

Talking Space

An anthology of stories told by West Australians with disability for everyone



Foreword

'Talking Space' is a candid insight into the lives of ten Western Australians with disability.

Through these stories we investigate the identity of people from different walks of life, ages, experiences, and nationalities. Within 'Talking Space' we have collated stories that challenge commonly held beliefs around disability and discover new ways of self-identity within the storytellers' words.

When presenting these stories, we have allowed our storyteller's to be open with controversial topics and create a platform where they can explore ideas that may go against the grain.

At its heart though, Talking Space is a collection of stories about people who have overcome adversity, found their place in community and self-reflected upon what it is to be a person with disability.



Carers WA acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures; and to elders both past and present.



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Jayelan - The Silent World of Autism



*Jayelan loves to hike, cycle, listen to pop music.
Jayelan is on the Autism Spectrum and has very limited speech.
He communicates through spelling on an iPad and a letterboard.*

For more than a decade, I was down in a pitch black hole. I longed to have a voice, but my mouth stayed silent- as silent as the depth of night. I could not communicate what was on my mind. I had no avenue to communicate my needs.

The worst thing I experienced in silence was my intelligence being underestimated by others. I was not included in mainstream classes because nobody knew I was capable of understanding academic material that was at my age level. The torturous feeling of sitting in a classroom and being taught lessons that were way below my level was not something I can easily forget. I was petrified that nobody would ever uncover the potential in me.

Fortunately, I have an open mind to try any new therapy that can help me. At 11 years old, with the introduction of an academic tool that leads to communication helped me spell out, express my thoughts and feelings. With the ability to communicate through spelling and typing, this helped me to access age-appropriate education that I was denied earlier on. I am glad I did not give up hope. My determination to find my voice is something I am truly proud of.

Now that I have a voice, I can set out to achieve my dreams of being an autism advocate. My school plays a big role in supporting my dreams. To date, I have presented at universities, symposiums as well as education centres. I am pleased that I am able to give insight into the silent world of autism.

I am happy that I found my voice and most of all God, as he helps me to navigate through the rough parts of my life.

Finally, I found a “magic wand” that is designed especially for me!



OPEN MIND - Jayelan

Dances constantly
Able to educate
A feeling hard to grasp
Capable and present
Yet bound and silent
An easy target for a laugh
Why do others deem me their lesser
I am not Autism
Dance with me.....
See me...



Michelle - Anything is Possible



My name is Michelle and I was born in 1981. I was born 3 months premature and was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy as a baby. My birth parents unfortunately refused to care for me, so I moved to Geraldton at 3 years old to live with my Aunty and Uncle. I now refer to my Aunty and Uncle as my Mum and Dad as they loved me and cared for me, and I would not be here today without them.

When I was 21 years old, I married my first husband. We moved from Geraldton to Esperance. We lived with his parents for a while and then got our own house with Homes West. As a person with CP, I felt so happy that I found a man to marry and we planned our future which involved having kids. However, after many years of trying, we were unable to conceive. Doctors and Specialists told me that I would never have children which absolutely broke my heart.

In 2011, I had a hip replacement and my marriage ended. I moved to Perth in April 2012 and we divorced in March 2013. I was devastated but our relationship ended up being quite toxic and I knew it was the right decision. I hoped that I would find love again.

A year later, I met Amandeep and fell head over heels in love. We got married in July 2014 and enjoyed married life for a number of years. In 2017, we found out we were pregnant. I could not believe it. I felt joy and happiness like never before. My gynaecologist advised me not to go through with the pregnancy due to the risks, but I decided to go against this advice and try my hardest to grow life inside of me. In February 2018, we found out I was having twins.

In June 2018, I gave birth to the two most beautiful boys I have ever seen. For the first time in my life, I felt like my life was complete. Even though motherhood is difficult, and I require support and assistance, it is the best feeling in the world.

In January 2019, Amandeep and I separated. However, we still work really hard together to maintain a relationship to raise our boys. Our main goal is to work together so our boys grow up in a loving environment that is happy and healthy.

