

# Learning the benefits of volunteering

By FIONA BLICK

**Student leadership and the art of volunteering go hand in hand at Yarrawonga College P-12 with students from the 5-8 campus participating in the community awareness, social and emotional intelligence program.**

Georgina Thomas, years 5-8 Engagement and Wellbeing Leader, said community awareness, also known as social responsibility, referred to the opportunities individuals had to contribute to or make a difference in their broader community beyond the immediate circle of their family and friends.

"Increasingly, the business world is looking for employees who demonstrate community and social responsibility," Georgina said.

"Social and emotional intelligence refers to the abilities linked to self-awareness, self-

management, social awareness and relationship management.

"Development of these skills enable people to understand and manage their own and others' emotions in social interactions.

"Leaders who master these competencies have a distinct advantage in social situations.

"Leadership is an important opportunity for students, and we want to maximise the opportunities for personal learning and growth.

"Students have been placed in various Yarrawonga-based community organisations and have volunteered their time in a 9-week program each Wednesday morning from 9am - 11am.

One of these places is St Vinnies in Belmore Street and store manager Shelley Cameron praised the students for their hard work and dedication.

"The students have been really good," St Vinnies store manager Shelley Cameron said.

"They have been working on the window displays and in-shop displays and have done a fantastic job.

"Our older volunteers and customers love seeing the young kids here.

"It is a pleasure to have them and it's wonderful to be involved in this program."

Year 5 student Sophie O'Dwyer said volunteering at St Vinnies was lots of fun.

"I like socialising so doing customer service is great and I really love dressing the mannequins."

Sheridan Henwood from year 7 said "being able to help out in the community is great"

Zoe Roberts, also from year 7, thought picking out all the fashionable items and arranging them in the store was fantastic fun.

"We get to organise the clothes and work out which ones should be displayed in the shop," Zoe said.

Willow Spencer from year 5 said she had thoroughly enjoyed her time at St Vinnies.

"All the staff here are really lovely and supportive," she said.



Yarrawonga College P-12 middle years students Sheridan Henwood, Zoe Roberts, Sophie O'Dwyer and Willow Spencer dress a St Vinnies mannequin, supervised by Manager Shelley Cameron.

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