STEPS Pathways College student Sarah Wallace, spending hours behind a lens has simply become part of her daily routine.

Sarah admits she's excited to see where her photography skills will take her in the future, and when catching a glimpse of her work for the first time, her sense of optimism is well and truly justified.

Sarah prides herself on incorporating a wide spectrum of colours and styles into her work and says she's truly grateful to be able to capture such beautiful flora and fauna in the STEPS Pathways College backyard.

With a little under four years' experience in the hobby, Sarah said her friends and family have been blown away with the progress she's made in such a short time.

"I got my first Canon camera in 2018 as a Christmas present then I started to teach myself how to use the right settings for different lighting situations," she said.

"Ever since I got my camera, a lot of people are amazed at the excellent eye I have for photography."

Often referred to as one of the hardest subjects to capture, Sarah says she feels at peace when photographing birds and other wildlife.

"Nearly every day of the week I would spend my time out capturing the amazing images and identifying all the bird species that are living in the Australian wilderness," she said.

"When going birdwatching all the time I get to meet other photographers who would give me photography tips for my camera settings. I am lucky enough to have fellow photographers and family and friends surrounding me that are so supportive."

Sarah has been a student at the college since October of 2021 and has already come a long way on her journey towards independence.

She is hoping to eventually live in her own place and become employed after graduating, preferably in the field of photography.

"My experience at STEPS Pathways College so far has been so amazing. I have learnt so many new independent skills already and gained lots of independence which I didn't have before arriving here," she said.

Sarah currently manages three Instagram pages:
@sarahwallacephotography
@sarahwallacebirdphotography
@birdlife_photography.2000
all with a combined follower count of more than 5,000.



Students making waves

Our students were part of a special five-week pilot program designed to help people with a disability enjoy Queensland waterways safely by equipping them with essential information and safety skills.





It's our people who make the difference.

The Mills family have a long-standing relationship with STEPS Pathways College, and they feel a deep responsibility in forming relationships between Ken Mills Toyota and the community.

For this reason Shez has been brought into the Ken Mills family as Partnership Engagement Officer – to further develop their community connections.

She is also one of their Ambassadors, and loves getting out and about on the Sunny Coast to represent everything Ken Mills Toyota.

Make sure you say hi to her next time you see her at the College.

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Cooking in the kitchen with Chef Brenton...



Coconut Loaf

Students bake this for our Café On George

Makes 1 loaf

INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups self raising flour
- 2 cups desiccated coconut
- 1 cup caster sugar
- 2 cups coconut milk
- 1 tsp vanilla

METHOD

Preheat oven to 180°C. Grease a loaf tin and line with baking paper.

Sift flour into a mixing bowl and add all other ingredients. Mix until combined.

Spoon the mixture into the prepared tin and smooth the top.

Bake for approx 40 mins or until a skewer inserted into the centre comes out clean.

Leave the cake to cool slightly in the tin, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool completely.

Slice and enjoy!



A day in the life

A day in the life of our students at STEPS Pathways College includes waking up in their own home and doing all the things any young independent adult might do before heading off to College, but in a safe and supported environment. Before class students will get ready for their day including making breakfast and lunch for the day and cleaning up before they go.

At College students will participate in scheduled learning (healthy living skills, food planning, preparation and cooking, healthy relationships, money management, other), and in the afternoon will participate in afternoon exercise and extra-curricular activities (sport, boxing, dancing, creative activities).

At night students prepare food and cook dinner in their homes and carry out regular activities such as cleaning up after dinner, showering, and winding down after dinner with friends or taking some personal time out before bed.

On weekends students participate in social activities and excursions, and have some much needed downtime.

There are 4 weeks of holidays throughout the year at STEPS Pathways College where students can return to their family home or make alternative arrangements.

Socialising and friendships play a big role in our student's lives at the College where our students graduate having made lifelong bonds with their fellow classmates.

What are the outcomes?

STEPS Pathways College will provide every opportunity for the student to develop the skills necessary to live a life independent of their families. The College can significantly change the shape of a student's life and build confidence, to make their dream of living independently a reality. We have a number of students who have now successfully taken this next step in their journey and we would love to help you with your goals too.



STEPS PATHWAYS COLLEGE

Helping young adults living with a disability and autism gain a lifetime of independence

Get in touch with us to find out more

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