

Children and Families at Time for Kids

We always enjoy hearing from our carers and 'their' children. The shared experiences of their contact over the years often has a profound impact on both families. Mason Sommerville was in our program for many years and shares with us some of his experiences with his Time for Kids family. Here is Mason's story.....



I am now 21 years old and I first met the Killian family when I was five. Looking back at my memories with them, I feel a huge sense of gratitude for what they did for me. Most of my childhood memories involve the Killians: camping out by the river at Easter and catching my first fish, riding the Cockle Train and treks around Granite Island - having my own birthday party! But most of all, having the chance to receive attention and to have time given to me.



I was referred to Time for Kids because I came from a family of six children being cared for by our single mother. At the time the youngest in my family was two years old and the oldest was fifteen. My mother was in desperate need of some relief and if Time for Kids hadn't appeared at that point in my life I'm not sure how I would have turned out.

Reflecting back on my relationship with the Killians, I can see how it has had a huge influence on my life. Dave is like the father I never had and a very strong and positive role model. Sue still nurtures me like a second child and has always been someone I could confide in. And Sam is like a brother; we've fought, we've cried but we are still best mates.

The Killians have given me support and taught me life lessons that have allowed me to excel as a person; they have shown me the many possibilities of life by giving me so many opportunities throughout my childhood to be myself and to choose my own path. I do believe that without their positive influence I would not today be doing the things that I have discovered I love.

I have been an active volunteer since I was 17 - in youth camps, as a youth mentor and as a telephone counsellor. I am studying Social Work and am presently completing my third year. Since 2005 I have also been doing volunteer work in India - at Mother Teresa's Home for the Dying in Kolkata and at MITHRA in Chennai, a school run by an Australian nun, which is for children with severe mental and physical disabilities. Recently I returned to India with my younger brother and more than \$3,000, which we had raised for the charities that we worked for over there.

I have a strong belief that service to others is our greatest gift, especially to those less fortunate than ourselves.

To bring this back to my Time for Kids experience, I feel that if, as a young person, I had not been given the chance to expand my horizons and experience a different way of life, I may never have developed into the person I am now. I think of my experience as standing on a river bank, never to reach the other side; then the Killian family came along and offered me a stepping stone to get closer to the other bank. Right now I am reaching the other side and am surrounded by many stepping stones, but if that first stone had never appeared, then I am not sure where I would be now.

Mason's story is truly inspiring and positively affirms our work at Time for Kids. Our volunteer carers can make a world of difference to the lives of so many children. If you would like to share some of your Time for Kids experiences we'd love to hear from you.

Promoting Time for Kids

We hope many of you saw our advertisement in the Messenger newspapers during Volunteers Week (May 14-18), thanking all of our wonderful volunteers for their invaluable support. If you did, you would have also noticed that we were front and centre of the volunteer spread, with a story about two of our carer families.

We hope the story sent the message that the carers volunteering with Time for Kids, are as varied as the children they care for. We have singles, partnered couples (with and without their own kids), grandparents and over sixties. And why do all these people volunteer to care for children? We loved the words that Bridgid Connors (one of the carers in our story) used:

"At times work-life balance can be a challenge and spending time with the girls reminds me of what really matters - connections with people that create meaningful relationships. They remind me of what it is to see the world through untainted eyes and enjoy the simple things: puddles aren't just annoying things that get your shoes wet!"

We still have many children on our waiting list that would love to go to a caring family. Word of mouth is invaluable; so please be proud of the work you do with children and **talk about it!**



From the Manager's Desk...

Can you believe that we are half way through the year already? Once again it has been another busy three months at Time for Kids. As some of you would be aware Karen, our Senior Social Worker, has been away for the last 6 weeks, so we have been even busier keeping up with Karen's work load. We are looking forward to having her return! It is great to see the people who have been waiting for their registration to be approved, now having the opportunity to share their lives with a Time for Kids child and their family. It is wonderful to see so many people who are willing to give their time and energy to children in need.

I would like to say thank you to all of our supporters who give money, time and enthusiasm to such a worthy cause. It makes such a difference to the children's self esteem and future

opportunities. All of us at Time for Kids look forward to the future knowing that we have the wonderful support of all the people involved in Time for Kids.

It is fantastic to be able to add three new members to our team this year; Maria Kelly as Recruitment and Training Officer, Tracey Brown as Fundraising Manger and Sherryl Fechner as Administrative Assistant. We hope you will all give them a big welcome.

We have had 68 children referred this financial year and would like to support as many of these children as we can, but we need your help. Please support by giving a donation. All donations are tax deductible but most importantly, all money goes to finding families for children in need. What a wonderful way to spend your hard earned money - giving a child the opportunity to form a supportive friendship with a caring family!

Kathy

New voice at Time for Kids

If you hear a new voice on the phone when calling Time For Kids, it might be Sherril, the newest member of our team. Sherril will be working with us for 3 days each week. In the past she has worked with young children suffering from Autism and is currently studying Psychology at the University of South Australia.

Sherril loves music, ballroom and Latin American dancing, theatre and the arts. She has a 9 year old daughter who loves Irish Dancing and horses.



"Do you always have the TV on?"

Tuning Kids on to Smart TV

You are your children's first and most influential teacher. The values and coping behaviours your children learn now will last a lifetime. Use TV to promote your children's health by building a balanced TV diet.

Top Tips for Kid's TV

- Lead by example - your child's viewing habits may be copied from yours.
- Control the TV - don't let it control you.
- TV viewing for a very young child should be in your company.
- Choose programs and turn the TV on only then.
- Record programs so they can be played at a time that suits best.
- Encourage children to talk about how they feel after watching a program.
- Play 'spot the gimmicks and trickery' in TV commercials.
- Choose a family area which can be a TV free space - make it comfortable and use it.
- Children need to learn skills which help them for school and getting on with others. These can be best learnt and practiced by doing things.



- Make TV one of a lot of activities your children do.

Hey, Mum and Dad! Do you Know...?

- The average child watches 3-4 hours of TV a day. Two hours of quality TV is the maximum time recommended.
- Active play time is needed to develop mental, physical and social skills.
- Children who watch violence on TV are more likely to display aggressive behaviour.
- Young children don't know the difference between programs and commercials.

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