COLLEGE NEWS

Spring Edition 2024

Learning skills for a life of independence



STEPS Pathways College graduate enjoying life of independence

Jackson, a former student at STEPS Pathways College, says that his journey with the organisation has changed his life and continues to shape his future for the better. Jackson grew up on a farm with his mother and stepfather and says that STEPS has shown him opportunities that he never would have imagined otherwise. His mother heard about STEPS Pathways College and signed him up for the Boarding Program.

"At first, I was pretty hesitant and wasn't sure what to expect," Jackson said. "That didn't last long. I quickly realised that the people here are very friendly and caring, and they take care of us every single day. If I could talk to someone who

was in my position and feels nervous, I would simply say: don't be. It's worth doing."

Jackson is still an active member of the STEPS family, volunteering every week in the STEPS Garden Centre and helping with Christmas parties. When asked about his favourite parts of STEPS Pathways College, Jackson was quick to mention the social sports, playing soccer and basketball alongside his housemate Harrison.

The two met during their time at STEPS and became fast friends, eventually boarding together as housemates up until their graduation. They now live together in their own unit on the Sunshine Coast.

"Harrison is a great housemate and an even better friend," said Jackson. "STEPS Pathways College has given me a lot of opportunities and experience, but I didn't expect to meet my best friend there. The whole journey was life changing."

Beyond the sports and gardening and friendships formed, Jackson says he is most grateful for how STEPS has made him feel independent. "I get to do my own things, live in my own place in a community I love, and go out into the world knowing I'm capable," Jackson said, "Everyday tasks like going shopping and keeping the house clean are just simple parts of my routine. Because of STEPS, I feel independent, and that makes me feel good about myself."

STEPS PATHWAYS COLLEGE

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Trainer profile

What do you teach at STEPS Pathways College?

Life skills and independence.

What do your students teach you?

Quite a bit. It never ceases to amaze me.
For example, the brilliant minds the students all have hiding behind the challenges they live with every day

What do you enjoy teaching your students?

I enjoy teaching the life skills that we as Trainers have learned over a lifetime. Along with our amazing curriculum writers, we guide students through the minefield called 'Life' that we sometimes take for granted.

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

To be kinder and more patient.

What has been a highlight for you so far?

Being a part of this amazing team of passionate people here at STEPS that are helping students become independent. Watching almost non-verbal students flourish and hold conversations with me is a highlight along with the big goal of seeing students move out of STEPS Pathways College to live independently on their own.

George Levette
Trainer
STEPS Pathways College

George



Student profile



Harmony

Tell us about yourself...

What are the things you enjoy?

I love hanging out with my friends like Sarah, both Lukes and all the other Boarding College students. I enjoy going for walks and catching up with my friends for a coffee at Café on George or somewhere else in Caloundra.

What classes do you enjoy taking at Pathways College?

I really enjoy the Cooking Class and learning how to make Healthy Snacks. I like cleaning my unit which is something I learnt how to do from being in cooking masterclass.

What do you enjoy about Pathways Boarding College life?

Everyone is so nice to me here. I've made lots of friends, hopefully we will stay friends when I leave here.

What are some valuable life skills you have learnt so far during your time at Pathways College?

I've learned how to be more independent. I can now cook things like Chicken Pad Thai which I learnt to do through doing Master Chef with the trainers in my unit.

What are your goals for the future?

I would like to live with a partner and maybe one day have a puppy dog.

What advice would you give to someone wanting to attend the college?

It's a good and safe place to come to. There are lots of nice people here and you learn how to do lots of good things when you are at College.

Enrolments are open for our Pathways Boarding College for January 2025



Stephanie

Principal's message

I am excited to share this edition of the STEPS Pathways College newsletter and to be the Principal of such an incredible organisation where our students grow and develop their independent living skills every day.

We have multiple stories featured in this Spring 2024 edition which shows the diversity of what our students learn, from cooking and excursions to understanding everything they need to know about holding tenancies.

