

SONY CHILDREN'S HOLIDAY CAMP PROGRAM

The Sony Children's Holiday Camp Program is a unique respite program that sees high school and university students take on the responsibility for the care of children with special needs, allowing their families to have a valuable weekend off.

The camps, which run for 3-4 days and nights, pair children with special needs with year 11 and 12 student companions who become their primary carer during the camp. The most remarkable element of the Holiday Camp Program is the far-reaching effect it has on all participants of the program. Everyone involved with the camps, whether they are school students, teachers, volunteers, nursing staff, cooks or cleaners, work tirelessly to ensure that these children have an experience they will never forget. From swimming and dancing to zoo visits and sailing – nothing is out of reach.

For the camper's families, the camps provide an opportunity for some much needed respite. Sony Foundation funds the program allowing all camps to be provided free of charge to families who need the service most. The superstars of the program are undoubtedly the teenage 'companions' – year 11 and 12 boys and girls who give up the first days of their holidays to take on the challenging role of providing 24 hour care to a child with special needs. The teenagers take care of every element of the child's stay – from bath time to lunch time and the often taxing, sleep-time. The experience can be extremely confronting for these companions but without exception, students arrive at the end of the journey energised and transformed by the experiences they have had.

The Children's Holiday Camp Program began in 1998 with one camp at one school in Australia has since grown to 28 camps hosted by 50 schools and universities. This year, thanks to the support of the Sony Group of Companies in New Zealand the first New Zealand Sony Children's Holiday Camp will take place. Christ's College and St Margaret's College Christchurch have joined forces to host the camp. This camp will offer 15 special needs children the holiday of a lifetime, over 30 student companions an incredible experience in understanding how to care for others and for the families of the children with special needs, the chance to access free overnight respite – something they may not have had available to them before.

"It is a very great honour to be able to be a co-host of Sony Camp Christchurch 2018. The opportunity to support children and families in this way is truly wonderful. I know all involved will grow from this experience and forever be changed by the unique and very special relationships that are developed." Garth Wynne,
Executive Principal, Christ's College

With the support of the Sony Group of Companies in New Zealand, this Camp will lead the way for this program to roll out in additional schools across New Zealand, allowing more children with special needs, and their families to enjoy invaluable time off that they may otherwise be unable to receive.

To apply or express interest in attending, please email: info@sonyfoundation.org.au

To learn more, please visit www.sonyfoundation.org/about/childrens-holiday-camps/