

YouthCARE school chaplain helps kids find a friend

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The school playground can be a lonely place for some children but Kelmscott Primary School is doing its best to change that, with the introduction of 'buddy benches'.

YouthCARE school chaplain Liesl Theaart has only been at the primary school for a term but she's already having a huge influence on the school community.

Last week she was part of the team who presented two 'buddy benches' at the school assembly. The benches will be placed in the school ground near the library and used by children who are feeling lonely.

"The idea behind it came from one of the teachers, so it really was a team effort. We noticed that some students were often sitting alone during lunch, but they didn't know what to do about it." Liesl said.

"We decided the buddy benches would give everyone a way to be a friend or find a friend. If children feel lonely, they can sit on the bench and we encourage other children to reach out to them."

"It also helps the staff to identify children who might be alone."

Liesl presented the idea to the school principal Neil Spence before she approached hardware store Masters Home Improvement in Forrestdale, who generously donated two benches.

"It became a school community project with the art teacher decorating them"

School principal Neil Spence said "We are very pleased to have received the Buddy Benches and provide an excellent opportunity for all students to feel safe and develop strong buddy friendships"

YouthCARE school chaplains are part of the school services team. They provide pastoral care to students, staff and members of the school community.

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