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With her beaming smile, is it any wonder kids at Angelica Bailey-Forrester's local pre-school light up every time she enters the classroom.

Proud Wiradjuri woman and NDIS participant Angelica, from Wellington in central NSW, volunteers at her local pre-school twice a week.

Angelica, 22, who has mild intellectual disability, is about to begin a Certificate III in Early Childhood Education, with a goal of becoming a pre-school teacher.

The NDIS and registered provider, Bamara, have supported Angelica since early 2023.

Bamara support co-ordinator Tiffany Rowley has helped bring out the best in Angelica.

Angelica, who lives with her mother, was unsure of what direction to take after graduating from high school.

Tiffany soon learnt of Angelica's love for children and set up a volunteer role at a local pre-school.

'I like to work with children,' Angelica said. 'I like getting to know them.

'Hopefully, after this volunteer work and my studies, I can gain a traineeship and become a teacher.'

Angelica's NDIS plan includes help with daily living, capacity building, social and community participation and employment supports.

Tiffany says she has been amazed at Angelica's progress over the past 12 months.

'When I first met Angelica as her support worker, she was a very shy girl,' Tiffany said.

'She lacked a lot of confidence. She wouldn't engage. She had poor eye contact. She would have trouble getting motivated.

'But over the past few months, since being her support co-ordinator, Angelica has bloomed so much.

'I'm so proud of her. The growth in Angelica is just unbelievable.'

Angelica is also going for her drivers licence, which would help in her ultimate goal of finding employment.

Bamara enrolled Angelica in its Driver Licensing Access Program. She does weekly lessons as she works towards obtaining her provisional licence.

‘When we met with Angelica’s plan manager the other day, he nearly fell out of his chair,’ Tiffany said.

‘He couldn’t believe how much Angelica has come out of her shell in such a short time.

‘I think the NDIS has played a massive role in Angelica’s life.

‘If it wasn’t for the NDIS and Bamara, she wouldn’t be where she is today.’

Both are looking forward to local NAIDOC Week activities from 7-14 July.

The theme of NAIDOC Week is ‘Keep the Fire Burning! Blak, Loud and Proud’.

‘NAIDOC Week is a time to celebrate my culture,’ Angelica said.

Bamara staff and clients will be part of Dubbo’s NAIDOC Week march on 8 July.

They will also celebrate at a community fun day in Victoria Park on 12 July.

N.B. The NDIS is now providing support to more than 649,000 Australians, with more than half receiving supports for the first time.

Angelica is one of more than 17,000 First Nations participants in New South Wales benefitting from the NDIS.

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