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Phone: (03) 5381 0122
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 Facebook: [/MATESMentoring](https://www.facebook.com/MATESMentoring)

Coordinator's message

Resilience - *the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness.*

I write this on the first day of release from Victoria's 6th lockdown after deleting a lovely pre-drafted 'MATES update' ready for distribution. However, it just didn't feel like the 'right' message after the State Government's most recent announcements. It was 'glossy' and whilst giving you are good generalised update, it no longer reflected current attitudes.

In talking 'mentorship' I think we need to refer to 'resilience', especially in this current challenging environment. Last night, I spent some time on social media reading and connecting with adults regarding the current COVID-19 situation. The overwhelming theme was one of relief, certainly from regional friends anyway. However, there were also expressions of fatigue, lack of motivation, and something I can only explained as a 'collective sigh'. I could only think, if we're feeling this as adults, how are children going?

Resilience is something that is developed over time through experiences and learning and yet, here we are requesting children continue to put one foot in front of the other, pivot between school and home learning, and just 'get on with the job'. What we are witnessing is a rapid development of resilience.... BUT what happens for those children who aren't developmentally ready for adaption; for those children who aren't having resilience role modelled to them; and for those children who need extra support?

Later in this newsletter, we introduce you to Param. And, it was in his words that I recognised the answer - the responsibility of supporting and building resilience in young people is up to us....all of us - as a community, as a village. Mentorship doesn't have to be formal, it doesn't even need to be between an adult and a child....**it's simply through 'mateship'**. Param said *"The most important values I hope to pass on are patience, caring and sharing"*, and I couldn't think of any better virtues to help build resilience in all of us.

Please take the opportunity to reach out to others. Be patient, be caring and share emotional resources where you can.

We can all play a part in building resilience.

Please stay safe and seek support if you need it. We've noted helpful contacts on the last page of this newsletter.



Vanessa O'Loughlin
Program Manager
Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN

Around the Region...

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@Kaniva

"Its been a long time since the Mentors have been able to come into school due to Covid-19" stated Carolyn, one of the Program coordinators. "But is lovely to finally see the MATES program back up and running and its worth seeing the smiles on the students face"

PS Love the cooking program!



@Holy Trinity Lutheran College Horsham

Something new for MATES! Holy Trinity Lutheran College sought support from the MATES Program to connect students with community members for a hike along the Mahogany Ship Walk between Warrnambool and Port Fairy. 8 people from our mentoring community will 'walk and talk' as the team hike 22kms along the beautiful coastline with an overnight camp stay.

@Nhill

Shout out to Janine and the Team at Nhill as they navigate their re-launch through changing restrictions. Nhill held a very successful virtual & face-to-face Information Session and now we are waiting a change in restrictions for training & launch! Yey! #relaunchparty!



Did the hat fit??

In March, we partnered with Centre for Participation and Uniting Wimmera to promote youth mentoring in the region.

The promotion 'Does the Hat Fit?' saw 5 VCAL students support the organisations to pull off a visual gorilla marketing campaign with over 200+ hats painted purple carefully placed around Horsham City area, and boy, did it get people talking! Huge shout out to Bunnings Horsham for supporting us with the paint and paint gun!

The campaign was supported by student voiced radio ads, posters, and other marketing which extended throughout March and finished with an information session on youth mentoring - featuring the 3 programs that run throughout the region.

March will continue to be 'Mentor Month' and we hope to expand the message to encompass our full region.

Lesson in Radio

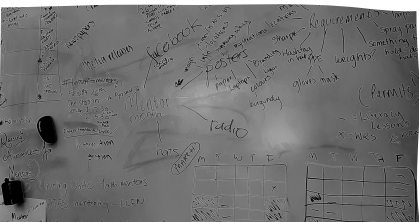
Thanks to Ace Radio's 'Adam Roche', the team were able to get a behind the scenes lesson in writing and producing radio advertisements.

Adam attended a number of sessions to teach the students about creative writing, targeting your audience and how to voice an ad.