As a woman with CP, I thought I would never get so lucky to experience marriage and motherhood. From the time I was six years old I always wanted to be a Mum and I feel so blessed that I now have two beautiful little people to love and care for. I understand that other people with CP might not have been as lucky as I am, but I just want to show people that anything is possible and miracles do happen.



Kaitlin - The Person Inside my Body



Kaitlin is a 18-year-old young woman who loves having fun and meeting new people. She is in Year 13 and is looking forward to her life as a storyteller after school. Kaitlin lives with three dogs – Addy, Gizmo and Deefer. Although she doesn't live with her biological family, she lives with an awesome bunch of ladies who she calls family. She is a shoe-addict with expensive taste – she loves Converse, Adidas, Doc Martens & Uggs – don't give her any no-name brands! Her goal is to have a great life.

My name is Kaitlin, and I have been told that I'm an amazing young lady, and not just by my family ;-)

I have a great sense of humour. I'm cheeky, sassy and love going on new adventures. Oh, did I forget to say that I use a wheelchair for my "legs" and communicate differently to you?

I use my iPad with a program called 'Snap Core First' and use head switches to 'verbally' talk to people around me, I also use my eyes by looking up for "yes" and down for "no" if I want to respond quickly to your questions.

Now, while I can focus on all the things wrong with me, I don't have to because a lot of people in the community are already doing that for me.

I am often looked through as though I don't exist. I have been stared at like I am an exhibit in a museum and have had comments made about me and in front of me, such as "she is a waste of oxygen" and "she would be better off dead". These comments really upset me and hurt my feelings, but luckily, I have great advocates around me who remind people about manners and inform them that I do understand what they are saying.

So let me tell you all about the amazing me. I am a typical young adult who loves to shop, loves fashion, and especially loves shoes. I have about 150 pairs of Converse, Adidas, Vans, Doc Martins and some Uggs. I love being out and about in my community, meeting new people and showing them what a great life I have.

I enjoy going to concerts and enjoy listening to all kinds of music. I am always out and about on the weekends doing things I enjoy. I like going to my ballroom dancing class so that I can practice for my next competition.

I love to embarrass the people I am out with by wolf whistling at the guys I think are cute or ask the people in front of me to hurry up and pretend it's not me. But most of all, and like

everyone else, I want to experience as much as life will throw at me. I want to travel, make friends, try new things, live in a world that is truly inclusive, where I don't have to worry if me and my wheelchair will be able to access the places I want to see or stay at. But mostly I want to educate others that people 'like me' can have a great quality life and not to write us off.



Charlotte - The Importance of Teachers



Charlotte Paterson is a 19-year-old aspiring author with Autism and Hashimotos living in Perth, Western Australia. Charlotte enjoys writing stories, drawing animals, and creating new languages. Her hobbies include Zumba, horse-riding, and choir. She is passionate about working with and reading to children, reading books, watching movies and television, and dance choreography. She plays Halo, Minecraft & Assassin's Creed. She is currently studying art at TAFE. Charlotte is a descendant of the famous Australian poet Banjo Paterson.

In 2010 when I was 8 years old, my favorite teacher Mrs. Potter (not related to Harry Potter) came in on the very last day of school and told us some very sad news. The shocking news was that she was leaving to go to another school and would not be coming back. She was crying when she spoke. We all tried to be supportive but myself and three other students were crying so much. In the end we all gave Mrs. Potter a big hug, and I gave her a present. It was something I made out of white tape with Cheetah prints. Every student signed it as a farewell gift. That was the first day I remember crying so hard and being sad.

In 2019 when I was 17 and much older at High School, my favorite teacher gathered us all around in the classroom to tell us the heartbreaking news, that she was leaving to go to another school. At that moment when I was sharing the fun news of my holiday plans, my voice broke and tears started pouring down my face. I had to run out of the classroom into the hallway. She came out and gave me a hug, and my new teacher came out to see why I was upset. We ended up talking and having a cheese toastie, after that I was feeling much better.

