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A CELEBRATION OF LIFE ABOUT US

A Celebration of Life was created in 2002 by parents Chris and Sophie Clarke.

Their daughter, Madeleine, was born with a severe case of Strep B and given only a 1% chance of survival when admitted to the Neonatal Unit (NNU) at The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne. Maddie defied the odds, thanks to the skill and dedication of the Neonatal Medical Team and is now a beautiful and happy big sister to brother James.

In honour of their gratitude to the NNU, A Celebration of Life was created by Chris and Sophie to assist specifically with the fundraising requirements of the NNU and hopefully make possible the equipment, resources and research that helps to make it one of the premier NNU's in Australia, if not the world.

The major fundraising event for the NNU is the Annual Celebration of Life Gala Ball. Now in its fifth year, this event has helped to raise thousands of life saving dollars for the NNU.

A Celebration of Life is recognised as a fundraising entity for the NNU at The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne and is coordinated by the RCH Foundation and a Management Committee comprising NNU & RCH staff, parents and supporters. The NNU is deeply grateful to the Clarke Family for their commitment, dedication and invaluable support.

A Celebration of Life is more than just a namesake – it is a statement of truth shared by the NNU team and all those it exists to support today and in the future.

HOW WE ARE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER NEONATAL INTENSIVE CARE UNITS

The Royal Children's Hospital Neonatal Unit provides highly specialised care to the sickest newborn infants from all over Australia and the Pacific Islands.

It supports and treats a UNIQUE group of babies with UNIQUE needs and is the only Unit of its kind that can assist babies who require treatments not available at other Neonatal Units in Victoria and in some cases, Australia.

Each year

- Over 600 babies are transferred to the NNU by the Newborn Emergency Transport Service (NETS).

- Over 40% of the babies undergo major surgery.

- Over 300 babies receive artificial ventilation via mechanical respirators.

- Most of the babies are seen by specialist doctors from the many medical disciplines available only at The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne.

- The highly complex paediatric investigative services including MRI, CT scans, digital angiography, fluoroscopy, endoscopy, electroencephalography, metabolic and laboratory tests, echocardiography and cardiac catheter are not available at other hospitals.

OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

In the last decade there have been many achievements in the care given to babies in the Royal Children's Hospital Neonatal Unit.

Some of the highlights are:

High frequency oscillatory ventilation (HFOV) is a highly sophisticated form of artificial respiration in which very sick babies are ventilated at breathing rates of up to 900 breaths per minute. The Neonatal Unit was the first Intensive Care Unit in Australia to introduce this technology in 1992 and this was the result of a careful and strategic research and training program. We now run training courses for other intensive care units around the country.

We are the only intensive care unit in the country that employs High Frequency Jet Ventilation. This technology is a life saver for babies with the most severe forms of lung disease.

Together with our colleagues at the Royal Melbourne Hospital we have led the way in the management of a rare form of cerebral aneurysm (an abnormality of arteries and veins in and surrounding the brain) by

interventional radiology thus providing both survival and favourable outcomes to many babies who in other centres would have died.

Our craniofacial surgeons have pioneered a form of jaw lengthening operations for babies born with facial abnormalities such as Pierre Robin Sequence. This surgery has produced stunningly successful outcomes and revolutionized the care of these conditions.

Together with our Neurology colleagues we are investigating ways to improve the outcomes for the sickest babies including those with Post Haemorrhagic Ventricular Dilation (commonly occurring in very premature babies) and have pioneered the use of MRI technology and bedside EEG monitoring in a Neonatal environment.

We provide the best outcomes in the country for a condition called Congenital Diaphragmatic Hernia. This is where a baby is born with a large hole in the diaphragm resulting in the intestines being present in the chest thus compressing the lungs. The condition requires the combined skills of neonatologists, nurses, cardiologists and surgeons. Our outcomes for this previously lethal condition are second to none in the world. Survival of this condition provides a normal life for these babies.

Our nursing staff has pioneered the management and prevention of pain in sick babies and has led the way in surgical wound care. The nursing staff is continuing to provide the best care to sick infants round the clock every day of the year.

We have recently appointed the first Professor of Neonatal Nursing Research in Australia. Our Music Therapist is looking at ways to improve the quality of life on the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit for the sick babies. We provide a home apnea monitoring service for babies who are at risk of and for their parents who are worried about Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Most of the advances over the years have been made possible by the very strong commitment to research and education by all members of the Neonatal Unit. The best care of the sickest infants cannot occur without the valuable achievements provided through research and education.

ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL NEONATAL UNIT VISION

The Neonatal Unit will become the benchmark of world's best practice for the care of the sickest newborn babies and their families.

ROYAL CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL NEONATAL UNIT MISSION

The Neonatal Unit will improve the health outcomes for newborn babies by:

- Providing the best and full range of tertiary and quaternary specialist care for the sickest babies in Australia and internationally.

- Providing undergraduate and postgraduate education in medical, nursing and allied health disciplines.

- Initiating and conducting research to enhance the clinical care of our patients.

- Providing information, health promotion, resources, education and advocacy for the families of our patients.

In order to maintain our mission and achieve our vision we need to:

- Attract and retain the best medical nursing and allied health professional staff.

- Establish world's best practice medical and nursing care of sick newborn infants.

- Acquire and maintain essential and cutting edge equipment.

- Improve access to and availability of newborn intensive care beds.

- Improve the space and the environment in the clinical areas.

- Improve the facilities for the families of the babies.

- Improve and maintain the infrastructure and facilities for research.

- Improve and maintain the infrastructure and facilities for education.

- Update and improve the Neonatal Unit website.

Funds raised are used by The Royal Children's Hospital Neonatal Unit to:

1. Purchase and maintain essential and cutting edge equipment in order to provide the best possible care for the babies.

2. Improve the bed availability in the Neonatal Unit by providing and equipping additional intensive care cots.

3. Assist in building a brand new Neonatal Unit which will provide world's best facilities and environment for the sickest babies and their families.

4. Support ongoing research and education in the Neonatal Unit.



"A Celebration of Life" About Us

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DIRECTOR'S REPORT Dr Peter Mcdougall



It has been a very exciting year with the big move of the Neonatal Unit from the 2nd to the 3rd floor of The Royal Children's Hospital. It has been wonderful for staff to now be working in an environment which is state of the art. The facilities for families in the family retreat area are second to none. The Unit itself was opened by the former Premier of Victoria, Mr Steve Bracks and attended by the former Minister for Health of Victoria, Ms Bronwyn Pike on the 26th June 2007. This was a very important reminder to all staff of the importance of the work we do for the hospital and the community.

The Celebration of Life Gala Ball was held on Thursday, 6th September. The evening was an outstanding success with over 500 people attending. The night was hosted by Paul Mercurio from Dancing with the Stars. Paul donated his time for the night and was an excellent master of ceremonies. Donna Aranyi provided a spectacular night which was both enjoyable for all who attended but also a very important fundraiser.

UNIT MANAGER'S REPORT



SHERI WALDRON

By the time this newsletter reaches you, we will have been on the 3rd floor in our refurbished new unit for about 6 months.

