

Helping others might be the best thing for kids' wellbeing

As parents, many of us approach the school holidays with a familiar mix of excitement and mild panic. How do we keep kids active, engaged and off their screens for two whole weeks?

In recent years, it has become increasingly clear that what many children are actually craving isn't just entertainment. It's connection, purpose and a chance to feel that what they do matters.

Children today are growing up incredibly connected digitally, yet often more isolated socially. Between social media, gaming and endless scrolling, it's easy for young people to spend hours online without experiencing the satisfaction that comes from doing something tangible and meaningful.

One of the most powerful antidotes to this is surprisingly simple: helping others.

Research consistently shows that acts of kindness and volunteering have real mental health benefits for young people. In fact, research from the Australian Institute of Family Studies found that children under the age of 13 who participate in volunteering activities report around 28% better mental health outcomes than those who do not.

When children contribute to something bigger than themselves, it boosts their confidence, builds empathy and strengthens resilience.

School holidays can provide the perfect opportunity for kids to experience this.

At Kids Giving Back, these experiences come to life through full-day School Holiday Programs for children aged 8–14 years, which run at the Paddington Hub as well as in Manly and Parramatta.

Kids Giving Back CEO and Co-Founder Carole Schlessinger says the transformation in children can often be seen within minutes. "Kids often arrive a little unsure of what to expect, but within minutes they are working together, chatting, laughing and getting stuck into the day's activities.

One moment they might be cooking nutritious meals while learning new recipes and practical kitchen skills. The next they could be preparing breakfast boxes, assembling care packs or creating pamper packs for people doing it tough in the community.

By the end of the day something shifts. Kids who may have arrived quietly often leave beaming with pride in what they've accomplished.

Another beautiful part of the experience is that children meet other like-minded kids who also want to do good. Friendships form naturally when kids are working together toward something meaningful, and there is always plenty of music, laughter and fun along the way."



For younger children aged 5–7, the Little Helpers Program allows kids to attend with a parent or guardian for a two-hour holiday session, introducing the idea of kindness and giving back in a fun and age-appropriate way.

And for teens aged 14–18, the journey can continue through the Youth Changemaker program, where young people can choose from a variety of volunteer opportunities and begin shaping their own pathway of community involvement.

"Sometimes the greatest gift we can give children isn't another activity. It's the

opportunity to discover that they have the power to help others and make a difference," says Schlessinger.

And when they realise that, something pretty special happens.

To learn more about Kids Giving Back school holiday programs, visit <https://kidsgivingback.org/school-holiday-programs/>

Carole Schlessinger, Co-founder, Kids Giving Back

KIDS GIVING BACK
www.kidsgivingback.org

VACATION CARE PROGRAM

Week 1 - Adventure & Action

MON 06 Public Holiday

TUES 07 Cables Aqua Park (10+ Only)

WED 08 Ninja Kids Hornsby

THU 09 Escape Room and Tumbalong Park

FRI 10 Luna Park

Week 2 - Explore, Climb & Create

MON 13 Sydney Easter Show

TUES 14 Climb Fit - St Leonards

WED 15 Symbio Park

THU 16 Laser Skirmish

FRI 17 Puppy Painting

Week 3 - High Energy Adventures

MON 20 Powerplay

TUES 21 Treetops - The Hills

Early Bird: \$95/day
Standard \$115 / day

Children Aged 7 to 12

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