



BIOGRAPHY - A CARER'S STORY

ALLAN SKIPPEN OF TAMWORTH FOSTER AND KINSHIP CARER WINNER

Allan Skippen from Tamworth has been selected as the national winner in the awards in the Foster and Kinship Carer category.

Allan is a foster carer who supports five teenage children who live with him in long term placements.

After working in the mines for 27 years before he trained as a Pastor in 2000, this vocation led him to foster caring and the community support roles which he now embraces.

Having started as a foster caring doing respite placements some 15 years ago, he has dedicated many hours and years of his life to supporting children in care, and does so with humility and compassion.

Allan has been a single carer since 2011 and is committed to supporting the children in a cohesive home, providing support and nurturing to bring out the best in them as they become young adults.

He says he has plenty of energy and strives to help them with whatever they need. They all have a very close relationship with him and he supports them all to attend the local Christian school.

Allan said like all parenting and mentoring roles, providing emotional support can be the biggest challenge. The group ranges in age from 13 – 16 and all have their own strengths and interests and require their own individual supports.

He says the trick is to get himself plenty of sleep to manage the diaries of six people. "Once I lay down in bed I know I have done my job and I let go of my worries" he said.

"Balancing and supporting five young personalities is critical at this stage of their lives as we are preparing them so they can launch into adulthood."

During the week, he also works as a Chaplain at the local primary school. Here he lends a hand and influences and supports the lives of over 500 children, providing a listening ear and

a shoulder to lean on in an informal setting by being around and available to chat when needed.

Allan says the support of the wider parent and school networks are vital to managing his own home life. He also has strong case worker support with visits on a regular basis to help ensure the individual identities and interests of each young person are maintained.

With three other adult of children of his own, Allan genuinely understands family bonds and ensures regular contact between the young people and their families. He has amicable relationships with the birth families and encourages the children to maintain these relationships.

The person who nominated him said although he does not do what he does for recognition or praise, Allen is certainly deserving of being acknowledged and thanked for the love, care, stability and compassion that he provides to the children every day and he is such a positive role model in the community.

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