Just before my 18th birthday my new teacher gave us even more shocking news. He said that he is moving overseas to China to teach and won't be coming back. Out of all these really upsetting experiences, that was the most traumatic one to me. In the end I managed to give him a hug and a parting gift to remember me by.

We then got another new teacher named Mr. R who was really supportive. This teacher was the most important teacher in my entire life and was actually the one who got me through all of those rough emotions in the end. We used to play UNO a lot and he helped me with the Barista Busters enterprise training scheme to practice taking orders and serving coffee. Mr. R who supported me during this time and helped me get over the sense of loss and move on to enjoy my last year of High School, I couldn't have done it without him.

Throughout my life there was a reason why I had those intense crying and emotional experiences especially when things happened, like teachers leaving. That reason is because

of my Autism, which causes many difficulties. Mine are particularly with social interactions, stuttering, issues when speaking, and regulating and understanding my emotions. I also have a genetic disorder resulting in thinning of the white matter in my brain which means my brain doesn't work as well as most people's and has to work much harder to stay focused. It also means it is hard for me to control my emotions and speak well without stuttering, particularly if I am emotional. This makes reading and writing difficult to focus on because my brain is trying so hard to process or do the work, it gets tired much quicker. If I get too tired or emotional, I can end up having seizures.

I like to take part in Zumba, Jujutsu, Horse-riding, attend a Youth Social Group, sing in a choir and attend TAFE studying Visual Arts to help look after my health. I try to avoid foods that do not help my body. All these things help me keep calm and cope with everyday life.



Ellie - Swim, Beach, Eat, Repeat



My name is Ellie. I am 25 years old, and I live in Perth.

Some people would look at me and say 'she's got a disability' but I don't see myself that way, in fact, I have never really identified myself as having a disability. Growing up, I was very lucky. I had a 'different' leg and did things differently sometimes, but there was never anything I didn't think I could figure out a way to do. I don't see myself as having a disability, it's always just been something I had to figure out. Everyone has their differences; it doesn't mean they need to be classified or labeled into a group of people.

I have always taken the view that I am not a disability, I am Ellie. I don't identify myself as 'Ellie with brown eyes', so why should I identify myself as having a disability. I am the high-energy, crazy dog lady, slightly mad swimmer addict, ice cream loving, beach loving, refuses to parallel park, tie dye wearing, can't sit still for more than five minutes Ellie. That's it- Ellie.

I absolutely love swimming. If it were up to me, the world would be made of water. I love anything water based, swimming in the pool, at the beach, snorkeling, body boarding, scuba diving, you name it, if it involves water, I'll give it a go.

I have always been a water baby. Having an identical twin meant I grew up very competitive- with my twin sister being my only competition. Having my leg meant I wasn't very good at most sports. I still gave them a go; I just wasn't very good at them (although I would never admit that out loud). Swimming was the only sport I was able to keep up with (and most importantly beat) my twin sister.

When I finished high school, I went straight to university to study Primary School teaching. With my love of swimming and interest in teaching, I became a swimming teacher. I loved it! Getting paid to be in the water 24/7 and teach kids to swim-what more could you ask for! Whilst teaching, I found a love of swimming laps.

Within a year, it had become an addiction. Since 2014, I have swum just about every day of my life, gradually increasing the distance and duration of my swims. In 2019 I swam my first Rottnest Channel swim in a team of four. We finished the 20 km swim in just under 8 hours. This was one of the biggest and best swims of my life. In 2021, I swam in a team of four again. I have also swum around the Bussleton Jetty twice and competed in numerous other open water swimming competitions. I one day hope to swim to Rottnest as a solo competitor.

