



September 2014



CEO Comment

Martin Wren

The obvious highlight for September was the 'Focusonability' awards night on Sept 4th.

However, behind the entertainment on the night there's a far more serious message; focus on ability is necessary in a world where negatively perceived difference can lead to exclusion and poverty.

It's no accident that we target schools for involvement in the program – the young men and women who make such a terrific job of highlighting ability are tomorrow's co-workers, managers, HR professionals and leaders.

These are also (bless them) the most open to the message that it's not what we can't do but what we can achieve that should be our measure.

How inspiring and informative were the films? My personal favourites bombed in the voting (you really do need to be super organised to be competitive) –



I loved Inala's entry: [Click here to view](#) and it was an absolute pleasure to meet West Bathurst Public School's team and Grace (never work with children – she stole the show!) and the enthusiasm of the various school contingents was just contagious.

Quick update for next year (suggest drum roll!) – the winner will be offered an absolutely amazing, once in a lifetime chance to have their film previewed in front of the stars – can't say more right now but never heard of a better prize.

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How to make a fine short-film competition

By Ann Bolch

In 2009, CEO of NOVA Employment Martin Wren started with three ingredients:

- An inviolate belief in the ability of people with a disability
- A big idea
- A committed team of staff disability employment service staff.



Blended together, these ingredients made the inaugural Focus on Ability Short Film Competition. In 2009, 14 films were entered and the winners received \$5000 in prizes.

This year 180 films were entered and the winners shared \$90,000 in prizes.

Last night the sixth annual FoA Awards were held at Fox Studios, Sydney to an audience of nearly 400. They laughed and cried along with a suite of inspirational films that highlighted the ability of people with a disability.

One of the four judges, Award-winning Director Di Drew, commented, "The standard of films was exceptional. We watched many humbling stories of inspiration. I see things differently after seeing these films."

Minister for Disability Services John Ajaka said the NSW Government is proud to support this wonderful initiative that highlights the creativity and ability of people with disability through films.

"I would like to congratulate the winners of this year's 'Focus on Ability' Short Films Competition and thank all the participants for promoting inclusion and raising awareness that disability is not a barrier. Through your films, you have all touched our hearts," said Mr Ajaka.



NOVA Employment CEO Martin Wren invited everyone present to spread the word about FoA, 'Next year we'll be doing it better, noisier; it'll be more inspirational ... Actually, how could it possibly get better than this? Next year we'll be back!'

Get a taste of the quality and variety of some of these entertaining films:



The Dale Wallace Story – a documentary about a woman with cerebral palsy who has worked at Myer for 27 years, delighting customers, loving her job and rising to team leader.

Eggs and Aspergers – a beautifully rendered, artfully shot story about a charming young man with Aspergers and his family.

James is Grandiose – where James played his funny, complicated self negotiating life with schizo affective disorder.

In 2014, online views and votes totalled 259,841, double last year's number!

For the full list of winners head to www.focusonability.com.au

Some NOVA links

Watch our latest video on NOVA's Youtube channel



Become a fan of NOVA on Facebook. Recommend us to your friends.



What's news at Can-Do-Ability?



Want some great employment tips?

Lets Get Working
A Nova Employment Initiative

This is why I come to work every day...

By Jodi Mitrevski - Work Placement coach

When I was first case loaded to Rachael, I was a bit concerned that I would not be able to place this young lady as she is completely deaf and non verbal; Rachael's wish was to become a kitchen hand. The challenge was set.

It was during an ITP meeting that Rachael identified Ingleburn RSL as somewhere she wanted to attend for work experience. After many attempts to discuss this with the employer, the placement was secured.

In March I placed Rachael at Ingleburn RSL for 1 day per week. This placement was increased in July to 2 days per week, for a 4 week job trial.

Throughout this process Rachael has continually proven her ABILITIES, to a point where today, a 15 hr per week minimum Hospitality Traineeship was signed off on; even more impressive than her initial kitchen hand position.

As of Monday 15.09.14 Rachael is a new tax payer.

I also would like to say that I could not have got this traineeship over the line without the fabulous support of the work placement team. Emma has worked really hard with Rachael(as I have not yet learnt Auslan). Emma has supported Rachael throughout this placement and it is her dedication to our trainees that has assisted not only this outcome, but the great ongoing relationship she has built with the employer.

I'm so proud I could pop!



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