



iAccord

SUMMER 2022



ST JOHN OF GOD

Accord

Hospitality | Compassion | Respect | Justice | Excellence

We're there for you

CEO Message

Lisa Evans

CEO, St John of God Accord



Dear clients, families, and caregivers

It is with great pleasure that I share with you all the summer edition of iAccord. Another jam-packed publication that showcases the achievements of our clients throughout our service.

I hope you love Gene Jeanie on the cover as much as I do. David Bowie is the second in a series of four portraits completed by the clients from the Greensborough art Programs of Support, using pieces of recycled clothing such as denim. You may recall John Denim on the previous cover. These portraits look fantastic on a wall together. Work towards the final two portraits are underway where Prince and Aretha Franklin will complete the series.

It was also wonderful to run the annual footy day again this year after a two year absence due to COVID-19. The anticipation and thrill of this event between our clients from the community campuses were palpable, and gives our clients momentum in supporting the AFL finals that run at the same time.

Throughout this edition, you will read many stories of our clients' achievement. A standout for me is the degree to which our partnerships with others play in creating opportunities for our clients. I want to acknowledge this, as without our community partners we would not achieve the outcomes and personal growth experienced by our clients. I know that this growth goes both ways, and our partners receive as much out of the relationship with St John of God Accord as our clients do with them. These opportunities are the result of many years of relationship-building between all stakeholders. Many of the stories presented in this edition talk about this, and it's fabulous.

The story of Jason securing a Program Officer role at VALID (Victorian Advocacy League for Individuals with Disability) where he will advocate for people with a disability who live in accommodation is a wonderful example of the

great opportunities that can be created when we work in partnership with others. I would like to congratulate Jason on his appointment to VALID. I think he will be an excellent advocate and I'm sure I will cross paths with Jason professionally in my next work chapter.

Speaking of which, you will have received a letter that I have resigned from St John of God Accord and finish on Thursday 15th December. I have accepted a role as Chief Operating Officer Victoria at Scope and will commence there in February after a summer break. I want to thank you all for your support of me as CEO here at St John of God Accord. This is a role that has been very dear to me and one that I can honestly say has been a career and life highlight. I will very much miss the daily touch point I have had with the clients at Greensborough and the many other clients I got to know throughout our service. To our families, I want to thank you for trusting your loved one to us. I appreciate every single phone call, email, and letter I have received that has provided feedback on what we do, and where we can do it better. To all the St John of God Accord caregivers, thank you for not just doing what you do but for how you go about your work. It takes a village, and I could not be prouder to have led this St John of God Accord village for three and a half years.

Silvana Gugliandolo will be acting CEO for three months while an extensive recruitment campaign is conducted. Silvana is no stranger to any of you, and I hand over to Silvana knowing that she will ensure the service continues to achieve great outcomes during this interim period.

Take care

Lisa

VALID opportunity for Jason

Aisling McCabe, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

We all know Jason from across the sporting airwaves and radio stations of Melbourne, and he has captured the hearts and minds of many Melbournian sports fans over the years.

A client of our services living in the eastern suburbs, Jason has featured in iAccord several times. More recently to add to his successes, Jason interviewed for a position as Program Officer at VALID (Victorian Advocacy League For Individuals With Disability) in Melbourne, and was successful in securing the job. (VALID is an award-winning organisation that has been at the forefront of advocating for people with a disability in Victoria since 1989).

I caught up with Jason to hear how his new role is going. He told me as a Program Officer he will be advocating for people with disability in their homes so they are treated with dignity and respect.

Given that Jason is new to the role, his whole focus at the moment is training and learning, understanding human rights, what it means to be a disability advocate, and what his responsibilities are as a VALID employee.

Matt Sterling, Team Leader at Jason's eastern accommodation home, told me that while VALID has his contact details in the event they need additional information, Jason's job is otherwise discussed and treated as yours or mine might be once he returns home, particularly around privacy and confidentially for personal information.

The most important and interesting part of what is happening for Jason, is that aside from the assistance to attain his position, what Jason is now doing is essentially independent of St John of God Accord.

