College News

SPRING/SUMMER EDITION 2023/24



STEPS PATHWAYS COLLEGE

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AND MUCH MORE!

To our STEPS College Pathways *community,*

Welcome to STEPS Pathways College. It's an honour to be the principal and a part of this amazing College.

As the first and only College of its kind in Australia, we provide a holistic and unique educational experience for our students in a co-educational, live-and-learn setting.

And while STEPS has been delivering disability support and education for nearly 35 years, we're immensely proud of our College today and our plans for the future.

We believe our role is to show our students what's possible and to provide opportunities that help them to find and fulfil their potential.

We also believe that learning takes place everywhere. Beyond providing pathways to the future, we're here to help our students become people who will go on to make meaningful contributions to their community.

I encourage you to visit our beautiful College Campus and meet our committed and professional staff, and some of our amazing students. We look forward to welcoming you into our College family.

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



Grand Winter Ball Recap

The stage was set and hearts were full of excitement as the community came together for the 2023 STEPS Grand Winter Ball, a beacon of hope and change for young adults with a disability and autism. Presented by Prima Commercial Fitouts, this glamorous black and white-themed event proved to be an enchanting evening of compassion, determination, and giving.

STEPS Managing Director, Carmel Crouch, expressed her gratitude, saying, "The STEPS Grand Winter Ball exemplifies the power we have as a community to create real, impactful change. Our deepest thanks go to our presenting partner, Prima Commercial Fitouts, and all the incredible sponsors, donors, and attendees who made this event an overwhelming success. Your unwavering support will empower our students at STEPS Pathways College to embrace their potential and create fulfilling lives."

This night of elegance and entertainment raised an astounding $377,727 for STEPS Pathways College. These funds will play a pivotal role in expanding the College's programs and providing life-changing opportunities for its students.

A highlight of the evening was the captivating performance by the talented singer and Channel 7's Dancing with The Stars finalist, Paulini. Her soulful voice and engaging presence left a lasting impression on all in attendance.

The STEPS Grand Winter Ball not only provided an enchanting experience for attendees but also allowed them to make a profound impact on the lives of young Australians with a disability and autism.



Student Stories

Blossoming Friendship: Nurturing Communication Skills at STEPS Pathways College

How Harry and Sam's Heartwarming Connection Transformed their Social Experiences

In the heart of STEPS Pathways College, a remarkable friendship has been quietly flourishing between two students, Harry and Sam. The duo can often be found on campus chatting at break times these days. In just a few short months their friendship has evolved into a heartwarming tale of personal growth and mutual support.

Harry, a reserved newcomer to the College, initially found it challenging to talk about himself in the classroom setting. His communication abilities began to improve when he forged a friendship with Sam. With Sam's support and encouragement, Harry started to open up to his classmates about his interests, what he did on the weekend and what he is doing on the upcoming weekend.

Sam, too, had her own set of challenges in navigating appropriate conversation topics with her peers. With Harry's gentle input, Sam learned the art of discerning when to share and when to keep certain details close.

Harry and Sam's connection illustrates how fostering supportive friendships can act as a catalyst for personal development at STEPS Pathways College. Beyond the classroom, their bond has become a source of inspiration for others, highlighting the importance of empathy, encouragement, and the simple joy of sharing "cheeky Friday sweet treats."



Harry and Sam



Harmony

Student Harmony Bonner volunteered at STEPS' former Café on Carramar, servicing the local Tewantin community, before enrolling in STEPS Pathways College to progress her independent living skills.

Harmony's transition to College life has been exceptionally smooth. She fully embraced the program and brought with her a wealth of valuable skills gained from working at Café on Carramar. Her adeptness in social interactions is also evident, likely stemming from her extensive experience engaging with a diverse range of people at the café.

Harmony's trainer Shane says Harmony is 'an absolute pleasure to work with' and is currently progressing well within Pathways College.



Niel

Niel had an amazing time on the excursion to the Maleny Botanic Gardens & Bird World with STEPS Pathways horticulture class. The College Day students went to the botanical gardens to explore new plant species. Niel and his classmates recently learnt about propagating and how to start and maintain a garden. Part of the lesson unit included learning the basics about a variety of plants and flowers, plant life cycles and their structure. Niel was able to identify several different plant species. He also really enjoyed getting close to the birds.

College Student Activities



































Halloween Party













Pathways Profiles



Josh Harvey

My name is Josh Harvey. I'm 26 years old and I enjoy playing my computer games, listening to my music and watching movies. I started off in the Day College but I'm now attending Boarding College.

What classes do you enjoy taking at the Pathways College?

Cooking classes and budgeting.

