

## **Southern Cross Baptist School Student Selected as projectABLE Ambassador**

*Sixteen year old Southern Cross Baptist School student, Holly Smith, has been selected by National Disability Services (NDS) to become a projectABLE student ambassador following her participation in the projectABLE 2011 program.*

September 5, 2011 (FPRC) -- Holly was chosen as one of three projectABLE student ambassadors and was selected for her dedication and achievements whilst completing the Young and ABLE Certificate Training Program. Holly attended a projectABLE workshop at Share Care in June and went on to complete the Young and ABLE Certificate Training Program at the Cerebral Palsy Alliance during the July school holidays.

In 2011, 354 students from 34 schools across Sydney took part in projectABLE and attended interactive workshops that helped to build the student's knowledge about the care sector and investigate future employment opportunities within the sector. A further 85 students then went on to complete the Young and ABLE Certificate Training Program which provides them with a nationally accredited certificate of qualification in disability work.

"I am both honoured and excited to be chosen as a projectABLE student ambassador. Before attending the program, I knew very little about disabilities and sometimes felt unsure of people with disabilities. Through the program, I learned to see beyond the disability and was more aware of what it is like to have a disability, what it is like to work with people with a disability and the importance of supporting and providing opportunities for people with a disability to succeed in society like everyone else," Holly said.

Holly will now have the chance to gain valuable skills in the disability sector. Her first role as a projectABLE student ambassador will be to work with a person with a disability on a project that aligns and ignites their common interest and passion for film and focusses on each person's abilities to succeed and realise their full potential. The assignment will be captured on film as a short-form documentary that follows the journey of Holly, her experiences, new found skills and knowledge of the care sector.

On completion of the short films, the student ambassadors will use their films to share their journey and to inspire and educate their peers and local communities on opportunities and possible career paths in the care sector.

"I am very interested in a career in the disability sector. Following my work experience at Sutherland Hospital, I was thinking about a career in the medical field such as nursing, medicine or physiotherapy. Now that I have learned more about working in the disability sector, I would love to combine the two. Through my role as a projectABLE student ambassador I also hope to inspire other students to consider a future career in the sector," Holly said.

projectABLE was developed in 2010 by carecareers, in conjunction with NDS, as a response to the growing demands on the sector's services. Encouraging younger skilled workers into the industry, projectABLE provides secondary students with the hands on work experience needed to evaluate their career options and also provides a pathway to future employment within the sector.

Patrick Maher, COO National Disability Services, said "projectABLE continues to do vital work in demystifying what it means to work in the disability and community care sector and raises the profile of the important and rewarding work done by paid carers and volunteers. We are really excited to have Holly on board as a projectABLE student ambassador. We hope the experience provides Holly with the opportunity to thoroughly investigate the care sector as a future career path as we believe she would be a valuable contributor to the sector."

In NSW alone, the predicted increase in demand for more skilled paid care workers will create an additional 40,000 full and part time positions in the sector in the next 5 years (2011-2015) as the number of people using these services is expected to rise to 350,000.

For further information, images, or to request an interview, please contact:

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