

Marcus' Story (full transcript)

April 29, 2009 Our son Marcus (2 years old) was diagnosed with Spinal Cancer. A spinal cord injury in which he would not walk again. A spinal cord injury which saw our son introduced to his first wheelchair. On this day, our family learnt the true meaning of inclusion and diversity.

January 2012, Marcus started primary school. After a year of school shopping with our community Occupational Therapist we had chosen a school. A small private school. My husband and I were both private schooled, so we thought this was best for our son.

The start of school was a very emotional time for my husband and I, and one filled with anxiety. Will he be accepted? Will he make friends? Will he be treated just like everyone else? Will the school be able to think outside the square/the norm so Marcus is included in all aspects of schooling?

As the years progressed, emotionally and academically Marcus was regressing.

January 2017, it was time for a new beginning, new schooling adventures for our family. This was the year we started our schooling at FGSS. This was the year we look back now and say we made the best decision for our son. A decision which has allowed him the opportunity to achieve, and grow his confidence as an individual within the school community. A decision where the word inclusive is not just singled out to Marcus but every individual in the school.



Marcus started at FGSS a reserved young man. He was not confident in his academic ability and was very shy with his teacher and amongst his peers. He knew he was different and he did not want any undue attention brought to himself. FGSS took on board these concerns of Marcus' and treated him with dignity and respect.

Marcus was now in partnership with FGSS in shaping his educational journey. If he wanted to sit at a regular desk, no worries. If he wanted to transfer to a chair, go for it. If he wanted to get on the floor with his mates, just do it. If he was

assigned a weekly classroom job, just get on with it. It does not matter how it was done, as long as it was done. He was treated as an equal, and that is exactly how Marcus wanted to be treated.



Specialty classes that were stair access classrooms simply came to his classroom or a ground level room to be conducted. Marcus had access to Quick Smart and Maths Jam to consolidate his maths skills and build his confidence. Tennis was incorporated into the Interschool Sporting schedule to allow active participation. Transportation to sporting events, excursion and school camp, no problem, a wheelchair accessible bus was ordered. And school camp (WOW!), Camp Good Enough, embraced Marcus as one of the boys. Marcus was able to participate in all activities, high ropes, crate stacking, building Billy Go-Carts and even the giant swing.

FGSS strong culture of diversity and inclusion is one I greatly commend. Effective communication with us as parents, Marcus' Community Support, and FGSS AVT has and continues to ensure Marcus' success in his schooling journey.

Thank you FGSS, we wish we made the transition to your school sooner.

Kerry Lentini

