

Students star in video series

Students and staff from Highgate and Woodville primary schools feature in two new video education resources that tackle bullying and belonging in primary schools.

Over a two-month period, students collaborated in brainstorming about the issues, developing characters and workshopping the scripts. Every word of dialogue was written by students and they approved the videos before their publication.

The videos are the second part of a series called *Stories of Us*. They were launched at Marryatville High School on 23 February. The first set of videos was released last year for secondary students and addressed bullying, stress and relationships.

The producer of the video resources, Christopher Faull, from Readymade Productions, said the videos spoke to a young audience in their own language and in a style and format they respected.

"The impact on the children was unbelievable and the feedback from teachers, school counsellors and other education professionals has been overwhelmingly positive," Christopher said.

"*Stories of Us* engages its audience. Because of the production method, students completely identify with the characters and their stories. Some students were convinced that what they were watching was real."

Each episode presents the story of two students as they deal with issues of concern to primary school-aged children. Students are then encouraged to explore the issues in depth with their teachers and each resource includes a 40-page Teachers Guide.

Christopher produced the videos with support from DECS Student Behaviour Management policy adviser Greg Cox, and financial assistance from the South Australian Film Corporation.

The *Bullying* episode was made with year 5 and 6 students from Woodville Primary School, with Jason Clay and Stephanie Woortman playing the main 'victims', while Highgate Primary School students Kyle Taplin and Amy O'Neil were the main characters in *Belonging*, made with Highgate PS year 5 students.

Teachers wanting to find out more about the resources can go to www.storiesofus.com.au.



ABOVE: Highgate Primary School student Amy O'Neil as 'Lily' playing with her friends 'Melissa' (Constantina Bakas - right), 'Rachel' (Chani-Sioux Bramford - left), 'Lindsay' (Sophia Itsines - rear right), and 'Chelsea' (Courtney Allard - behind Lily) in the video *Belonging*.



TOP RIGHT: Woodville Primary School student Stephanie Woortman as 'Kelly' is intimidated by 'Leah' (Julia Kencally - right edge of screen) in front of friends 'Vanessa' (Natalie Viola - right), 'Paula' (Eftiaiai Evdokiou - left of Kelly) and 'Chloe' (Diana Kencally - left) in the video *Bullying*.

RIGHT: Highgate Primary School student 'Josh' (played by Kyle Taplin) talks to his mother (played by actor Wendy Bos) on his first day at a new school in the video *Belonging*.

Taking learning into the community

Auburn Primary School is taking learning into the community through home visits that are enabling students to see into the lives of others.

Part of the school's Early Years Literacy program, students from reception to year 2 last year undertook visits to the homes of eight of their peers.

Teacher Beth Croughan said the benefits were many and varied for students, teachers, parents and the wider community and this year the program would be run for the reception to year 3 class of about 18 students.

"There were lots of wonderful outcomes," she said.

"It's a more personal way of finding out about their lives. The students feel that I'm part of their life and the other children are part of

their whole lives, not just their school life.

"The parents were very enthusiastic about it as well."

Students were able to see their peers' bedrooms, look through family photo albums, play in their backyards and hear special stories from their parents.

"I think what the students get out of it is lots of fun, and they become a bit more empathetic to the other children, a bit more caring," Beth said.

She said the program was part of the school's "greater commitment to the community and about being a bigger part of the community."

"It's part of our early years plan and the next step I think is taking it to the older people in the community," Beth said.

"We could, say, go and sing to the CWA (Country

Women's Association) or have them come into the school and teach crocheting or other skills."

Auburn PS is already making its fitness learning visible in the community.

"We go for a power walk once a week around Auburn," Beth said.

"People can see our part in the community and they can see our Sunsmart and fitness programs in action. Also the children often stop and chat to people who are out in their front gardens.

"I think it's just making the children aware there's a community out there and we want to bring the community into the school.

"It's about the students appreciating their community, and appreciating their parents and what they do for them, as well as the importance of our school in the community."



LEFT: Emily Dodd, Lily Cavalier, Tim Roberts, mum Donna Roberts, Chelsea Bentley, Kiarna Taylor, Hayley Ireland, Mitchell Lambert and teacher Beth Croughan during a visit to the Roberts family's home.



RIGHT: Tim Roberts, Emily Dodd, Lily Cavalier, Hayley Ireland and Heiko Jeandupeux.