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For the past 55 years, St Michael's Association's support for people with a disability has evolved to meet the changing needs of participants.

"From the organisation's inception as a school through to the current accommodation and day programs at our Newstead, East Devonport and Independent Services campuses, our belief has enabled our participants to develop their independence and capacity when making choices about their lives. This has always been at the heart of what we do," CEO Mike Thomas said.

St Michaels' day programs are focused on increasing participants' skills to live independently.

Its range of programs for the Spring/Summer season will be unveiled shortly and Mr Thomas said several new offerings would be made available including pottery and an extended gardening option in the North of the State.

"We are always seeking to encourage our participants to try new things and take on new challenges, but also ensuring the choice and control remains with them," he said.

"The new programs are not just fun activities but ones which will also allow our participants to develop some new skills to assist them live independently.

"There will also be that sense of achievement which comes from successfully completing a task whether that be a piece of pottery or growing a vegetable from the garden to the plate."

Lara is one of the participants at Newstead and, according to her mother Margaret, she "absolutely loves" Tuesdays as it is dancing day.

“She also loves going out on the bus for morning team. Another favourite is the music and drumming days.”

St Michaels’ place in Northern Tasmania is well documented, but a couple of years ago the organisation branched out with an additional campus on the North-West Coast at East Devonport.

Mr Thomas said the former school site was ideal for repurposing as a day program facility. Programs began back in 2019 and participant demand for quality, outcome-driven day programs has increased rapidly.

“The growth in participant numbers and ongoing demand in the region has meant that we will soon commence building a respite centre at the campus,” he said.

“We already offer a respite service in the North-West but a purpose-built centre will enable us to meet more of the demand.”

For additional information regarding St Michaels please call (03) 6331 7651 or email info@stmichaels.asn.au. Follow us on Facebook @stmichaelsassociation

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