

EPIC Community Grants helping to improve lives



Kookaburra Kids is one of the 27 community groups EPIC has supported through the first round of its community grants program.

Late last year EPIC awarded over \$8,000 worth of grants to not-for-profit community groups as part of the EPIC Community Grants program.

We were heartened to hear that the grants are already making a positive difference, with one of the 27 successful recipients, Kookaburra Kids, sharing their story with us.

Kookaburra Kids run educational and recreational camps for kids living in families affected by mental illness. The camps allow kids to have a break and just be kids, while also learning to better understand their loved one's mental illness.

Kookaburra Kids' Acting CEO Danielle McGloin says through camp, kids participate in fun activities such as canoeing, go-karting, ice skating, and archery. But more importantly, kids can step away from the complexities of their day-to-day lives, while finding comfort with like-minded peers.

"Because kids struggle to understand mental illness, they often believe they are to blame for their parent's illness or behaviour," explains Danielle.

"But at camp, kids learn that this is not the case."

Danielle says broader benefits are often noticed when the child returns home.

"We certainly see that children's mental health knowledge increases after attending the program," says Danielle.

"Parents have reported the positive impact this has had on parent/child relationships at home, with conversations about mental illness occurring that would never have taken place previously."

EPIC is proud to support community organisations like Kookaburra Kids. If you'd like to find out more about Kookaburra Kids visit their website kookaburrakids.org.au

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Welcome to the Feel Good February edition of EPIC Enquirer.

We're thrilled to share some stories guaranteed to make you feel good, as well as give you some thought starters to help spread the feel good vibes throughout the community.

EPIC Enquirer is distributed to connect and inspire more than 3,500 job seekers across Australia who are being supported by EPIC on their employment journey. If you would like to receive a copy of this publication in your letterbox you can subscribe at bit.ly/EPICenquirer.

You can also connect with EPIC Assist through social media for more feel good stories.

To connect with your local
EPIC Service Centre
call 13 EPIC (13 3742)
or email us on
hello@epicassist.org
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Are you part of a community group that is helping to improve the lives of people with disability, illness, or injury? You may be able to apply for an EPIC Community Grant.

Round 2 is open now. Applying is easy.

Visit epicassist.org/get-involved/community-grants/

CEO update by Bill Gamack

Welcome to a new year - and the first edition of EPIC Enquirer for 2019.

It seems like only yesterday that I was celebrating Christmas with some of you at our Brisbane Participant's Christmas Party in December. I always enjoy the chance to meet some of our new people, as well as see some faces that have been around for a little longer!

I had the pleasure of hearing from some of the people we helped into employment more than 10 years ago. It means a lot to me that after all this time, they still feel connected to EPIC and are part of our family. When we say that we'll stay with you on your employment journey - we mean it.

For those of you who are new to the EPIC family - welcome! We look forward to supporting you on your employment journey throughout 2019.



Everything's coming up roses for Phil

After years of sporadic employment and battles with depression, Phil has finally found the path back to confidence. His employer, Brian, has nothing but glowing praise for Phil's initiative and work ethic as a courier at iBlossom Florist in Maroochydore.

Phil's life was upturned a few years ago when he underwent an extensive laminectomy to correct an out-of-place disc in his back. For two-and-a-half years, he struggled to maintain employment or find a provider willing to support his unique needs and wellbeing.

"I heard about EPIC and they said they would never force me to have a job that I wasn't comfortable with. I found EPIC very understanding," says Phil.

As someone whose life is also touched by disability, Brian is hopeful that Phil's story will make waves in the community. He is passionate about destroying the misconceptions surrounding the skillsets of people with disability.

"I would certainly say to employers if you've got a spot, consider someone with a disability, because disability can mean anything," Brian advises.

He hopes that in the future employers will learn to open their minds and focus on the person, as it has worked out well for his business.

"Phil is really quite happy, and we're really pleased with him. He couldn't be a better fit."



Phil (left) and Brian's (right) employment journey is growing strong with Sunshine Coast florist iBlossom.

To those struggling to find employment or stay motivated when facing health conditions, Phil encourages them to never give up.

"Just keep trying. I applied for many different jobs, so don't give up. And hang in there."

Camel career for new recruit on Sunshine Coast

Every day is hump day for Jo since starting a new career on the Sunshine Coast. Jo is the newest addition to the team at commercial camel dairy QCamel, and a big part of her job is to make sure the camels are well loved and looked after.

Jo describes her job as 'amazing' and says she couldn't imagine working anywhere else. She says this job has given her an enormous boost and sense of purpose.