What are some valuable skills you've learned from your time at the College?

How to cook food that I wouldn't have known how to make and how to save my money better to afford the things I want.

What do you love about your Boarding life at the College?

Doing the outdoor maintenance classes and being able to hang out with my friends and family.

What achievements are you most proud of so far?

Eating healthy and making healthy choices.

What are your goals for the future?

To live independently and hopefully get my own place. To be able to get myself the stuff I want and need.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to attend Pathways College?

Just do it.



Ansh Sethi

Can you tell us a bit about yourself? Do you attend Boarding, Online or Day College?

Boarding College

What classes do you enjoy taking at the Pathways College?

Cooking class, meal planning and healthy snacks class.

What are some valuable skills you've learned from your time at the College?

Master chef

What do you love about your Boarding life at the College?

Hanging out with friends and family.

What achievements are you most proud of so far?

Keeping my words to myself.

What are your goals for the future?

Moving out in the real world to Brisbane and find a job in Toombul shopping mall.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to attend Pathways College?

Ask a trainer and talk to the front office.

Lara Jane Broadley

Can you tell us a bit about yourself? Do you attend Boarding, Online or Day College?

I am nice. My name is Lara and I go to Day College. I love cooking class and I am a friend to Luke, Neil, Levi, Kristyle, Sarah and Erin.

What classes do you enjoy taking at the Pathways College?

I love doing cooking with Josh and I love doing theory with Craig the trainer; they are good-looking trainers. And they are comedians.

What are some valuable skills you've learned from your time at the College?

Cooking, being with friends, fishing with family and friends, acting and dealing with money.

What achievements are you most proud of so far?

Walking for 1,000 kms. Cooking with Josh the good looking bloke. Doing theory with Craig the good-looking bloke.

What are your goals for the future?

Moving out with friends. To help our friends who need help.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to attend Pathways College?

Just come over and I will be with you for the day.



Sonia Fry

What do you teach at the STEPS Pathways College?

Monday: Communication

Wednesday: Dealing with Emotions

What do you love about your job?

Seeing students grow with confidence, knowledge, and gain independence in different areas of their life.

What is the most valuable thing that you have learned in your role?

How beautiful ones with disabilities can be, how caring for each other and how they are so honest and say what they think.

What do you enjoy teaching to your students?

I enjoy most motivating them, to be the best they can be, to help them to think of their future and not so much the now.

What do your students teach you?

Patience and kindness

What are some skills that your students have found most useful in their journey towards independence?

Learning to communicate confidently, to be more social, and understanding we all have emotions, but it's how we control those emotions.

Please share a fond or fun memory you have with your students.

I asked my students to be actors for an hour and they had to act out different emotions and communicate different scenarios. One student, Matthew C, had done drama many years ago, won the Oscar for the session. It was so much fun, we laughed so much.



Jack Foster

I attend Online. I'm 24 years old. My current job is in the city in a construction office with my dad.

What classes do you enjoy taking at the Pathways College?

Cooking, emotions, conversations and money.

What are some valuable skills you've learned from your time at the College?

How to communicate in certain words or tone, understand how I feel is normal and what are needs and wants.

What achievements are you most proud of so far?

Communicate in certain ways

What are needs and wants with money

What levels or colour an emotion comes from

How to be healthy and what to eat less and how to be independent

What are your goals for the future?

Cook for my family and friends

Use money for needs more than wants

Use emotions for certain reasons

Communicate how I feel, give a person a turn to talk and ask questions

What advice would you give to someone wanting to attend Pathways College?

Just take the classes I take as they're very helpful and good.



Adam Priest

Can you tell us a bit about yourself? Do you attend Boarding, Online or Day College?

Boarding

What classes do you enjoy taking at the Pathways College?

All classes

What are some valuable skills you've learned from your time at the College?

Cooking

What do you love about your Boarding life at the College?

Everything

What achievements are you most proud of so far?

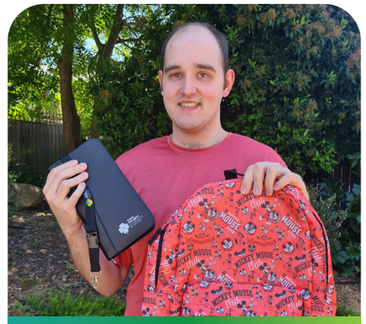
Cooking

What are your goals for the future?

New home

What advice would you give to someone wanting to attend Pathways College?

Do It!



Matthew

My name is Matthew, I live in Canberra and I attend the Online STEPS classes.

What classes do you enjoy taking at the Pathways College?

I really enjoy the emotions and communication classes.

