

*“It’s fantastic that we’re getting out and about and supporting the local community.”*

–Brad Wemyss  
Early Learning Educator



## Be You: The success of the Kindness Garden and Fairy Lane

When Kids Capers North Lakes were in the early stages of planning a wellbeing project they were unaware it would blossom into something truly transformational. Read how they used the Be You Action Team handbook, Family Partnerships and Early Support domains to help implement a whole learning community approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Kids Capers North Lakes registered for Be You in 2018.

After dipping their toes into the Professional Learning material, they used the Family Partnerships domain to foster and build relationships with the service’s educators, families and children.

With Be You as their guide, educators at the service now have the tools and resources to confidently talk about the children’s wellbeing with their families.

Encouraged by this early success Kids Capers North Lakes started planning for their next wellbeing project.

Guided by Be You Consultant Patricia Osgood, the newly formed Action Team consisting of Mynette, Kristy, and educators Mel Telfer and Brad Wemyss used resources within the Assist Family Partnerships module and the Provide Early Support module to create something children could easily grasp the concept of and one which would also involve families and the local North Lakes community.

“We were looking for a project that was small and achievable, to spread kindness,” said Kristy.

“Having Be You as a support network and the Early Support modules were so important. I know from my studies and training that the first five years are foundational so if we don’t get that support structure for those families early on then it makes it hard for those children to emotionally cope for the rest of their lives.”

Kristy’s close friend, Natalie Poole, founded Moreton Bay Community Rocks which is a group of locals who paint small rocks with uplifting messages and pictures and drop them in public places to spread messages of kindness to the community.



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## From one rock, came many

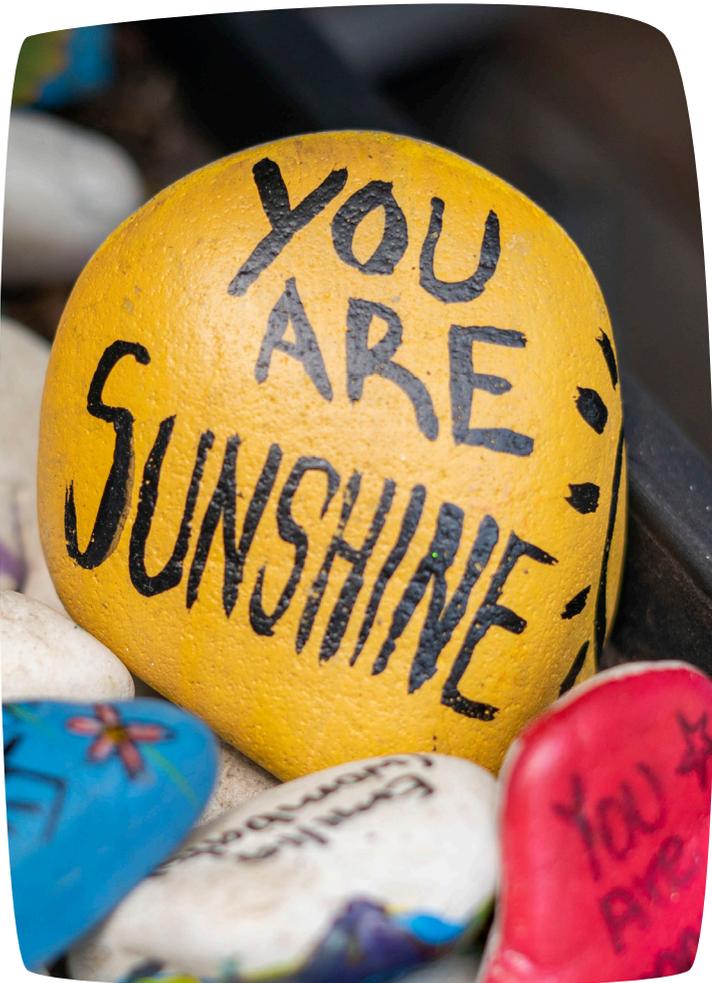
The Action Team met with Natalie to discuss how her project could be translated and implemented in an early learning service setting. Conversations quickly led to action.

With help from educators and their families, children at Kids Capers North Lakes were soon creating their own wellbeing rocks with messages of kindness.

From one rock, came many. So much that the Action Team decided to create an outside space at the centre for the creations to live. This beautiful area would be renamed the Kindness Garden by a child called Darcy.

“The children really got involved and our educators are really artistic, then our parents started to take some time to paint with their children,” added Kristy.

“Parents are really busy, so it was really nice to see these lovely stories of them sitting at home, even for five minutes, and just being able to paint, or draw, or talk about the messages with their children.”



