



MontroseAccess

MEDIA RELEASE

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Greater Recognition Required For People With Disability

Australians should pay particular attention to International Day for People With Disability on December 3rd, and place greater focus on rewarding ability according to Darrel Bourke, CEO of MontroseAccess, a charity offering disability care for kids.

The United Nations sanctioned International Day for People With Disability will promote greater support and understanding for people who live with disabilities worldwide. But this should not be the sole focus, says Darrel. Rather there should be a much greater emphasis and recognition of what people can do; a celebration of achievement.

Darrel said, "We have a client at MontroseAccess, Tristram Peters, who recently won the Outstanding Young Achiever Award in the Disability Action Week awards for his participation in powerchair sports. Not just participation, but he also visits local schools and inspires other kids who use wheelchairs to take part, stay fit and enjoy life. Inspiring for someone who themselves uses a wheelchair because of spinal muscular atrophy."

Tristram is from Brisbane and is such an enthusiast that he is now working towards bringing the international sport of powerchair football to Queensland, one of the only states left in Australia without an official team. But this all has to be done when he has the time. You see Tristram was an OP2 student and is currently studying journalism at the University of Queensland.

According to the Australian Bureau of Statistics, 6.3% of the Australian population experienced disabilities with profound or severe core activity limitation. Of those, more than half a million people under the age of 65 were considered to be physically disabled.

Despite these alarming figures, there are many like Tristram who continue to defy any stereotype and showcase exactly why it is that our focus should be on ability instead of disability.

Joshua Merkas is a Gold Coast resident and another MontroseAccess client who has soared to great heights this year. He has duchenne muscular dystrophy and has been busy studying for his HSC this year, but none of that was enough to stop him from representing his country and heading to Italy for the World Championships at powerchair hockey in November.

"Whether it's sporting, academic or social, people with disabilities are an important part of any community and sadly, they are often overlooked. Their achievements are worthy of greater note because often they have had to overcome so much more than many other people. We applaud International Day For People With Disability and we applaud communities that acknowledge the achievements of people with a disability," Darrel went on to say.

For further information, to arrange an interview or high res images, please feel free to contact MontroseAccess Communications Manager, Adam Harper, on (07) 3717 1184 or 0404 871 360 or email: aharper@montroseaccess.org.au