We also profile a student and trainer, Harmony and George, and hear more about them and what makes their time at STEPS Pathways College so special. As always, I would like to thank our students for all their hard work and dedication to their time with us here at STEPS.

My team and I are continually blown away by their achievements. I would also like to thank our amazing team here at the College for their hard incredible skills and commitment which led to us being recognised as the 'Fisher Education Provider of the Year' - you learn more about this in this edition of College News.

I'm looking forward to the next few months here at the College. Although bittersweet, in December we will see some of our students graduate and embark on their new life of independence outside of STEPS Pathways College.

This incredible milestone makes me feel enormously proud and I am eager to see what amazing things they will achieve next with their new-found skills and confidence. Thanks for your support and interest in STEPS Pathways College.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with us if you would like to learn more about our College, have any questions or would like us to take you on a tour of our beautiful campus.

Stephanie Patey
Executive Principal
STEPS Pathways College and STEPS Social Business

How you can help

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

By donating 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.



Thank you!

Interactive whiteboard

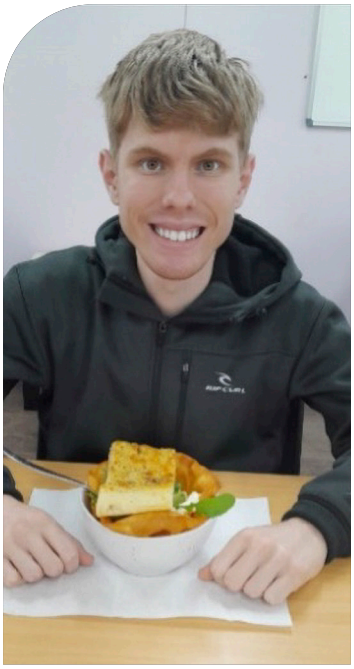
We recently received a $4000 donation from Diamond Partners and Milford Assets to purchase a brand-new interactive digital whiteboard.

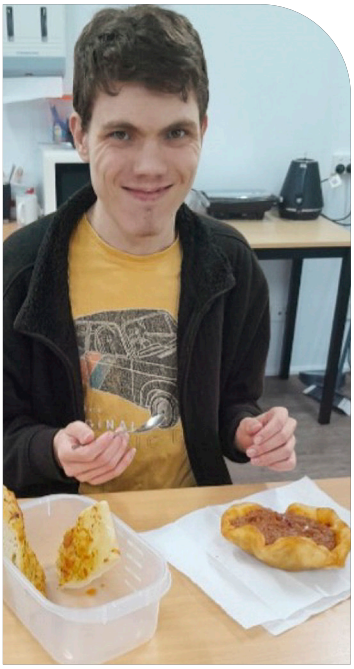
One of the key advantages of the interactive whiteboard is its ability to accommodate students' varying needs, ensuring that no one is left behind.

"Even on days when students are unable to attend classes in person due to illness or other reasons, they can seamlessly participate in lessons from the comfort of their own boarding units," said STEPS Managing Director, Carmel Crouch.

We have an enormous amount of gratitude for the team at Diamond Partners and Milford for their generosity which is helping make a huge difference to the lives of our students.







Curriculum news

Students cook up a storm!

Our students in the Boarding and Day College particpate in weekly cooking classes hosted by qualified chefs who guide and support students to cook with a safe, practical and hygienic approach.

During these classes, students gradually work towards cooking a variety of meals and healthy snacks independently.

Recently, students made a chilli con carne from sratch using beans and mince as their base ingredients and their own tortilla bowls to accompany the dish.

The classes combined different cooking techniques with varied skill levels and encouraged students to step out of their cooking comfort zones.

The dish was a huge success and the students all enjoyed eating it together after doing a wonderful job of preparing and cooking the meal.

Introduction students learn about tenancy!

Students in our 'Introductory' phase who are enrolled into our Boarding College program spend two days a week in a classroom environment.