The relocation of the Smorgan Family Neonatal Unit happened on the 22nd May 2007 – my thanks to our incredible staff who coped with the build up to the move and managed the actual move itself with incredible calm and professionalism.

We are just beginning to feel comfortable in the new ward – it has taken us 6 months to adjust to the very different design of the ward which has been challenging for us all.

We also had several families, including the Sneddon's, Ferguson's and the Warren's who ran separate and very successful fundraising events.

Professor Des Bohn from Toronto Hospital for Sick Children recently visited our Unit and participated in a one day think tank on congenital diaphragmatic hernia. We were very pleased to present our results which rank the best in the world. This was a very important day to further improve our management of children with this condition.

This year marked the retirement of Mr Keith Stokes, Paediatric Surgeon. Keith has been a magnificent contributor to paediatric surgery over a very long career. He has surgically operated on hundreds of critically ill newborn infants and his contribution is warmly appreciated.

Research is a very important part of the Neonatal Unit. We have an active research program and this helps maintain the standard of care at the cutting edge. Dr David Tingay was awarded an MCRI Career Development Grant Scholarship for his work in mechanical ventilation. A/Prof Paul Ekert has been granted the very prestigious Silvia and Charles Viertel Foundation Senior Medical Research Scholarship. Nick Kirly a research technologist won the best scientific presentation at the Australian and New Zealand Intensive Care Society recently.

The Parent Retreat has provided a haven, allowing parents time-out from the clinical area whilst still being close to their baby. As these photos illustrate, it provides a nurturing and comfortable space for our parents, who are now even able to sit outside on a sunny day and enjoy a break.

The Postnatal Mothers Unit is also located adjacent to the ward and is more "hotel" in style than clinical. Every room also has a great view over Royal Park.

The Unit was officially opened on the 26th June by then Premier Steve Bracks and Health Minister Bronwyn Pike, who both toured the new facility and met some of our families after the official speeches and unveiling of an official plaque.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our generous donors who have supported the refurbishment of the Neonatal Unit. Also to our families who allowed their stories to be filmed as part of either the official opening or the recent segment on A Current Affair- in particular the Thompson Family, Funke Family, Kelly Saliba and Mawson Families.

I would also like to thank the Neonatal Team- Nursing Medical and Allied Health for their incredible commitment and dedication every day that makes working in the Neonatal Unit so special.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Sheri

As the year draws to a close, the Neonatal Unit has been extremely busy in recent times. The work, at times, is very stressful and demanding on all staff. I am very proud to work with extraordinarily dedicated and skilled team of medical, nursing and allied health staff. All this work would not be possible without very generous donations from many of the parents who have had children pass through our ward. The donations, not only enable us to provide the best possible care, but they are a very important morale booster, the importance of which cannot be underestimated.

Finally, I would like to wish all the staff, parents and children of the Neonatal Unit all the very best for the festive season and a happy and safe New Year for 2008.

With best wishes

Peter McDougall



Photo courtesy Jay Town



RCH FOUNDATION DONOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGER'S REPORT



DONNA ARANYI

"After the verb to love, to help is the most beautiful verb in the world" – Bertha Von Suttner.

For me these words describe perfectly the essence of the work of the Neonatal Unit at The Royal Children's Hospital.

Philanthropy and community support play a critical role in providing funding for the Neonatal Unit which delivers world class care to our very sickest babies. What I find continuously inspiring is the amazing strength, enthusiasm and willingness of parents to remain involved with the NNU long after they have left the RCH, by raising ongoing funds for the Unit.

With the move to the new Unit now a reality, ongoing fundraising remains an important priority if we are to maintain our standard of excellence and reputation as a leader in neonatal care.

This year's Gala Ball was yet again another great success but would not have achieved this without the dedicated efforts of our generous sponsors and donors. Parents also played a vital part by not only attending this annual event but by also donating suitable items for our charity auctions, one of the most difficult aspects to manage of charity events such as this. Over \$60,000 was raised in the Silent Auction alone this year which is a testament to the great selection of prizes that were on offer and the donors and parents that made them possible – special thanks to you all!

You will read many articles in this edition of NNU News about other fundraising events and adventures held in support of the NNU since our last edition – I hope you find them inspiring and motivating. We are deeply grateful to our NNU families for their amazing fundraising efforts and hope they might encourage others to get involved and do the same!

Please know that we are here to help and support those donors interested in raising funds for the NNU. If you have an idea for an event or would like to try your hand at raising some funds for the NNU, please feel free to contact me anytime. Every single dollar helps to make a difference and every single dollar is greatly appreciated.

Congratulations, Birthday Wishes and our heartfelt thanks to all those babies and families that nominated the NNU to receive donations in lieu of gifts when celebrating special occasions recently – we are honoured by your kindness. The monies donated from special occasion events such as these are used to purchase much needed equipment for the NNU on an ongoing basis, which is a rare luxury for a hospital department – we feel so grateful for this privileged support.

As another year draws to a close, I would like to thank every individual and company that made a contribution in support of the NNU throughout 2007. I cannot adequately express the value and significance of these funds and the impact that they make on the lives of the babies and families that we care for – ongoing funding is vital and I urge all supporters of the NNU to continue to "spread the word" of it's amazing work and achievements in 2008 and beyond. If you've thought about getting involved or trying your hand at running a fundraising event, 2008 is the year to give it a go!

I hope you enjoy reading this final edition of NNU News for 2007 – thank you to all those that made contributions for sharing your personal stories with the extended NNU Family, much appreciated always.

If you would like to share your NNU experience with us, have requests for assistance relating to the NNU or need to update your address details please contact me via donna.aranyi@rch.org.au or telephone (03) 9345 4510.

Finally, special thanks to DNA Artworks and Eagle Print for their generous sponsorship of this newsletter and all NNU graphics and printing requirements – there would be no NNU News without their amazing support.

Wishing you all a safe and happy holiday season!

Donna

Our son Finley spent the first five months of his life in the Neonatal Unit at The Royal Children's Hospital. He was born with a condition known as Long Gap Oesophageal Atresia. During this time the Unit became our home and the people within it, our family.

As a mark of our gratitude to the Neonatal Unit, we organised 'A Celebration of Little Feet and Big Hearts' Cocktail Evening & Auction. The event was held on Saturday 5th May 2007 at Kilmory Park, a restored mansion, near Sale, with approximately 100 people in attendance.

The evening commenced with a comedy spot by our Master of Ceremonies, Comedian, Justin Hamilton. The introduction was followed by a brief speech made by the Chief Surgical Registrar from The Royal Children's Hospital, Dr Craig McBride and us, the parents of a 'Neonatal Baby'. I shared some of our thoughts and experiences about our son, Finley, who spent time in the Neonatal Unit. I explained how his journey presented some of the wonderful work the Neonatal Unit undertakes and Glenn graciously thanked our very generous sponsors and supporters.

Auction items such as autographed surfboards and soccer boots, weekend getaways, scenic flights and cruises, tickets to Rove Live and nursery furniture were just some of the items up for grabs. A Silent Auction ran for the duration of the evening with the Main Auction commencing at 10.00pm, the atmosphere very exciting and busy with conversation and bidding. The auction raised in excess of \$10,100.

