

Girl With a Golden Heart

PAULYN Wame, a vibrant Year 12 student and school vice captain of Southport State High School (2008), has recently been awarded the prestigious Order of Australia Youth Citizenship Gold Medallion. This award aims at recognising the youth of Australia and their participation in the community through their volunteer work and leadership skills.

Paulyn was one of 12 students in Queensland to receive this honour. Her generous work at Angels Kitchen, a weekly charity bread run and her outstanding leadership skills won her the award.

Paulyn moved to Australia from Papua New Guinea in early 2007 and instantly earned the respect and admiration of her peers. She earned such a high level of respect that after only one year she was elected school vice captain.

Southport State High School teacher Sharon Currie said she hoped Paulyn was very proud of herself. "Paulyn always inspires me with her commitment to her values, her positive attitude and her passion for giving back to the community," said Ms Currie.

"I count myself very lucky to have not only taught her, but to have learnt from her."

Paulyn said she tries to juggle her time between volunteering at Angels Kitchen, doing the charity bread run and school. "Angels Kitchen is a place where individuals cook for the homeless and people who cannot afford to have three meals a day," said Paulyn.

"We serve, help clean up and talk to the people who go there. We get to know them and learn from their experiences in life." With a warm smile, Paulyn said the biggest inspiration and motivation in her life is her family.

"I've grown up in a family where we give our time to the community. My mum has done a lot of work in the settlements in Papua New Guinea," said Paulyn. "You know you're doing something good for the community in your own small way."

Paulyn was also recognised for her outstanding leadership skills at Southport State High School. She is part of the revolutionary leadership program, which involves a high level of student involvement in all school matters. Paulyn said she believed the leadership program had changed her life.

"The leadership program has taught me a lot about courage and standing up for what I believe in," said Paulyn.

Jessica Maher

Year 11

Southport State High School

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