



## TECHEADZ

### One year on and still going strong!

"Techeadz" is a joint venture between Kalgoorlie DSC Staff, Career Contact and the National Disability Coordination Officer Program (NDCO) and provides an opportunity for young people with Autism spectrum disorders in transition from school to work/study. The goals of the program include the facilitation of increased social interaction, the opportunity to share IT skills and general preparation for the workplace.

Andrew Browner (pictured above) developed skills in graphic design through the Techeadz program. This has resulted in a design he developed being accepted for the cover of a corporate annual report. Andrew has established his own graphic design business, 'Red Oculus'.

The business registration for 'Red Oculus' was arranged for Techeadz by Sheryl Liddicoat, CEO of Career Contact, the major disability employment services provider in the Kalgoorlie/Boulder area.

Also developing his graphic art skills through Techeadz is Shane Frances. Shane (pictured right) has already produced a folio of graphic art, an example of which he is displaying in his picture.

Both Andrew and Shane would like to own and run their own independent businesses. The evidence through their work is that they are well on their way.

NDCO, Dale Arthur has been not only impressed by the quality of the graphic art produced but also of the groups developing social skills – an important ingredient in running any successful business.

A new intake of students from the Eastern Goldfields Senior High School and John Paul College joined Techeadz in second term.



## Professional Development for Kimberley Schools

In early February the Kimberley District Education Office ran a professional development day targeted at all school staff across the Kimberley who work with students with disability.

The training day was headed up by Nola Gray, the Kimberley's visiting teacher from the Centre for Inclusive Schooling, and involved various presentations tackling topics ranging from Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders (FASD) to the Disability Services Commission's Local Area Co-ordination program, and how this supports school age students and their families. Those in attendance included principals, teachers and education assistants ranging from Prep to Year 12, and traveling from as far as Wyndham District High school to attend the Broome based event.

The NDCO program was invited to co-ordinate a session based on 'Supporting students towards work and independence'. The presentation was conducted by Melanie Stevenson, a Job Coordinator for EDGE Employment Solutions' Perth based Supported Work Experience and Training (SWEAT) program. Melanie provided information on how to support students to find and keep a job, and explored the direct correlation of exposure to work experience and securing ongoing mainstream employment for individuals with disability. Much of the information Melanie provided can be found in EDGE Employment Solutions' 'Finding a Job, Keeping a Job' manual, a free resource developed by EDGE Employment Solutions, which offers tips on how to secure and maintain open employment for people with disability, available at [www.edge.org.au/research/Training\\_2.pdf](http://www.edge.org.au/research/Training_2.pdf)

The NDCO for Northern WA, Nicole Cox, partnered with Melanie and explored the barriers to successful transition identified by Kimberley stakeholders, clarified the role of schools and other organisations in supporting students with disability (such as DSC, disability employment services and the NDCO program), and provided advice and resources on how to achieve a successful transition for students with disability, following the Department of Education's transition website, [www.det.wa.edu.au/inclusiveducation/detcms/navigation/transition-planning/](http://www.det.wa.edu.au/inclusiveducation/detcms/navigation/transition-planning/)

The feedback from the day was overwhelmingly positive, with the NDCO's transition presentation reportedly shifting perspectives of the audience, and revitalizing some fading attitudes. The presentation concluded with a video created by a marketing agency, Droga 5, in collaboration with a Sydney based disability employment service, Breakthrough Personnel, which left the audience inspired. The DVD can be viewed at [www.creativespirit.org.au](http://www.creativespirit.org.au)

## As the Crowe flies . . .

In late January, Aquinas Crowe (pictured right) made the move from Fitzroy Crossing to Perth to attend a year long Creative Futures course being held at the Central Institute of Technology's Perth campus. The NDCO program assisted Aquinas in his transition from the bush to the city through co-ordination of his accommodation, transport and support needs while attending the Creative Futures course.

Within four days of his arrival, Aquinas had traded in his manual wheelchair for an electric model, acquired a travel smart card and moved into accommodation at the Centre for Cerebral Palsy. A phone call to Transperth to ascertain timetables and the routes for buses with disability access was most illuminating as they informed him that you could order a bus with disability access for any route with 24 hours notice. (To order 9248 9866 or email [m.dco@path.com.au](mailto:m.dco@path.com.au))

Aquinas took less than three days to master the public transport system and was soon traveling by bus and on the Midland, Fremantle and Armadale trains to meet family and friends. The independence and ability to move about Perth that the electric wheelchair and access to an excellent public transport system has given Aquinas is a delight to see.



## E-learning opportunities for deaf students



Have you ever considered that, for a Deaf person who 'speaks' Australian Sign Language (a commonly known as Auslan"), English is a second language? For many Deaf people, this has been a significant barrier to gaining educational qualifications that would allow them to pursue satisfying careers.

A group from TAFESA South's Business Management team have spotted an opportunity to do just this, and have grabbed it with both hands. They have won funding from the National VET E-learning Strategy to deliver the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment to a group of Deaf learners who share the aim of gaining the qualification necessary to teach the nationally endorsed Auslan curriculum in Registered Training Organisations such as TAFE.

They have teamed up with a number of industry and community organisations, with the aim of improving both educational and employment outcomes for Deaf learners. Program Manager, Rose Howell, says "We plan to make use of a variety of e-learning strategies that have been specifically chosen for their suitability for use by Deaf students, such as Skype and Voicethread, as well as social media and video-based multi-media."

The project is now underway, with a group of students who are all members of the Deaf community in Adelaide. You can follow their progress on the project blog at <http://elearningdeaf.wordpress.com/>

## Visit our website

Visit our NDCO website at [www.ndcowa.net.au](http://www.ndcowa.net.au)