When I am not in the water, I like to keep myself busy. People often joke that I can't sit still for more than five minutes. I work three jobs. I am a swimming teacher; Primary School teacher and I also work at Carers WA. I often forget about my 'disability', so much so, I once taught an entire

swimming class how to dive with one straight leg. When watching them all dive and trying to figure out what 'looked off', my supervisor came over laughing hysterically stating I had taught them all to dive 'like Ellie'. The mistake was quickly fixed, but it is something I have never been able to live it down again with constant joking reminders that everyone else can swim with both their legs.

If I had one message to pass onto the world it would be to always stay happy and to not let your differences stop you from achieving anything you want. If you want it- go for it! My lasting message is this: anything in life can be made better with a quick swim in the pool or the ocean.



Ryan - I am not a Robot



My name is Ryan, I am 34 years old, living with Duchene Muscular Dystrophy, a disability that causes muscle weakness. I was diagnosed when I was seven years old and had to start using a manual wheelchair as I got into my teenage years. A couple of years later as I started to become weaker, I had to start using an electric wheelchair. I also require the use of a VPAP breathing machine during the day on my wheelchair and overnight while I sleep to assist with my breathing.

I live with my parents in a separate area of the house which was purpose built for wheelchair access. I have 24-hour care seven days a week for personal care, social supports and getting out in the community enjoying most out of life.

I enjoy watching movies, listening to music, going out to concerts, watching motorsports, going away on holidays with my support workers and have a great interest in information technology mainly film production and editing.

There have been many challenges I have faced in the community as a person living with a disability. One challenge that has become more common is when children see me out in the community and say out loud or ask why I am in a wheelchair and can't walk or wearing a nasal mask for my breathing.

Some examples that have happened when I have been out

"Look that man is sick" or "look at that man he is in a wheelchair he must have brain damage" and "look there's an elephant" or "look there's robot man". The parents feel embarrassed by what their child has said and tell them "That it is rude stop staring at that man". With this being said to their children, it doesn't teach them about people with disabilities living in the community.

The best way I have overcome this challenge, is not to let it worry me in my mind and know that it's not the child's fault, they are just curious as to why I am different. Another way is to try and involve myself in the conversation with the child and the adult they are with, I explain why I use a wheelchair or the reason why I can't walk or how I need to use my VPAP machine to help with my breathing. This always seems to help children have a better understanding of people who have a physical disability or who are in a wheelchair.



Tara - Disability to Diffability



My name is Tara, and I am 15. I was diagnosed with Hydrocephalus with only eight weeks to go before my birth.

The hydrocephalus didn't bother me at all during my early childhood. As I entered my preteen years however, something changed. My first negative experience that I can remember as clear as day was in 2017. We were at IKEA, and I saw a girl looking at my foot brace and then looking back up at me with disgust. I have never forgotten it. That was just the beginning.

In 2018, I moved to a new school and that's when I got bullied terribly. If I had a dollar for every time I'd heard the words, 'disability,' or, 'special-needs child', I'd be rich, I promise you. Sometimes it was a comment directed at me, but more often than not, it was the other students mocking me to my face. This was also the start of my hatred for the word, 'disability'. I hate that word because it's not just a word - it's a label. Most labels and stereotypes are considered offensive these days. I find this label offensive.

Look at the word. Disability. The prefix d is a Latin prefix having a negative, or reversing force. This prefix is added to the word ability to make it negative. I am really annoyed at this prefix that I've been labelled with, so, I am going to play some tennis. Yes, you read correctly, I play tennis. Sure, I wasn't walking at the same time as my friends...I only walked at the age of three, but nevertheless, I play tennis. I wasn't writing as easily as all the others either, but hey, on 28 June 2016, 'Sunflower and her Tremendous Adventures' by Tara Jane Weyers was published. Yes, ten-year-old me published a book. It has a four star rating. These are the things that truly define me. My abilities.

The word disability is a disgusting label, and I will not let it define me. I wish that we'd get rid of that word and replace it with another. So that we'd not feel like such outsiders. I wish that they'd help us with what we need help with and find other things that we are strong at. Our weaknesses are weaker than normal. But then again, maybe our strengths are stronger than normal. We are just differently abled, maybe?

