Peter Milano '97
Cherbourg, Australia

I spent my senior year in a rural Aboriginal community located 3 hours west of Brisbane, the capital of Queensland. I met many wonderful people and even got a chance to work on the bus farm, which is the pride of the community as well as a large source of community income.

I spent a lot of my time shifting between helping Uncle Allen (left in hat) prepare for NAIDOC (National Aboriginal and Islander Day of Celebration) and various other organizations in the community. The picture to the left is of Uncle Allen preparing traditional Aboriginal food called “bush tucker” which includes "parrot pea", "wattle" flowers, "sunflower seeds", and "bannana". I also spent time in the school working as a teacher’s aid for the remote and second grade classes. The picture above is of Mrs Fields’ 7th grade class.
Some of the community engaged in the "Read to Me" program in Cundinup, which was initiated by Sponsor Children's Fund. I taught reading and writing. I also attended BARKA meetings which helped Aboriginal legal affairs, volunteered with the Aboriginal Health Organization, and worked on community-based primary care and information-related projects and collected supplied written information packets for NAIDOC.

NAIDOC is important to the community because much of the traditional culture had been lost, and what little is left is going to be gone with the old generation. Part of the celebration includes re-building a traditional shelter, dancing performances by community members, and a traditional food stalls around campfires, while the elders and seniors talk about the history of the community.