Michael's visit to IGA

Our heartfelt thanks to the Team at Michael's IGA who presented cheques for two Cot Sponsorships to the NNU in August 2007. Company Owner Michael Lorenz visited with his lovely wife Rose and Marketing Manager, John Markham to meet with Dr Peter McDougall and Sheri Waldron to make the presentations and visit the new Unit. Michael's IGA have been an ongoing NNU Cot Sponsors for ten years, donating \$100,000 to the NNU during this time. Cot Sponsorships ensure that each NNU Cot is maintained with the latest medical equipment and form a valuable contribution to the NNU. Each cot that is sponsored proudly displays a plaque featuring the name of the company/individual who has made the sponsorship possible.

A raffle that had been running for four weeks in the lead up to the Cocktail Evening was drawn on the night, following the auction. The evening continued with live music, a local acoustic guitarist, while our guests enjoyed some delicious food and beverages, in a warm and relaxed setting.

The level of support and generosity we received made the organisation of the Cocktail Evening & Auction a real pleasure. The support from all of those involved ensured our fundraising efforts were extremely worthwhile and for that, we are truly grateful. We believe the success of our event is certainly a reflection of our generous and supportive community.

We would like to thank The Royal Children's Hospital Foundation, especially Donna Aranyi for helping us to raise much needed funds for the Neonatal Unit and for supporting our goals with practical and helpful advice. Support such as this is invaluable when conducting a fundraising event, especially for those of us "new" to event management!

We feel very privileged to be able to donate the total of \$21,329.92 on behalf of the Sale, Maffra and surrounding communities.

Our recent fundraising efforts are just a small token of our appreciation to the Neonatal Unit for ensuring the health and wellbeing of our son, Finley. Thank you for helping make fundraising for The Royal Children's Hospital such an enjoyable and worthwhile experience – we can assure other NNU families or anyone thinking about doing something like this that, despite the hard work, it is an experience that is extremely worthwhile and rewarding.

Glenn, Kelly & Finley Warren

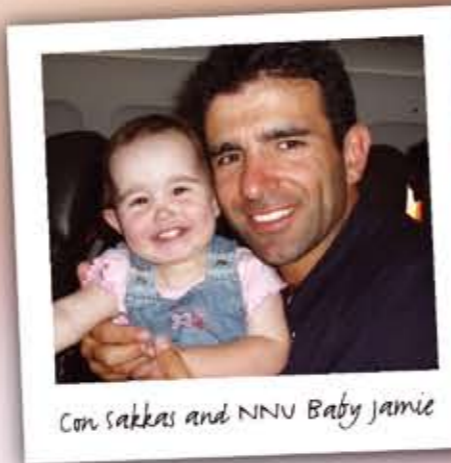


Happy Buns!

Safeway Manager and NNU Dad, Con Sakkas, helped to raise funds for the NNU during this year's Safeway Easter Hot Cross Buns stores promotion.

Over \$500 was raised as a result and presented to the NNU in the form of Safeway Wish Gift Cards which would be spent to purchase important items as required by the Unit.

Special thanks to Con and all those Managers that agreed to support the NNU in this way - this, in addition to the outstanding and ongoing support already demonstrated by Safeway to the RCH, is precious and invaluable to us.



Con Sakkas and NNU Baby Jamie

Back Row: M.Ward (Scoresby), G.Coulter (Stud Park), D.Sciortino (Canterbury Gdns), M.Borrelli (Ferntree Gully), A.Robinson (Mountain Gate), C.Athanassis (Bayswater), J.East (Boronia Junction)
Middle Row: G.Sutton (Yarra Junction), B.Stevenson (Croydon), B.Thomas (Endeavour Hills), V.Creed (Lillydale), D.Worland (Kilsyth), T.Thompson (Chirside Park)
Front Row: G.Ruigrok (Monbulk), S.Flores (Belgrave)



Guests were invited to enjoy their entrees which heralded the start of a culinary procession of exquisite foods which had been lovingly prepared by Crown Executive Chef Oliver von Brunn.

Soon it was time for the main speeches which saw Chairman of the A Celebration of Life (COL) Committee of Management, Andrew Raper, reconfirm COL's commitment to further fundraising for the NNU and to thank those whose efforts had seen this year's event realized.

This was followed by a speech from Director of the NNU, Dr Peter McDougall who addressed the audience to explain the importance of fundraising to the NNU and how extra funds are utilized. Many guests had seen an EXCLUSIVE story shown on Channel 9's "A Current Affair", about the life changing work of the NNU, the previous night and Peter's message reinforced the value of services offered and showcased in this excellent portrayal.

Guests were then invited to share an NNU experience as seen through the eyes of parents – John and Karen Gawne, whose baby "Nathan" spent many months there receiving treatment over ten years ago.

John and Karen's speech was extremely moving and really provided a realistic portrayal of what the NNU is all about. The highlight of the speech was the "surprise" appearance of Nathan onstage to present a gift to Dr Peter McDougall and Sheri Waldron.

It was AFL Legend Anthony Koutafides win on Dancing with the Stars that prompted the theme for this year's Gala Ball. Kouta had very kindly and generously donated his winnings from the show to the NNU - \$25,000 and took the time to personally visit the NNU to meet with staff and families.

Enter "Host Extraordinaire" Paul Mercurio and singing sensation Kate Ceberano and we soon had a line up that was sure to attract another good audience to this year's major fundraising event.

The Gala was held on Thursday 6th September at The Palladium, Crown. We are greatly indebted to our supporters and friends at Crown Limited for their ongoing support of this event, now in its fifth year.

The Palladium Ballroom looked spectacular with elegant candles and tropical blooms gracing every table. Special thanks to Paul and Ellie at Function Accessories for their expert design and styling once again – they really are the best in the business!

Paul Mercurio warmly welcomed guests and explained the evening's fundraising activities. There was a stunning Silent Auction displayed at the rear of the Ballroom with an impressive array of prizes for all tastes and budgets, all of which had been generously donated by over two hundred sponsors; Raffle tickets to purchase for some outstanding prizes made possible by our sponsor Ramvek Shopfittings and a fantastic Main Auction that would be held later that evening.

Nathan, now a healthy, thriving ten year old, serves as a great example of what happens when a baby receives "the best chance – first chance at life".

Special thanks to John, Karen, Nathan and family for sharing your lives with us at that time.

Main Auction time and our special guest auctioneer Guy St Leger from Biggin & Scott Real Estate – took to the stage with Paul Mercurio to offer a great range of priceless and "money can't buy" experiences which included prizes courtesy Crown Limited, Carbone Master Tailors, Yering Station, Elton John, Sportz 3, Flight Centre, Papillion Furniture, Investing & You Magazine, Sassano Jewellers, Artists Nick Morris and Dave Bowers and James Hird and Kevin Sheedy to name a few.

