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NDIS Participant Song's love of dogs sparked the idea for a rewarding and successful business that is hitting all the right notes for very happy Sunshine Coast canines and their owners.

Song, 17, who has auditory processing disorder, first accessed the NDIS in March 2021 and the Scheme has helped her to set up her own business working with animals called Sandy Paws.

A day care business based in the Noosa region, Sandy Paws offers overnight stays and homemade, organic dog products.

Loving the opportunity of building her dreams, her way, Song said her business was off to a great start.

"I don't reckon I would have had this business without the NDIS," Song said.

"It just intrigued me, working with dogs and walking them And also, just running your own business and doing it yourself, just you and the dogs."

"It's been really successful; I just need more clients. But it's doing really good and I mean, you've got to start somewhere, but it's been a really good start."

Song has noticed significant differences in her life since accessing the NDIS through plan support from Carers Queensland's NDIS Local Area Coordination (LAC) Partner in the Community Program for the Maroochydore region.

Since starting Sandy Paws, Song is enjoying the benefits of a daily routine, increased responsibility and greater independence.

"I think I have more structure in my day now that I've got my job set up," Song said

Song's Mum, Lyndal, provided business mentoring and support to help Song set up the business and Song is assisted with daily tasks three-days-a-week by Imogen, a support worker funded through her NDIS plan.

Lyndal said starting out with a structured routine had Song finding the right rhythm in making the business work with assistance from Imogen, so that Song can complete her bookkeeping, weekly diary and inventory.

They'll do some social media postings and they might go up and do some horse riding together," she said.

"Song's actually started to teach Imogen how to horse ride; it's a bit of role reversal there. That's after work."

Song schedules the rest of her week with a balance of dog walking and day care for clients, cooking and manufacturing for her product range of dog treats and dog shampoo, and building her social skills.

“Fridays are a complete social day with Imogen. They usually do an activity together, they’ll do an outward-bound activity like kayak up the river, or if it’s raining they might go to the movies,” Lyndal said.

Song’s plan for the rest of the year is to continue growing Sandy Paws while also growing her increasing social capacity.

Now content and soaking up the success of Sandy Paws while living the life she chooses, Song wanted to pay it forward with some simple advice for others who may also be dreaming of creating their own business.
“You’ve got to do what you want to do,” Song said.

“If you’re really passionate about it, like me with dogs and animals, I feel like that’s the easy part. If you really enjoy it, it will come naturally or easier.”

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