

Brooke's Story

Stars Peer Mentor

I'm Brooke Hannah. This is sunny Red Beach.

I was part of the Stars Peer Mentor programme in 2013 at wonderful Rutherford College.

I hear about Stars actually at Rutherford. I was one of the first kids through the programme in 2009 when it first came and I sort of thought to myself, well it will be fun to go full circle and give it a try in 2013.

I was absolutely nervous to be a peer mentor. I wasn't a confident in 2009 when I started. I was the nervous kid that hid in the background and didn't want to do anything.

When I actually got chosen, my thought process was, "Why me?"

I walked into that thinking I didn't belong. I walked out of it thinking that this is the best opportunity I've had in my entire life. I went to Stars Peer Mentor camp not once, but twice in 2009 as the nervous kid. Absolutely petrified my first time away from home and back in 2013 as a confident mentor helping everybody conquer their fears.

We did incredible activities at Camp Adair including the high swing, zip-line, confidence course. Couldn't do the mudslide because it was too cold. Didn't matter. I remember having to learn to trust myself. There is nothing like having to trust yourself to jump off the high swing and then have to teach kids in 2013

the exact same thing. Because trusting yourself is the best way to get yourself through high school.

My favourite part about being a Peer Mentor was actually being able to help the students. They always came to me with their problems and it means the absolute world to me to hear them go on and do incredible things with their life. Knowing that I had a teeny little part in it.

My biggest challenge personally about being a Peer Mentor was that I had to learn to trust myself again. I'd been bullied my entire life and to have an environment where kids actually wanted to come up to me and spend time with me meant the absolute world to me.

My key takeaways from the Stars Peer Mentor programme is that it is ok to be myself. I'm funny and I'm quirky and I like to have fun. And life is fun, so why not have fun with it?

My advice to students facing obstacles in their life is to just hold on and keep fighting. I have CPTSD, I know full well what it is like to go through the impossible and make it out the other side.

Life does get better, and no matter how hard it is, relish every single good moment you've got because you never know when the great moments are coming.

We want every child to know: What they have inside is greater than any obstacle.