"It is an empowering change for Jason, and he is learning quickly the boundaries between his work and what is discussed and documented at home," said Matt Sterling (Team Leader).



Being able to work is a fundamental human right for people with disability, and Jason continues to break down barriers, promote inclusion and advocate for others.

Jason continues to be an inspiration to us all.



What's happening at Sydenham Community Campus (SCC)

Aisling McCabe, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

Programs of Support

Learn to Dance

Partnering with Brimbank Council has opened up a wide range of opportunities for our clients to access the community, including choice and participation in a range of programs to better support their social activities or upskill with training and development.

The program Learn to Dance is a huge hit with our clients. The Sydenham Neighbourhood House is host to the ballroom beginner's class each week. So for term four, October to December, our clients are actively involved out in the community learning to dance.

Our strong partnership with Brimbank Council is building community-based programs for the future with our clients. We look forward to seeing our clients at some of the following Council centres: West Sunshine Community Centre, Delahey Community Centre, Westvale Community Centre, Keilor Community Hub and the Sydenham Neighbourhood House.

These initiatives actively promote social inclusion and break down barriers for participation, while having a great time as well.





Kangan Institute Program



Certificate I in Transition Education supports our clients to develop the most appropriate skills for them in the community after leaving school. This may include employment, volunteer work or further study.



Our clients enjoy the opportunity to explore options for further training, work or community activities. Students can investigate possible options such as; community participation, recreation, leisure and social options, along with training, education and voluntary work. This includes identifying factors which may impact on their choices and help develop a plan to explore preferred options. They can review their plan with assistance from a support person.

Students can also identify recreational activities in the community and the benefits of participating. They look at the requirements and barriers for participation, engage in selected activities and learn appropriate behaviours to participate.



Quotes from clients:

"We talk about skills and goals and about getting a job in retail and answering the phone. I am learning writing and how to do forms"- Terry, client at SCC

"It's good, very good. I love being with all my friends. I'm going on an excursion next week. I learnt about goals, we did guess the sound and use the computer. I use the Kangan card, it's in my wallet. I type and I can do everything!"- Avnish, client at SCC

Community Partnerships at the heart of Glenroy Community Campus

By Georgia Vicendese (Team Leader)

In the heart of Melbourne sits Glenroy Community Campus, a vibrant and energetic campus where clients enjoy several Programs of Support both on site and out in the community.

Glenroy is built on community, and building partnerships are both beneficial to our clients, their families and the community at large. Bunnings is well known for their support of community groups, especially the much loved sausage sizzles.

It was our clients who generated the much-loved partnership that is currently in place with Bunnings in Coburg.

It was regular trips to Bunnings to source art supplies by our clients who participate in the art and ceramic Programs of Support that raised awareness with Stephanie Hobson, the Activities Organiser there.

Stephanie was always available and very supportive of the group when they came in each week. As the relationship progressed, Stephanie offered advice and workshops to better support our clients in each program in which they participated.





From the positive feedback received, I reached out to Stephanie to discuss a partnership whereby we could provide excursions and workshops for our clients. With that, she came out to look at our Glenroy Community Campus and viewed our outdoor area. After many discussions with clients and caregivers we decided to revamp the garden area, so we selected items we would like to use for the project. Stephanie helped throughout, including booking a full day to provide a workshop for the clients and caregivers. Everyone was equipped with their gardening tools, and all chipped in to plant trees and a garden bed with tomatoes and herbs.

Stephanie provided educational input around garden management as we went along. The clients thoroughly enjoyed participating in the project and look forward to the finished product.

It was a very positive and productive day for us all. We are all enjoying watching the garden grow. We are also excited to see the trees grow over the years. We intend to use the vegetables in our cooking programs.

In appreciation, the clients signed a thank you card that was designed by our card making group.

We appreciate the relationship we have and continue to build on our partnership with Stephanie and Bunnings in Coburg.



