

Spotlight on Support Workers

Meet Laura...

**Support Worker & Microbiology
Graduate Student**



How do you manage the emotional and time demands of supporting complex participants while also staying committed to the academic rigour of your masters?

Managing the emotional and time demands of supporting participants with complex needs while pursuing my master's degree isn't easy, but I am grateful for the schedulers at Unique Support who make it possible.

I work night shifts so I can focus on my coursework during the day, creating a balance that keeps me present in both roles.

Inside Scoop

At Unique Support, our support workers are at the heart of everything we do. They bring compassion, skill, and dedication to every shift; helping participants live with confidence, independence, and joy. In this edition, you'll meet Laura, a dedicated Support Worker and Microbiology Graduate Student, who shares her inspiring journey of balancing study, work, and making a real difference in people's lives.

Tell us who is Laura and what do you want us to know about Laura?

I'm turning 25 and I'm a sibling to four amazing human beings. I love my family. My elder brother lives in the US, while my younger siblings are still back home in Kenya with my parents. Here in Perth, I'm blessed with a circle of friends from my country and beyond.

I hold an undergraduate degree in Medical Microbiology which I completed back home and am now completing my Master's in Microbiology and Immunology at Murdoch University. Essentially, it is the study of the complex world of infectious microorganisms, their interactions within the human body to cause disease, and how the immune system responds in defence. I've always thrived at school, and I am an avid learner, hence why I chose to do research.

I'm also a believer in God, actively serving in my church's ushering and welfare department.

So given that you're having this big study on your hands, what attracted you to the role of support worker?

I joined Unique Support over a year ago. The role resonated with me because of my experience caring for my grandfather after an accident back home.

When I arrived in Australia to study, I discovered I could also earn a living while doing something as honourable as supporting others.

At first, I hesitated, I had no formal experience, but with encouragement and training from my support network, I stepped into this rewarding path.

What strategies or routines have you developed to stay focused and avoid burnout while handling high pressure responsibilities?

My friends often ask me: "How do you do it?". I tell them it's the Grace of God that sustains me. I usually tell myself the Bible says it's not in our sufficiency, but the sufficiency of God that makes us to be here. When I put my head to something, I must make sure that it really works.

Saturdays are my rest days, I take time to recharge and ensure I can give my best in everything I do.



What motivates you to pursue such a challenging academic path alongside your support work, and what do you hope to ultimately achieve by doing both?

I'm naturally introverted and up until then had always chosen to engage in things I am comfortable with.

Being a support worker really challenged me, as I had to put myself out there, but also so fulfilling; I learned to become outspoken, interact with people and more importantly shift my focus to the needs of others. This transformative experience enabled me to be more confident in myself. I haven't worked with people from different backgrounds until Unique Support. I meet various support workers and participants then I get to understand and learn because I am always curious.

So what will be your advice to someone in your situation? In their 20s studying making a living and adapting to a new culture? or another person who is in the same situation?

I would say: "I am super proud of you!". As an immigrant, I came to this country where I have no family and friends and was told that I would be picked up from the airport.

I'm so proud that I was able to navigate through that situation, meet people and make friends, ask for help and get help.

The thing that I've learnt in the three years is to be confident in yourself, believe in your strength, believe that you can do it.