

THE MIND BEHIND THE BODY

Disability Awareness Year 10 Nudgee College Immersion
5-9th of August 2013



A Nudgee College Experience

On the 5th of August, 31 young Nudgee men, including myself, set out on a life altering experience. We were told prior to the weeks activity that we would be tested and pushed beyond our comfort zones, but nothing could prepare us for the week ahead. At Nudgee, our school motto is 'signum fidei' this term means sign of faith. All Nudgee men are inspired to be signs of faith to all and this week was an opportunity that was too great to miss for our group of 31. For many of the students we had not experienced disabilities first hand in our lives previous to this week. During our short yet intensive briefing sessions we were warned about things we might see. To many of the group it was as if we were going to a different world. In many ways we were travelling to a different world, a world of misunderstanding, judgment and a willingness to survive. The things we experienced on this immersion week would go on to change our outlook on life.

Our program for the Week:

- Day 1: Craigslea sensitivity unit.
- Day 2: Wheelchair trip to Toombul shopping Centre.
- Day 3: Geebung special school.
- Day 4: Royal Children's Hospital School facilities.

Luke's Gospel

But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: And thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.

AN OPENING INTO A NEW INSIGHT

The Story Of Our Week And Experiences We Faced.

Our abled bodied world would come crashing down on our first day of immersion. The sensitivity unit was our first real taste of adventure that week. The unit showed us what it was like to have disabilities and be intellectually and physical impaired. The boys experienced what it was like to be blind, paralyzed, have a learning disability, cerebral palsy and tunnel vision. Life all of a sudden got a lot different.

Day 2 saw our group attempt to experience a day of wheelchair use. This day saw us travel from the college to Toombul shopping Centre in wheelchairs. This was an unexpected challenge for all the boys who finally realized how difficult the life of a wheelchair user is. "every eye focuses on you, everyone stares" our lives had changed again.

Day 3, perhaps the most confronting day of all, involved the groups splitting of and travelling to different locations. My small group of 15 was selected to experience a day at Geebung special school, in preparation for their sports carnival. Seeing the children with various disabilities, put us immediately out of our comfort zone. Thrown off by the graphic scenes and challenging tasks, pushed our group to step up . All the boys took each challenge as it came, some boys even witnessed a seizure ! This day showed us that even though some kids were disabled they still wanted to be 'normal kids', they never took no for an answer and they participated in everything they could. This showed me that even though they had a disability , they didn't let life get them down.

Day 4. this day was a different experience all together than what we experienced all week. This day was spent at the Royal children's hospital, dealing with kids that were suffering from illness or a family member was suffering. This again through us out of our comfort zones due to the fact that we were dealing with children that could possibly be dying in a few days time. We had been shown by staff that we were to tread lightly when speaking or responding to certain children and comments they made. This day was one of the most rewarding days, that resulted in us learning more about the hospital and the children that went to school there as a result of illness or injury. This very special day taught me, to cherish what you have and not taken any situation for granted. And most importantly, there is no reason to be unhappy.



Understanding Happiness Through Suffering

A 7 year old girl, about to turn 8 in two days in the RCH, who was suffering from cancer when asked what she wanted for her birthday said, "All I want, is to be happy no matter what that means, I just want to be happy."

This little girl touched all of our hearts and showed us that even when life gets you down, you can still rise above and give the most back to the world that you can.