

Introducing Maryborough ELEVATE

Director: Kelly Walker

Team: Steve, Teagan, Daniel, Renee,
from the Maryborough Salvation Army and Maryborough AOG churches



Tell us a bit about Maryborough ELEVATE:

Maryborough ELEVATE has been *connecting in* to Maryborough Education Centre (MEC) since April 2009. The aim of the team has been to support the school and staff in whatever way we can. Currently, we are involved in providing lunchtime sport and games for students two days a week – with an aim to be able to do this 5 days a week. SOAR also operates at MEC, and it has been great to be able to build connections with some of the students who are part of that program – seeing some of these kids, and others involved in the lunchtime activities, then *connect out* with the local church youth groups. The team has also had a focus on building relationships with school staff, and last term we provided a staff lunch, which was very much appreciated by the school.



What do you hope to achieve in the school through your involvement?

We would love to see the Maryborough ELEVATE Team help the students and staff to be more positive, and to be a part of seeing a turnaround in school morale.

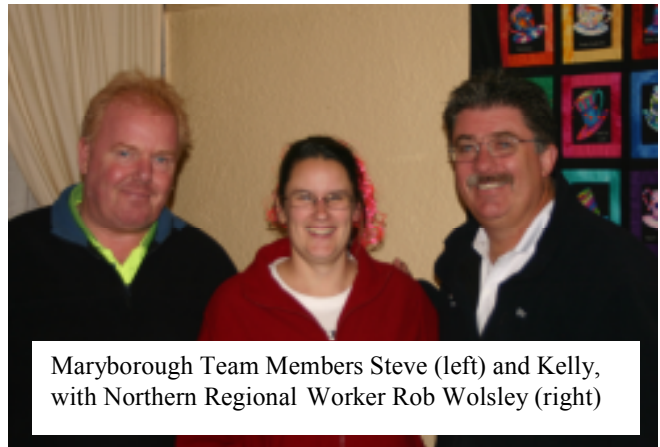
There seems to be a reduction in bullying during lunchtimes at the school, and it is thought that diverting young peoples energy into more positive activities such as the ELEVATE lunchtime sports and games has had a part to play in that.



What have been some of your struggles in the school?

Overall the school has been very supportive of ELEVATE and SOAR – the one thing we have learnt in our time at the school has been to navigate and be aware of the school systems, processes, and politics, which can be very foreign to those who do not work in the school – and are helpful to know so you don't unknowingly step on toes!

Building and keeping a consistent team is also a struggle we've had to manage.



Maryborough Team Members Steve (left) and Kelly, with Northern Regional Worker Rob Wolsley (right)



What have been your successes in the school?

MEC is known as a "tough school" – but it has been great to observe that kids, and their attitude to school and each other, is slowly changing. We wouldn't claim to be the sole reason for this – but we have played a part in the wider school approach.

It is always a great feeling when kids recognize you, when they are waiting at the classroom to welcome you, or texting you to make sure you are coming! And it is fantastic when students begin to start bringing their friends along to ELEVATE each week, and then coming along on Friday nights to the local church youth groups.



Share us a story of a young person you know who has benefited from Elevate.

One of the students we have come to know, Dominic (not his real name), used to have quite a reputation for bullying. He's been involved in the SOAR program, and he started coming along to ELEVATE Lunchtimes. We have been privileged to see a huge change in him, through the continued weekly contact. It's particularly notable that he is no longer constantly coming to the attention of teachers for bullying.