

Mental Health Month October 2023

Australian
Kookaburra Kids
Foundation

Media Release

Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation Collaborates with Australia Zoo to Promote Mental Health Awareness during Mental Health Month

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The Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation announces a joint initiative with Australia Zoo aimed at providing programs to support more young Australians impacted by family mental illness.

During Mental Health Month, all Australians are urged to prioritise their mental health and wellbeing, foster a culture of understanding, and support those grappling with mental health challenges. The initiative encourages proactive steps towards mental wellness and advocates for seeking help when needed, regardless of prior mental health experiences.

Australia Zoo's generous support has been instrumental in enabling the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation to enhance the quality and reach of its programs, providing invaluable opportunities to children affected by family mental illness. The collaboration facilitates memorable experiences for these children at Australia Zoo, coupled with impactful mental health education provided by Kookaburra Kids.

CEO of Kookaburra Kids, Renée Coffey, emphasised the significance of these experiences, stating, "Providing these young people with a variety of memorable experiences at Australia Zoo, alongside our impactful mental health education, is a powerful combination. One we are very thankful to be able to offer."

"It is estimated that 23% of children living in an Australian household have a parent with a mental illness. This equates to just over one million impacted Australian children," she added.

She also stressed the urgency of Kookaburra Kids' mission, citing direct interactions with families awaiting opportunities for their children to engage with Kookaburra Kids. "What I am seeing and hearing time and again is that our programs are empowering young people to thrive beyond the impacts of family mental illness," Coffey added.

Australia Zoo have welcomed 72 young people across three activity days as part of the Kookaburra Kids program, while the groups enjoyed a unique experience meeting beautiful wildlife, watching the conservation shows, and admiring the crocodiles at the Containers for Change Crocoseum during the Australia Zoo Wildlife Warriors show.

Wildlife conservationist Terri Irwin said, "The Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation's efforts in providing mental health services to young people are incredibly important. Here at Australia Zoo, we recognise the increased need to promote the importance of mental health and wellbeing. We work with inspiring groups and charities who are making a difference in the world, and are delighted to have welcomed Kookaburra Kids for three activity days to meet and admire our stunning wildlife family."

The Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation remains dedicated to enriching the lives of young Australians affected by family mental illness, instilling resilience, and equipping them with the tools to build a promising future.

Our free camps and activity days not only provide a fun connection for young people impacted by family mental illness but are also clinically designed to deliver mental health education and teach young people coping strategies to use in everyday life. Our programs also enable them to learn what supports are available to them and their families.

"Despite evidence that mental health concerns impact the family unit, most treatment approaches continue to focus only on the individual and not their families," Ms. Coffey added.

"We know with additional funding, we can offer more quality programs to children impacted by family mental illness. I have spoken directly with families who are desperately waiting for opportunities for their children to engage with Kookaburra Kids. These calls can be upsetting and really do highlight the need for our work in the community."

Australia Zoo is home to over 1,200 animals and connects people with wildlife in the hope that they would one day want to save wildlife, ultimately creating a world where humans and wildlife can coexist in harmony.

Ms. Coffey explained, "We are incredibly thankful to Australia Zoo for their generous support of Kookaburra Kids and our work with children impacted by family mental illness."

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The Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation delivers services to young people (8-18) impacted by family mental illness with the aim of empowering them to build resilience lifelong knowledge and abilities to reach their potential. This is carried out through face-to face programs and online Connect sessions which are run across Australia.

To donate to the Australian Kookaburra Kids Foundation please go to our website <https://kookaburrakids.org.au/get-involved/donate/>

For images and a glimpse of the Australia Zoo activity day, including an interview with Renée Coffey, CEO of Kookaburra Kids, please click [here](#).

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