

Community collaboration



Victor McConvey, Mimi Morgan and Carmel Wall discussing Parkinson's symptoms.

Empowering young innovators

The Fight Parkinson's health team, in collaboration with the ParKanDo Parkinson's Peer Support Group, helped lift the lid off Parkinson's to a crowd of young innovators.

Earlier this year, Fight Parkinson's Health Team Manager and Parkinson's Nurse Victor McConvey, Occupational Therapist Victoria Tull and several ParKanDo Parkinson's Peer Support Group leaders collaborated with Newmark Primary School in Williamstown to help educate grade 2 and 3 students about living with Parkinson's.

ParKanDo hosted the session at the Newport Community Hub and was part of the school's community-based projects where their students learned about the brain. This session with Fight Parkinson's and ParKanDo was focused on how Parkinson's affects people's lives and how they can still live positively with it.



ParKanDo Parkinson's Peer Support Group Leaders, Carmel Wall and Peter Wall.

"Victor and Victoria from Fight Parkinson's were brilliant. They played some fantastic games with the children to demonstrate how things they do automatically as young children, are far more challenging for people with Parkinson's," said ParKanDo's leader Mimi Morgan.

The children were extremely engaged during the session and learned helpful tips and tricks to support people living with Parkinson's.

Back at school, the children took on a unique challenge. Working in groups of 4 to 5 students, they were tasked with using what they had learned from the session to design a product that assists people living with Parkinson's in their daily lives. As part of their product design, they had to consider factors like how it looked, portability, cleaning and ease of use.

In a follow-up session, the young students revealed their inventions. Each group presented their invention, explaining the reasoning behind its design and how to use it. Some notable ideas included:

- a toothbrush with a weighted base to allow a larger hand-grip and optimise hand control
- a modified hairbrush featuring a secure, slip-on hand strap
- a soap mitt with a built-in pouch for soap to remain in place
- an activity board equipped with zips and fastenings to practice fine-motor skills.

"The depth of consideration shown by the students was remarkable, with many of the products focused on assisting hand function and fine motor skills. Their designs reflected a solid understanding of Parkinson's symptoms and the importance of helping people with Parkinson's complete daily tasks," said Victoria.

The project was fun and valuable in educating young minds about Parkinson's. The kids' creativity and fresh perspectives demonstrated the potential for innovation and how their skills could positively impact people's lives. The sessions also served as an opportunity to raise broader awareness of Parkinson's, fostering a greater understanding of the condition among the younger members of our community.

We thank Newmark Primary School and ParKanDo Parkinson's Peer Support Group leaders Pam West, Carmel Wall, Peter Wall and Mimi Morgan for their collaboration and contributions to bringing Parkinson's awareness to these students.