With formalities out of the way and fundraising activities over for another year, it was soon time for Kate Ceberano and her band to take to the stage to wow guests with a repertoire of classic 80's hits as heard on her latest album "Nine Lime Avenue".

This year's event raised just over \$90,000 for the NNU and would not have enjoyed such success without the generous support of many hundreds of sponsors, supporters and guests – a heartfelt thanks to you all. Special thanks also to NNU Mum Georgie Kirby, who managed to secure \$20,000 worth of prizes for our charity auctions – you go girl!

All in all, it was a spectacular evening with all guests enjoying everything of offer and enthusiastically supporting the work of the NNU.



Special Thanks to

A Celebration of Life Auxiliary
A Celebration of Life Committee of Management
A Celebration of Life Volunteers
Actil
ASGO
Andrew & Louise Raper
Anita Ivankovic
Anna Nowak
Ann Peacock
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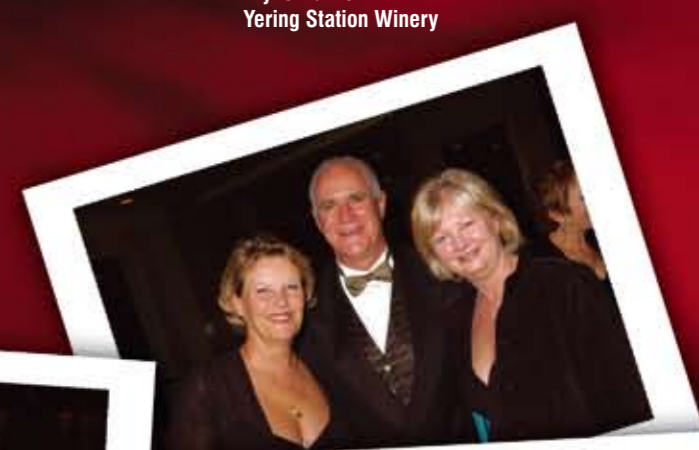
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Katrina Hollis
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MRK Designs
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Sheila Hargreaves
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Smith Family
Smyth Family
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Stephanie Glavas

Stewart Family
Sue Falzon
Sue Manson
Sunrise Plastics
Suzie Jones
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Wylie Dalziel
Yering Station Winery



Karen

“Every parent wants a healthy baby”. Although this should never be taken for granted, John and I hoped our third born would be a healthy baby, no matter what the sex. When our son Nathan Jack Gawne was born on Sunday May 18 1997 at 5.03 PM by Emergency Caesarean Section at Francis Perry House in Melbourne, our world was turned upside down. Despite suggestions two weeks previously that all might not be normal following a 36 week ultrasound, nothing prepares you for the reality of having a baby who is seriously ill at birth.

Nathan was born with a condition called oesophageal atresia – or in layman’s terms he was born with an oesophagus that ends in a blind pouch. The condition is a congenital abnormality which occurs in 1:3000 births. This condition can sometimes be repaired quickly and the oesophagus can be joined together in the first few days of life. In Nathan’s case he had a long gap oesophageal atresia and his oesophagus ended at the base of his neck and his stomach had no distal oesophagus or in other words no formation of any oesophagus coming from his stomach. This meant that the option of rejoining the oesophagus end to end was impossible. His condition is known as a long gap oesophageal atresia, so we were facing a long stay in the neonatal unit and complicated surgery in the months to come.

In 50% of cases of long gap OA, the children suffer other abnormalities including heart, spine, rectal and other problems. Thankfully Nathan had no other abnormalities, but he faced a long term admission to the NNU until he was strong and large enough to cope with complicated surgery. This involved the forming an alternative oesophagus. As a consequence, the NNU became Nathan’s home for the first five months of life, and a second home to me, my husband and my daughters.

John

Shortly after Nathan’s delivery at the Francis Perry, he was stabilised by the Neonatal Emergency Transport Service, or NETS as it more commonly known, and transported to the NNU at RCH. Here a team of nurses, doctors and his surgeon Alex Auldlist were on standby awaiting his admission. I was so overwhelmed that I managed to get lost between the Women’s and the Kids hospital. This fact has remained my secret for the last ten years (so please do not tell anyone). Finally I was greeted by a hive of activity, busy people that were efficiently saving the life of Nathan as well as countless others.

Nathan was wheeled into surgery where an assessment of the condition was made. I remember waiting in the waiting room, so tired that I was awoken leaning against a wall by Nathan’s surgeon, Alex Auldlist who confirmed a long gap in his oesophagus and that Nathan now had a gastrostomy tube. Little did we know that that this tube in his stomach would nourish him for his first two and a half years of his life. I raced back on a now familiar track to the women’s to tell Karen the news and play a video of Nathan in the Neonatal Unit. This was my attempt at diffusing the separation anxiety that Karen felt being separated from our new born son.

Karen

While any person who has ever had a child, grandchild, friend or relative that has been treated in the NNU, would agree the technologies and equipment that are made available to our children are second to none. However it is the care of the Doctors, Nurses and support staff who work within the unit that make the unit, in our opinion the best in Australia, if not the world.

An example of this was on the second day following Nathan’s birth, and visiting Nathan for the first time, I was told by a Neonatologist of Nathan’s long gap OA and the potential realities of what his could mean. I was completely overcome with emotion and totally devastated. I was wondering how Nathan would survive without an oesophagus, and I was whether he could ever have a normal life? I remember sitting outside the NNU totally inconsolable. Within minutes the nursing staff had organised a social worker and one of Alex Auldlist’s registrars to see me as Alex was not in the hospital. I left the unit feeling totally overwhelmed and worried about what the future held for Nathan.

The phone rang about 9.30 PM that night after I returned to my post natal room. It was Nathan’s surgeon Alex Auldlist firstly to apologise for not meeting me in person earlier in the day and secondly to reassure me that if he could not rejoin Nathan’s oesophagus, he would fashion a new alternative oesophagus for him, and I would be taking him home. He reassured me that he would eat and have a functioning oesophagus in the future.

To have one of the world’s leading surgeons take time out from a busy day and give a mother some hope is the sort of action that makes the NNU so special. Alex understood I was desperate mother needing answers, and I would be unable to rest until I had them.

John

This excellent care was also delivered constantly by the nursing staff. The care towards Nathan was always optimal, but the nursing staff became our second family for the hospitalisation period. We are particularly grateful to Nathan’s primary care team, Neroli, Sheri, Alisa, Kate and Carolyn. They got see us at the very lowest of our lows, a privilege usually only given to family members. I do recall a discussion I had with one of the nurses, pointing out that Karen and I were spending 24/7 at the hospital and while Nathan was important, we had two other children that were equally as important.

It was the kind of point only a family member could make. That night, Karen and I drew up a roster, Karen daytime, me evenings and we made a rostered day off each weekend for one parent to spend one day of each weekend with the girls. Things began to improve from that moment.

What makes the RCH NNU special is:

- The expertise and caring of the staff. This is not just because of the highly specialised skills, it because of the empathy given to parents and their family

- The ability to listen and provide explanations, answering our concerns and catering for our level of understanding. This is something we found, not only from the nursing staff, but the surgeons, neonatologists Peter McDougall and Neil Campbell who despite having many sick babies to care for, always made time to give you full explanations of Nathan’s condition and progress. This was always appreciated, whether the news was good or bad. It was important to know every detail concerning our son.

