2013 St Andrew’s College Children’s Camp Report
James Daniel, SACCC Coordinator

St Andrew’s College hosted its second Children’s Camp (SACCC) on 4-8 December 2013. The camp involved children with special needs staying at College, cared for full-time by a university student ‘companion’. The camp aimed to give each child a fun, independent and meaningful experience, with some well-deserved respite for their parents. For the student carers, the camp provided opportunities for personal growth and a way to give back to the community.

Our camp calendar was packed full of fun and entertaining activities; swimming, lawn games, singing (with our star Drew’s performers Sophie Payten and Sam Shumack), a trip to the Sydney Aquarium, arts and crafts, a movie, slip-n-slide in the Glen, conga drumming (hugely popular with the children!), a treasure hunt to Victoria Park Pool, face-mask painting, a disco, a carnival with a petting zoo, a jumping castle and a demonstration by the fire brigade, which ended with excited children climbing into the truck. The camp culminated with a Christmas lunch where children, parents and carers all shared a wonderful meal together. A surprise visit from Santa and gifts for all the children was a crowning moment in the day.

In an exciting development, this year the Sony Foundation provided event sponsorship. The Foundation sponsors a number of children’s camps, however St Andrew’s is the first residential college to join the program, which hosted 530 children with disabilities in 2013. Following the inaugural camp, one of our major goals was to secure corporate sponsorship, so we were thrilled to achieve this goal by the second year in.

The 2013 camp expanded upon the pilot event. We hosted 16 children (up from 12), provided 18 carers (up from 14) and were assisted by 9 volunteers (up from 5). Our carer and volunteer intake also grew to include the Sydney University community. The three students who joined us from the university were a welcome addition to the camp’s energy and diversity.

The response from the families was overwhelmingly positive. All agreed that the camp had been a fantastic experience and they would happily return. Two parents shared what they most appreciated about SACCC:

“Respite for the family, but more importantly, (our son) has been expressing a desire to want to socialise with other children of a similar age, and this will give him that opportunity without being made to feel different.”

“(My son) is nearly 12 and has never stayed away overnight before. Being a single mother with no support, it really was a once in a lifetime opportunity.”
Months of hard work and dedicated planning was put in by the 2013 SACCC Committee, comprised of Jamie Craig, Xan Hewson, Lachie Weir, Sarah Loewy, Michael Cahill, Jess Lochtenberg, Matthew Larkin and myself.

The 2013 Sony Foundation St Andrews College Children’s Camp was a great success and we look forward to doing it again!

The Committee extends our thanks and gratitude to the children, parents, donors, doctors, nurses, carers, the College and everyone who volunteered their time and brought the camp into reality.

Our carers and helpers who were entrusted with the children:

Will Beaumont, Millie Der Sarkissian, Rachel Dewhurst, Camilla Ferguson, Lucy Fogarty, Amelia Gilbert, Amy Gojnich, Jemma Griffin, Max Hardwick-Morris, Carolyn Harris, Richard Heath, Peter Hingston, Rosie Jeavons-Fellow, Jo Lawson, Stuart Miller, William Nash, Anna Parker, Georgie Quigley, Kiah Roebuck, Caitlin Rosser, Alex Shaw, Matilda Stump, Philippa Sutherland, Angus Trenerry, Michaela Vaughan.

Our students, past residents and parents who volunteered with night settling duties:

Paddy Coolican, Manuela Crouch, Lewis Der Sarkissian, Mary Fogarty, Alexander Gonda, Harriette Greenhalgh, Jenny Harris, Nick Harrington, Kirsty Holyman, Nea Lohman, Julie Long, Kate Molloy, Freya Potts, Brendan Pryke, Holly Robson.

Our doctors and nurses who were on site or on call for the entirety of the camp and were an invaluable addition:

Rachel Flocco, Karen Larkin, Christine O’Byrne, Carolyn Rosser.