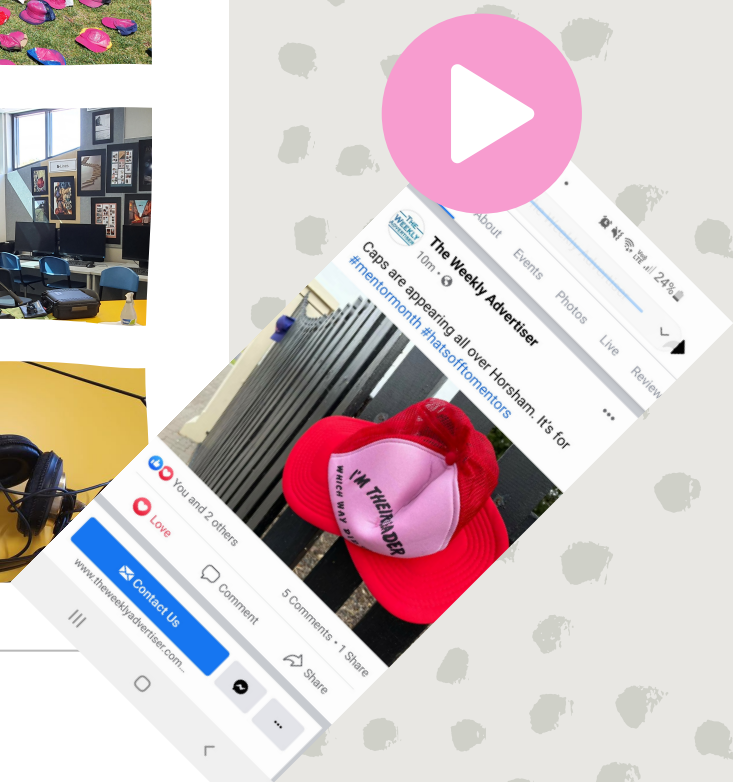
It was a terrific experience for the students to learn about a new industry.

Their voices were heard far and wide.

Click the play button below to listen!



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National Volunteer Week 2021

Thanks to Federation University, who brought together volunteer organisations cross the Wimmera, we were able to showcase MATES Mentoring!

WSMMLLEN were lucky to have our work experience student 'Rowan' who produced more brochures and information packs as well as assisted with the display. We think he did a fantastic job!



THANK YOU

Nhill Free Press & Kaniva Times were all over Volunteer Week, ensuring they got the message of 'thanks' far and wide.

We appreciated their hard work in popping together our advertisement and an editorial featuring Kaniva College who are back up and running in full force!

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WHAT'S ON...

Unfortunately with the current COVID-19 restrictions, many of the planned activities have had to be put on the back burner. Fingers crossed we get the green light soon!



INFORMATION SESSIONS

PRERECORDED LINK: [MATES Information Session](#)

DIMBOOLA - Postponed. New date TBA.



TRAINING

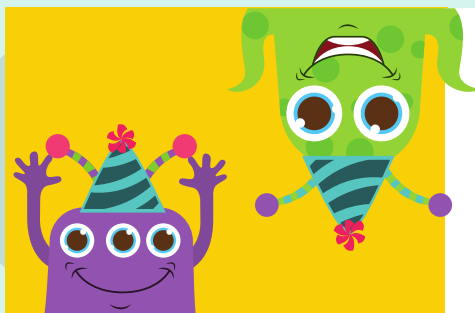
NHILL - Postponed. New date TBA.

VIRTUAL TRAINING DATES: [Click here](#)



PROGRAM LAUNCH

NHILL RE-LAUNCH - Postponed. New date TBA.



GET-TOGETHERS

We all love a good get-together. Plans for mid-year mentor catch-ups in several active programs were in the making until the snap lockdowns. Plans are pending restriction announcements.



TEAM IN THE SPOTLIGHT - WARRACKNABEAL PRIMARY

Warracknabeal Primary School strives to support student wellbeing. We have many wellbeing opportunities in place and among them is the MATES mentoring program.

The coordinators behind the scenes are Kelsea Wall and Leah Kaluza. Kelsea is an Educational Support to students and is part of the school's library team. Leah is the Wellbeing Officer supporting students and other wellbeing programs.

Currently we have 5 MATES pairs and are always looking for more mentors for our amazing students.

If you would like to join our MATES team and become a mentor at Warracknabeal Primary School, please contact the school on 53981194 or email leah.kaluza@education.vic.gov.au or kelsea.wall@education.vic.gov.au.

**OUTSTANDING STUFF TEAM
WARRACKNABEAL PRIMARY
SCHOOL!**



MATES School Coordinators -
Kelsea Wall and Leah Kaluza

FUN TIMES!

Starting soon, we will be posting 'of the weeks' on our Facebook. Here's our thoughts for this week!