- The other things that make the NNU so special is the ability to care for the whole family as well as our beautiful baby. Every parent understands the strain of not having a child at home would they should be. They understand perfectly how it is to walk passed an empty bassinette that you have prepared for a new born that is yet to make it home and the stress it places on the family as a unit. Whilst the primary focus was Nathan, there was a secondary focus on all of us as a family unit. In fact, the staff of the neonatal unit not only cure and care for sick babies, they put families together.

It is almost ten years to the day that we finally bought Nathan home for the first time. He now leads a full life, playing football, doing karate, eating food, climbing trees and excelling at school (although according to Nathan he only attends school to play football at lunchtime and to see his mates).

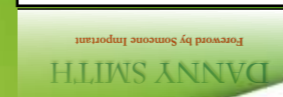
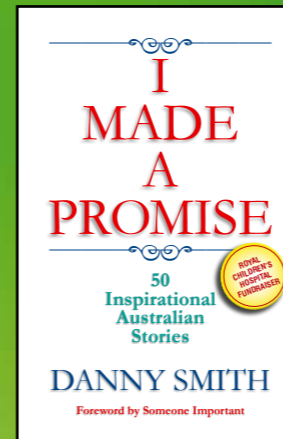
Each night he sleeps in his bed and is a core member of very tight family unit. We would like to thank all of the Neonatal Staff for putting our family together and giving us the opportunity to be one.

Karen

We also want to acknowledge Chris & Sophie Clarke who had the vision to create A Celebration of Life and the RCH foundation for carrying on their vision. We come to the celebration of life ball every year and I believe that I speak on behalf of all of the parents, relatives and friends who have ever had a child treated in the NNU. Thank you to everyone who has donated time, money or their services towards this night. We owe our son’s life to the team at the RCH NNU and we cannot thank you enough for supporting the celebration of life.

John

I’m not sure whether the photographs help you appreciate what a ripping young lad Nathan is today, 10 years and 5 months of age, so I’d like to introduce Nathan Jack Gawne and his sister Courtney to you all. And Nathan would like to thank Sheri Waldron and Peter McDougall for their fantastic work and hope they feel half as proud of their achievements as we do.



“Wills Memory” Charity Dinner

On Saturday 11th August 2007, family and friends of Michelle and Scott Ferguson gathered at “Churchers” in Richmond to celebrate the memory of baby Will Ferguson, a patient of the NNU in 2002.

Michelle and Scott wanted to commemorate the fifth year anniversary of Will’s short life in celebration, and had worked tirelessly in the preceding months to organize a very special dinner and charity auction to help raise funds for the NNU.

Over 120 guests attended and gave generously to support Michelle and Scott’s efforts. Dr Peter McDougall, Director of the NNU attended on the night to express his deepest thanks to all those that helped to ensure its success and had raised funds for the NNU in Will’s memory.

Over \$15,000 was raised on the night – a fantastic achievement which could not have been made possible without the support of Michelle and Scott’s family, friends, sponsors and all those that attended.

Danny’s latest offering was officially launched at Readings in Hawthorn on 7th November 2007.

His collection of truly inspirational stories is now available nationally and Danny will donate 10% of profits from the sale of each book directly to the Neonatal Unit at the RCH in an effort to support its ongoing fundraising needs.

The NNU at the RCH holds a very special place in Danny’s heart:-

“My debt of gratitude to the Neonatal Unit at the RCH is immense. My nephew “Caelan” was a patient in the Neonatal Unit in 2002, having been born with fluid on his lungs. He couldn’t breathe

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Further thanks to Camille Barclay and Simon Best – Wills God Parents, for their continued support and amazing effort in the success of “Wills Memory”. To Dr Peter McDougall for taking the time out of his personal life to be a part of our night. Donna, what a generous and caring person. With such a busy and demanding job, she always has time for others. She is a true asset to The Royal Children’s Hospital and “thank you” just doesn’t seem enough. And most importantly, special thanks to all of the business’s that chose to support “Wills Memory” – without them, our night would not have been a success.

and we thought we were going to lose him. Thanks to the skills and dedication of the NNU Team, he survived and is now a normal, healthy 5 year old boy. My niece “Eden” also received treatment and surgery for a life threatening condition in January 2007 and is also now doing well”.

Danny Smith – Author “I Made A Promise”

Books can also be purchased for \$25 from the RCH Foundation Office or by visiting

www.imadeapromise.com.au

The perfect gift idea to support a truly worthy cause – get yours today!

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I hope to organize a Family Fun Day in March and a Cocktail Evening in August. Please contact myself or Donna if you would like to be a part of these fundraisers and we will pass on the details when they are finalized”.

Michelle Ferguson
willsmemory@hotmail.com



Another great day was enjoyed by families attending the 2nd Annual AFL Grand Final Family Day presented by The Elise Sneddon Foundation.

This Foundation, which was formed by Kerryn and Robert Sneddon in loving memory of their daughter Elise who passed away in the unit in March 2005, aims to raise money for the purchase of life saving equipment for the NNU.

Although the weather remained threatening all day, hundreds of kids and adults alike had a fantastic time running around and trying out all the activities that were on offer.

The huge jumping castles were a hit, as were the CAMP AUSTRALIA activities and the fun filled CRAYOLA tent. There was plenty of glitter and glamour with spectacular mask making and a gallery of miniature artists produced some fine pieces of artwork.

A stack of freebies were given away including a show bag upon entry and an unbelievable CRAYOLA show bag for the kids filled with art supplies.

This year the event also included pony and train rides, elaborate face painting, baby animal farm and once again the super screen televising the big game.

Sergeant Pete made another special appearance and brought along some normal and miniature police cars for the kids to explore.

Another highlight of the day was a special appearance by Chris Morant and his Fire, Circus and Magic show. Super Dooper flew in for an interactive show and Captain Spalding also performed.

Through generous sponsorship, silent auctions, raffles and entry passes over \$25,000 was raised on the day.

Many thanks to all of our wonderful and generous supporters for their ongoing commitment to our cause. It means a lot to so many people, especially the babies whose lives will be saved by the equipment purchased with the profits.

Make sure you mark the 2008 Grand Final Day on your calendar and come along and support this great event!

For further information about the event and how you can get involved contact **Kerryn or Robert on 9038 8322** or email **elisefoundation@optusnet.com.au**

Visit our website at www.elisefoundation.org.au



Busywoman.com.au is extremely excited and proud to announce its involvement and support of the Neonatal Unit in 2008.

Director, Melanie Carson, has recently experienced the great work that the NNU do first hand.

"A friend's little boy decided to enter the world very early and had a few hurdles to get through before he was finally able to go home with his Mum and Dad. For a single woman like myself, who has not yet considered having a family, I was not aware until recently – because of this experience – of the great work that the NNU does on a daily basis. The challenges some little ones and their families face are extremely tough to say the least. It was reassuring to know what good care the children were in", she said.

