

FAITH
HOPE
LOVE



TIME TO BUILD

Building lives, homes & communities

Newsletter of Our Place Christian Communities and Hope Christian Homes | APR 2023

Learning from each other

By Dr Louise Gosbell

There's a famous quote that says "Choose a job you love, and you will never have to work a day in your life." The idea is that when you love your job, it doesn't really feel like work at all. I have to confess that this is a little how I have felt starting in the role of Ministry Leader with Our Place.

For many years I have been involved with running workshops on disability inclusion for churches as well as liaising and consulting in different Christian contexts on matters of disability and inclusion. But most of this has been work I've squeezed in-between doing my 'real' job.

And now, this IS my real job!

In the two months since I started with Our Place, I've had the opportunity to have lots of wonderful conversations with many different people on matters of disability and inclusion.

Whether it's church leaders contemplating running one of our **Belonging training workshops**, or individuals and families looking for advice and resources on inclusion in churches, the conversations have been rich and encouraging and it has been a real privilege to be able to offer support and advice to so many different people and communities.

If you haven't been to our website in a while, it is worth checking it! We have started creating some simple **free disability resources** you can use to start taking steps towards inclusion in your own church communities. There will be more on the way in the future so watch this space.

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I'd love to hear from you and hear about your experiences of church as a person with disability or parent or carer.

- **What tips would you share with others on how to make an inclusive community?**
- **What have been the biggest barriers to inclusion you have experienced?**

Please get in touch with me at ministryleader@ourplacecc.org.au.

In this edition...



Belonging disability training
May 27



Q&A with Jerrah
(house updates!)



Tips on welcoming people with autism

Q&A with Jerrah Patston

Jerrah's moved in to the first Hope house in Springwood. New routines aren't easy, but a local church community makes all the difference...



Jerrah and Fergus - sleepover @ WHS

What's been fun? I think living in Welcome Home Springwood (WHS) is fun because I like living my own life and enjoying the place that I'm basically living at the moment. The most important thing about living in WHS is having overnight support workers and we have a good night together.

What's been challenging? The things that have been challenging is that the routine is changing and I'm missing Mum and Dad but hopefully I get to see them this week. I would add that it has been challenging to have moved in without a friend living with me and the new build not happening yet.



Jerrah having dinner with friends from Alive@5 (nearby neighbours)

How has your church been a blessing to you? Getting to talk to people and getting to know them and having my buddy sit next to me. My favourite bits are about church are serving the community in so many ways like setting up the tables and chairs, doing supper sometimes, being part of a music team and being on welcoming and I think being on music team has been great to me so far in church.



Giving to Hope's homes
hopechristianhomes.org.au
[/donate/](#)



**DOWNLOAD
YOUR FREE
CHECKLIST**

Our Place Christian Communities' disability inclusive ministry Checklists for Churches were developed by Dr Louise Gosbell. Download them, share them with your church leadership, your Bible study group - and take next steps together.

Thank you

To all who came to our fundraising afternoon tea on March 11! We're so thankful for your interest and generosity. Thank you Trish Doyle, MP for the Blue Mountains, for your kind words and support.

3 tips on welcoming people with autism

Things you can do to welcome people with autism into your homes, lives and churches

By Lisa Patston

The best thing you can do to welcome people who live with autism is to do what you would with anyone else - be friendly and talk to them.



A friendly welcome

At church, greet them with a smile, ask their name and what they do through the week. Then introduce them to someone who shares something in common so they know others and can sit with them. If there is a significant communication challenge, the person with them will support the person with autism to reply. **What's important is to relate to them as a valued person** – not only to their carer or parent.



Shared meals, interests and activities

You can welcome people with autism into your home by **inviting them for a meal or afternoon tea**. Ask them what they like to eat or drink, their favourite activity or game. Again, if there are issues with foods or environments, they or their support person will let you know. You might need to think about the time, how many are going and some structured activities if conversation is challenging. Offer for them to bring someone with them if they'd like. **Knowing in advance what to expect can help all of us.**

People living with autism have **interests, gifts, personalities and skills** like we all do. As people created by God, they need and benefit from **being in relationship** as well as **having something to offer others**. Invite people with autism to become part of your life. The world is a more interesting and complete place because of difference.



A safe space to offer skills

A new season with our thanks

After years of service on both the Our Place committee and Hope Board, Rod Thompson will be focusing on the work of Hope in his next season of ministry. Rod has worked as a high school teacher, Presbyterian minister, tertiary college lecturer and principal. Along the way, he has been impassioned to see all students learn well and achieve their goals, particularly those with learning challenges. This led Rod into exploring a theology of disability and establishing a Theology and Disability Working Group at Laidlaw College in New Zealand. Today, he serves a support worker with people who have a disability so that he can, among other things, learn from and be blessed by them.

Apr 2 | World Autism Understanding Day

Pray for your church to be a place of belonging for people with autism.

May 27 | 1-4:30pm | Belonging workshop @ All Saints Anglican, North Epping

Pray for Louise as she facilitates Belonging.



Belonging.

Making
your church
a disability
inclusive
community

MAY 27 | 1:00-4:30pm | ALL SAINTS ANGLICAN NORTH EPPING

Belonging aims to give your church a biblical foundation for becoming a disability inclusive community. You'll grow in your understanding of disability, the barriers that prevent people with disability being able to participate, and what you can do together to become a disability inclusive community.

\$20

includes
3.5 hours of
disability training
plus workbook

For more
info and
to register



Dr Louise Gosbell

Dr Louise Gosbell has over 15 years experience in helping churches and Christian organisations become places of inclusion and belonging for people with disability. She's also spent many years researching and writing in the areas of disability ministry and disability theology, including a PhD on disability in the gospels and a set of disability inclusive guidelines for churches.

Louise has a lived experience of disability and is passionate about seeing people with disability use their God-given gifts as active and contributing members of the Body of Christ.