

Latrobe Lifeskills is an Organisation and NDIS provider. As Ivanhoe Grammar School students, we were privileged enough to get to spend a week with everyone from Lifeskills and gain insight into their day-to-day life there. It was truly an eye-opening and a really positive experience for me. We started to meet many of the participants on Tuesday. Before meeting all the participants, we had an information session with some of the managers at Lifeskills, who informed us about the purpose of Lifeskills, the people who attend and work at Lifeskills and what we would be doing. It was interesting to learn about the history behind Lifeskills and why they do it. After that, we made our way to meet the participants.



I must admit I had my doubts, there was some fear that I was going to say the wrong thing or not be able to talk with the participants, but the group of people I sat with were amazing.

At our first lunch, I was with Mia, Victoria, Vasi and Flora, they were all such big personalities and it was the best experience. I found out a lot about every one of them; Mia was new to Lifeskills, Victoria loved listening to Greek music, Flora was a diehard Collingwood fan and Vasi has been going to Lifeskills for 18 years! After that enjoyable lunch, we made our way to our activities. I was partnered with Vasi in Art, we connected instantly.



Art was a peaceful activity and was very calming. We started with meditation and then Vasi and I worked together to make some colourful mandalas. Overall, it was a delightful day. On Wednesday we started with the sports circuit, which our group of Ivanhoe Grammar School students organised and ran. The sports included were squash, soccer, basketball, and table tennis. My role was to guide and participate with a group. My team included Jackson, Lole and Nuvindra. Our Team name was Team Lole! Everyone in my group was excited for the sports and did amazingly at each one. Jackson was one of the best in table tennis, Nuvindra was a pro at squash and Lole was so skilled at shooting hoops in basketball. After the sports circuit, we had lunch. I was at a quieter table, and it was harder to make conversation but overall, it was a great learning experience. By Thursday everyone was a lot more comfortable around each other. The Lifeskills group made their way over to our Campus. We gave a tour around our school, showing the participants our classroom. We then had a Just Dance session. This was something I helped plan and run, it was a blast! We had almost everyone up dancing and enjoying the music. We had colourful lights around the room that made the classroom feel like a disco! After our recess break, we worked together to decorate biscuits, it was so nice to be able to sit together, talk and share our creations. We then headed across to Lifeskills to have lunch. I sat with Mia and Christina and enjoyed getting to know them. I finished the day with the Social Group, playing some board games, card games and pool.

This week my perception of people with a disability completely changed. I had these views that this week was going to be like a job, and that we were taking care of them but in fact it was just like hanging out with friends, they were so warm and kind it just made my heart melt.

I could honestly spend another week or two with Lifeskills, it was such a wonderful experience.

By Talia.