So, how do I overcome this, and how do we disable the label? By realising that it isn't that big of a deal. Does it affect my schooling? Not in big ways. Does it affect my friendships? No, not because of the kind people out here. I am a girl with hydrocephalus who has only thought it a problem when others have made it a problem. Now, look, I don't even know why I have this condition and that question does plague me sometimes. Honestly, I let myself cry but then I also remind myself that it's not that bad. I am not unable to do great things. Disabling the label might take some work but I suggest we change the word, 'disability' to 'diffability'. It sends the message across without sounding quite so negative. It's all a mind game-don't let the haters get to you just push on through. Little changes could make a difference. So that's my story, that's my heart.



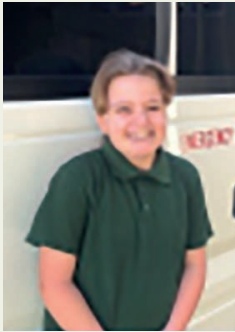
Carson Street School- The Community Kind



Finding your place in the community can sometimes be hard. To feel like you belong, you need to be able to get out and about, to meet new people, to discover new places and experience new things. For the students at Carson Street School, this was difficult for many of our friends who are in wheelchairs, as we did not have a wheelchair accessible bus. That is, until we raised enough money to get Poppy. Here is what some of students have to say about the adventures they have been on since Poppy became a part of our lives.

"My friend Tyrese and I can go up on the back and it can be our outing bus. I feel excited! "

Student councillor Ellaine, 9, who named the bus.



Some students went to the West Coast Eagles training ground to play footie with the players.

"It was great. The students did some excellent trying. We want to do it more!"

Nate, 6, written using his Augmentative and Alternative Communication- a Pragmatic Organisation Dynamic Display (PODD) book.



To be able to participate in an immersive sensory experience was unforgettable for some students. On the way back to school, while on the bus, Russell used his PODD book to say "I want to do it again!"



Tyler and his classmates went to visit the WA Police Air Wing as part of their transport topic. Using his eye gaze system, Tyler reported back that 'It was cool! The WA Police Air Wing is fast!'



Some students got to visit Sculptures by the Sea. 'A' wrote about his experience.

"We went to Cottesloe beach and we took some photos down there. There was beautiful art work at the beach and we had a walk around. After that we had morning tea...I was feeling proud."

"A" aged 10



Jacinta - Never Say Die



An accident left 18-year-old Jacinta with catastrophic head injuries that doctors warned she would never survive.

But Jacinta fought back, and against the odds, she emerged from a coma and began to teach herself how to swallow, eat, walk and talk again, rebuilding her life from the ground up.

This story was written by Jacinta, 2 years after her accident.

I was 18 and on the threshold of life.

Before the accident, I had it all. It was as if I had the world at my feet.

But little did I know what was in store for me. In a tragic accident on 28 November 1985, I was called upon to undergo the most grueling test that I would ever have to face. I was to come to learn the meaning of struggle and determination by becoming a statistic in the numbers of the ever-growing head injured population of WA.

I remained in a coma for 6 long weeks. Gradually, as I improved, I no longer needed these life-giving supports. I had passed the phase of survival – now I had to learn how to become a person again.

Brain injury is so complex, that to try and explain its implications is very difficult. The agonies and frustrations I experienced – and am still experiencing – are inconceivable to the average person.

In the accident, my brain stem was damaged. When the brain is damaged, it causes a variety of different reactions and problems. Because the brain stem is largely in control of motor functions, I had grave difficulty with my mobility and speech. My dream of becoming a glamorous newsreader on television had been destroyed by my accident. In the early days, even my family misunderstood me.

I found a wide range of activities difficult, which previously I had taken for granted. Because I was no longer fed through a tube, I had to learn how to do something else I'd always taken for granted – swallowing. The nurses stroked my throat to produce a reaction that enabled me to swallow.

