Q & A with Kim Butcher

Completing VCE is a challenge for every student – let alone those who have a young child of their own ... or three.

Kim Butcher is 27 years old. She left school halfway through Year 12, nine years ago. Kim re-engaged with schooling by joining the Young Parents Access Program (YPAP) at Corio Bay Senior College in 2009 where she will complete her VCE over three years. She has three children: Lynkon, 6, Rydah, 3, and Gypsi, 16 months. Last year, Kim studied Psychology, Health and Human Development, English and Media.

What drew you to the Young Parents Access Program at Corio Bay?

I belonged to a young mothers group as part of the CREATE (Geelong) program. Lorraine from YPAP came to speak to the group and it sounded like a good idea, because I am interested in becoming a midwife, and knew I needed to continue my education. I left school halfway through Year 12 because I didn’t see it as being important. I slept in a lot and didn’t take it seriously. I was shy and didn’t ask the questions I should have. I had always struggled and couldn’t comprehend what school was all about.

What have you learnt as a result?

The most important thing I have learned from YPAP is to believe in myself. I know now that if I put the effort in I will succeed. I have also learned ICT skills. Because I had been out of school for nine years, my ICT skills were out-of-date.

Tell us about your recent achievements

At the awards night this week I was presented with two awards – the Insight English Award and the Norman Benders Citizen’s Award. I knew I was going to get one award but the other one was a surprise. It felt really good – I’m not a person who likes the limelight. My dad took me to the awards night and he was really proud of me. I know my parents have been disappointed in me in the past but I feel as though I’m making up for it now.
How has YPAP helped your children?

One of the best things is that the child care centre is close by so I can visit my kids during the day. I was still feeding my daughter when I started this year. Gypsi started at child care fulltime in Term 4 and Rydah started going to child care fulltime at the start of second semester.

What were the challenges?

The biggest challenge was organising three children so I could get to school on time every morning! Having to balance life, kids and homework isn’t easy, and not having a supportive partner at home doesn’t help … but the workers at YPAP have given me such great support: they’ve been wonderful.

What opportunities have opened up for you?

Next year I will study General Maths Units 1 and 2, Health and Human Development Units 3 and 4 and English Units 3 and 4. I will also do VET in child care services which will involve work experience at a day-care centre. Before, school was for social contact with my friends: now I know learning is the pathway to my future. I want to go to university to study nursing.

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This interview was conducted by the Research Branch, Department of Education and Early Childhood Development.


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