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Devonport NDIS participant Sharon Roberts feels a sense of purpose, creating intricate mosaic artworks, special occasion cards, and sewing and donating pouches to wildlife rescuers and hats to cancer patients.

The 60-year-old, who has an intellectual disability, epilepsy, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder, said she is so much happier being able to do all this after receiving NDIS funding.

It has allowed her to engage disability support provider Multicap Tasmania so she can attend regular day programs, social outings and have support at home.

“I live on my own and I was a bit shy and anxious, but my NDIS funding has been great. It’s got me out doing art and craft classes, making all these wonderful things and meeting others in my community. I just love it,” she said.

Sharon’s support worker, Tania Smith, said it’s been beautiful to watch Sharon grow and see how her supports have empowered her in so many ways.

“Sharon has really evolved since she first started with us. Initially, she was shy and anxious in her decision-making, but now she’s come out of her shell, and she’s become a confident person.

"There’s no-holds-barred anymore,” Tania said smiling.

Now able to express, share and build on her love of art and crafts, Sharon said she’s created several mosaic pieces, cards, and even poems, which adorn Multicap Tasmania’s art room and feature on various walls throughout her home.

“At the moment Tania is teaching me how to make speciality cards. I like to do fairies and sea themes, like seahorses, dolphins, and turtles,” she said.

Tania said she also runs sewing classes and asked Sharon to give it a try, but she wasn’t keen and felt a tad scared using the sewing machines and the overlocker.

“I said, ‘why not join us anyway but do some hand sewing?’ and Sharon agreed.

“On the first day of sewing class I discussed all the sewing machine parts and showed the class how easy it was to do a straight stitch on a piece of fabric.

“Each class member had a piece of fabric and I got them to practice sewing lines up and down.

“Sharon took to it straight away and we haven’t been able to stop her since!”

Tania said one of her colleagues, who helps rescue and care for injured wildlife, showed them a photo of a baby wallaby she was caring for, tucked up in a pouch.

“We said how cute, and asked if there was anything we could do to help. My colleague said yes, her organisation was in desperate need of wildlife pouches, particularly little ones, so Sharon and I started making them,” Tania said.

“I even brought in my embroidery machine from home so we could pop their names on each pouch and then donate them.

“Then we decided to start making hats for cancer patients, donating them too.”

Sharon and Tania said it’s been so rewarding helping people and animals.

“It’s a real community thing to do and it gives us a sense of purpose, helping others in a positive way,” both women said.

With her epilepsy unpredictable, Sharon is grateful for her NDIS funding.

“I have a support worker who comes to my house to pick me up. She takes me to the bank so I can pay my bills and she helps me get my groceries,” she said.

“I also have a cleaner come in once a week who does all the jobs I can’t do.”

Now more independent than ever, Sharon said her mum couldn’t be happier with her progress, now she's more active in her community and making and donating lots of useful items, which are helping to benefit others.

“My mum loves all the stuff I make, and she said she’s really proud of me and that makes me feel proud,” Sharon said.

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