

# Media Release

26 October 2020

## International Day of People with Disability – a place to call home

Growing up and moving in with your mates is a rite of passage. But for some young people with disability, it's not so simple.

December marks 12 months since Lara, Matthew, Andy and Wayne moved into their own Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) in Glen Waverley, run by non-profit aged and disability services organisation VMCH.

**December is also the month we celebrate International Day of People with Disability (IDPwD) – which aims to increase public awareness, understanding and acceptance of people with disability and celebrate their achievements and contributions.**

**The story behind how the four came to live together is unique, and a testament to the love and tenacity of their parents, who advocated for more than 15 years to ensure their children were able to live together in a home that fostered friendship, fun and family.**

The families – Sue and Colin Chinner, Jill and John Cole, Kitty David and Karen Everett – met at Glenallen specialist school when their children were aged six. Over the years they became friends and discovered they shared a dream of seeing their children live in a place that was more than supported accommodation, but rather a home surrounded by people with similar values.

**The process wasn't simple. Ordinarily, people with disability need to apply for accommodation that, while practical, doesn't necessarily provide for their social and personal preferences.**



(L-R) Lara, Wayne, Matthew and Andy. Higher res images available on request.

The four, now aged in their thirties, had been attending VMCH's day program and staff knew of their dream. With support from VMCH and the introduction of the NDIS (making the process for finding appropriate accommodation easier) the dream became a reality in December 2019.

**“Andy, Matthew and Lara were like the rat pack at school, they were thick as thieves. I’m really happy because I never thought it was going to happen,” said Sue, Matthew’s mum.**

**“It’s (the move) been incredibly positive and I would love to see this for the future; for friends to be placed together.”**

Lara’s mum, Jill, said living with her friends and having the support of their families was invaluable for her daughter.

“Lara loves it because she’s very social and when the other families come in and talk to her, they know what’s going on in her life. They’re not saying ‘hello’ to be polite, they have meaningful conversations.”

Kitty said her son Andy, who loves horror movies and the Bombers, was “very happy” at the Glen Waverley home.

“They’ve known each other since they were little so he’s very comfortable and very happy there. I couldn’t ask for more.”

**Living with his mates was incredibly important for music-lover Wayne, said his mum, Karen.**

**“This is his extended family. He was quite proud to move out of home and live there.”**

Ensuring their children were safe and happy as they age was also a motivation for their parents.

“One of the best things is the siblings of the four friends also know each other as they’ve been to all the celebrations over the years,” Jill said. “The next part of the dream was knowing there would be support there when we’re not, through their siblings.”

**If you’d like VMCH to help you and your friends find a home together, call us on 1300 698 624.**

## **Media enquiries**

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## **About VMCH**

Here at VMCH, our services are as diverse as the people we support.

Our values underpin the work we do. As a Catholic not for profit organisation, compassion, respect and inclusion aren’t just words to us, they guide us in everything we do.

While we’ve been around for over a century, we’re always moving forward. Always staying true to who we are by supporting people and families to live their best lives; providing a place to call home and spaces to learn and grow.

Our professional and compassionate teams are with you on your life journey; helping you with a wide range of support from early learning and therapy, specialist education, disability services, affordable homes, residential aged care, retirement living and at-home aged care.