What are some valuable skills you've learned from your time at the College?

How to ask open-ended questions and pretending in class scenarios for practice.

What achievements are you most proud of so far?

Developing friendships with my classmates.

What are your goals for the future?

I am looking forward to my cruise in two weeks, making friends, volunteering and hoping for more work experience.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to attend Pathways College?

STEPS is a welcoming, safe and great learning environment.

Prima - A growth partner with heart

Sunshine Coast company Prima Commercial Fitouts has been a long-time supporter of STEPS, and their contribution over the years has given many students the opportunity to achieve a life of independence at STEPS Pathways College.

But while their generosity is greatly valued by us and our students, it's their work to reduce costs from STEPS' bottom line that deserves our heartfelt appreciation too.

While STEPS Pathways College receives no government funding, many of STEPS' other programs and services do.

As a not-for-profit organisation STEPS depends on government funding for programs such as disability employment services, and our important language, literacy, and numeracy programs.

The nature of this funding can mean a sudden change in which an organisation must quickly recruit staff and create workspaces to support new or expanded programs and services.

STEPS Managing Director Carmel Crouch says this type of change can be a costly burden on organisations like STEPS, but that's where Prima has stepped in.

"We've worked with Prima Commercial Fitouts for years now, and in that time they have saved us huge amounts of money by redesigning our office spaces and classrooms to meet our changing demands",
Carmel said.

"If we had to move our offices every time we launched a new program or expanded the cost involved would be crippling", she said.

Prima's director Brendan Wavell-Smith said the years working with STEPS on the Sunshine Coast and around the country have given him insight into some of the challenges people with a disability face in daily life.

"It upsets me to see how hard it can be for people with a disability and the limited opportunities available to them", Brendan said.

"That's why I'm such a big supporter of STEPS. I have seen firsthand the work they do and the impact it has on their clients and students".

"And I'm absolutely honoured to be a part of such an innovative program like STEPS Pathways College, something that is going to actually change the future for these young people".

This year Prima Commercial Fitouts were the presenting partner of the STEPS Grand Winter Ball, our biggest fundraising effort that we put out annually to raise funds for STEPS Pathways College.

We thank them for their continued and unwavering support to our cause!







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Partnering for Change

"We've been working with businesses on the Sunshine Coast for more than 35 years and understand the power of community, and our responsibility to support our local community how and when we can."

- Brendan Wavell-Smith, Prima Commercial Fitouts

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primacommercialfitouts.com.au

Student Farewells

In December STEPS Pathways College community said goodbye to three of our beloved students: Chad, Ben and Sarah.

Chad began as a Day College student who attended classes at Bulcock street during COVID lockdown. Once we resumed classes back at George Street, Chad met a few Boarding College students and learned a little more about Boarding College life.

He made the decision that being a Boarding College student would be good for him. Chad has worked through many challenges and developed a better understanding of who he is as a person.

During his time at College Ben investigated his options to understand his physical and mental health needs, he worked on his relationships with family members, friends and staff and he decreased his meal sizes – all contributing to a healthier version of himself.

Ben and Chad have moved out together sharing an apartment with another male.

Sarah is working in a field she loves – butchering, working with meat four days a week at Gateway care. Sarah has moved off site to share with two other ex-Boarding College students.

It was evident that Sarah, Chad and Ben had forged strong friendships with fellow students and teachers over the years spent at the College. The speeches made at their farewell parties had many tears flowing, and there were long hugs and reluctant goodbyes.

We miss Ben's big personality, Chad's clever IT skills, Sarah's amazing photography and their lovely presence around the campus but are equally excited for what awaits them.

We wish them all the best and look forward to their visits!



Looking to become a STEPS volunteer?

Whether your skills lie in the kitchen, classroom, nursery or beyond, we have just the role to suit your unique skillset. If a once off volunteer opportunity is more for you, we also have many one-off community events such as the STEPS Grand Winter Ball and the annual Autism Treehouse Christmas Party that are great opportunities to help make a difference.

Volunteers are an integral part of the STEPS brand. They allow us to continue the valuable work we do in the community by providing support every step of the way.

With Australia's only Boarding College for young adults with a disability and autism located right here in Caloundra, you'll become part of something that's truly one-of-a-kind... and change plenty of lives in the process.

Become a STEPS volunteer today and help us empower individuals with the tools they need to path their own road to success.

For more information, contact our Volunteer Relationship Coordinator:

5458 3002 | volunteer@stepsgroup.com.au





Students' Graduation 2023: A Remarkable Journey Culminates in Friendships and Achievements

On December 7, eight students of STEPS Pathways Boarding College marked the end of a transformative chapter in their lives. The graduation ceremony, held at the Caloundra RSL, was a poignant moment for students, trainers, and families alike.