Greensborough Community Campus (GCC)

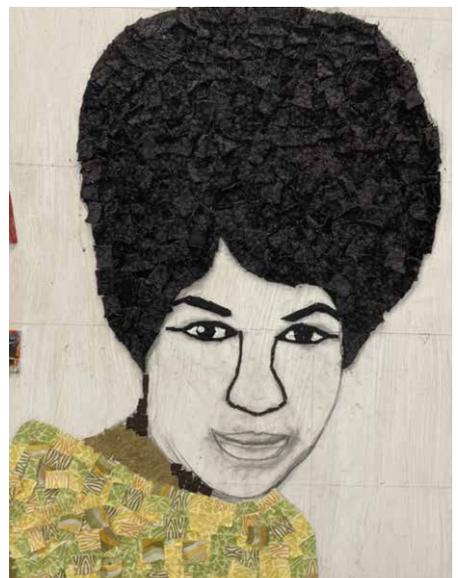
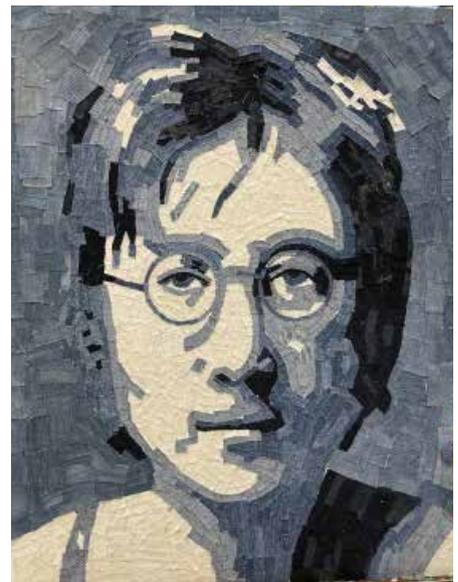
Aisling McCabe, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

Programs of Support

Programs of Support at GCC are fully functional, and clients are regularly participating in a range of programs that best suits their needs.

The clients from the arts program at GCC continue with their project of creating portraits of music icons using denim fabrics.

With John Denim (Lennon), Gene Jeanie, (David Bowie) and Prince finished, our clients are busily turning Aretha Franklin into an art form.



There is a remarkable talent within our client group, and we can't wait to exhibit this collection in the future.



The Ceramics Program

The clients in the renowned ceramics program are busily getting ready for Christmas, as many caregivers, family members and members of the community buy ceramic pieces like vases, bowls and Christmas decorations as gifts.



The Photography Program

Clients are becoming more comfortable behind the camera, and learning more strategies in relation to what makes a great picture. All in all, they are taking their photography program to a whole new level.



Great job outcomes

Joseph Patrick, Manager (Disability Employment Services)



He loves the job, loves the team and loves the theatre! More importantly, Lucas is experiencing being able to contribute to society and enjoying social inclusion.

Lucas

Lucas started his employment journey with St John of God Accord Disability Employment Services in 2019.

We worked with Lucas to find a position that best suited him, and he acquired several hours of work experience at Lombard's Party and Events store in Nunawading. He volunteered his time and loved sorting the costumes, wigs and party items at the shop. As Lucas gained experience, the Disability Employment Team went to work to find Lucas paid employment.

It wasn't long until Lucas was offered eight hours a week of paid employment at Rose Chong Costumes in Gertrude St Fitzroy.

Rose Chong Costumes is a well-known and iconic costume shop in the heart of Fitzroy in Melbourne. Rose, the owner, is quite the character and has been synonymous with the costume industry for a very long time.

More importantly, Rose was very willing to support Lucas into paid employment. Rose has encouraged Lucas to develop his customer service skills, overall confidence and self-esteem. Lucas is included as part of the overall store team and loves every minute of his work.

Lucas is supported by Tess, who assists in his more difficult tasks, but photos of Lucas at work speak for themselves.



