



# Sacred Heart Primary School, Mildura

(A Catholic School of the Sacred Heart Parish)

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Olive Grove, MILDURA, VIC 3500  
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21<sup>st</sup> August, 2013

To whom it may concern,

In my school, I work in student wellbeing, special needs and the environment. I am qualified as a teacher librarian and worked many years in my school library. Previous to that, I spent a number of years as a classroom teacher and worked mostly in the middle to upper years. In my present position, I work with individual students, small groups of students and the occasional class group. Many of the students I work with belong to small interest groups. Quite often these interest groups link to environmental initiatives. For the last 18 years I have coordinated an environmental communications program within the Murray Darling Basin, which involved our local schools. This program was initially funded by the Murray Darling Basin Commission. When the funding ceased in 2011, the project was confined to the local schools only. The environmental communications program is now called “Special forever: voices of the children,” for which local children submit their writing and artwork.

It was through my work with the various small groups and associated programs that I first had the pleasure of working with Jaya Lewis. For a number of years now, I have mentored students as they prepared to be presenters at the International River Health Conference. These conferences have been held every two years and have as their foundation the model of “Kids teaching kids” (“Kids teaching Kids” week is now a national annual event). This model offers a powerful motivator for students to take responsibility for their own learning. In taking on the task of teaching other kids, the students must first educate themselves before they can confidently take on the task of teaching others. I wanted to capture the process of this unfolding and to motivate other students and other schools to have a go at learning this way.

I wanted to use film to inform and inspire teachers and students to adopt this “Kids teaching kids” way of working. To achieve my goal I needed a unique kind of film maker; one that was an educator and had a special rapport with children. My film maker needed to have an implicit understanding of the “kids teaching kids” philosophy. My film maker had to have sensitivity towards environmental matters as each of the projects held strong environmental messages. Jaya Lewis was that person.

Jaya has now collaborated with me to develop several projects. In viewing each of the projects, Jaya’s sensitivity towards the subject matter and the underpinning philosophy are clearly evident. Jaya’s gentle rapport with children is also clearly evident.



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As the funding for the “Special forever: voices of the children” project had ceased, I put in a submission for funds from our local council. Jaya put in a successful tender to develop the website.

Her latest film, Kids Teaching Kids 2012: 'Be Aware. Take Care', is testament to her ever-growing talent as a filmmaker; whilst her Special Forever Kids website is a fine tribute to her creativity and ability to create an interesting and workable website (both projects listed below).

The following links showcase the projects that Jaya and I collaborated on:  
Kids Teaching Kids 2012: 'Be Aware. Take Care' (video)

<http://youtu.be/OAvjL-SDHls>

Paper Bricks & Worm Juice (video)

[http://youtu.be/6ih2aP-m1\\_8](http://youtu.be/6ih2aP-m1_8)

Special Forever Kids (website)

<http://specialforeverkids.com/>

Take Action. Think Frogs! (video)

[http://youtu.be/lVog6\\_aaBGg](http://youtu.be/lVog6_aaBGg)

Take Action. Think Frogs! -- Launch Day

[http://youtu.be/79r\\_nAawyYA](http://youtu.be/79r_nAawyYA)

I am delighted to recommend Jaya Lewis to you. She would be a great asset to have on a school staff in any school – primary, secondary or tertiary. She works well with children and young people. My students felt very comfortable and at ease as Jaya discussed ideas and worked with them to develop the film. She understood them and treated them with great respect. Children very quickly trusted her and were very “natural” in her presence. As an educator she understands learning and is very supportive of students as they “have a go” Her performing arts background assisted her as she helped to “coach” children to be confident in front of the camera.

I want to pay tribute to Jaya’s most recent film that she developed, “Be aware, take care” I am delighted in the way Jaya has managed to capture with her film making skills, the joy of learning the children experienced. She has been most sensitive in her final editing of the material that she filmed. The children in the film are having fun, are masters of their own learning and doing a first rate job “teaching kids”.

My final word: Jaya is a delight to work with. She is hard working, competent, creative and very dedicated. She knows her material and will seek to find out should there be a need to learn. Jaya is very professional in her approach to her filmmaking.



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Jaya knows and understands the correct protocols and procedures and follows them. She speaks with a quiet authority and is approachable at all times. I value her expertise, her knowledge and her professional approach.

I highly recommend her to you. Furthermore, I am willing to provide additional feedback, if requested.

Sincerely,

Rosemarie Zalec, Grad Dip Ed (Teacher Librarianship), Charles Sturt University  
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