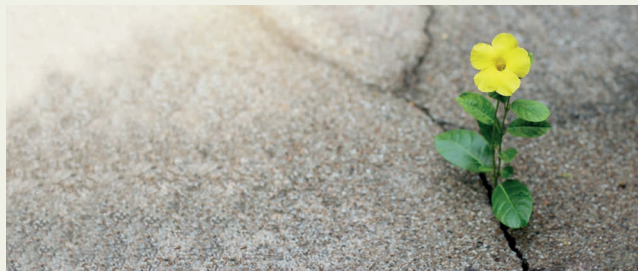
Later, I was given a mirror to help my co-ordination. The mirror allowed me to see where my mouth was so I could learn how to feed myself more efficiently. I was a virtual baby again, except my intelligence far outweighed my physical capacity.

I spent long hours re-learning how to shower and dress myself. I found great difficulty in trying

to tie my shoelaces. A simple procedure that was made so difficult because of my lack of coordination, but I kept practicing until I mastered it.

Walking came next. It seemed so odd and awkward that something I had taken for granted for 18 years would now seem difficult and require great concentration. I learned to walk on a frame so I could get out of my wheelchair.

When I arrived home, everything was different. I saw our driveway where I used to kiss my boyfriend goodbye. The same driveway where I spent long hours of fun running around playing basketball. But those days were gone now.



Now I saw things from a different perspective – from a wheelchair. Even our dog reacted differently and refused to go near her old buddy because something wasn't quite right.

I can remember painstakingly learning to walk on the front lawn. It was so frustrating taking 3 steps, then falling head over heels and having to pick myself back up again.

I also remember thinking how great I was for sitting on a normal chair at the dinner table instead of a wheelchair, and for eating with normal knives and forks without throwing food everywhere – in hospital, I had to eat with utensils designed especially for people with disability.

It shows you what constant practice and determination can accomplish.

No two head injuries are the same. Because my intelligence wasn't affected, I decided to write this article to outline some of the difficulties and problems I and other people with head injuries might face.

You must keep a positive attitude, even though at times I have wanted to end it all.

Never say die – nothing is impossible. If you don't succeed the first time, try and try again until you do! I once read: "Don't dwell in the past, just live in the present and dream of the future."

And that's exactly what I intend to do.

Rudy - Overcoming Barriers



I am Rudy and I was born in the countryside in the Philippines. I was 2 years old when I was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy. I have minimal control of the right side of my body, and I am speech impaired. My parents said goodbye to Usain Bolt and said hello to Stephen Hawking. They wish!

At that time the Philippine population was almost 75 million. 5% of the population were rich, about 15% were middle class, 35% were the poor and the remaining 50% were the poorer of the poorest, which included my family.

I grew up in a hut built by my family and friends. The roof was thatched grass, and the walls were made up of palm fronds. We only had the bare essentials.

No microwave, no baking oven, no soft sleeping mattress, no soft couch, no built-in wardrobe, and no car. Not even a push bike. Just imagine a little hut with two light globes and a fridge, that was our home. Even the fridge is empty, only ice cubes and cold water or occasionally a pound of meat. My mum stayed at home to look after me.

Support from the government for children with my condition was almost none. Medical attention and physical therapy for my condition was very limited. There were no specialists or therapists in rural areas like ours, only quack doctors. My mum went to see one and she contracted sore eyes and my dad got a sore stomach laughing!

Amidst the poverty, I am just thankful and lucky that I was raised by a loving family and a caring circle of relatives.

I was eight years old when my old man got his big break. In 2006 he was hired by Fletchers International as a slaughterman. After three years, with a heavy heart, my mum followed him to Australia. I was left in the Philippines under the care of my maternal grandma and an auntie. After a year, my parents with the help of the abattoir company applied for permanent residency. The application dragged on for more than a year. Unfortunately, our application was turned down by the Australian Immigration Department. My parents appealed but were turned down again. My parents, determined as ever, made a last and final appeal to the Immigration Tribunal and they prayed very hard to God. Half expecting that the battle will be lost again; they sponsored me to come to Australia as a tourist.