The NNU is filled with truly gifted and dedicated staff and Busywoman.com.au would like to acknowledge, support and assist in the great work of the NNU and endorses the message that all busy women are never too busy to make a difference.

We hope to organize some very exciting activities for all those busy women out there in 2008 so stay tuned!

For further information or to subscribe please visit Busywoman.com.au



Upcoming Events

"Put your glad rags on and join me hon... we'll have some fun when the clock strikes one"...

Yep, she's at it again! Following the success of last year's Barn Dance, NNU fundraiser and proud supporter, Sue Falzon in conjunction with Paul Gixti, invites all NNU families, friends and readers to attend an upcoming Rock'n'Roll night in support of the NNU on 1st March 2008. Venue and Ticket Prices are to be confirmed but the event already looks set to be another sensational success for the NNU. Please contact Sue or Paul directly via email if you require further information, would like to attend or donate a prize for the charity auctions –

Sfa05428@bigpond.net.au or **Paul_g@sushisushi.com.au**

Family Activity Day

Will's Memory Dinner organizer and NNU Mum – Michelle Ferguson & friends invite all NNU families and supporters to attend a proposed Family Activity Day at Luna Park in March 2008.

Please contact Michelle directly via email for further information:

willsmemory@hotmail.com

Busywoman.com.au

Calling all busy women! Please register your interest in participating/supporting an upcoming Busywoman.com.au "Never too busy to Make a Difference", all women event/s in 2008 via email mel@busywoman.com.au All funds raised from Busywoman.com.au events will be proudly donated to the NNU to assist Mothers of newborn babies.

"Across The Universe"

Charity Movie Night in support of the NNU

Two hundred friends, families and supporters of the Neonatal Unit at the RCH gathered on Wednesday 7th November at the magnificent Sun Theatre in Yarraville to enjoy a very special charity screening of the film "Across The Universe". Organized by NNU Mum – **Rebecca Grieve** – the fundraiser was held in gratitude for the care and support Rebecca's baby "Oliver" received whilst a patient of the NNU. Over \$2000 was raised on the night with funds utilized to purchase much needed supplies for the NNU. Special thanks to Rebecca Grieve, the Sun Theatre and all those that attended to help ensure another successful fundraising event for the NNU!



the kids the kids the kids the kids

We'd like to make 2008 a "Great" fundraising year for the NNU and invite you to join us and get involved!

Many parents and their families/friends express an urge to "give something back" when their little ones have received treatment in the NNU at the RCH.

This is a common response and we welcome and appreciate gestures of this nature.

Usually, the first question parents/family/friends ask is, "How can we help?"

Well, here are a few examples of ways in which NNU supporters have chosen to get involved with our great cause:-

- Support by selling RCH Merchandise for the NNU Auxiliary "Neonate Mates". Merchandise can be collected or posted from the RCH Auxiliary Office on a sale or return basis. Just make sure you NOMINATE the Neonate Mate Auxiliary as the beneficiary of your sales achievements. Over \$14,000 was raised by this Auxiliary in the 2006 – 2007 financial year, a result of many NNU Mum's, Grandparents, Friends and Members selling RCH Merchandise all over the country! For Merchandise Orders please contact the RCH Auxiliaries Office directly on (03) 9345 7051 or Dawn Aranyi - President of the Neonate Mates Auxiliary on (03) 9743 6995 if you would like to become a Member, Volunteer to run a Stall here at the RCH or donate suitable items for sale on a Stall.

- Nominate the NNU to receive donations in lieu of gifts when celebrating your next special occasion. Birthdays, Anniversary's, Christenings, Engagements, Bat/Bar Mitzvah's, Weddings – whatever the occasion,

Auxillary Update

Over the past 12 months, Auxiliaries at The Royal Children's Hospital has introduced many new items to their extensive merchandise range. If you are looking for a fun and simple way to raise funds, this range of merchandise is available for you to on sell. Proceeds from all sales with directly support the NNU. The merchandise is available on a consignment basis.

If you would like to place an order please contact the Auxiliary Office on (03) 9345 5188 or via auxiliaries.office@rch.org.au.

We are more than happy to send out further information and order forms. Please mention that you would like to nominate the NNU to receive funds from your sales of RCH merchandise.

we are always grateful to receive donations from events such as these. Customized Donation forms can be provided to be sent out with Invitations or made available to guests at your event.

- Organize your own fundraising event for family, friends and workmates. Many friends of the NNU have been very creative in the way that they have raised funds for the Unit. Some of these events have included:-

Trivia Night

Sportsman's Night

Shopping Tour

Jewellery/Clothing/Fragrance/Homewares Parties

Formal Dinner Dance

Family Activity Day

Gold Coin Donation BBQ or Dinner Party

Fashion Parade

Movie Night

Bike Ride

Golf Day

Fishing Competition

Mother's/Play Group Morning Tea

Dance-a-thon

Themed Parties i.e. Bush Dance

Car Wash

Ongoing Workplace Giving

Casual Dress Day

Art/Craft Exhibition

Garage/Trash 'N' Treasure Sale... etc.

Items include:

Tote Bags		\$2
Art Smocks (sml, med, lrg)		\$15
Adult Mugs		\$15
Children's Cups		\$12
Gardening Gloves	Adult	\$5
	Child	\$3

Aprons		\$15
Umbrellas	Adult	\$20
	Child	\$15

Socks		
(available stars or stripes)	6 pairs	\$20
Ladies Socks also available		\$20
Busy Boxes		\$20
Dragon Singlets	set of 2	\$15

Some events require more of a time commitment than others but if you have a group of friends or a network of people who are ready and willing to promote and attend your event, sell/buy tickets and help with prizes and the overall organization of the event, you are set to go! All fundraising events being held in the name of the RCH MUST BE REGISTERED with the RCH Foundation. There are also specific laws that relate to fundraising events and raffles held in the state of Victoria – please contact Donna Aranyi for further information and to provide the DATE of your event for inclusion in the NNU Newsletter (subject to print deadlines).

- Attend a NNU Fundraising Event –make sure you read the NNU Newsletter to check for dates of specific events being held in support of the NNU. You may decide to attend the Annual Gala Ball, bring the family along to an upcoming Activity Day or event.

- Memorial Trusts/Funds – please contact Donna Aranyi at the RCH Foundation to discuss personally on (03) 9345 4510.

- Trusts and Foundations – if you would like to nominate the NNU to receive funding provided by an external Trust or Foundation please contact Fiona Ballantyne at the RCH Foundation BEFORE you submit an Application on (03) 9345 6815.

- Use your imagination - these suggestions serve as guidelines only. We welcome any further ideas you might have to inspire and motivate supporters to get involved.

Please meet our newest member Dogtor Heal.

This range includes:	
Dogtor Heal Plush	\$25
Heal Real Soon Bags (features a badge)	\$3

And don't forget the gorgeous Luv a Bub range. New items include the latest knitwear range featuring knitted jackets, beanies and booties. Features: Blankets, socks, wraps, gro suits, booties, beanies, mittens plus much more...



