

Justine has a deep passion for the sport

If anyone can demonstrate how to resiliently recover from a major setback in sport, it's Justine Wallis, who's done so while showing maturity beyond her years.

Nineteen year-old Justine was a member of Cherrybrook Little Athletics from U6 to U17 while she managed to reach state level. While in Year 11 and training for the goal of reaching nationals in the 800m and 1500m, she began experiencing symptoms of a serious heart condition.

Unfortunately, the heart condition became too concerning during high levels of physical activity that she had to stop competing. She took up volunteer roles with Cherrybrook Little Athletics where she still fulfils her passion of being involved in sport.

"It was difficult getting that news," Wallis reflects.

"I was lucky enough one day to get a call from Nicky Jenneke asking if I would like to be part of the Cherrybrook Athletics Committee and was so grateful for this opportunity. It really helped me to stay involved with the club and see many of our athletes experience PBs and qualify for carnivals, which I love to go to, watching and supporting them.

"At the beginning it was so disappointing but it helped me mature a lot. It has been a blessing in disguise because I wouldn't have had the committee experience if I was still competing."

There have been a plethora of

roles that Justine has undertaken with the Little Athletics which include but are not limited to; helping out the U6 groups Age Managers and joining the committee as Club Competition Coordinator and Age Manager Coordinator.

Justine organises special events and fundraisers for the club while also studying a double degree of Bachelor of Education (Primary) and Bachelor Psychology with the goal to become a primary school teacher. She also works on a casual basis at before and after school and vacation care.

While Justine doesn't compete anymore, she still occasionally trains with Cherrybrook coaching coordinator, Valme Kruger, to keep her fitness up. Wallis' hard work volunteering with Cherrybrook Little Athletics hasn't gone unnoticed as she picked up Little Athletics NSW Young Volunteer of the Year award late last year.

Cherrybrook Athletics Club president, Martin Lubrano, speaks glowingly of Justine.

"Justine's commitment to the club and the young athletes goes beyond what



you might expect of someone her age, especially someone who is also studying a double degree and working," he said.

"She has a passion for inspiring and encouraging young children in their pursuit of personal bests and she willingly shares her love of athletics. Her selfless and dedicated nature makes her a valuable member of any team, particularly our Athletics Club Committee. She is one

of the loveliest people you will ever meet – she is adored by our athletes and their parents."

Justine reflects on how enjoyable her volunteer work has been,

"I love the sport so much I wanted to see other kids enjoy it. I love organising events and seeing how excited kids get just to participate and especially when they get their Personal Bests."