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The Information, Linkages and Capacity Building (ILC) program provides grants to organisations who deliver projects to build inclusive communities for people with disability.

ILC project 'Sailors with DisAbilities' (SwD) Wright of Passage aims to help people with disability to develop empathy and engage with others through shared responsibility.

The New South Wales program helped two people in particular to gain confidence with social interactions through peer support.

At first, the participants both felt the group's strong enthusiasm intimidating and occasionally confronting, and were reluctant when it came to social interaction.

Jack has Autism Spectrum Disorder, depression and an anxiety disorder. Due to bullying and a school system not suited to his needs, Jack became disinterested in his education.

Jack isolated himself for months, developing a heightened sense of social anxiety. His self-doubt made Jack more isolated and depressed because he lost motivation for everyday tasks. Since he couldn't focus on simpler tasks, he didn't have any motivation to look into things like getting a job, building his life skills or taking any opportunities that came his way.

Jack relied on isolation, always saying he wanted to be alone and that he would not come back to the program – but then he met Lily.

When Lily joined the program, she was shy and often unsure of herself. Lily has minor physical disabilities and intellectual disability.

The SwD program team recognised Lily found it hard to participate so thought of ways to help build Lily's confidence.

The team asked Jack to make friends with Lily, and to let them know if she had any specific concerns about the program. From day one, Jack and Lily's friendship was positive for both of them – they both began to increase in confidence, highlighting the importance of peer support.

Jack and Lily's friendship also led to developing stronger interactions with others in the program. Their friendship meant they interacted with the team in a more meaningful way, because they felt more comfortable to engage with the program.

The rest of the team have since been inspired to create a peer support mechanism in the SwD program because of Jack and Lily's success.

SwD has recently changed their name to 'The Making Waves Foundation'

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