Fortunately, by God's grace, and for the good-hearted people in the Australian Immigration we were granted to stay here in this lucky country indefinitely. For that, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the nation of Australia for giving me a fair go. Cheers mate!

I'm still trying very hard to prove my worth though, no worries.

My condition and my foreign upbringing made my transition here in Australia long and slow. My disability made me very shy towards people, and I've never seen so many white people in my life. I only saw them on TV and now their right in my face! Everything is big. Even the flies! They're massive!

The language barrier is another thing. I understand the Filipino language and American English. But Aussie English? That is out of this world English! 'Telly, arvo, and ute', what the heck are they? Aussies are swearing every time they speak! Quite amusing! But don't get me wrong, I have heaps of respect for all of you especially, to my Aussie mates and Teachers! Bloody Oath mate!

I walk awkward and I cannot speak. Honestly, speaking, people like me are a magnet for bullies. I've have had my fair share of that kind of treatment. It happens and will always happen. I choose to ignore them. I put it down as ignorance and, as I may say, a lack of creative imagination of how it feels to be in the place of a physically challenged person. It seems bullies lack understanding. Funny that, I understand them, but they don't understand me.



Amidst the difficulties in coordination and communication, I have my loving and caring family for support. And I truly believe that for people like me, it is paramount that family is always there to lean on.

Australia is truly a lucky country. For me, it is a haven for people with barriers and special needs. The amount of support from the Government, support agencies, charities, and volunteers are just overwhelming. Just makes a life for a person like me much easier. I take my hat off and give thanks to the people behind these support programs. What you're doing is much appreciated.

I graduated year 12 in 2016 with an Endeavour Award. Thanks to the unparalleled support and guidance of my Education Assistance and teachers; I finished my Certificate I and II in Business, Certificate II in Workplace Learning; Certificate II in Information, Digital Media and Technology; Certificate III in Information, Digital Media and Technology this year. I am currently studying online for a Certificate III in Retail.

Since graduating, I worked as Librarian Assistant at North Albany Senior High School Library; 7 months as a librarian assistant at Albany Senior High School Library; and another 7 months of Librarian's assistant experience at Albany Town Public Library. At present, I volunteer at WA Museum of the Great Southern in collaboration with the wonderful people there, I help with the archiving of historical events, people, places, and documents. I am still on my way to prove my worth to Australia. My goal is to learn great work ethics and to contribute to the community whilst being paid and enjoying my hobbies.

I have a deep understanding of diverse culture and people and their different levels of abilities. I believe in the power of RESPECT! GIVE IT AWAY GENEROUSLY AND HOPE PEOPLE WILL DO THE SAME TO YOU!

Believe in yourself, be positive, resilient, self-reliant, and open-minded are some of the great attributes that definitely helped me to where I am now. I believe in HARD WORK AND COMMITMENT too.

I have overcome heaps of my barriers, worries, and fears, but I've got many dreams too. I proudly chase them, and I'm determined to not let them get away!

Carers WA Community Capacity Development Team

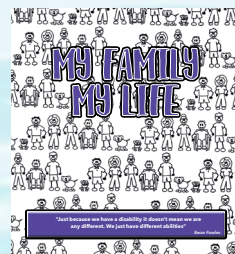


Back row - Ellie, Anthony, Shelley, Jess, Andi, Tom
Front Row: Stuart, Punya, Paul

The Community Capacity Development Team at Carers WA worked closely with people with disability to share their stories in a variety of mediums. As part of the Disable the Label series we have explored stories around acceptance, inclusion and perseverance which aim to create a world where the lives and experiences of people with disability are better understood.

Within these books we have supported and encouraged storytellers to expand on their skills as creatives to find their voice and share their stories. These stories come from personal experience, the imagination, and our connections to community, while still holding a truthful representation of what it is to live within our society as a person with a disability.

The Community Capacity Development Team would like to thank everyone involved for their continued enthusiasm and passion throughout these projects. It's been a pleasure.



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