"It's very important to be part of a community and keep yourself busy and active every day," says Jo.

"EPIC has been so important in getting me to where I am today. They made sure I was able to get to work, and I had my uniform and was feeling great and ready to go.

"I just love working with the camels, rounding them up and playing with the babies. They're all so gorgeous," says Jo.

"Our team is wonderful. Everyone gets along really well, we're all friends and we help each other out whenever we need it.

"Working here is one of the most important steps in my career so far, and I'm just thrilled to be here."



A big part of Jo's working day at QCamel involves making sure the camels feel loved and looked after.

Exhibition shines light on artistic talents



EPIC job seekers and talented artists enjoy mingling with family, friends and VIP guests at 'A World of Difference' opening night celebrations.

2018 finished on a high note for EPIC Assist with our celebration of International Day for People with Disability in December. For the fourth year EPIC celebrated the day with our increasingly popular art exhibition, with this year's theme 'A World of Difference'.

Through 'A World of Difference', we helped emerging and professional artists with disability to reach new audiences and sparked conversations about the value of difference. Thank you to everyone who visited the gallery, helped us spread the word on social media, and bought artworks - more than \$6,500 was raised through artwork sales, 100% of which is returned to the artists!

Positive Self-Talk tip

The way that you think about yourself has a huge influence on your self-esteem. If you keep telling yourself that you are no good, you might just start to believe it even though it's not true. With practice, you can learn to notice your own negative self-talk as it happens, and choose to think about the situation in a more realistic and helpful way.

To kick-start your positive self-talk why not try these alternatives:

EPIC Service Centres regularly run workshops to help you build your self-esteem and confidence.

Why not ask your EPIC Service Centre if they have any workshops coming up?

Instead of saying this...	Say this....
I cannot do this.	I'm going to keep trying until I get this.
It is too hard.	Hmmm. This seems hard. But I've got through harder things and I'll get through this too!
I have never done it before.	This will be a skill I'll be proud of when I master it!
They don't like me.	Maybe these people are nervous about meeting new people - just like me.

EPIC Events

THRIVING NOW'S NEURODIVERSITY AND EMPLOYMENT SYMPOSIUM

This event is an opportunity for EPIC job seekers who are on the autism spectrum, or with ADHD or Dyslexia, to attend and learn about services that are available and also opportunities that are on the horizon.

EPIC is proud to be sponsoring this event.

Friday 31 May
9am - 4pm
Royal Queensland Yacht Squadron
578 Royal Esplanade, Manly QLD

TICKETS: thrivingnow.net



GLOBAL DATES

February

Feel Good February

March

National Epilepsy Awareness Month

3 March

World Hearing Day

21 March

Harmony Day
World Down Syndrome Day

2 April

World Autism Awareness Day
- Go Blue For Autism

May

Mindful in May
Macula Month

20-26 May

National Volunteers Week

Feedback from participants

“

Jane my consultant is amazing, provides me with support in person, via the phone and email whenever I require it. She understands my illness and works with me to help achieve the best outcomes for me.

Simone”

“

I see Janelle at Bundaberg every two weeks and have done for approximately two years. During this time Janelle has supported me during some very frustrating and anxiety-causing challenges. Due to Janelle's support I have suggested EPIC to others in need of a great service provider.

Magdalena”

“

I am treated like an individual and my personal needs are being catered to. Ebony really helped ease my anxiety.

Leah”

FEEL GOOD



While kind gestures are wonderful every day of the year, Feel Good February is a movement that hopes to get people talking - and doing - during February. In support of Feel Good February, we've put together the Feel Good Five, simple things you can try to bring kindness to others' lives - and your own.

1 GIVE A GENUINE COMPLIMENT

Compliments are a way to show others that we see their strengths and accomplishments, and that they are valued. If you receive a compliment, try not to deflect it - remember that you are valued too!

2 WRITE A CARD FOR SOMEONE SPECIAL

Let someone know you're thinking of them by writing a letter or card. Even a thoughtful text message can brighten someone's day.

3 PICK UP LITTER IN A PARK OR AT THE BEACH

Take your random acts to a community level by collecting litter in a park or beach. You'll make the space nicer for a neighbourhood and help the environment at the same time.

4 SMILE AT A STRANGER

If you make eye contact with a stranger, flash them a genuine smile. They'll likely smile back, and both of your days will be a little brighter!

5 DO SOMEONE ELSE'S CHORES FOR THEM

If a particular chore always falls to your partner, parent, or sibling, do it for them without expecting them to return the favour.