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Our service, knowledge, and experience is second to none which is evident with the number of Charities, Sporting Clubs, Associations and Corporate/Private fundraising events that we participate in Australia wide.



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SPortz3 Pty Ltd
Level 1/Suite 1 84 Synnot St, Werribee
(Appointment only)

Ph: 03 9749 7599

Fax: 03 9749 7588
info@sportz3.com

Let us know when your next fundraising event is and we will donate an Australia Greatest Statistical Print Poster of Sir Donald Bradman to your organisation – Call or email us for details...

***conditions apply.**



It was twelve months ago when our three week old baby Oscar, became very ill - after being transported to your unit via the NETS team and spending 3 weeks in your care, he has made a full recovery and is now fifteen months old!

It is an unimaginable thought for a parent, not knowing if your newborn baby is going to pull through or not. As Oscar was our third baby and I had enjoyed a perfect pregnancy, easy natural birth and an amazing first three weeks enjoying our little boy at home, we never imagined the journey we were about to experience.

Mother's instinct is an amazing thing. After Oscar was having trouble keeping his milk down and presenting with a bone-dry nappy after twelve hours, I knew something was not right. I thank God every day, that I didn't just put him back down for his morning sleep and that I had the courage to ring my local GP, Pediatrician, and MCHN and insist that someone give me some advice and confirmation that medical assistance was required (being a mother of three, you do become less neurotic).

Anyway the rest is history and thanks to the amazing team of Doctor's and Nurses in the NNU at the RCH he is now doing really well! He is still on his daily Atenolol, but is being weaned off and he has his Cardiology review next month, in the hope he can stop the medication all together.

The last 12 months has been a whirlwind but a day has not gone by when I have not thought of how grateful we are for the sensational care Oscar received while in the NNU!

The love & kindness that we experienced (especially Oscar) from all of the staff at the RCH, words cannot express! We greatly appreciate the support each individual offered us and feel truly blessed, THANK YOU SO MUCH!!!!

Thank you again, I think the RCH & NETS offers an amazing service to the families of Victoria and beyond, so never forget the wonderful contribution and difference you make to people's lives everyday!

James & Georgie Kirby



Ben came into the world at 37 weeks of gestation in March 2006 at 2.59am weighing 2.1 kilos, a very tiny baby.

Following his birth, Ben was transported to the Neonatal Unit at The Royal Children's Hospital, Melbourne whilst I stayed behind to recover. It was not easy seeing him leave and even harder knowing I couldn't be with him so soon after his arrival.

Once at the NNU, Ben was diagnosed with a medical condition known as Long Gap Oesophageal Atresia his gap measured 10cm. Basically, this meant that Ben's oesophagus did not reach his stomach. In order for Ben to feed, he had to undergo surgery to insert a feeding tube known as a gastrostomy through his abdomen into his stomach.

Not long after this had been done, we met with surgeon Dr Joe Cramer who explained to us that further surgery would be done some weeks later. We would have to be patient and wait for Ben to put on weight and for his stomach to grow before we could move through to the next phase of our challenge. We needed the gap in his oesophagus to increase in length to have the best chance of a successful surgery and long term outcome.

During this time, I took things on a day-to-day basis, believing that each new day bought us one step closer to seeing this experience through. The nursing staff loved Ben, especially his easy going nature and the obvious joy he shared with every interaction.

After three very long months in the NNU, Ben's gap had increased by 2cm and he was finally in a good position to have surgery. The surgery took six hours and the relief I felt meeting with Dr Cramer afterwards was overwhelming. Joe had successfully joined Ben's oesophagus with the tubing in his stomach so that food could naturally reach it, at last. Ben's stomach would be a bit smaller than normal as a result but a week after his surgery, he was back to his old smiling and happy self.

At four months of age and after four months of outstanding care in the NNU we were moved to 4 Main to begin the final leg of our journey that would take us home at last. It was very difficult saying goodbye to our friends in the NNU after such a long time but after only two weeks in 4 Main, Ben was finally able to leave the RCH. I cannot adequately describe in words what it felt like to walk out of the hospital and walk in through our front door at home with our baby in our arms. We were all so happy at last.

Ben is now 18 months old and walking and talking. He experienced an initial slight delay in development but after a few months at home with us, has well and truly caught up with his peers. He still visits the RCH every two weeks for Oesophageal dilatation but overall he is doing extremely well.

We would like to thank Ben's team of doctors - especially Dr Joe Cramer, his nurses and all of the other parents who had babies in the NNU at the same time as Ben, for their amazing support, especially during the hard times. There's an almost unconscious sense in the NNU that although we are all there as individual families, a bond forms naturally between all of us, which means that we share in each others triumphs and also the sad times. It is a very special place for which our family will always owe a great debt of gratitude.

Thank you.

Pauline, Paul, Claire, Erick and Baby Ben.

You can read more about Ben's progress at www.benjourny.blogspot.com



I was born last century and the RCH has seemingly always been a part of my life. My father worked here as a medical specialist in childhood cancer for many years, and my sisters and I spent a lot of time on weekends, playing in the hospital, whilst my father was on call. I think I always wanted to do medicine, especially as I was not good enough to make it as a professional soccer player!

I did my paediatric training at RCH, and during this time was exposed to Neonatology. The first night on looking after sick babies on my own, was an experience I will never forget. I was scared witless! But I came back for more, meaning I either like a challenge or I am a fool.

Once I had decided to stick with Neonatology, I dragged my young family off to the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto, Canada, where I worked for three-and-a-half years. This was a formative time as it was here that I started to do research in a serious way and got involved in working in a basic science laboratory. This became so important to me that when I got back from Toronto, I worked part time in the Neonatology Unit at RCH but spent most of my time doing my PhD at the Walter and Eliza Hall Institute with Professor David Vaux.

Now I run my own laboratory here at the Murdoch Children's Research Institute, in the Children's Cancer Centre at the RCH. We study the molecular mechanisms of how cells live and die, and how their survival is

regulated by chemicals known as growth factors. When I start to talk about all this to my colleagues, understandably their eyes begin to glaze over and their eyelids droop sleepily... Nevertheless, they have always supported having a molecular biologist who also loves working in the Neonatal Unit!

The Neonatal Unit is sometimes a tough place to work, at other times incredibly rewarding. At all times, I have to admire the courage of the parents and babies who find themselves in a place and in a situation they could scarcely have imagined.

My life at home, like most people, is busy, sometimes chaotic but my favourite place to be! Noelene, my wife, works full time running her general practise. We have two children, Hugo, who is 18 and doing VCE this year (I thought my first night in Neonatology was stressful). Georgina is 16 and going into year 11 next year. They are both wonderful children of whom I am extremely proud, although they both suffer from a condition that prevents them from doing any sort of domestic task or helping around the house! They probably got it from me.

When we can, which is all too infrequent, Noelene and I like to go down to the beach. I will hack my way around the golf course or we will go for a run along the beach with our dog of uncertain breeding, Chloe. I am pathetically slow, but I try. A glass of red or a beer finishes the evening off nicely.