Kiera

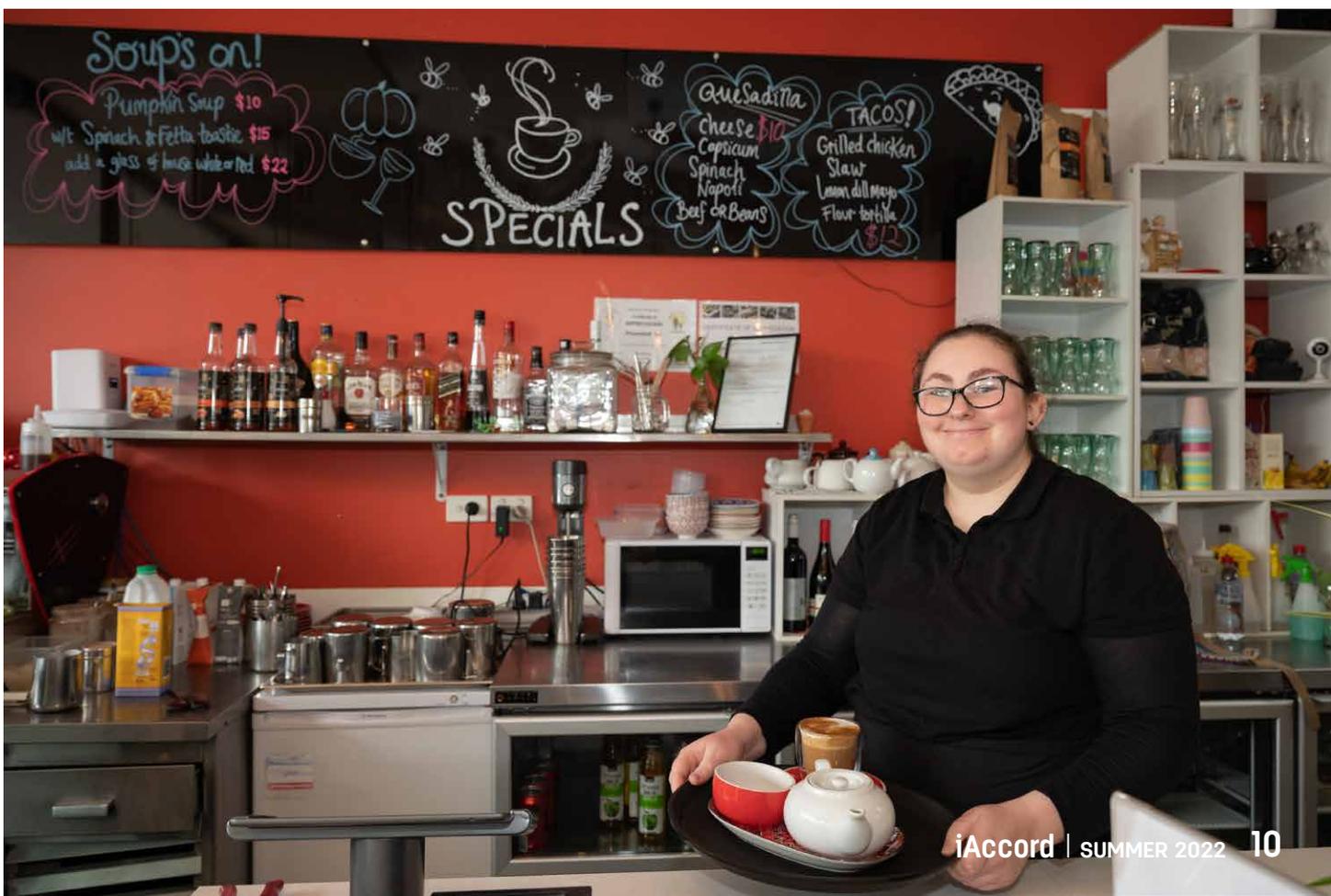
Kiera started her employment journey with St John of God Accord DES in September 2020 and soon gained work experience and employment as a Café Assistant with a company called Turfmate.

Kiera demonstrated excellent customer service skills and coffee-making abilities while working at Turfmate.

Since then, she has gained more confidence in her ability to engage with customers and assist with various tasks as a Café Assistant.

