Summer Hills Trinity Grammar students learn empathy

- Education

29 Nov 12 @ 12:02pm by Rashell Habib

Peer Support program leaders give younger students advice at Trinity Grammar School. Myles Colley (year 11), Edward Khoury (year 7), Ben LoRusso (year 7) and David Nada (year 11). CRAIG WILSON

A PEER Support program at Summer Hill’s Trinity Grammar is arming students with skills they will take into adulthood.

The program sees year 11 students act as mentors to younger students. A teacher supervises each group which includes two peer leaders and between 10 and 14 year 7 students.

Past program co-ordinator and teacher Janet Wonders said the program builds a connection with students based on inclusive activities and common ground.

"Having an older student explain the school routine, empathise with them, play with them and help them through their early days at school greatly assists in making the days happier and very positive," she said.
The program has been running for more than 20 years and was implemented to make the often daunting transition from primary school to high school a lot smoother.

Part of the mentor role is to pass on any issues raised by the younger students to their tutor or teacher, such as bullying.

"Because the year 11s are closer in age to the year 7s than we are, they're very attuned to the mood and feelings of the boys on a range of issues," Ms Wonders said.

She said the the power of empathy is something the boys learn and will take with them into adult life.

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eleanor elliott writes:
Posted on 29 Nov 12 at 05:58pm

Wonderful idea. My son James when in kindergarten at Warrawee Public School had a peer support mentor from year 6. It made his early school experience happy and induced confidence.

Sharon Austin writes:
Posted on 29 Nov 12 at 05:30pm

As General Manager of Peer Support Australia, it gives me great pleasure to see how these young people are so supportive and encouraging to their younger peers. It is also lovely to see media reports of such a positive nature.