

# ★ A Week in the Life of a Teacher's Assistant ★

I usually work in the classroom two days a week. It is very rewarding and my tasks change daily. This term I have been doing the cooking program with Secondary R and Year 11/12E on one of these days. Some of our cooking is right up there with Master Chef but we do have the occasional disaster! On the other day, I assist in Primary S and Primary G classrooms. The younger ones certainly are a great deal of fun to be with.

I am fortunate enough to also spend time as a program assistant in Mater Dei's Structured Work Placement Program (SWPP) which takes me "off campus" on the other three days of the week. SWPP is offered to our Year 11 and 12 students. It takes them into a workplace environment (usually one day a week) to experience life as a co-worker, employee and all the social opportunities that are not available in a school setting. I take some of our students out to deliver "Meals on Wheels" on Tuesday and Wednesday every week. I drive the students to the depot to collect cooked

meals and then to the homes of the elderly in Camden where the students deliver the freshly cooked meals to their door. These visits bring so much company and pleasure to our elderly clients and are rewarding for our students. So valuable is our contribution to the Meals on Wheels program that when our students are on holidays, the people at Meals on Wheels have to find a team to replace them!

On Fridays I accompany and supervise a student who has been placed in a new work environment. One such student has been Sarah Piper who goes to "Eats on Argyle" to learn hospitality skills. When she first started, I went with her to show her what to do and support her and her "employer". Now she has so much confidence I no longer need to stay, so I drop her off and then pick her up!

It is so rewarding to be able to help our students learn and grow in confidence. At Mater Dei we celebrate every achievement.

