

Volunteers to build playground - in one day - at school for children with intellectual disability

Katandra School, a Melbourne school for children with an intellectual disability, will receive a fantastic transformation on Tuesday 17 February with the construction, in one day, of a state-of-the-art playground and BBQ area.

Thanks to the financial contribution of Computer Associates (CA) and the hard work of 70 community members and CA employee volunteers, students at the Katandra School in Ormond, will soon be enjoying a new playground that would have only been a dream six months ago.

This 'playground build' is the first of its kind in Australia, but follows 43 similar playground builds in the US over the past few years. In an ongoing initiative, CA is providing funding and employee volunteers to build playgrounds around the world for schools and communities in need of safe, accessible and well-designed places for children to play.

Katandra School, whose 40 special-needs primary school students are aged four to 13 years, was approached by CA in September 2003 to see if they would be interested in taking part in the program. The enthusiasm of parents, staff and students since then has been overwhelming.

"We are committed to providing our children with the richest possible education, and the ability to provide them with a bright, fun and safe playground area is a hugely important part of that. A good playground area encourages socialisation and verbal skills in addition to fostering an active and healthy lifestyle," enthused Mrs Joan Linardos, Principal, Katandra School.

She continued, "This new playground will also lift the spirits in the playground, and will improve the entire school environment. We are sincerely grateful to CA and National Australia Bank for their generous contribution, and to all the community members and parents whose time and effort will see our dreams fulfilled in one day."

The children themselves are excited about the program, and have been greatly involved in the planning stages. The locomotive theme of the playground was selected by the children, reflecting their fascination with the trains that pass by on tracks near the school.

"We feel privileged to be able to give something back to the community and very happy to have this opportunity to help the children of Katandra School," said Julianne May, CA's local Community Relations Manager who will be at the build next Tuesday. "The desire to help kids is something everyone feels and we're proud to come together with the National Australia Bank and the community to build a safe and fun place for children to play."

About Katandra School

The Katandra School was selected to take part in this program, not only for its enthusiasm towards the project, but also because of its outstanding commitment to providing a unique learning environment for its students that promotes success, friendship and a sense of belonging.

The Katandra School provides a specialised curriculum and a supportive environment to encourage students to gain independence and meet their maximum potential.

Katandra School is a small, caring, special school with an exemplary range of programs for students with a mild intellectual disability. The school is owned by the Department of Education and Training and has been an integral part of the Ormond community in the southern suburbs of Melbourne for 45 years.

About CA

Computer Associates International, Inc., one of the world's largest software companies, delivers software and services that enable organizations to manage their IT environments. Focus areas include network and systems management, storage and security management, portal and business intelligence, and application life cycle management. Founded in 1976, CA is headquartered in Islandia, NY, and operates in more than 100 countries. For more information on CA, please visit ca.com. For more information about CA's Community Relations programs, please visit ca.com/community. The playground building coincides with the CA Expo 2004 technology and educational shows held in Sydney and Melbourne to showcase the business solutions available at CA, one of the world's largest software companies.