Kiera, in 2022, commenced working for Trims Restaurant in Customer Service and is enjoying her new role. Kiera continues her journey in the hospitality industry, and hopes to improve her skills and confidence to take on more roles in the future.

Kiera's work ethic continues to shine through



Specialist Disability Accommodation homes in Melbourne

Shannon Morgan, (SDA Coordinator)

St John of God Marillac officially opened the first of their two new fully accessible and improved liveability Specialist Disability Accommodation homes earlier this year.



Currently home to six clients in Mooroolbark, in the eastern suburbs of Melbourne, where each client is experiencing greater independence due to the smart technology available to them in both villas, promoting a greater quality of life.



Construction is underway of the remaining eight new two bedroom villas, with completion due in 2023. These builds are in various stages of completion and are located in Eltham (situated in the northeast) and Hillside, Ardeer and Altona (located in the western suburbs).



Blanche Street, Ardeer
Natural light filled interiors
Large outdoor space
Dedicated BBQ areas



The Regency, Hillside
Natural light filled interiors
Large outdoor space
Dedicated BBQ areas

Please contact us if you have any enquiries or would like more information on our exciting new SDA homes.

Shannon Morgan,
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Please watch this video showcasing our new SDA homes at www.marillac@sjog.org.au

Home is where the heart is

Denise Leuschner, Manager Accommodation

Villa two of the Specialist Disability Accommodation in Mooroolbark is now home to Sharon, Maryellen and Meg. The key ingredient to having a long-term harmonious living arrangement is the compatibility of all clients living together.

As the weeks have gone by, it has become clearly evident that this house is much more than a new home to these three individuals. Yes, it provides the fundamental physical aspects of comfort and safety, but most significantly, it provides each individual with a sense of personal growth and achievement.

It is a rare occurrence in this sector, to be able to witness firsthand the developmental journey towards self-actualisation.

Meg, Maryellen, and Sharon have no hesitation in communicating their sense of awareness and pride in their newfound status of independence in their new home. Their choice and control in the pursuit of personal goals has been, and continues to be, the central force that underpins the support of these three clients moving forward.



Allied Health involved in Positive Partnerships Workshops

Di Butcher, Allied Health Manager



Eva Lam (Behaviour Support Practitioner) and Melissa Thai (Occupational Therapist) have been seconded by Positive Partnerships to run a series of workshops for parents of children on the autism spectrum in Mandarin and Cantonese.

Positive Partnerships is a national project funded by the Department of Education, Skills and Employment through the Helping Children with Autism program. The project is delivered by Autism Spectrum Australia (ASPECT) and works with families, educators and communities to strengthen positive outcomes with young people on the autism spectrum through workshops, webinar and online modules.

This initiative by Positive Partnerships is the first time their workshops have been facilitated for people from a non-English speaking background without the assistance of an interpreter.

Since their comprehensive training, Eva and Melissa have delivered full day workshops on sensory processing and webinars on interoception.

The workshops have been extremely well received by the carers and parents who attended, who said that the information helped them develop a better understanding of how Autism affects their child. Parents also reported they have an increased understanding of their child's behaviours and all the factors and variables at play which will help them find new ways of caring for and supporting them.

Parents were also able to foster support with other parents, establish new connections and develop a clearer understanding of how to work with their allied health professionals.

Melissa and Eva developed their public speaking and group facilitation, and increased their own professional development. They will continue to run the multi-lingual workshops in 2023 and also want to introduce the programme to families and carers of clients in the St John of God Accord community.

“It has been a wonderful experience being able to meet parents where they are at with their understanding about Autism both at a cultural and language level, and supporting them to understand their child more.”

Eva Lam and Melissa Thai

Allied Health - Accommodation Collaboration

Occupational Therapy Home and Living Project

In an exciting St John God Accord initiative, Jenny Hutchens, our Senior Occupational Therapist has taken a role supporting some of our clients in accommodation with the Occupational Therapy Home and Living Project. The 12 month role has been created to assist clients by gathering evidence for their NDIS Home & Living applications to secure additional needed Supported Independent Living (SIL) funding, or to achieve Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) funding. Jenny will be identifying information about current supports and needs through discussions, assessments and review of files and reports in prioritised order. This information will be reviewed, and if seen as insufficient, will be submitted to the NDIS for review. This innovative project is a collaboration between Allied Health and accommodation services and will work towards ensuring clients are receiving the right level of funding for their needs.