During this time, they participate in a range of activities designed to expose them to our ten areas of learning which work towards independent living.

In this class our students have been learning about how to Maintain a Tenancy, which includes vital information about how to be a good tenant, a respectful flat mate and understanding your rights and responsibilities.

Students learn about tenancy agreements, rental payments, efficient use of utilities and how to stay safe at home.

Our students are so proud of themselves (as are we!) and can be seen celebrating the completion of a classroom unit with their trainer George in the photo!





Excursion to Mooloolaba

Our Boarding College students enjoyed a fantastic day out at Mooloolaba, taking a cruise through the blue waters, and enjoyed lunch at the beach front afterwards.

As part of their Unit, "Accessing Entertainment Venues and Community Spaces", the students spent time planning, researching, and discussing local options and negotiating where they would like to go on a day out in the community.

They agreed that they all wanted to go on a boat ride and researched places on the Sunshine Coast that provided this opportunity. Their findings found them agreeing on a 1-hour canal cruise, leaving from Mooloolaba Wharf at 11am. Following this, students researched costs, how to make a booking on the phone and arranged to get a quote emailed. They also googled the travel time involved and printed out a travel plan and map.

Students discussed what food would be appropriate to take for lunch and alternatively what budget they would have to purchase food. They planned what to bring/pack, and wear with a focus on being sun smart.

This unit was a fantastic confidence-building exercise which enabled our students to be independent and use their new skills to organise an outing in their local community.



Become a volunteer

Whether your skills lie in the kitchen, classroom, nursery or beyond, we have just the role to suit your unique skill set.

If a once off volunteer opportunity is more for you, we also have many community events that are great opportunities to help make a difference.

Volunteers are an integral part of STEPS. 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, Karla.

07 5458 3002 or
volunteer@stepsgroup.com.au

Day students explore Aussie World!

Day College students completed the units Travelling Safely and Self Control and Boundaries with a culminating excursion to Aussie World.

In preparation for the excursion, students worked out how they were going to budget for their ticket, as well as what purchases of food might be required, or whether they would take a packed lunch.

Students also considered what they wanted to do over the day and negotiated what groups would go on what rides by using the using the Aussie World map.

During the day students were excited to share their use of self-regulating techniques, with one student rushing off a ride to tell us that she had used her breathing to stay calm during a scary part of a ride.

Throughout the day students made clear decisions about what was good for them and constructively enforced their boundaries, while navigating the park using their maps effectively to be at the right place at the right time. Overall, the day allowed students to explore all their learnings in a real-life way and they succeeded beyond their own expectations.



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STEPS Pathways College takes home 'Fisher Education Provider of the Year'

Our STEPS Pathways College has won the title of 'Fisher Education Provider of the Year' at the 2024 Fisher Community Awards!

The awards ceremony honoured individuals and organisations in the Fisher electorate who are making notable contributions to the Sunshine Coast community. Nate Nelson, who was recently named our first ever 'Young Ambassador', was also recognised as the 'Fisher Student of the Year' for his dedication to supporting STEPS. Stephanie Patey, our Pathways College Executive Principal, says that everyone at STEPS is passionate about changing lives and redefining the possibilities of young people with disabilities and autism.

"It's so heartwarming to see everyone in the STEPS community recognised, from our staff and students to our volunteers and advocates like Nate," she said.

"Watching our students learn, grow and graduate, ready to begin their new lives as independent young adults, makes everyone in our organisation feel so incredibly proud."

We're very proud of the STEPS Pathways College team for this wonderful achievement.

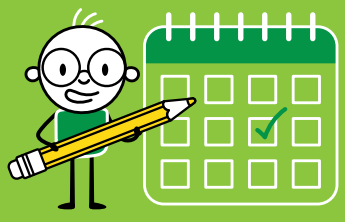
Mark your calendar!

NOVEMBER

Sunday 24 November - STEPS Autism Treehouse Christmas Party

DECEMBER

Tuesday 3 December - STEPS Pathways College Open Day



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