



**MEDIA RELEASE**

**IMMEDIATE**

**9<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2013**

**SOPHIE COMES TO STAY**

Volunteers throughout Australia will be given the recognition and thanks they deserve during National Volunteer Week, Monday 13<sup>th</sup> – Sunday 19<sup>th</sup> May.

Volunteers are an important part of disability support service, Interchange Outer East.

Whether it is supporting children and young adults on recreational camps and activities or providing care and support through the volunteer host program they play a vital role in the organisation.

The host program matches a child or young person with a disability to a volunteer 'host' who shares their home with the young person, ideally one weekend a month. The program is very flexible in the amount of time spent together per month and also the nature of the relationship can vary hugely from being another family unit to a buddy, mentor or friend.

One such volunteer host is Knox resident, Stephanie Mortimer. Stephanie is retired now and for the past couple of years has been sharing her time and her home with Sophie Bakens, a lively 12 year old. Stephanie and Sophie have formed a lovely relationship and have become great friends. Stephanie describes Sophie as being "an absolute delight to have around". No doubt she has brought a whole new dimension to Stephanie's life!

While Stephanie and Sophie are spending time together, Sophie's Mum, Maxine, gets a bit of precious time for herself plus time with her other children

Hosts can be living alone, like Stephanie, or be couples, families with a whole household full of kids, young people and active oldies, just about anyone can host.

For more information about the Interchange Outer East Volunteer Host Program please contact Karen Munzel on 9758 5522 or email [karen.munzel@ioe.org.au](mailto:karen.munzel@ioe.org.au) or visit [www.ioe.org.au](http://www.ioe.org.au)

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For more information about the above release or to arrange interviews or photo shoots, please contact:

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