

siblings reconnect

Reconnecting children separated by Foster Care



“These children suffer profound loneliness, isolation and uncertainty; an environment that unfortunately has significant impacts beyond their childhood and into adulthood.”

The YMCA's Siblings Reconnect program brings together separated siblings in out of home care at Camp Yarramundi during the school holidays. Here, through a structured Outdoor Recreation Program they share new experiences, support each other through challenges, reconnect and gain hope for a brighter future.

Consider for a moment the incredible bond that exists amongst siblings; perhaps that of your own children, perhaps that of a close friend or family member or even your own growing up. Consider how important that bond would be for children who grow up in dysfunctional, abusive or neglectful families.

Research suggests that these children are among the most disadvantaged in Australia. They experience levels of homelessness, unemployment, school dropout, drug and alcohol abuse, justice system involvement, and early parenthood that is vastly disproportionate to the general youth population.



Shayla and Tayden's Story

Removed from a neglectful home as toddlers each was later abused in out of home care. Having been moved through several placements and now separated in Foster Care, without each others support they live with daily challenges of abandonment and post traumatic stress. At camp they get the chance to reconnect and feel like a family. Shayla plays mum, nurturing, dressing and tucking in her younger sibling.

In NSW, over 11,000 children are removed from such families and placed in out of home care. Heartbreakingly, too often, siblings in such situations are separated in out of home care. The bonds forged out of supporting one another through difficult times are broken, their support for each other gone, their sense of stability and identity taken away.

Research also suggests however that constructive contact with parents, siblings, extended family members, school friends and professionals who are known to, and trusted by the child, collectively contributes to positive identity formation, a child's perception of security and stability and the development of resilience.

Children in out-of-home care who have the chance to reconnect with siblings become emotionally empowered to rise above their circumstances and have a better chance at forging healthy relationships, achieving social maturation, and gaining education, having meaningful careers and adult family lives.

With your support we hope to raise \$28,000 in 2010 to provide over 100 children the opportunity to spend 5 days reconnecting with their siblings at the YMCA's Camp Yarramundi.



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We build strong **PEOPLE**
strong **FAMILIES**
strong **COMMUNITIES**