



YOUNG MOTHER NAMED AS FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARER WINNER IN VICTORIAN STATE FINALS

Sydenham resident Shayna Henry-Camilleri has been selected as the Victorian winner in the Foster and Kinship Carer category in the state finals of the National Carer Awards.

Young Mum Shayna has been a Kinship carer for her three siblings since the beginning of 2014.

At the young age of just 20, Shayna took on the responsibility of providing care for them after the passing of both of their maternal grandparents who had previously been their long term carers. At the time, the three siblings, were aged 8, 11 and 16 and needed ongoing care and support.

Along with her partner, John also in his early twenties, Shayna said they opened up their home without hesitating, as family is the most important thing in the world.

Although they had their own young family, including a toddler and now also a 3 month old, Shayna said they knew they needed to step up and keep the rest of the family together. She said they've had a few practical adjustments initially, but they are making good progress

"We had to get a bigger house and a bigger car, and we've reorganised our routines quite a lot" she said.

As well as providing support and accommodation, like her siblings, Shayna has had to deal with grief and the loss of her maternal grandparents. At the same time, she has been focused on keeping them emotionally supported and also continuing to coordinate their day to day care.

Shayna has provided unconditional love and support to her siblings, taking on full parenting responsibility, regularly attending school meetings and taking them to their medical appointments.

She encourages them constantly and facilitates their sporting activities and interests, providing social and behavioural support as needed. She coordinates contact with their extended family to ensure they develop a positive sense of self and maintain the connection with their Maori culture, as well as keeping them linked in with their local community.

The person who nominated Shayna said she is a very independent young carer who seeks minimal assistance and support, showing great strength and dedication. She has been able

to provide a stable and safe home environment and support her siblings to continue to develop into their adolescent years.

Shayna said she is grateful just to be nominated for the awards and it's great to be recognised.

"There's a lot to do, but we just keep on going to give all the children the happiness they deserve now and in their futures," she said.