



MEDIA STORY

2nd May 2012

Hosting Lilly

"Becoming an Interchange volunteer host has had a positive effect not only on my own family's attitude to life but that of my extended family and their friends as well. Even though we have only been hosting Lilly since the beginning of the year, she is already an important part of our family."

Karen Munzel together with children Freya, Chiara and Aiden began hosting Lilly in February this year. Each month their 'bundle of fun and affection' comes to spend the weekend with them as a part of the Interchange Outer East volunteer host program.

The Munzels were first introduced to Interchange when Freya started volunteering on recreation programs about five years ago. Her stories about the fun she had on camps and activities had Chiara and Aiden signing up to volunteer as soon as they turned 14, the minimum age for being a rec volunteer. After meeting Lilly on a camp they decided they would love to spend more time with her by becoming her host family.

When Lilly comes for her weekend stay she joins in all the family activities – cheering on Aiden at basketball, getting out and about, hanging out at home and visiting friends.

"Lilly is a very popular young lady and our family and friends love to spend time with her – she is teaching us all such a lot about different ways to communicate, having fun, and about acceptance" said Freya

"We have learnt that regardless of difficulties people have an amazing ability to enjoy life. We want to learn to apply this positive attitude to our lives – to appreciate what we have and overcome obstacles."

There are many different hosting options. The Munzels host Lilly for a full weekend. Other matches might involve a regular single day stay or even just a regular outing, with Hosts taking on the role of 'other family', friend, mentor or 'buddy' to their matched child.

Interchange Outer East would love to hear from anyone who would like to find out more about the volunteer host program. Call 03 9758 5522, email ioe@ioe.org.au or visit www.ioe.org.au.

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