

9 October 2023

Wings without Barriers with Hayden McDonald

During the school holidays, the Rex Theatre at Charlton hosted an inspiring community event with Hayden McDonald, Winner of ABC Trailblazers, a young person who is autistic and a pilot.

The event was part of Hayden's mission to fly solo around regional Australia to promote awareness of Autism and he flew into Charlton just hours earlier for the event.

"Wings Without Barriers" combines his passions for aviation and promoting real inclusion for people on the spectrum. Hayden wants to inspire young people and show them that no matter what challenges you face in life, you can break down those barriers.

Wendy Pollard from the Wycheproof P12 school was instrumental in securing the event and she proudly introduced Hayden to the audience.

The audience were treated to a viewing of one of Hayden's videos called "Why is it so IMPORTANT to have AUSTISTIC People to have a VOICE?"

Hayden followed with a speaking presentation which had it all - it was powerful and inspiring and the audience could feel the passion in his words as he shared what it's like to be autistic, not promoting awareness, but rather acceptance of autism – seeing people for their ability not their disability.

Hayden was thrilled to have a major sponsor, Andrew Eddy from Genius Armoury, in the crowd who had travelled from Melbourne for the event and Hayden invited him on stage for a presentation in appreciation. To conclude the event, Hayden answered many questions from the enthralled crowd before intermission allowing the gathering to meet Hayden.

To complement Hayden's story a screening of Temple Grandin followed, a true story with a powerful autistic message.

Hayden's website 'Wings Without Barriers', provides more information on both his challenges and successes, as well as links to the numerous videos he has produced.

Hayden's next stop on his journey was Tocumwal and if you would like to follow his journey, a map is provided on his site as well as links for sponsoring his mission.

The event was proudly presented by Wycheproof P12, the Buloke Engage! program, North Central LLEN, the Charlton Youth Group and the Rex Theatre.

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For more information contact Julie Bourke on 0419 819 212
