



Gold Coast Sun
Wednesday 21/05/2014

Page: 6
Section: General News
Region: Gold Coast QLD, AU
Circulation: 170956
Type: Regional
Size: 222.00 sq.cms.



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Swimmer helps autistic children

WHILE Olympic swimmer Thomas Fraser-Holmes is busy training for the Commonwealth Games he still has time to visit a new centre for autistic kids. Fraser-Holmes popped in to visit kids at the AEIOU Foundation early intervention centre in Arundel, ahead of the centre's official opening on May 29.

The Miami local said he knows about the daily struggles facing autistic kids because his 11-year-old cousin Jack has autism.

"It's everyday things these kids are dealing with, it can be

just getting up to go to the toilet or getting ready, they just need more attention," he said.

As an AEIOU Foundation ambassador Fraser-Holmes said he hoped the organisation could raise enough funds to get an extra two rooms up and running. He said it was important to help autistic kids develop basic skills, like threading toy blocks on a piece of string. "These are some of the things other kids might take for granted," he said.

Fraser-Holmes said he enjoyed visiting the centre despite his busy schedule leading

up to the Commonwealth Games in 2018.

"We're doing 12 sessions a week in the pool at the moment and three in the gym, so it's pretty full on but I'm hoping the rewards will pay off in 11 weeks time," he said.

AEIOU Foundation chief executive Alan Smith said Fraser-Holmes was a genuine supporter for children with autism. "Thomas knows all about setting goals and facing challenges, and with a connection to autism, he understands how it can affect a child and their family," Mr Smith said.



Olympic swimmer Thomas Fraser-Holmes with Chase Stephens, 4.

Picture: RICHARD GOSLING