Music Therapy Student Placements

This spring, we have been excited to welcome two music therapy students from The University of Melbourne to St John of God Accord.

Xenia is a first year student completing a Master of Music Therapy, and has worked alongside Zara with individuals and the online music therapy group program. Xenia has enjoyed getting the chance to put the things she has learnt in class into practice.

Megan is a final year student who completed an independent placement at Glenroy Community Campus (GICC). Megan set up three wonderful music therapy groups at GICC who have had a great time making music together over the past few months.



**Thank you Xenia and Megan
for your contribution to our
programs!**

St John of God Accord's accommodation party comes to life

Aisling McCabe, Marketing & Communications Coordinator



The wait was over, the **St John of God's accommodation Christmas party was back** after a long break due to COVID-19.

Almost 300 people were in attendance consisting of clients, their families and caregivers. The tribute band **BABBA** delighted the audience, and had everyone on their feet for the afternoon.

Jason thanked everyone for coming.



Footy fever alive and well

Aisling McCabe, Marketing & Communications Coordinator

After a two year hiatus, finally the Bombers footy team from Greensborough Community Campus (GCC) and the Bulldogs footy team from Sydenham and Glenroy Community Campuses (SCC and GICC), came face to face for a much-anticipated match at Diamond Creek Oval, northeast of Melbourne.

Diamond Creek Oval came to life as barbecues, trestle tables and ice coolers were unpacked and set up for what would be great celebrations as caregivers busily got cooking. Sausages, veggie burgers and onions were in high demand.

The air was full of tension, the adrenaline was pumping, the clients ready, the whistle blew and the ball thrown in. Bulldogs Mustifa, Dragan, and Avnish took the lead, but it was Bombers Russell, Effie and Ritchie who eventually propelled their team to winning the game.

The cheers from the clients, their families and caregivers went up when the final whistle was blown. Steven Williams, Manager Community Campuses, gave Best on Ground to Russell (Bombers) and Mustifa (Bulldogs).

Everyone was ready for a sausage at that point, the sun stayed out and it was a great day for all.



The sun stayed out and it was **a great day for all.**

The story of Pastoral Care at St John of God Accord

Tania Rose (Pastoral Care Practitioner)

As a Pastoral Care Practitioner at St John of God Accord, I continue to promote healing by listening, responding to and providing care for the emotional and spiritual needs of clients within our services.

Over the last eight years, my reach in providing pastoral care has expanded across our accommodation homes and as needed in other services, especially Individualised Services. During COVID-19, many of our accommodation clients received greater individual services as their group programs and daily activities ceased. It was then that I was receiving more calls for pastoral care support. Like everyone else, I had to go online, and many conversations took place over FaceTime, WhatsApp, and whatever was available. It worked.

It's great that now I can physically meet with our clients, either in their homes or a location of their choice - usually they like to meet at local cafés. These encounters make me realise we are all social beings, and conversations are an integral part of our journey together. Being able to participate in and experience individual engagement is very enriching.

Each day is different for me. Any single day can quickly evolve, and I have to create different ways to reach out to our whole community and assist our many clients when circumstances arise. Often for our clients, these can be life changing situations.

I recently provided pastoral care to a client in his 40's who was born with cerebral palsy. More than anything he wants to experience life and love, and has dreams and hopes of being fully accepted for the person he is.

For him, being able to talk about his feelings and emotions makes him feel heard, understood, and - for that time - appreciated.



Tania Rose, Pastoral Care Practitioner with Peter and Michelle.

People with disabilities want to be accepted and feel included; for this person, it is paramount that he doesn't feel judged.

I listen and encourage him to speak about himself, and I remind him that he has so much to offer and that he has the courage within to make the changes he desires.

