Posted on:
23 November 2023

With 2 casual jobs, volunteer work and co-hosting a radio program about disability, busy bee Scarlett Jennings has little time for rest.

Diagnosed with an intellectual disability at the age of 10, Scarlett, now 20, is thriving in her recent transition from school to working life.

By the age of 6, Scarlett, from Clyde North in Melbourne's south-east, began to show signs of intellectual disability.

Her mother, Vanessa, started accessing early intervention therapies for her child before she became a NDIS participant.

'We could only do speech therapy for a limited time because we couldn't afford it,' Vanessa said.

'The occupational therapy was subsidised, but we were still out of pocket.

'I was able to access supports but paying for it was tricky. We wish the NDIS had been around when Scarlett was younger.'

Scarlett joined the Scheme in 2019. Her plan covers the cost of speech and occupational therapies. Scarlett's provider, Umbrella Support, was pivotal in helping her find work, as well as exposing her to social, health and well-being programs.

Umbrella founder and support worker Cindy Warren supported Scarlett in work placements.

She also co-hosts Disability Matters, a monthly radio program on online station The Buzzz .

'Scarlett is full of drive,' Cindy said.' 'She gives everything a go, setting goals and working towards them.

'She has an outgoing personality. When faced with a challenge, she will seek guidance and move forward. Scarlett is proof that the NDIS does assist those living with a disability to strive for their goals.'

Scarlett works 2 shifts a week under the guidance of qualified chefs at L'Arte Central Social Enterprise Café, Florist and Art Space in Cranbourne, and 2 shifts a week at nearby Amstel Club.

There she splits her time between the bistro and its Every1 café, run by people with a disability.

‘I was really surprised and excited about the opportunity at Amstel Club,’ Scarlett said. ‘I’ve been here almost one year and it’s been amazing.’

Her role includes serving food, taking orders, clearing tables and even watering the plants.

‘I love the variety, Scarlett said. ‘I get to learn something new each week.

‘The staff are so supportive. They encourage you to step out of your comfort zone.’

Aside from work, Scarlett volunteers weekly at her local Salvation Army store.

‘I work on the cash register, with support from staff,’ Scarlett said. ‘I serve customers and price donations.

‘They’ve been fantastic for giving me an opportunity to develop my skills.’

Vanessa says while the NDIS has been great for her family, it’s important to think of others too.

‘It’s great to find useful employment but you’ve also got to give back to your community,’ Vanessa said. ‘The Salvos work Scarlett does is so special.

‘The Scheme has been life changing for us.

‘Our goal is for Scarlett to be an independent and productive member of society.

‘With help from the NDIS, she’s well on her way.’

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