

## **Welcome all families program receives \$5000 donation**

An all-inclusive community program that welcomes families from all walks of life has received a significant donation from the State Government.

Paula Kirk-Clarke - a selfless volunteer who operates the 'Welcome all families' program at the Mitchell Park sports and Community Centre - was given \$5000 by Assistant Minister for Autism, Emily Bourke on Monday.

The friendly social group is welcomes children and parents of home schooling, unschooling and part time schooling, but is open to anyone.

Paula was brought to tears by the surprise donation, which she said would make a big difference to the program.

"This program is all about bringing our community together to support and learn from those who may have children with autism in our area," she said.

"This donation will just help us raise even more awareness, which is our ultimate vision."

She said the program two-hour program offered the opportunity for children and parents to connect with eachother each week.

"We try to have games, puzzles, lego and things like that happening and then every second week we will have something a bit more structured," Paula said.

"They often don't even realise the important connections they are making while undertaking these activites."

"The feedback has been amazing."

Ms Bourke said Paula was one of the leaders in raising awareness for autism.

"She shares people's stories, not for her benefit, but for the benefit of those around her," she said.

"She makes people feel like they are part of something."

Marion Mayor Kris Hanna praised the work Paula does in the City of Marion.

"We are very lucky to have people like Paula in our community," he said.

The money will be used to assist Paula to deliver this program and others in the City of Marion moving forward.



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