



CONTINUOUS LEARNING FOR GRADUATES

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There are very rarely sad moments at Mater Dei; moments without hope or optimism. We do experience a broad range of emotions here every day, but not often sad and not often without hope.

I did overhear one staff member however, reflect upon their experience when attending the Mater Dei Ex-Students reunion. And they described feeling sad, empty, without hope. They explained that they saw a couple of students who had been thriving at Mater Dei, who perhaps had still yet to reach their potential so long after leaving school and through no fault of their own.

As you will know, we will not stop working to seek to improve the lives of people with disability by creating opportunities for them to reach their full potential. We believe every person is worthy of the dignity that only opportunity and engagement in the workforce and in the community offers.

Herein was born the kernel of a new program for young adults with a disability who have completed their compulsory schooling and who wish to embrace ongoing learning.

To this end, we are thrilled to announce the arrival of Tennille Bertram - Director of Continuous Learning (pictured above). Tennille's appointment marks an exciting time in the evolution of programs offered by Mater Dei.

While in its infancy, we envisage that the emerging opportunities in the Mater Dei post school program will be:

1. Focused on continuous learning including specific skill development.
2. Evidence based.
3. Informed by best practise models locally, nationally and internationally, and
4. Driven by the principles of self-determination.

Tennille is a qualified speech pathologist with a Masters of research in friendships following traumatic brain injury. Tennille joins us with considerable experience dealing with young adults with disabilities particularly in the field of acquired brain injury. Her passion is to improve the lives of people with a disability.

As the research and planning continues, Tennille has said to me "At this stage we are doing the groundwork, focussing on evidence based best practise. To honour our commitment to the young adults who will engage with the program the foundations need to be solid in order for the program to meet its objectives and to be sustainable in the long term"

Watch this space!

Tony Fitzgerald