KEEP ACTIVE

Schools generally have cupboards full of sporting equipment that Mentors can borrow. However, we're highlighting discus! For a more 'user friendly' version, try frisbee!

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE IDEAS](#)



GOOD COOKING

These little beauties are not only easy and fun to make, they're both healthy and delicious! Kids love using the cheese grater. See the full recipe here: [CORN FRITTAS](#)



BOARD & CARD GAMES

The game of 'Exploding Kittens' comes highly recommend by a group of 10-12 year old's. It is both fun, challenging, and strategic. The aim is simple really....don't pick-up an exploding kitten!



CRAFTY MENTORS

Celebrate friendship with 'Friendship Bracelets'. A blast from the past, these knot tying memoirs are back! A perfect activity for a cold and miserable day. If you need a refresh on how to make them, click here: [FRIENDSHIP BRACLETS](#)

Motivation Madness:
[click here](#)

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MATES now in Stawell



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CENTRAL GRAMPIANS

Central Grampians Local Learning and Employment Network (CGLLEN) launched its MATES mentoring program in Stawell in April this year.

Launch events were held at Stawell West Primary School, Concongella Primary School and Stawell Secondary College to give students an opportunity to meet their new mentors.

MATES is a model that was originally developed by Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN to match nominated students with a positive role model from the community.

CGLLEN is replicating the initiative as a pilot program in 2021, thanks to a community grant from Northern Grampians Shire Council.

CGLLEN Executive Officer Jane Moriarty said MATES was helping young people learn new skills, connect with the community and build self-confidence.

"We are so excited to be able to offer the MATES in the Central Grampians region and connect our youth with people that will take an interest in their personal growth and development," she said.

"It's all about providing young people with someone they can talk to and learn from outside of home and school."

Mentor Nerissa Gee said she was enjoying participating in the program.

"It has been fantastic getting to know the student I have been matched with and developing a positive relationship," she said.

"During our fortnightly meetings, we participate in some of our shared hobbies and interests and just have a general catch up about what's been happening in our lives," Ms Gee said.

Students and mentors in the MATES Central Grampians program meet once a fortnight during school hours.

Anyone who would like to volunteer their time as a MATES mentor should contact Penny at CGLLEN on 0418 535 478.



Meet Param!

#MentorStory



Param enjoying afternoon tea with his Stawell West Primary School Mentee at the program launch in Stawell. Photo credit: Central Grampians LLEN MATES Program

Param Kathiramalay is a true champion for young people with 2 mentees in the MATES Mentoring Programs plus participation as a Mentor in the L2P Program.

Param mentors at Stawell West and Horsham Primary (298 campus) primary schools offering a wealth of knowledge, support, and encouragement to his mentees.

We thank Param for his continued effort and absolutely loved his responses to our Q & A...

"The most important values I hope to pass on are patience, "caring" and "sharing"."



Param's Mentee at Horsham Primary School. All smiles as they enjoy a puzzle together.

Q & A with Param

Why did you decide to get involved in youth mentoring?

I have been fortunate to having been blessed with a reasonably comfortable life starting my career as a Ship's engineer and moving on to run a company assembling small construction machinery and finally as a home tutor helping students up to 16 years with mathematics and science. I would therefore like to be able to share my life experiences with students as a mentor hoping it will light a spark in them, resulting in success in their own endeavours. The most important values I hope to pass on are patience, "caring" and "sharing". These virtues will certainly help them to interact with their fellow schoolmates and help them lead a happy and confident school life. This in turn should translate to better performance in school and ultimately a successful and meaningful life.

What are your favourite activities to do with your mentees?

We have been playing ball games, flying a kite, building jigsaw puzzles, playing chess or domino and making paper boats, aeroplanes and hopefully jumping frog. (origami).

You are a few months in now, what is your relationship like with your mentees?

I think we get along well and certainly believe we look forward to the sessions.

What have you enjoyed most about mentoring?

The activities we have done so far appear well received and the mentees have been energetic, well mannered, enthusiastic and of pleasant disposition. It has also given me some insight into the life of young persons. I have included a couple of photos herewith and the expressions on their faces speak volumes. The student in the darker top is from Stawell Primary and the student in the red top is from Horsham Primary.

