

Good Afternoon Sue,

I spoke with you briefly yesterday afternoon but thought I would follow up with an email. I had the absolute privilege of being able to share this fabulous day with the children and staff of your very special school (in more ways than one).

When my niece Cathie Antony told me of this event and was bemoaning the lack of volunteers I must admit I grudgingly told her I would help her. My background is nursing and I specialised in Dementia Care Management so felt that I had a basic understanding of what I would need to do.

I initially thought that it was going to be a big ask for children with disabilities to manage bikes as those children with no such disability have significant problems learning to balance and steer etc. The skills of your students and the joy they experienced blew me away. And what a massive undertaking by all concerned to plan and provide such an event for these lovely children. I mentioned to Cath several times "This is bigger than Ben Hur!"

I cannot praise the staff enough, not one impatient sound all day, smiles on every face, encouragement to the children by the bucketful and the willingness to assist each other and ensure that those who did have children with more challenging behaviours were given a break from time to time. I met so many friendly staff on my little walks with lovely Benjamin and Neve (probably not spelt correctly) and the fact they knew every child also was a clear indication of their care and respect for the children and their colleagues.

I enjoyed watching Ingrid, Shannon and Cathie interact with the children and feel that you should all be very proud of not only what you achieved yesterday but the very obvious fact that this is or was, just another day for you, ensuring that your students get the very best from their school experiences.

Take a big bow Dandenong Valley Special School!

Regards