

Adrian Becomes Prefect!

We would like to congratulate Adrian on becoming prefect! Adrian, who is profoundly deaf and is in Year 11, attended our last program. He said the “Leadership Enrichment” workshop encouraged him to successfully try out for a prefect role at his school.

Adrian now wants to share his story in the hope of encouraging other young deaf people to have a goal by showing that “nothing is impossible” – a new motto he has developed since participating in the Hear For You program.

Adrian’s Story

As my school principal read out the names of the successfully elected prefects and called my name, I was really proud of myself. Now I'm a member of the leadership team of my school for 2009/10. My friends congratulated me on my effort. I couldn't hide my grin. This is one of the highlights in my lifetime. But let us rewind to when I was in Year 7.

I was a nobody, ashamed about my hearing loss. I had no friends as I started a mainstream selective high school. My popularity from primary school was forgotten as I started secondary school with no self esteem and no confidence. It was only then that I became involved in peer support activities. I found it very difficult to communicate but I did not tell my peers about my hearing loss because I was embarrassed. Even I was frightened to carry the FM to the teachers since they had no experience with this. As the years went by, I made friends in my class and I realised that I needed to build a social network.



Using MSN and recently Facebook, I was able to make more friends easily without having to be nervous to confront and mumble words. My friends have learned about my hearing loss and have tried to help me. Friends can help define who you are – not by intelligence or sporting achievements. With the support of my friends and teachers, my confidence was soaring high and I did not let them down.

Hear For You has also aided me in exceeding my potential. I learned that other deaf peers were also facing the same problems as I have endured. **By sharing experiences and information between deaf teenagers and mentors, I have found new innovative ways to assist me towards my future and the work place.**

Some activities, mainly “The Hear For You Presidential Debate” and “Leader of My Country” where my group did one-minute speeches at intervals helped boost my confidence. These activities helped me communicate with others about my thoughts and ideas. Being able to listen to those who also struggle to meet their demands associated with hearing loss made me realise that we all personally have room for improvement.

Honestly, my favourite activity was “The Hear For You Presidential Debate” as I battled stage fright. In the end, I conquered my personal demons about having to present in front of a large audience.

When I nominated myself for the prefect role this year, I did not expect to achieve it. However, Hear For You and my friendships brought about the unimaginable. I now look forward to the future and to enjoying a fantastic time promoting my school.

I would like to thank my Hear For You mentors, Dave Brady and Kate Locke, for helping me build a positive attitude and my self-esteem. Special mention goes to Olivia Andersen who started the Hear For You program.

I hope that my story will inspire others regarding their goals in the future.

Right: My mentor, Dave Brady.



Below is an excerpt from Kate Locke one of the Hear For You mentors.

So, on the morning after my cochlear implant surgery, I am sitting up in my hospital bed, checking my sms's and emails.

And in pops an email from one of my mentees. I mentor the Year 11 and 12s, and they are such a wonderful group of kids. I really love them. **And I can see myself reflected in them so clearly – everything that I went through in high school – I always just want them to know that they are not alone, and can do anything they want.** We are always on about how deafness is not a disability, but a difference, and that they can be leaders, and have brilliant careers etc etc.



So, anyway – this email comes in ... and it says something like: "Hi Kate, just wanted to let you know ... I got elected to be a prefect at my school yesterday."

WOW. I was completely floored. Had a huge smile on my face.

Didn't know what to say. Well actually, I did know what to say! I was hooting and cheering, and if I'd been hooked up to a heart monitor, alarms would've been going off.

He is profoundly deaf, and has been elected prefect at a normal mainstream school. His parents had mentioned that he had decided to go for the position of prefect at his school after coming to our workshops, but I don't think I realised he was really going to do it.

The grin got bigger, and I thought – this is what it's all about. This ... giving the kids enough confidence to know ... they literally can do ANYTHING. It was a small sign – well, a big sign – that what we are doing is making a difference, is helping these kids feel more confident about themselves, and pushing them to challenge themselves.

So, congratulations Adrian! You are my hero, and I am very proud of you. Just remember this is step one of the journey. Keep going till you hit CEO, just like we talked about! And remember it doesn't end there! **Kate Locke, Mentor**