## Fairy Lane and the rock drop

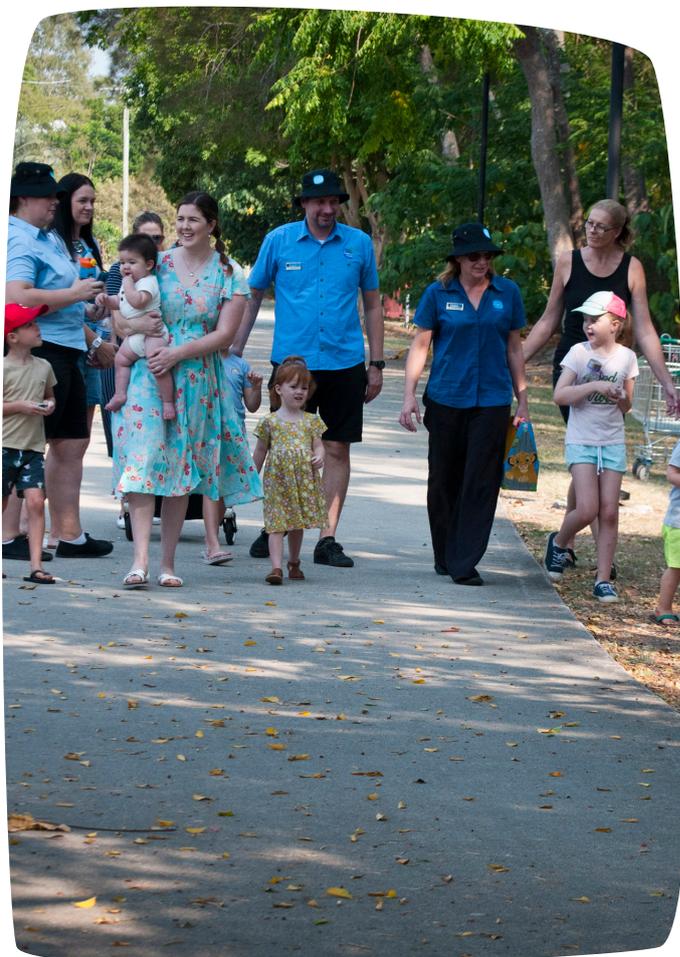
Seeing the positive results of the project within the service, the Action Team at Kids Capers North Lakes used Step 4 in the Action Team handbook to implement their Action Plan and connect with their learning community.

Working closely with Natalie, the children went on a field trip and dropped the rocks on a pathway just a short stroll from Deception Bay beach which has been renamed Fairy Lane.

On the back of each rock was the Kids Capers logo and the Moreton Bay Community Rocks Facebook page for members of the public to find.

An organic process started where runners, walkers and other members of the community would find the rocks and write their own message of kindness on the Facebook page. The social media platform is now awash with pictures of rocks and wellbeing messages.

The area is now real a focal point of the community. Foot traffic has increased so much that the local council plans to build toilets close by and a water fountain for the public to use.



## The success of Fairy Lane

This project went beyond anything Kids Capers North Lakes could have expected and aligned with an aim of Be You to empower educators by supporting them to develop their mental health skills and knowledge, while also providing guidance on how to implement a whole learning community approach.

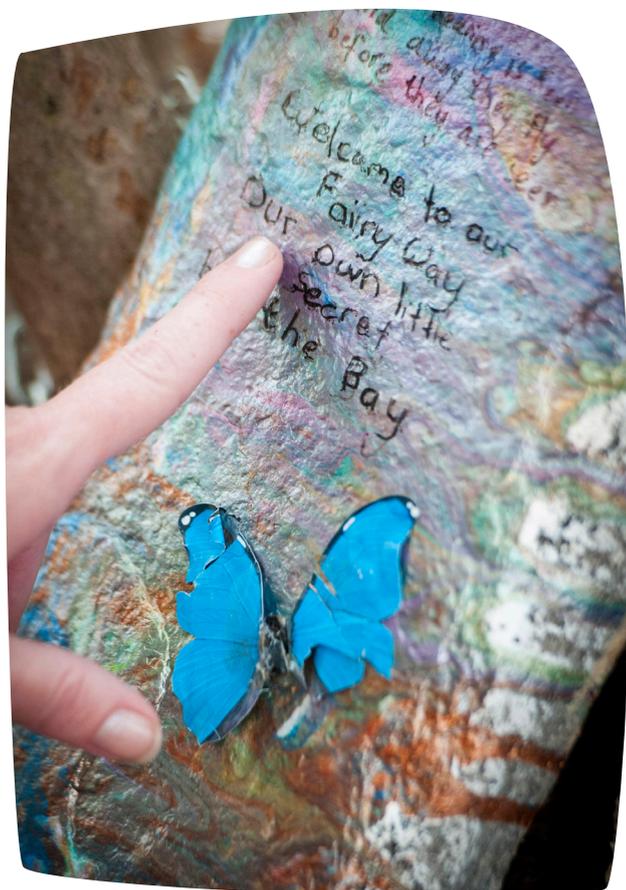
From a community perspective, Natalie is delighted to see the regeneration of the area and what is possible when different groups work together to improve mental health and wellbeing.

"It's so beautiful to see community in action," she said.

"No one used the path before, and now it's constantly busy. The locals just love hearing the children giggle and have fun.

"Dads are coming out with their children and making a competition of looking for the rocks, grandparents have something to do when they're babysitting the children. I think it's a special bond between grandparents and their grandchildren.

"It's like the old days when the community used to get together. Everyone knows everyone now, and that's how it used to be."





## Future wellbeing projects

Following the success of the Kindness Garden, Kids Capers North Lakes are looking to work their way through more Be You modules to provide them with inspiration and ideas for future projects.

“We’re doing a lot of excursions this year, we really like to get our children out in the community,” added Kristy.

“Being seen as members of our local community is really important. We have our little Kids Capers vests, so people know who we are and we’ll continue to do that.

“We also have a centre opening in Scarborough, so our plan is for our children to paint them some rocks and say ‘welcome to our Kids Capers community,’ and just keep that message of kindness rolling on.”

Kindness Gardens are now growing throughout the other centres.

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