

# Extended Families

## Volunteers recognised for 5 years of service in 2017

### **Lesley**

“Lesley has been our safe guard over the past 5 Years” (parent)

Lesley was approved as an Extended families volunteer late 2012 and soon after was introduced to Kaiden (when he was 7 years old) and his family. Lesley and Kaiden catch up for a few hours every fortnight and do all sorts of fun things –rock climbing, mini golf, cycling, tennis, playing in the park and just hanging out. They’ve developed a great bond and both really look forward to spending time together.

### **Jane**

Jane came to Extended Families in mid-2012. Since then she has been matched with Daniel and his family. She is very committed and reliable, visiting mostly on a weekly basis for over 5 years. Jane has developed a close relationship with the whole family. She spends time engaging in sensory experiences with Daniel, like playing with cushions and bubbles. In the warmer weather they spend lots of time out in the backyard and playing on the trampoline.

### **Jill**

Jill has been matched with Dhayaani since June 2012. Originally Jill’s 15 year old grand-daughter was the one who had the idea about volunteering and we said she could join us, but that she needed to have an adult buddy volunteer with her in the role. Jill stepped in very willingly and although her grand-daughter is now an adult busy doing other things, Jill has continued to visit Dhayaani and her family regularly a couple of times a month and stayed an important part of the family’s life.

### **David**

David has been involved in two families since coming on board as a volunteer in 2012. David first got involved with his current family 4 years ago and over this time has developed a supportive relationship with this family as a whole. David’s spent time in the family home, and was also involved going out to celebrate family birthdays, attend school concerts and so on. David has often helped at various Family Day Events / Extendable Activities which has been appreciated.

Emma who is almost 11 years wrote this letter to David after hearing about his acknowledgement.

Emma’s letter: Dear David, Each time you come around I learn something new. Whether it be playing a game, sharing your knowledge and experience, or simply your sense of humour. You

always try to make things fun. Even though I might not say it, I appreciate all you do for me. Richly blessed is how I feel, having a grandfather like you. Love Emma.

### **Nick**

Matched with Sally in early 2012, Nick has been visiting Sally on nearly a weekly basis for several years. Nick and Sally get out and about in the community doing a huge variety of different activities like going to the park, train rides, swimming and the movies. Nick has also been a valued Committee of Management member for several years.

### **Nicola & Christopher**

As family oriented people, Nicola and Chris chose to volunteer with Extended Families so that they could contribute to the development of a child and make a positive connection with another family.

Nicola and Chris were matched with a family with two young children with ASD in December 2012.

Nicola and Chris value the time they spend with the children and have found it particularly rewarding to watch a relationship between their own children and the children they are match with grow.

The family expressed how grateful they are for the friendship offered by her Nicola and Chris, seeing them as an extension of their own family.

### **Hui Ting**

Hui Ting was approved as a volunteer with Extended Families in August 2012 and has been matched with 'Alwin' for over 4 years now. Hui Ting has been described by her previous coordinator as being a reliable and responsive volunteer throughout. Even during her final year studying medicine, and during her placements and first work positions, Ting has been a consistent support to the family.

Quote from Alwin's mother: "Ting is a very good person for my family. She reads books to Alwin and takes him to playgrounds. She is very friendly and Alwin feels very safe and comfortable with her. We feel lucky to have her and I am very thankful for her."

### **Belinda**

Bel first meet her 'match' Olivia in September 2012, it was Bel's first volunteering role with Extended Families and she has remained a valued visitor to the family over these last 5 years. In the following quote you'll note Bel's circumstances have changed and she has very recently decided to cease formal volunteering with Extended Families

Quote from Liv's mother: "By day Bel is a high powered sales executive. On the weekends she is simply Liv's friend. The girls have loved walking their dogs, having hot chocolates, and getting their nails done together. As a family, we were humbled that someone as busy as Bel would give up her time to be a friend to Liv. She was always happy and bubbly and Liv loved spending time with her. Bel will be greatly missed by our family and we wish her nothing but the best for the future."

## **Maëlle**

Maëlle and Hebe were have been matched since September 2012. Coming from a family who believe in giving back prompted Maëlle to become involved in volunteering with Extended Families. Over the past five years, Maëlle has been a very committed volunteer. She has developed a great relationship with Hebe and her family, catching up regularly and continuing to support Hebe through times when she has undergone surgery and rehabilitation.

Maëlle has spoken positively about her experience of being an Extended Families volunteer during volunteer training.

"I really enjoy my time with Hebe and I feel like I get more from the experience than maybe Hebe does from spending time with me. I've grown to have an attachment to Hebe and her family and am always thinking about them."

## **Danielle**

Matched with Chelsea in August 2012, Danielle has been a big part of Chelsea's life over the past 5 years and continues to visit at least 6 hours a month. They enjoy outings out into the community together, including shopping, music concerts, and to cafes.

## **Nga**

After hearing our Coordinator talking about looking volunteers to support Vietnamese family group programs on an SBS radio spot, Nga got in touch with Extended Families and started the process of becoming one of our highly reliable group volunteers. Nga is a great help with the Vietnamese Friendship Group, which runs one Saturday per month. More recently she has also been available to help with the Vietnamese Families with Special Needs Children group on a Thursday.

The Group Coordinator described Nga as very reliable and committed and said "she is always willing to help even though it isn't easy for her to get to the programs."