



....**MYVOICE**



Kim Dawe, 24, is a member of Reach Crew and a senior facilitator for Reach – a national not-for-profit organisation supporting young people.

I got involved with Reach in year 9 after one of the ambassadors, Jules Lund from *Getaway*, came to my school to host a workshop. He was so inspiring and I realised there was more to me than what I shared with my friends. By year 12, I was a facilitator and running workshops for Reach in the eastern suburbs.

At Reach we want to make sure every young person has the support and self-belief they need to fulfil their potential. I'm involved with Fused Workshops, which is a community-based program aimed at bringing young people together so they can interact in a safe and creative environment. It provides a space for kids to hang out after school, connect with others and discover who they are. The program runs for five weeks every term for people aged 13 to 18. Normally, about 25 to 30 young people attend each session.

Reach's most recent campaign was the Open Book Project – an initiative where people aged over 18 were invited to share the thoughts and feelings they had growing up. Participants can scan or transcribe their diaries and upload them to an online forum. The project aims to bridge the gap between adults and teenagers by allowing an honest and open conversation to start. The benefit of the Open Book Project is that it provides a forum for young people to discover and learn

about who they are and to relate to people going through similar situations and be inspired.

We've had a great response so far. Many positive comments have been posted on our Facebook page and heaps of people have said they're surprised by the diary entries of some of the celebrities such as Kerry Armstrong, Cathy Freeman and Hamish and Andy. Revelations about relationships, school problems, parents and puberty from people in the community help teenagers understand that everyone goes through the same kinds of things growing up and that everything will work out in the future. Most importantly, it facilitates an honest conversation between adults and young people.

I don't see my involvement with Reach as work. I get to do something I love every day – hang out with inspiring young people from all around Australia. It's a chance for me to just be me and to be around people who are on the same quest to discover who they truly are and what they want in their lives. I feel honoured to meet such incredible people who are honest and courageous and actively choose to explore their potential.

For more information about the Open Book Project, visit theopenbookproject.com or reach.org.au