

'Just About Me' – Siblings Day

THIS year, the Catholic Schools Office (Margaret Donnelly, Cay Camden and Carmel Dunn) and Centacare Broken Bay (Sharon Grocott, Amy Osborne and Vicky Pollard) worked in partnership to jointly staff and run the siblings' day – *Just About Me* – in May, at Challenge Ranch, Somersby. Other collaborators included Challenge Ranch, NSW Department of Health (Carers Program) and Siblings Australia Inc.

The aim of the day was to provide an opportunity for the children and young people to have a great day focusing on them, enabling them to link up with other siblings and to further explore what it is like for them to have a brother or sister with special needs.

This year, approximately 60 children and 10 students (mentors) from St Leo's Catholic College, Wahroonga, benefited



from this joint project. Siblings were identified through the Catholic Schools Office and Centacare Broken Bay staff.

Many siblings, brothers and sisters of children with disabili-

ties, grow up without access to support networks and information that support them in their 'carer' roles. Throughout their lives they will share many of the same concerns and stresses that their parents experience.

Because a sibling relationship is usually long lasting they are actively involved in the planning, meeting the needs and the care of their brother or sister who has special needs. Service providers predominately target the child with a disability or the primary carer (usually being the parent). Siblings are often the forgotten members of the family who have such an important role in the day to day care of the family member with a disability.

The children and young people (as well as the adults) had a great day.