KEEPING SAFE WHILST MENTORING

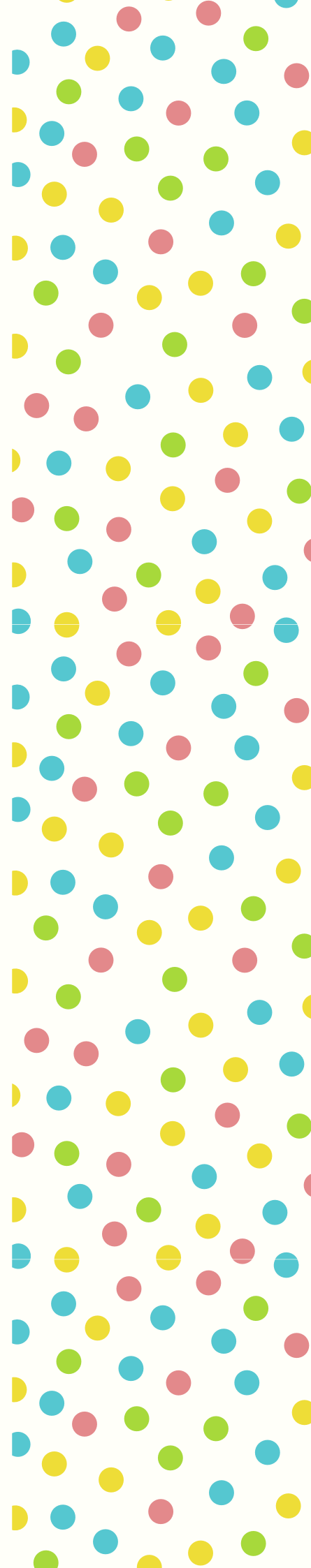
The safety of mentors, mentees and school staff is paramount to our communities. It is important that we all practice COVID safe mentoring practices when we are able to be onsite.

POINTERS...

1. Pay attention to the Victorian Governments advice including your own personal risk to COVID-19.
2. Greet your mentee with a smile only! Avoid shaking hands or hugs. A first pump followed by a healthy dose of alcohol based sanitizing gel may be required for those children who are overly excited to see you!
3. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth and encourage your mentee to do the same.
4. Try planning activities that can help maintain a social distance of 1.5 meters eg. painting rocks or another craft, planting herb pots, and outdoor activities.
5. Wear a mask, ensure you wash your hands, and use sanitizer.
6. If schools remain under current restrictions, or you are not comfortable visiting, pen a letter or write an email.
7. If you are unwell, do not attend your mentoring session. Mentees will understand, they are very resilient to COVID-19.

If ever in doubt, speak to your School's Coordinator or contact WSMLLEN at mates@llen.com.au or (03) 5381 0122

**YOU CAN FIND THE VICTORIAN
GOVERNMENT'S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S
ADVICE [HERE](#)**



Need to contact us?



Tim Shaw
Executive Officer



Vanessa O'Loughlin
Program Manager



Announcement Pending
MATES Coordinator

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Phone Vanessa: 0418 312 556

Email MATES Team: mates@llen.com.au

Website: www.llen.com.au

Facebook: www.facebook.com/MatesMentoring

About WSMMLLEN

Local Learning and Employment Networks (LLENs) are an initiative of the Victorian Government. They were established to bring together schools, business and industry, community organisations, government agencies and individuals to improve the lives and education outcomes of our young people.

The Wimmera Southern Mallee LLEN works across the Hindmarsh, Horsham, West Wimmera and Yarriambiack local government areas. We have a strong focus on supporting disadvantaged young people to remain at school.

The WSMMLLEN strives:

- To improve the participation of vulnerable young people and their families in education
- To increase the re-engagement of young people into programs leading to qualifications
- To increase our schools' engagement with the community to improve students' aspirations and education outcomes

Helpful phone numbers

Grampians Community Health: 5362 1200

Hindmarsh Shire (03) 5391 4444

Horsham Rural City Council: 5382 9777

West Wimm. Shire: Edenhope: (03) 5585 9900

Kaniva: (03) 5392 7700

Yarriambiack Shire: (03) 5398 0100

Police (Horsham): 5382 9200

Rural Northwest Health (03) 5396 1200

Lifeline 13 11 14

West Wimm. Health Service (03) 5391 4222

Wimmera Health Care Group

(Horsham Hospital): (03) 5381 9111

Bushfire information: 1800 240 667

headspace (Horsham): 5381 1543

Coronavirus Hotline:

Nurse on call: 1300 060 024

SES Emergency: 13 25 00

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SOUTHERN
MALLEE
LLEN



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