WORDS OF THANKS FROM THE FAMILIES OF THE NNU

My name is Abe Watson and I am writing to you on behalf of St. Joseph's Primary School Bendigo, Student Representative Council. On August 3rd this year we held a coin line fundraiser at our school and our School Council decided that the NNU at RCH would be a worthy cause to donate the monies. Not long ago, a member of our school community's little brother, came home from your hospital after having six operations and he nearly didn't make it; you saved his life. So we would like to thank you by giving you this donation of \$1395 raised by our school at the coin line event, so that you can continue your good work.

Abe Watson – Captain of the St. Joseph's Primary School Student Representative Council

There can be no other job more important than caring for someone else's sick newborn baby. You do it with such love, care and compassion. Also, special thanks for the care offered to two tired, scared, desperate and worried parents on our first day in the NNU. You will never be forgotten.

Sharon, Andrew, Samantha, Holly & Chelsey

Thank You For All That You Have Done a poem by William Byrd

Thank you for all that you have done.

Hard times are now turned into times of pride.

All this we managed with you by our side,

Nor could we otherwise this course have run.

Kindness isn't tendered on demand:

You gave with love, not merely out of duty.

Our days are daily burnished by that beauty.

Upon your love we three now proudly stand.

With our love and thanks to you all –
Steve, Melinda & Ava

To the wonderful staff of the NNU who took care of our precious daughter Ingrid – thank you for your outstanding nursing care, your relaxed and supportive manner with us, our family and friends during what was a very stressful time for us. You all do a wonderful job in difficult and trying circumstances. Ingrid is doing well – she is a real cutie with a wonderful smile. Thanks again, you are all true angels.

Leonie, Romeo Luis & Ingrid.

Even though I can't talk just yet I want to thank you all with all of my heart for making me better. I will never forget your hard work, dedication and care. Lots of love and thanks –

Adrian

Thank you so much for the love and care you have given me and William over the past few days. I'm so happy William is almost back to his best and it's all because of you guys! Lots of love

Amanda & Matthew

Thank you for your care, support, thoughtfulness, commitment, professionalism and expertise – it's been amazing and is greatly appreciated.

Tamsin, Jamie & Stephanie

Thank you all so much for the great care you gave Leif in these super important days of his life. Thanks to you guys (and the Surgeons and Doc's) he will be able to come along to many a soccer game with us! Thanks too for treating us like friends and not patients. God Bless

Chad, Erika & Leif

To the staff of the NNU – what more can we say but “thank you” for getting our beautiful boy through the ups and downs of his little life so far.

Phil & Lesley

We would like to try to thank you all those that cared for our baby son Samuel – there are not enough words, however we will try. Thank you to Tom Clarnette and his team who were brilliant and kept us completely informed at every step. The follow up care also, was thorough and genuine. We always felt your concern for Samuel was real – we never felt that you thought of him as just another patient. Thank you to Lisa Hawley for your management of Samuel's care and coordination of his leaving and follow up appointments. Thank you to all of the Neonatologists who oversaw Samuel's daily care and kept his best interests at heart. Most of all, we would like to thank the NNU nursing team. To us, you were the ones that cared for Samuel in every way possible.

You are all an inspiration and we would be very surprised if a better team existed anywhere else in the world. Thank you for being kind and caring; for cuddling him when he was upset; for feeding him when we couldn't and for taking the time every day and night to fill us in on what we might have missed. Thank you for being more than nurses; for providing a listening ear, a shoulder to cry on and “stand in” Mothers. You guys were everything to Samuel for six weeks and also to us.

We had a hard journey ahead but you made it easier with your reassurance, support and love. Samuel is such a happy little soul and we are so grateful to have him home and growing healthier by the day. We know he may face set backs ahead but we will teach him that he can be anything and treat him as a normal child. He is surrounded by family and friends who love him and will be there for him and we know if he ever needs the services of the RCH we will never ever need to worry about his well being with you guys taking care of him.

Our love and thanks, Samuel and Family.

A BIG thank you for taking such good care of our son and for supporting us during such a traumatic time. Your kindness was very much appreciated and will not be forgotten. With sincere thanks

Dean, Candice & Blake

WORDS OF THANKS FROM THE FAMILIES OF THE NNU

We would like to thank all the staff of the NNU for the care you have given Kaytie over the past 4 months. She had some tough times but you always had faith in her recovery. You gave us the most wonderful support that helped to get us through this experience. We also know that Kaytie's future success will be due to your hard work and dedication to her care. We will keep in touch, thanks again

Laura, David & Kaytie

To the NNU Team of Doctors, Surgeons and Nurses – thanks very much for all your care and support throughout our stressful time. Words cannot express how thankful we are – Ethan's stay here was very much appreciated by all family concerned. Thanks again

Rebecca, Troy & Ethan

Its been almost 7 weeks and Olivia is now ready to go home – yay! She has done a remarkable job but she couldn't have done this well on her own! Thank you for taking such good care of her. Her surgeon did a great job and her nurses helped to get her to where she is now... Take care of yourselves and thanks again.

Karl, Jaime & Olivia

To the wonderful people of the NNU at the RCH thank you for looking after me! You guys are all absolutely amazing and loving carers. With all my love and thanks Little Miss Lois – now going great guns! Also, our eternal and heartfelt thanks to you all – everyone we met showed us nothing but patience and care. You are all angels that we will never forget.

Much love Georgia, Drew & Owen

To all those that looked after Ethan, we want to say “thank you” for looking after our son. The wonderful care he received was absolutely fantastic and has resulted in his amazing recovery. Thank you all again.

Brett & Simone

To the incredible staff of the NNU – we cannot begin to thank you enough for all that you have done for our little Audrey. Our family has experienced a roller-coaster of emotions recently and you all treated us with an amazing amount of support and encouragement. It was very hard for us to leave Audrey at times however we found peace knowing that she was being cared for by people who love their job and all of the babies. We cannot thank you enough... words don't seem to adequately express our true gratitude. With thanks

Martin, Mel, Mikaela & Audrey

Where do we start? It has been a very long 4 months for us and Ben who has grown from a very small baby into a very big baby boy! We would like to thank all of the staff that looked after him. Please know how grateful we are for your care and for keeping us updated on his progress and wellbeing. As Ben has grown, his smile, laughter and kind nature have all been aspects that have developed with your care – words can't express our joy and gratitude. You should all feel very proud of yourselves and give yourselves a BIG pat on the back for the wonderful work and care you gave our son Ben. We are going to miss everyone in the NNU who have become like “family” to us and we hope to visit soon. Once again, a big thank you.

Pauline, Paul, Claire, Erick & Ben

We would like to say a very big thank you to all those that helped care for our beautiful little boy Brooklyn during his illness. Your kindness, patience and support have been much appreciated. Kind regards

Rebecca, Shannon & Brooklyn

Please accept this special thanks as a small token of appreciation for looking after our little man – Thomas.

Thank you so much. Grant, Joanne & Thomas

Dear NNU Staff, we would like to thank you for helping our little baby boy – Jye. We can't thank you enough, you have all been great! Love always

Tammy, Daniel & Jye