Sarah, Colby, Daichi, Chad, Josh, Ben, Liam and Courtney were honoured with certificates of completion, acknowledging their commitment to personal growth and independence. This milestone was the culmination of their two-year journey at the Boarding College, where they navigated and excelled in all 10 key areas of learning: communication skills, social skills, healthy living skills, home living skills, community connections, recreation skills, finding and maintaining a tenancy, employment pathways, technology literacy and numeracy, and healthy relationships.

These ten core areas of learning, a distinctive feature of the STEPS Pathways College education, encompassed an array of essential life skills aimed to help students create a life of their own design upon graduation.

"We see magic in each and every one of you, and this is just the beginning of what you can achieve," remarked STEPS Pathways College principal Stephanie Patey.

When asked what their goals are now that they've finished College, each student expressed excitement about their plans for the future.

"I've been a very passionate visual artist, so I'm looking to go into the art communities across the Sunshine Coast and probably beyond that, to expand my art circle a little bit more. Maybe later down the road, I'll be able to travel to different countries", shared Daichi.

"Signing up for TAFE, obtaining a job and maintaining a job and doing the best I can to reach those goals," said Colby.

The graduation ceremony concluded with afternoon tea where students' families, STEPS' staff and sponsors had the opportunity to celebrate the occasion with the new graduates.

As these young adults step into a new chapter of their lives, the STEPS Pathways College community wishes them continued success and fulfillment.









School's Out Work's In (SOWI)

Explore your future in Hospitality and Tourism with the immersive SOWI program.

The School's Out Work's In (SOWI) program provides a practical and impactful learning experience for groups of 10 students that focuses on job-related skill development, industry insights and personalised guidance for future work options in the hospitality and tourism sectors.

Students are expected to treat SOWI like a work opportunity in relation to dress code (full school uniform), punctuality, attitudes, behaviours, language and completion of tasks. Including active engagement with local employers, guest speakers, onsite-visits for job observations. Students will also be supported by a youth mentor.

Entry Requirements

Must be referred by your school

Grade 11 or 12 (uniform to be worn)

Location

Caloundra – 9 George St



Students in the STEPS School's Out Work's In program participated in the STEPS Charity Connect lunch, were they had the opportunity to take part in the planning, organising and preparation of the event held on the grounds of the STEPS Pathway College. The students were each delegated specific tasks on the day to test their skills. Each one presented themselves in a well-behaved, presentable and organised manner. The students engaged with customers, served, and presented food in a hygienic way. Afterwards they cooperated with one another and thoroughly cleaned up their workspace.

The day ended up being a successful outcome for the students: they learned new skills, engaged with new faces and raised money for a good cause.

One of our SOWI students Thomas started the progam unsure and anxious and avoiding the classroom progressed and opened up over the course of the program. As the program progresseed, Thomas became more willing and engaged in conversations with students, trainers and volunteers.

Another student whose skills improved with the program was Emma Farrugia. Since commencing the SOWI program, Emma's confidence has improved as well as her communication skills. She has been able to express to trainers her interest in design and what courses she may want to pursue when she finishes school.

Blade Little has also expressed his interest in pursuing a career in diving. The recent experience at Sea Life was a great opportunity to engage and connect with Sea Life diving staff who shared with him their experiences and what they did to achieve a position at Sea Life as a diver.













STEPS Garden Centre Open Day a Blooming Success

STEPS Garden Centre saw a fantastic turnout at their Open Day event on Saturday, October 7th. The Garden Centre was recently renamed from the STEPS Nursery and extend their trading to seven days and held a plant sale and Open Day to commemorate the milestone.

Despite the wet weather conditions, the event saw a remarkable turnout, raising over $5,000 for the STEPS Pathways Charity & College.

Customers arrived early and lined up to purchase plants for their gardens. STEPS Pathway students ran a sausage sizzle, while volunteers served coffee and baked treats at Café on George to customers who supported our sales during their tour of our Garden Centre and Café facilities.

The generosity of visitors and supporters shone through, showcasing the commitment to a great cause. The success of the day was also thanks to the great show of support from STEPS staff. Some came to contribute to the plant sale and others donated their time volunteering in the garden centre, café and around the site.

Sunshine FM brought a great energy to the day with their live broadcast onsite and setting the atmosphere with some great music.

STEPS Garden Centre Manager April Heard says they almost completely sold out of kangaroo paws, and there were many spaces that needed to be restocked and filled for their Sunday trading the next day.

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

07 5458 3000

E: pathways@stepsgroup.com.au

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