Small steps may make a difference!

I feel privileged to be a Pastoral Care Practitioner. I see our clients enjoying their best life, and I celebrate with them; but I do also see our clients feel the humiliation of being excluded, and I stand with them.

Small steps may make a difference!

Successful employment

Chris Milton, Manager NDIS Employment Services

“ The king has returned. ”



When our client Matthew received the news earlier this year that he would be starting Work Experience in his dream job at Rebel Sport, he replied, “This is the best day of my life, dreams really do come true!” Over his 12-week placement, Matthew displayed sheer dedication, drive and enthusiasm to every aspect of the role, often stating that this was “12 weeks of pure excitement.” Matthew received amazing feedback from the managers and staff at Rebel, who titled him ‘The Record Breaker’ for his fast-paced energy when completing any task, in particular, his favourite job: placing the price tags on shoe boxes.

The Individualised Employment Services supports provided by St John of God Accord over the last three years enabled Matthew to recently secure an actual permanent paid position at Rebel Sport Frankston. This was the news Matthew had been waiting to hear. He completed his first shift on 22nd November and is currently working two 4-hour shifts per week, on Tuesdays and Fridays. Our Employment Support Workers are continuing to support Matthew in paid work initially but he will be working independently in “open employment” at Rebel in the very near future.

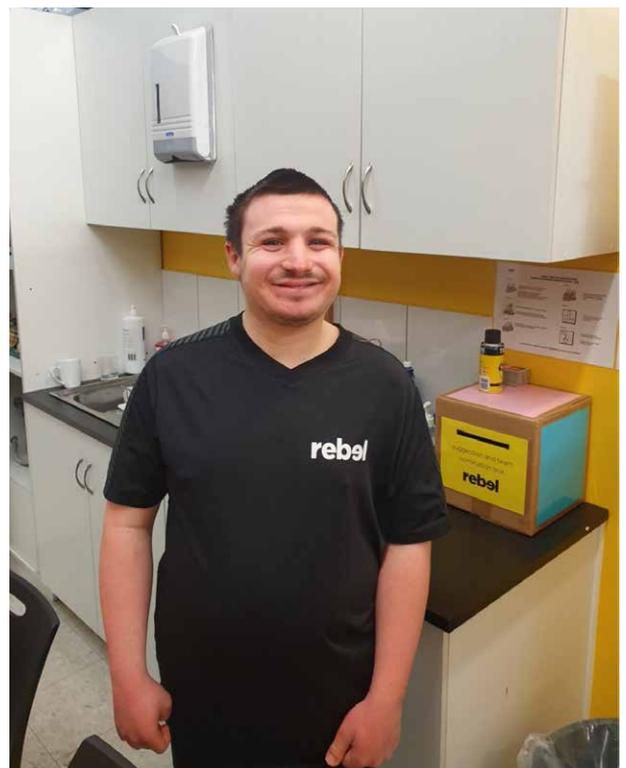
“ Rebel is my favourite shop of all time, it’s my Dream job. ”

On his first day as a paid employee, the smile could not be wiped off Matthew’s face as he greeted every single staff member individually, something Matthew did each and every shift. He announced, “The king has returned,” and expressed how “excited” he was to officially be part of the team.

When asked, “Why Rebel Sport?” Mathew replied, “Because Rebel is my favourite shop of all time, it’s my Dream job.” Matthew conveyed his love for cricket and football merchandise, in particular his devotion to ‘The Mighty Hawks’. When asked, “What have you learnt since starting at Rebel?”, Matthew replied, “I’ve learnt so many new skills but most importantly, that it is possible to still have fun while working.” Matthew told us that he would be “saving his first pay cheque” but was excited about the staff discount, and that he had already been thinking about the Hawthorn merchandise he would like to purchase.

Matthew’s employment journey has been a long but exciting one! With the help of our team of Employment Support Workers, Matthew’s success story shows us that anything can be achieved with the right support, patience and commitment.

Congratulations Matthew!





RESPECT

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